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Dialogues Between Two Worlds: Prophecy, Resurrection and the Imagination of the Otherworld

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Introduction

When the reader flips to the table of contents of this thesis, certainly the question might pop up: Is this another work that compares the incomparable and connects the unconnectable? What is the purpose of comparing two histories of beliefs that were so vastly different in almost every aspect?[1]

In *Les rois thaumaturges*, Marc Bloch criticized Frazer's methodology that compared the belief of the English and French monarchs' power to heal by touching to "le cas des îles Tonga en Polynésie, où certains chefs, dit-on, exercent une homéopathie de cette sorte", and hypothesized that English and French monarchs, like these chieftains, in ancient times were able both to inflict and to cure scrofula. But Bloch continued: "La méthode comparative est extrêmement féconde, mais à condition de ne pas sortir du général ; elle ne peut servir à reconstituer les détails."[2]

Indeed, on the level of grand structures, many things could be compared – in a section titled "a cross-section of comparative history" in *Feudal Society*, Bloch compared Japanese feudalism to the European one.[3] However, whether the comparative method is destined to be confined at the grand and general level, it could still remain an open question. In both Frazer's and Bloch's methodology, one end of the comparison was taken as the model, to which the other end(s) would be compared. Frazer's starting point, in the case of the healing touch, was an assumption about the superiority of the "primordial" at the dawn of time, which was preserved in the uncultured Polynesians. By virtue of this superiority, the characteristics of the primordial belief could be ascribed to the supposed earlier stages of the English and French cases. In Bloch's discussion of feudalism, because he was much more familiar with Western Europe than with Japan, he used Western Europe as a model to compare the characteristics of Japanese feudalism, noting their differences.

Following the paths of these predecessors, first we could say that the

[1] For some perspectives on the promises, challenges and pitfalls of the comparative method, see Caroline W. Bynum, "Avoiding the Tyranny of Morphology; or, Why Compare?" History of Religions, Vol. 53, No. 4 (May 2014), pp. 341-68; Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Philippa Levine, "Is Comparative History Possible?", History and Theory, Vol. 53, No. 3 (October 2014), pp. 331-47.

[2] Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturge* (Paris : Gallimard, 1983), pp. 52-53.

[3] Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society, Vol. 2*, L.A. Manyon trans. (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 167-68.

comparative method can be conducted in a more equal manner – that is, trying not to presume the superiority of one side over another, and trying to be more balanced in terms of materials rather than using one side as the model. In recent years, researchers have become increasingly self-aware of their own cultural perspectives. At the same time, in the study of popular beliefs, they have increasingly begun to notice the nameless people themselves, rather than the structures and discourses imposed upon them. *Ecstasies* could be seen as an attempt to reconstruct popular beliefs in a manner of equal comparison between cultures in the framework of the overarching concept of shamanism.[4] Its earlier parts were constructed in a tangible manner with detailed materials from Europe. However, when it entered into the realm of comparison between myriad fragmented descriptions of beliefs, the sense of tangibility waned. Even so, the last part contained a relatively concrete case study, as a clue through which the pervasive Eurasian beliefs of the otherworld was traced in a highly hypothetical manner: that is the tale of Cinderella. The analysis of the heroine's role as shaman and the use of the animal helper's bones signifying a belief in resurrection was illuminating. But such meanings were only metaphorically connected to this story. It is questionable whether the storytellers and listener noticed them or received them thus.

It is the aim of this thesis to attempt a comparative study of beliefs about the otherworld in a way that bestows the greatest amount of attention to the historical contexts and developments behind them, and to what holders of such beliefs – rather than observers from another culture or time – thought about them. It was born from the observation that, within Chinese and European beliefs about the otherworld from ancient to early modern times, there were many similarities. But to what extent were they the result of coincidences, generated by divergent historical circumstances? What could be gained from their study? To answer these questions, and to evaluate whether the answers generated by this study are trustworthy, it is first necessary to establish the methodological principles by which this study would be conducted.

This study tries to come as closely as possible to how these stories would

[4] Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

have been received in their original cultural environments. This has multiple layers of meanings: On the one hand, if one begins from one culture, using the standards of that culture to search for similarities in another culture, this very likely could result in misreadings. On the other hand, even within things believed to be within the same tradition, explanations of later times could be ascribed to earlier beliefs, creating distances. Therefore, although the process of reading reflected the desires and understandings of the reader, which itself was often the subject of historical study as well, it is desirable to attempt to pursue as closely as possible the original meaning of the text.

If we want to, in the process of comparison, try not to lose the original meanings of these texts, an equal comparison is needed, rather than the attachment of explanations from outside. Therefore, a text's original cultural context is crucial, in terms of how its writer and its audience perceived it – and, tracing backwards before it has been written down, of how the storytellers and their listeners might have enjoyed their stories. This also makes one question if, when these stories were taken as the object of scholarly study, whether it is always appropriate to attempt to fit them into pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Only when one keeps in mind that every text has its own meaning and needs to be conceived as such, could an equal comparison become possible.

Also because the goal of this study is an equal comparison, it tries to be very careful in terms of selecting the material. It will stay with stories that in themselves share similarities, and it will limit metaphorical readings of stories to the lowest extent possible, because metaphors are more morphable than texts, especially when the study concerns multiple cultures. When there is a metaphorical meaning, it tries to divulge it only when the text itself reveals that it contains this meaning. When such connections remain unstated in the text but could be deducted by logic from its context, care is taken to remain in the realm of hypothesis. Moreover, even when texts are similar in appearance, it cannot be directly concluded that they share similar meanings, because similar events could be endowed with different meanings in different cultures. Connections between materials within a culture could not be applied to similar materials in another culture, without evidence from the latter's own part.

So far, we have been discussing similarities. But difference, or strangeness, is more valuable than similarity. When a text seems very difficult

to explain or even unexplainable, it would be worth investigating whether it is connected to something else and contains meanings other than those traditionally attributed to it. Such connections could exist somewhere else in its own culture, or in places further away.

Such examinations are only possible at the level of details. Moreover, in the absence of details, it would be impossible to reconstruct a text's own historical contexts and its original meaning. Taking a distant view allows one to see structural similarities, which could indeed be compared like Marc Bloch did in *Feudal Societies*. However, this would make all the details blur into the background. With all the differences and distances kept in mind, a comparative research with materials composed of details would be a labourious task, but worth trying.

There are, therefore, two mirroring aims of this study. On the one hand, it seeks to increase historical knowledge about beliefs of the otherworld. On the other hand, it also attempts to do so in a manner that can illustrate what can be learnt via a careful application of the methodology outlined above.

The first part of this thesis tries to take each culture on its own terms, starting in seemingly disparate places and using materials solely from its own tradition. Chapter 1 begins with a peculiar problem in the *Divina Commedia*: the far-sightedness of the dead. This paradoxical ability had long puzzled commentators, but this study argues that its source could neither be found in the theological canon nor in classical texts. By tracing the preservation and reconstruction of classical beliefs about the dead and about prophecy in the Christian West, it illustrates the possibility of how such a tradition could remain vibrant in the 13th century in a popular form, and might have provided the inspiration for elements in the *Commedia*. Chapter 2 begins with the ancient beliefs of resurrection as reflected in Chinese excavated texts, and identifies the unique phenomenon in which resurrection, previously taken to be aberrant and inauspicious by the literati elite, gradually became taken for granted through the lens of its representation in the Histories. It traces the historical developments behind this process of gradual normalization, in the context of literary and religious shifts.

These chapters appear to start in distant places, but their origins are in

fact not so dissimilar. They both exemplify a process of latent comparison in which a question was generated by a comparative perspective, but the answer sought in the culture's own traditions and materials. Chapter 1 was motivated by the observation that it was not strange at all for the Chinese dead to know the future. Why did the theologians think it was strange? And why did Dante seem to think that it was not so strange? The answer, as the chapter shows, must be found in other European texts. On the other hand, Chapter 2 was motivated by the observation that the event of resurrection in the Western tradition was seen as rare and marvelous. Why did the Chinese literati not see it as rare and marvelous? The answer, too, must be found in Chinese historical, literary and religious texts. Therefore, although these questions were generated by keeping the comparison in mind, the comparison was only a latent one. The meanings of each historical development must be sought in its own cultural context.

The latent materials that led to the formation of these questions are found in Chapter 3, which draws together apparently similar beliefs about incorruptible corpses, about mistaken summons to the underworld, and about the dead's prophetic abilities. It shows how the first was a case of false likeness with different underlying meanings, the second could have been supported by similar social circumstances, and the last might have been similar at the beginning due to common psychology, but diverged significantly due to different religious influences. More broadly, it illustrates how broad political, social and religious contexts contributed to the makings of the Western European and Chinese underworlds respectively, and discusses the divergent effects of Western Christianity and Chinese Buddhism on imaginations of the otherworldly.

This concludes the first part of this thesis. The second part of the thesis does not divide between Western and Chinese materials. Rather, it is organized around three thematic chapters; however, within each chapter, the specific characteristics of Western and Chinese stories and their respective historical backgrounds are illustrated and form key parts of the discussion.

Chapter 1 analyzes various European and Chinese beliefs about a man's marriage to a snake-woman based on textual details and intertextual connections, showing the limitations of folklorist classification by story stems. It provides evidence that the snake-woman story was probably indigenous to neither Europe nor China, and likely underwent sometimes multiple

processes of introduction and internalization in both cultural contexts. Notably, the disappearing banquet element of Lamia stories was later found in beliefs of witchcraft.

Chapter 2 discusses stories of a woman's resurrection through copulating with a man: The meaning of Philinnion's story in Phlegon of Tralles's *Mirabilia* had long been debated and could not be satisfactorily explained within the Classical tradition. Drawing on the much more complete body of stories on girls resurrecting through sexual intercourse with men recorded in China, which shared very considerable similarities with Philinnion and were likely derived from a common source or influence, this chapter attempts to reconstruct the cultural context in which Philinnion's story might have been found and the circumstances of its transmission to a Greco-Roman audience.

Chapter 3 is composed of two parts. The first part discusses the remaining clothes in an empty tomb, showing that this similar element in Christian and Daoist stories might have resulted from similar narrative needs of legitimizing claims of divinity and immortality. Moreover, using the Chinese body of stories as a comparative reference (rather than as a source), the common element between Jesus Christ, Philinnion, and Plutarch's Thespesius emerges, pointing to the possibility of a popular belief in third-day/three-day resurrection at the time in the Mediterranean. The second part, which is unrelated in the Western context but is related to resurrection stories in the Chinese context (hence its placement), concerns nightly gatherings. The Chinese body and the early European (pre-Inquisitorial) body of stories about nightly gatherings not only shared similarities in their plots and internal logic, but also shared similarities in many details. While the missing links are not clear yet, this could be evidence of a shared belief.

From these preliminary studies of Western and Chinese texts within their cultural contexts, it could be said that evidences of some potential links emerged. The evidences that pointed to such links are not always the same. Based on its strangeness within the Classical tradition, it seems quite probable that Phlegon's story of Philinnion had been a case of cultural transmission. Its origin might have been close to China or China itself. On the hand, based on the coincidence of not only plots and meaning but also multiple details, it appears somewhat probable that the two bodies of stories regarding nightly gatherings were related.

However, what we learn from comparative study was not only about possible connections. When the logics behind the stories are different, such differences reflected the different characteristics of societies. Moreover, drastic differences have the potential to reveal the limitations of pre-existing systems of understanding, allowing one to see the strangeness of things that had always been taken for granted, and to pose questions in a way that is somewhat removed from the established discourse of analytical and theoretical frameworks. In this sense, comparison could be one of mindset, though not necessarily of practice.

Such a study necessarily involves the problem of materials, and the focus of this study on details requires direct reading of primary sources. Therefore, I have tried my best to limit the materials used to what I could read and what had reliable translations along with good commentaries. Also, I am of the belief that more in-depth knowledge of a few bodies of materials is preferable to a cursory knowledge of many different bodies of materials. Therefore, I limited the scope of this investigation mainly to materials from Western Europe and China. India, Central Asia and the Byzantine Empire must be critical to establishing possible connections; however, due to the aforesaid limitations, I have decided to leave their investigation for future study.

Part I

Chapter 1: Farsightedness and Knowledge of the Dead

I. Farinata and the Problem of Farsightedness in Dante

In *Inferno* X, when being asked why the souls of the dead were able to see the future but, at the same time, were unable to know what was happening in the present, Farinata degli Uberti replied:

> "Noi veggiam, come quei c'ha mala luce,
> le cose," disse, "che ne son lontano;
> cotanto ancor ne splende il sommo duce.
> Quando s'appressano o son, tutto è vano
> nostro intelletto; e s'altri non ci apporta,
> nulla sapem di vostro stato umano.
> Però comprender puoi che tutta morta
> fia nostra conoscenza da quel punto
> che del futuro fia chiusa la porta."

Since the 14th century, numerous commentaries had been written to explain these lines. This "farsightedness" was traditionally investigated as an epistemological concept, and within the theological frameworks of Thomas Aquinas, Gregory the Great and St. Augustine. With regard to the ignorance of the present, one can find satisfactory explanations in *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* or *Summa Theologiae*.[5] However, the problem of prophecy seems to be much more complicated. Christian theologians tend to attribute the prophetic foreknowledge to the grace of God, which, apparently, would not be expected to be granted to sinners in Hell. Thus, either this foreknowledge was bestowed by the demons, or it came from the God, but for the good of others.[6]

However, such theological explanations are scarcely supported by

[5] St. Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, Chapter 15, 18: "Proinde fatendum est nescire quidem mortuos quid hic agatur, sed dum hic agitur: postea vero audire ab eis qui hinc ad eos moriendo pergunt; non quidem omnia, sed quae sinuntur indicare, qui sinuntur etiam ista meminisse; et quae illos, quibus haec indicant, oportet audire" (Then it must be admitted that the dead do not know what is going on here, but, when something is happening here, the dead actually hear about it later from those who at their death go from here to them); and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Prima Pars, Q. 89, A. 8: "[S]ecundum naturalem cognitionem...animae mortuorum nesciunt quae hic aguntur" ([B]y natural knowledge...the souls of the dead do not know what passes on earth). "Possunt etiam facta viventium non per seipsos cognoscere, sed vel per animas eorum qui hinc ad eos accedunt..." On the theological explanation of the ignorance of the dead, Pietro Alighieri had provided thorough discussions in his comments on *Inferno*, X, 100-08 and 97-108.

[6] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Secunda Secundae Partis, Q. 172, A. 4, 5, 6.

Dante's text. In Christian theology, the prophecy of demons is by definition inaccurate and deceitful, contrary to the prophecy from God, which is always true.[7] There is no evidence implying that the prophecies given to Dante *personaggio* originated in demons.[8] Moreover, the prophecies of Dante's sinners were true (because these prophecies were actually post eventum). Dante, as the author, also had no intention to reduce the veracity of such prophecies by placing them in the mouths of sinners. Nor is it indicated anywhere that the sinners' ability of prophecy was attributed for the good of others. On the contrary, the case of Vanni Fucci (*Inferno*, XXIV and XXV) demonstrated that the sinners could speak prophecy even out of malicious intentions ("E detto l'ho perché doler ti debbia!"). As a man "di sangue e di crucci", Vanni Fucci even cursed God just after he spoke of the future. Yet such a soul could correctly foretell the political turmoil in Pistoia and Florence, calling into doubt whether the prophecy here is intended as a divine gift in accordance with the theological canon.[9] Finally, prophecies in the *Commedia* were usually delivered by those who did not have the fame of prophets when they were still alive. Neither the false prophets punished in *Inferno* XX, nor the true prophets blessed in *Paradiso* gave any prophecy to Dante *personaggio*.[10] To be sure, the form of the foreknowledge as it was represented in the *Paradiso* suited the theological system better, like the "specchi, voi dicete Troni, onde refulge a noi Dio giudicante" (*Paradiso*, IX, 61-62), and "il punto a cui tutti li tempi son presenti" (*Paradiso*, XVII, 17-18). However, the same could not be said for souls in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*.[11]

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[7] See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Secunda Secundae Partis, Q. 172, A. 5, resp. 3, and St. Augustine, *De divinatione daemonum* 10. Dante was quite aware of the deceitful nature of demon, as Malacoda's lie in *Inferno*, XXI, 109-11 had proven. But this misleading information given by demon was about events in the past, rather than in the future.

[8] Some early commentators, for example, Pietro Alighieri, did suppose that the dead's knowledge of the future came from demons. To support this opinion he cited *De Civitate Dei* 9.22. On St. Augustine's view on the nature of the foreknowledge of demons, see also *De divinatione daemonum* 3.7-6.11.

[9] Though in *Summa Theologiae*, II ª IIae, q. 172 a. 3 and 4, Thomas Aquinas had written, respectively, prophecy requires no previous disposition ("[n]on ergo requiritur aliqua praecedens dispositio ad prophetiam") nor good life ("ideo prophetia potest esse sinebonitate morum"), he also stated that strong passion such as anger would be removed by Divine power when the prophecy is spoken: "Sicut etiam impeditur aliquis ab actu prophetandi per aliquam vehementem passionem vel irae vel concupiscentiae, qualis est in coitu vel per quamcumque aliam passionem. Sed talem indispositionem naturalem removet virtus divina, quae est prophetiae causa." (II ª IIae, q. 172 a. 3 ad 3) This is clearly not the case of Vanni Fucci, who foretold under the impetus of hatred and anger.

[10] The fact that the false prophets in *Inferno* XX were silent has attracted the attention of many commentators. See, for example, Teodolinda Barolini, "Canto XX: True and False See-ers," in *Lectura Dantis*, ed. Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, Charles Ross (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 278. Characters who had given prophecy in *Paradiso* were Carlo Martello, Cunizza, Folco in Canto IX, and most prominently, Cacciaguida, in XVI and XVII. By contrast "Natàn profeta" and Joachim di Fiore both appear in Canto XII, but neither gave a prophecy. The eagle of justice also gave prophecies in Canto XIX: while King David was one of the souls who formed the eagle (Canto XX), but it does not seem that the King's own prophetic abilities were emphasized.

[11] On discrepancies between Dante's view of the dead's ability to prophesize and Catholic theology, see also Robert Paul Wilson, "Prophecy by the Dead in Dante and Lucan," in *Italian Studies*, Vol. 52, 1997, pp. 19-24, especially the discussion on Vanni Fucci in pp. 20-21. In terms of Dante's deviations from Catholic orthodoxy and

Other scholars have sought the source of Dante's belief in the dead's prophetic abilities in classical authors. For example, Robert Wilson proposed that Dante's direct source could have been Lucan's *Pharsalia*, VI.[12] It is beyond any doubt that traces of classical literature permeated the whole scope of the *Commedia*.[13] However, if we accept the idea that all dead possessed prophetic abilities was directly derived from *Pharsalia*, there would be several significant discrepancies. In *Pharsalia*, VI, the prophecy was delivered by the soul of a nameless soldier, who, like Ciacco, was not a well-known figure. But this soldier's soul did not know about the future by himself. As a man who died recently,

> "Tristia non equidem Parcarum stamina" dixit
> "Aspexi tacitae revocatus ab aggere ripae."
> (*Pharsalia*, VI, 777-778)

He only learned about future events from "cunctis...umbris", whom, judging by the following lines, were namely "duces," the Decii, Camillus, Curius, Sulla, Scipio, Cato, Brutus, Catiline, Marius, Cethegus, Drusus, and the Gracchi. In this scene, the knowledge of the future still belonged exclusively to the mighty ones. Ciacco's case was totally different. He did not receive his knowledge from someone else; conversely, he was able to tell Dante *personaggio* about the locations of some famous Florentines. Even if Lucan did imply that all the dead who had passed over the Styx could see the fateful fabric, and therefore were able to tell the future, there was no such indication

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why the sources of prophetic abilities in the Commedia was probably not theological and philosophical, I agree largely with his analysis. However, I do disagree with his attribution of the source to classical literature – more on this below.

[12] Wilson, "Prophecy by the Dead in Dante and Lucan," pp. 30-37. In addition to his attribution of Dante's source to Lucan, Wilson also argued that Dante's *praesaga* was closely linked with the classical usage of this word, as the expression "se l'antiveder qui non è vano" (*Inferno*, XXVIII, 78) or "se l'antiveder qui non m'inganna" (*Purgatorio*, XXIII, 109) had shown, since the *praesaga* in the context of classical Latin authors often correlated with the "si non vana" motif (ibid., pp. 24-25). But in the original classical context (especially in Vergil's *Aeneid*) this kind of disclaimer implied, according to James O'Hara, the deceitful nature of prophecy. See James J. O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Virgil's Aeneid* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 13-14 (on the deceitful nature of prophecy generated from the intention of the character speaking, see chapters 1-3). The lacking of this interpretive ambiguity in the prophecies of the dead in the *Commedia*, however, made Dante's use of the "si non vana" disclaimer a mere rhetorical device. Even Wilson had admitted to this: "The proposed undermining function of the motif clearly does not apply to the Dantean usage, since the post-eventum prophecies are manifestly true, and the others clearly aspire to be" ("Prophecy by the Dead," p. 25).

[13] On the influence of the Classical tradition on Dante, see generally Michelangelo Picone, "Dante and the Classics," in *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Amilcare A. Iannucci, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 51-73; and Kevin Brownlee, "Dante and the Classical Poets," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. Rachel Jacoff, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 141-160. More specifically, on the *Commedia* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, see Simone Marchesi, "Lucan at Last: History, Epic, and Dante's Commedia," in *Brill's Companion to Lucan*, ed. Paolo Asso (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 481-490.

in the *Commedia*.[14]

More importantly, in *Pharsalia*, VI, the prophecy was attained through the baleful ritual of necromancy. The ritual itself as well as the characteristic of the Thessalian witch Erictho were depicted in such an obtrusively profane and gruesome way that it would be surely impossible to ignore the evil nature pertaining to this "umbrarum Ditisque fidem", if one had tried to adopt the notion of foreknowledge presented here.

In Statius's *Thebaid*, IV, there was a necromantic scene that showed clear affinity with the ritual of Erichtho.[15] Worrying about the outcome of the war, Eteocles appealed to the seer Tiresias for help.[16]

> ...ille deos non larga caede iuvencum,
> non alacri pinna aut verum salientibus extis,
> nec tripode implicito numerisque sequentibus astra,
> turea nec supra volitante altaria fumo
> tam penitus, durae quam Mortis limite manes
> elicitos patuisse refert... (*Thebaid*, IV, 409-414)

The rhetoric that contrasted necromancy with other methods of divination and spoke favourable of the former was quite similar to *Pharsalia*, VI, 425-34, 770-74. And Tiresias's threat in 512-18 was not unlike that of Erictho's (*Pharsalia*, VI, 730-49). Therefore, both the reason to choose the ritual of necromancy and its procedure bore the imprint of *Pharsalia*. But exactly in the same scene, one shall see a reproach as clear as the affinity.

> ...an, rabido iubeat si Thessala cantu.
> ibitis et Scythicis quotiens medicata venenis
> Colchis aget, trepido pallebunt Tartara motu:

[14] To be sure, it seems that Wilson already realized this problem, and had tried to relate the prophetic ability of Dante's dead with *Pharsalia* by highlighting three references to the Fates in the *Commedia*. However, he also admitted these references were all metaphorical. See Wilson, "Prophecy by the Dead in Dante and Lucan," pp. 31-32.

[15] On the borrowings of Statius from *Pharsalia* VI, see Randall Ganiban, "Crime in Lucan and Statius", in *Brill's Companion to Lucan*, pp. 335-37.

[16] Besides *Pharsalia*, this scene of necromancy also consisit of obvious parallel to Seneca the Younger's *Oedipus*, in which Tiresias proformed a series of divinations to determine the murderer of the old king, and a clear answer was only obtained in the end with necromancy. The relationship between these two episodes of necromancy was undeniable. However, in Seneca the Younger's play, Tiresias summoned Laius to question about the latter's own death. That is to say, in this case the dead was supposed to possess knowledge of his own past, rather than of the future. Therefore, the notion that the dead was able to prophesize was more probably derived from *Pharsalia*. Even in this play, Tiresias requested Oedipus: "ede cui mandes sacrum;/nam te, penes quem summa regnorum, nefas/inuisere umbras" (*Oedipus*, 397-99). The nefarious nature of necromancy was also obvious here. Moreover, this passage in *Thebaid* also demonstrated clear influences from *Odyssey* XI.

nostri cura minor, si non attollere bustis
corpora nec plenas antiquis ossibus urnas
egerere et mixtos caelique Erebique sub unum
funestare deos libet aut exsanguia ferro
ora sequi atque aegras functorum carpere fibras?
(*Thebaid*, IV, 504-11)

In the preceding book, there was also a detailed description of the Thessalian witch, searching for newly dead corpse "cui plurima busto imperet ad Superos".[17] It seems that by emphasizing the rejection of the Thessalian witch and her baleful art, Statius had tried to justify, and in some way also to purify, his own treatment of necromancy as a means of obtaining prophecy.

Dante must have been familiar with both of these two necromantic scenes. In *Inferno*, IX, he mentioned Erichtho "che richiamava l'ombre a' corpi sui", and in *Inferno*, XX, the description of Manto as "la vergine cruda" was very probably taken from *Thebaid*, IV, 463 ("innuba Manto"). Exactly because the profane nature pertaining to this foreknowledge of the dead depicted so thoroughly by Lucan could hardly be omitted, as in Statius's *Thebaid*, in which way did Dante deal with it would be noteworthy. However, the mention of Erichtho in *Inferno*, IX served only to explain that why Virgil, a soul from Limbo, the outmost circle of Hell, could have knowledge of the remainder of Hell: "ben so 'l cammin; però si fa sicuro" (*Inferno*, IX, 30).[18] This explanation concerned the knowledge of the past, rather than of the future. If the witch did call back Virgil's soul, which was newly dead, in order to procure prophecy about the future, it would contradict Lucan's description. Virgil was called back "per trarne un spirto del cerchio di Giuda". But only "modo defuncti tepidique cadaveris ora plena voce sonent", and the spirit from the circle of Judas would be a "feralis umbra" whose utterances were unintelligible.[19] If this spirit were a newly dead as well, and were called back

[17] "Thessalis haud aliter bello gavisa recenti,/cui gentile nefas hominem renovare canendo,/multifida attollens antiqua lumina cedro/nocte subit campos versatque in sanguine functum vulgus et explorat manes, cui plurima busto/imperet ad superos: animarum maesta queruntur/concilia, et nigri pater indignatur Averni." (*Thebaid*, III, 140-46).

[18] Wilson noticed that Erichtho, as one of the most infamous necromancers, curiously did not appeared in *Inferno*, XX, and presumed that Dante the poet wanted to avoid a scene in which she came face to face with Virgil, with "either uncomfortable questions or a deafening silence". See Wilson, "Prophecy by the Dead," p. 28. However, another probably equally infamous necromancer, namely the witch of Endor, was absent from this *canto* as well. This calls into question that, if Dante invented the Erichtho's summoning of Virgil, whether he did so based on the story of Samuel, such that to avoid a problematic scene with Virgil, he also removed the witch of Endor, which might have been in an equivalent place in his mind. Or perhaps he did so out of a more general purpose of avoiding the embarrassing question that why necromancers would be able to summon virtuous souls, even one like Samuel.

[19] "Sed pronum, cum tanta novae sit copia mortis,/Emathiis unum campis attollere corpus,/Ut modo defuncti

to his own body to give a clear prophecy, it will be hard to see why Erichtho would need Virgil as a medium here, judging by her ability depicted in the *Pharsalia*.

Nevertheless, it had been generally recognized that Dante invented this episode about Erichtho summoning Virgil's soul. In "Dante e la magia", Francesco D'Ovidio stated that:

> "A inventar codeste cose, o, s'altri vuole, ad appropriarsele, Dante fu certo condotto da due ragioni: di fingere un plausibile pretesto onde la sua guida si trovasse già esperta del viaggio, e d'insinuare come il preteso mago fosse stato lui all'occorrenza zimbello d'una vera maga."[20]

This argument was persuasive. In *Inferno*, XX, 55-102, Dante rewrote the story of the building of Mantua in *Aeneid*, X, 198-203, substituting a city built by the son of Manto *fatidica* and named after her with that built by some indigenous people who named it Mantua only because Manto first chose the place, "sanz' altra sorte".[21] "La variante dantesca introduce così una differenza piuttosto notevole," wrote D'Ovidio, "e con la netta distinzione tra il nome e la stirpe contribuisce forse a tagliar il Mantovano interamente fuori da ogni larva di ereditaria stregoneria."[22] Considering that Dante was so careful to remove every possible print of witchcraft from his guide and the latter's birthplace, if the kind of foreknowledge in the *Commedia* as "a fact of existence in the otherworld" was taken from the necromantic scene in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, it would be indeed curious that why he made no such efforts here, since the ability of prophecy, needless to say, was always one of the main concerns of

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tepidique cadaveris ora/Plena voce sonent nec membris sole perustis/Auribus incertum feralis strideat umbra." (*Pharsalia*, VI, 619-23.)

[20] Francesco D'Ovidio, "Dante e la mag ìa", in *Studii sulla Divina Commedia* (Milano and Palermo: Sandron, 1901), pp. 100-101. Similar opinion could also be seen, for example, in Raymond V. Schoder, "Vergil in the Divine Comedy", on *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 7 (Apr., 1949), pp. 415-16. On Virgil's fame as magician in the Middle Ages, see also Juliette Wood, "Virgil and Taliesin: The Concept of the Magician in Medieval Folklore", in *Folklore* vol. 94:i, 1983, pp. 91-104; Fabio Stok, "Virgil between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance", in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Fall, 1994), pp. 18-22; Domenico Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, trans. E. F. M. Benecke (London: Sonnenschein, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1908), pp. 239-376; and Edward Kennard Rand, *The Magical Art of Virgil* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1931).

[21] On Dante's rewriting of Virgil, see Teodolinda Barolini, "Canto XX: True and False See-ers," pp. 275-86, Raymond V. Schoder, "Vergil in the Divine Comedy", p. 417. On Dante's rendering of the origin of Mantua and later response, see Angelo Mazzocco, "Dante, Bruni and the Issue of the Origin of Mantua", on *MLN*, Vol. 127, No. 1, January 2012 (Italian Issue Suplement), pp. S257-S263.

[22] Francesco D'Ovidio, "Dante e la mag ìa", p. 106.

Christian theology.[23]

To be sure, one would encounter in the *Commedia* various anomalies that were not in conformity with orthodox Catholic doctrines. At the very entrance of *inferno*, we see "l'anime triste di color che visser sanza 'nfamia e sanza lodo" along with "quel cattivo coro de li angeli che non furon ribelli né fur fedeli a Dio" (*Inf.*, III, 34-39): the unprecedented placement of "cowardly neutrals" here has no theological grounding.[24] Similarly, besides the unbaptized (the placement of which was more theologically correct), souls of those men who lived "dinanzi al cristianesmo, non adorar debitamente a Dio" were placed in Limbo as well (*Inf.*, IV, 37-38). The appearance of Cato in Purgatory and that of Ripheus in Paradise were even more anomalous, considering that both were pagans until their death. But here and there, Dante was fully aware of his deviations from orthodox Catholic doctrines, and provided careful explanations for each case within the text. For the "cowardly neutrals", Dante let his Virgil state: "Caccianli i ciel per non esser men belli, né lo profondo inferno li riceve, ch'alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d'elli" (*Inf.*, III, 40-42). In Limbo, Virgil even prompted without being asked: "Tu non dimandi che spiriti son questi che tu vedi?...Per tai difetti, non per altro rio, semo perduti, e sol di tanto offesi che sanza speme vivemo in disio" (*Inf.*, IV, 31-32, 40-42). At the entrance of Purgatory Cato mentioned "quella legge che fatta fu quando me n'usci' fora" (*Purg.*, I, 89-90). For Ripheus, "[q]uelle tre donne li fur per battesmo...dinanzi al battezzar più d'un millesmo" (Par., XX, 129).[25]

Moreover, when Dante found that his classical sources contradicted the Christian belief, he adjusted, sometimes even to the extent of rewriting, the former to suit the latter. However, when Dante did so, he also provided a conscious explanation. The aforementioned rewriting of the origin of Mantua was an example. In *Purgatorio*, VI, Dante *personaggio* asked, if Sibyl's statement that prayer cannot bend the decree of Heaven contradict the souls' plea, Virgil also replied with a detailed explanation: "là dov' io fermai cotesto punto, non s'ammendava, per pregar, difetto, perché 'l priego da Dio era

[23] On Dante's treatment of the magical elements, besides the aforementioned "Dante e la mag ìa" by D'Ovidio, one can see also "Ancora Dante e la mag ìa" by the same author (*Studii sulla Divina Commedia*, pp. 113-149), and Simon A. Gilson, "Medieval Magical Lore and Dante's 'Commedia': Divination and Demonic Agency", in *Dante Studies*, No. 119 (2001), pp. 27-66.

[24] Here I used the expression in Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 33.

[25] *Par*., XX 118-129 provided a full explanation. Moreover, Trajan's placement was explained through his returning in his body to be baptized, which is a prevalent medieval tale (*Par*., XX., 106-117).

disgiunto" (Purg., VI, 40-42).[26]

Thus, it seems rather different when in *Inferno*, VI, Dante asked Ciacco for prophecy in such a way as if he expected the soul of this sinner to know about the future. Similarly, in *Inferno*, X, Dante's confusion focused on Cavalcante's ignorance of the condition of his own son, rather than the reason why Farinata was able to predict, and Farinata's reply also concentrated on their ignorance.[27] The lacking of a proper explanation might remind the reader of the sin of Capaneus, who in Inferno, XIV was punished for his pride toward Jupiter. "È questa un'altra prova della pressione esercitata su Dante dalla cultura classica," commented Attilio Momigliano, "la figura campeggiante nella *Tebaide* di Stazio ha sedotto la sua fantasia, ed egli non ha badato alla stonatura ideale che ne seguiva."[28]

Just like he "non ha badato alla stonatura ideale" between Capaneus's offence to Jupiter and that to God, Dante the poet made hardly no explanation on the sinners' ability of prophecy. In this explanatory silence accompanied by the question "se tu sai", Dante the poet and Dante *personaggio*, albeit only momentarily, became one and the same. Though it was quite clear that the condemnation of Capaneus was transplanted from *Thebaid*, the case was less obvious here. If there was something lying under Dante's expectation that the sinners were able to give prophecy, it was, as had been stated above, unlikely to be Lucan's *Pharsalia*.

If we examine the necromantic scene in *Pharsalia*, VI, we will see another predominant trait of the classical *nekyia*, that is, the dead was generally passive. The soul of the anonymous soldier was summoned and questioned by the necromancer Erictho, and only passively gave the answer. This feature was also quite common in other classical descriptions of *nekyia*, for example, Elpenor, Anticleia, Agamemnon and Achilles in *Odyssey*, XI, Palinurus and Deiphobus in *Aeneid*, VI. In these cases, there seems to be a hidden rule that the souls had to be recognized and welcomed by the living before the communication began. In the *Commedia*, however, Dante *personaggio* was frequently recognized and greeted by the dead. The divergence on this point became even more noteworthy when one noticed that in *Inferno* Ciacco (Canto VI), Farinata (Canto X), Brunetto Latini (Canto XV), Reginaldo degli

[26] For the full explanation see *Purg*., VI, 34-42.
[27] Wilson also mentioned this point in passing. See "Prophecy by the Dead," pp. 21-22.
[28] See Attilio Momigliano's comment on *Inferno*, XIV, 49-60.

Scrovegni (Canto XVII), Muhammad and Pier da Medicina (Canto XXVIII), Camiscion de' Pazzi (Canto XXXII), that is, almost all the souls who had shown the ability of prophecy, spoke to Dante without being recognized or asked. The only two exceptions were Nicholas III (Canto XIX) and the aforementioned Vanni Fucci, both voluntarily gave prophecies without being asked for.

To be sure, in *Odyssey* Teiresias was able to recognize Odysseus, so was Anchises in *Aeneid*, VI able to greet his own son. It must not be coincidental that they were prophets who, respectively, told Odysseus and Aeneas about the future. Moreover, they were both illustrious, Teiresias was even a renowned prophet before his death. That separates the world of Homer and Virgil into two parts: on the one side there were distinguished prophets, who could take an active role in interacting with the living; on the other side there were the remaining dead, who must remain passive before being spoken to. It is almost certain that Dante had not read *Odyssey*, but this trait was even more obvious in *Aeneid*, VI. When Aeneas met Palinurus, "Hunc ubi uix multa maestum cognouit in umbra, sic prior adloquitur..." (340-41), and for Deiphobus, "Vix adeo adgnouit pauitantem et dira tegentem supplicia, et notis compellat uocibus ultro" (498-99). Even though Aeneas could only recognize them with great difficulty, they did not speak to Aeneas until the latter recognized them and spoke to them first. Therefore, if Dante's underworld was framed after the model of classical literature, why it did not inherit this prominent trait, would be a problem worthy of discussion.

Therefore, it is likely that Dante's source for the dead's prophetic ability was neither the charism of Catholic theology[29] nor the necromancy in classical literature. The dead's prophetic abilities in the *Commedia* are unique in this fashion: they are omnipresent, neutral (in the sense that it was neither baleful nor blessed) and truthful. As earlier scholars have attested, it is difficult to find similar precedents in the genre of otherworldly travels. But when Dante was trying to imagine his travel, what was in his mind might not be constrained strictly within the scope of otherworldly journey.

[29] Wilson had clearly and detailedly analyzed why the prophecies of the sinners in Hell contradicted Catholic theology, especially the case of Vanni Fucci. He also pointed out that paradoxically, the traditional prophets and saints, who supposedly had the power of prophecy, did not prophesize in the *Commedia*, which indicated that the characteristic of prophecy in Dante likely deviated from traditional Christian conceptions of prophecy. Wilson, "Prophecy by the Dead," pp. 19-24.

II. Dreams, Prophecy and the Dead: an Ancient Tradition

We could start our search from Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, a text with which Dante was probably familiar.[30] Before the other parts of *De re publica* were miraculously recovered in 1820s, for a long time the *Somnium Scipionis*, which survived through the citation by Macrobius, was the only extant part of this lost book. This excerpt was traditionally considered as one of the most important classical texts for its philosophical, especially cosmological merits, and was regarded as an imitation of Plato's Myth of Er from the latter's *Republic*. It was true that since the antiquity commentators were accustomed to discuss these two episodes together and compare one with the other, but they had an interesting concern which was very different from that of the modern scholars. We knew from the extant materials that Favonius Eulogius, after mentioning the Pamphylian Er's coming back into life, commented that Cicero "non fabulosa, ut ille, assimulatione conmentus est, sed sollertis somnii rationabili quadam imaginatione conposuit".[31] Similarly, while discussing the problem of resurrection in *De civitate Dei*, St. Augustine mentioned that Cicero commented about Plato in *De re publica*: "ut eum lusisse potius quam quod id verum esse adfirmet dicere voluisse." According to Macrobius, Cicero mentioned the attack – by some certain Epicurean – on Plato. "Hanc fabulam Cicero licet ab indoctis quasi ipse veri conscius doleat irrisam, exemplum tamen stolidae reprehensionis vitans excitari narraturum quam reviviscere maluit."

Thus, the ancient authors, including Cicero himself, were highly sensitive about the respective credibility of the two stories. Moreover, it could be said that when Cicero was writing the *Somnium Scipionis*, he very probably had in mind that how to make his own account more credible. A reader of the *Somnium Scipionis*, at least as expected by Cicero, would recognize at the very moment when Africanus foretold to the protagonist, that the prophecy eventually – though it was not mentioned in the text itself – came true. This seeming correspondence between the (post-eventum) prophecy of Cicero's Africanus and the fate of the real, historical Scipio Aemilianus rendered onto the text a sense of verisimilitude that would latently legitimize the rest of the narrative. A modern scholar would readily regard either Er's coming back to life or Scipio's receiving of prophecy in the dream as "fabulous" triviality

[30] On Dante's possible knowledge of *Somnium Scipionis*, see Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante: Scripture and Classical Authors in Dante* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), p. 262. On Dante's familiarity with Cicero's other works, see ibid., pp. 258-73.

[31] Favonius Eulogius, *Disputatio de somnio scipionis*, Alfred Holder ed. (Leipzig, 1901), p. 1.

irrelevant to the philosophical core. But in the original contexts, these events were intended to be taken as true as the philosophical truth.

Then we could turn to *De divinatione*, the work by the same author to discuss various kinds of divination. In regard to the dreams, the interlocutor, Cicero's brother Quintus, narrated a story which was allegedly told by Cicero himself and a certain Sallustius (probably a freedman of Cicero). When Cicero was in his banishment, one day he fell asleep around daybreak, recounted Quintus,

> "visum tibi esse, cum in locis solis maestus errares, C. Marium cum fascibus laureatis quaerere ex te quid tristis esses, cumque tu te patria vi pulsum esse dixisses, prehendisse eum dextram tuam et bono animo te iussisse esse lictorique proximo tradidisse, ut te in monumentum suum deduceret, et dixisse in eo tibi salutem fore."[32]

As the swift and glorious return promised by this dream came true, this dream of Cicero was regarded as a strong proof to the veracity of divinatory truth obtained through the dream. Surely the prophecy of Marius here was not unlike that of Africanus in the *Somnium Scipionis*. But if we follow the thread of Cicero's narrative, we shall see how prophecies intermingled with other kinds of divination in the scope of the dream.

From *De divinatione* I, 39-59, Cicero discussed twenty-three cases of divinely inspired dreams. There are some certain cases about prophecies or signs of the future: the mother of Dionysius (39), Vestal (40-41), Hecuba (42) and the mother of Phalaris (46) had dreams about their progenies; Aeneas (43), Tarquinius Superbus (44), Cyrus the first (46), Hannibal (49), Hamilcar (50), Publius Decius (51), Socrates (52), Xenophon (52), Eudemus (53, while being deceived), Gaius Gracchus (56), Simonides (56) and Cicero himself (59) had dreams about their own fortune; the Arcadian and Cicero's brother Quintus dreamt about the fortune of some other one, the former of his friend (57), the latter of his brother (58). The Indian Callanus foretold Alexander's fate to the latter, but not in a dream (47). Likewise when Olympias gave birth to Alexander, the temple of Diana at Ephesus was burned – a sign of Alexander's subsequent conquest of Asia (47). The remaining cases, though all related with the dream, were more complicated. Hannibal received a warning from Juno about his intention to take a golden pillar from the shrine,

[32] Cicero, *De divinatione*, Book I, 59.

and he obeyed the goddess's warning (48). A Roman peasant was ordered by some god to deliver a message to the Senate about the (already happened) opening of the great votive games, but he only obeyed the order after being punished, and was subsequently cured (55). The case of this peasant, in the way that he was ordered three times, was closer to that of Sophocles, who learnt about the thief who had stolen a golden bowl from the temple of Hercules, but only took action after having frequently the same dream (54). Furthermore, in *De divinatione* II, 66, while discussing the above cases, Cicero presented one more case about Alexander's dream, in which a serpent of his mother's carried a root (a remedy to heal his wounded friend) to him and told him where to find this root.

If we consider that most of the cases were more or less about the future, the inclusion of the warning, the order or the revelation of some unknown knowledge would be interesting. With regard to all these twenty-four cases, the only thing in common was not the dream (considering Callanus's prophecy to Alexander and the burning of the temple at his birth), but the correspondence between the conjectured events (whether of the past or of the future) and the reality. From the above cases we can see, in Cicero's arrangement, the predictions of the future were not clearly distinguished out, but rather intermingled with other forms of divination. The emphasis is in fact not on whether the divined event took place in the past or in the future; instead, both divinations of the past and of the future take their effectiveness by virtue of their correspondence with reality.

It is by no means that Cicero genuinely believed in the effectiveness of divination. The "somnium Ciceronis", as well as other cases of divination in *De divinatione*, Book I only set up the target for Cicero's subsequent attack on the truthfulness of divinations in the second book. Nevertheless, these cases of divination in the first book was constructed in a way that it would appear to be true – at least to a less philosophically lucid mind. There is evidence to believe that Cicero did not purposefully distort prevalent views of divination to serve his polemical purpose. For one, there exists considerable resemblance between the *Somnium Scipionis* and Marius's prophecy in *De divinatione*. The prophecy in the *Somnium Scipionis* was deployed by Cicero as a legitimizing device, and therefore was unlikely to be negatively distorted. In Book II of *De divinatione*, Cicero's objection did not concern the trueness of the prophecy: He argued neither that he had not dreamt of Marius, nor that Marius's predictions had not somehow come true. Rather, he tried to explain the cause

of the dream: "...ut mihi temporibus illis multum in animo Marius versabatur recordanti quam ille gravem suum casum magno animo, quam constanti tulisset. Hanc credo causam de illo somniandi fuisse" (*De divinatione*, II, LXVII, 140). This is exactly what happened to Scipio, after his conversation with Massinissa about Africanus: "credo equidem ex hoc, quod eramus locuti; fit enim fere, ut cogitationes semonesque nostri pariant aliquid in somno tale, quale de Homero scribit Ennius, de quo videlicet saepissime vigilans solebat cogitare et loqui."[33] Moreover, most of the examples cited in *De divinatione* are drawn from other writers. Some of Cicero's sources had since been lost, but from a comparison with the now extant sources, we could reach the conclusion that Cicero's representations are largely faithful.[34] In doing so, Cicero might have wanted to avoid the criticism of attacking a strawman. Despite the work's overall skeptical tone, the first book could still be regarded as a faithful representation of prevalent beliefs about divinations.[35]

[33] Cicero, *De re publica*, VI, X, 10. Cicero's second objection arose from the infrequency of the divinatory dream: "mihi quidem praeter hoc Marianum nihil sane quod meminerim." (*De divinatione*, II, LXVII, 141). This, however, still leaves the trueness of Marius's prophecy intact. Conversely, with regard to the *Somnium Scipionis*, it is probably interesting that Cicero made his Scipio mention Ennius's dream of Homer, which was a well-known episodes in Latin literature. Considering Cicero's effort to construct a naturalistic, rationalistic explanation to the divinatory dream in *De divinatione*, Scipio's mentioning of Ennius here might be regarded as a concealed attempt to reduce this mystical event to the level of rationalization. For an explanatory analysis of Ennius's dream, see, for example, Peter Aicher, "Ennius' Dream of Homer," *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 110, No. 2 (Summer, 1989), pp. 227-232.

[34] See the exegetical commentary of *M. Tulli Ciceronis de Divinatione, Liber Primus*, ed. Arthur Stanley Pease (Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1920).

[35] Corresponding to Cicero's systematic representation of the mixed nature of beliefs in prophecy, in the Classical World ghosts could testify to various ranges of things for various reasons. For example, the ghosts of Hector and Creusa in *Aeneid* both foretold the future to Aeneas. Virgil, *Aeneid*, II. 268, 771-789. (Although Creusa was described as grand in statue, which might have implied that a god took on her form.) In Plutarch, a ghost of a wrongfully killed girl was thought to have prophesized the death of the Spartan general Pausanias soon after his return to Sparta. Plutarch, *Cimon*, 6.4-6.6. In these cases, the ghosts spoke of the future. But it was more common for them to speak of the past. For example, in Herodotus' *History*, the tyrant Periander's deceased wife appeared to request garments from her husband. To verify her identity, she told that he had sexual intercourse with her dead body. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 5.92. Another example is found in *The Golden Ass*, in which a man was called back by necromancy, correctly identified his wife as his murderer, and as proof of the truth of his accusation, testified to the witches' theft of the night watchman's nose and ears, which he experienced as a corpse. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 2.20-2.30. From these we could see, necromancy was presented in a non-negative, or even favourable light. This might be because *The Golden Ass* was a comical work of literature. However, in Lucian's examples of necromancy, the practice was not presented so negatively as it was in epic poetry, which makes one wonder whether at a popular level a different belief was held than what was represented in high literature. See, e.g., Lucian, *Philopseudes*, in *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 237-38. (*Menippus, or Necyomantia* in fact concerned the journey to the underworld and therefore was different from cases discussed above.) This is not to say that the negative connotation of necromancy was not rooted in the common people. For a more popular negative depiction of necromancy, see Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, 6.12-5 (an old woman performing necromancy to return her son to life, but was scolded by the dead, who prophesized her death and the protagonist's happy end), in *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, pp. 199-201.

III. The Christianization of Prophecy and the Disappearance of a Motif

As exemplified by our discussion of Cicero above, in the Ancient World there was not a clear-cut delineation between knowledge of the future and other forms of divination. However, with the advent of Christianity, Christian theologians began to divide knowledge of the past from knowledge of the future. This arises out of both theological and philosophical reasons. In the line of the rather Platonic pursuit of an eternal, immutable and supreme God, St. Augustine wrote in *De civitate Dei*, 9. 22:

> "Aliud est enim temporalibus temporalia et mutabilibus mutabilia coniectare eisque temporalem et mutabilem modum suae voluntatis et facultatis inserere, quod daemonibus certa ratione permissum est; aliud autem in aeternis atque incommutabilibus Dei legibus, quae in eius Sapientia vivunt, mutationes temporum praevidere Deique voluntatem, quae tam certissima quam potentissima est omnium, Spiritus eius participatione cognoscere; quod sanctis Angelis recta discretione donatum est."

This chapter was titled "Quid intersit inter scientiam sanctorum angelorum et scientiam daemonum". Because of this decisive distinction between the knowledge of the angels (and then of God) and that of the demons, between the eternal and the temporal, between what is always true and what is fallible, the cognitive world was separated, and what belong to the latter category became essentially inferior, sometimes denounceable and even evil. However, this does not mean that the rather primordial, undistinguished understanding of divination, as it was shown in Cicero's *De divinatione*, had died out.

Probably in the year 421, St. Augustine wrote *De cura mortuis gerenda*, one of the minor works by the great theologian. This treatise was written under a very specific circumstance. Paulinus, St. Augustine's friend and Bishop of Nola, wrote to St. Augustine with regards to a noble woman who had inquired whether burying her son near a saint's tomb could benefit the soul of the dead. As he was addressing this specific question, Augustine likely had a much less philosophically oriented audience in mind when he penned it. Perhaps for this reason, this work contained a range of examples from daily life. In 10.12, Augustine discussed about "visa quaedam": "Feruntur quippe mortui nonnulli vel in somnis, vel alio quocumque modo apparuisse viventibus atque ubi eorum corpora iacerent inhumata nescientibus, locisque

monstratis admonuisse ut sibi sepultura quae defuerat praeberetur." With a strategy not unlike Cicero's, Augustine did not try to eliminate the possibility that such events could happen;[36] however, he attempted to demonstrate that dreams are, by their nature, illusory. In dreams, Augustine argued, living persons often appeared, but they themselves did not know that they appeared in the dreams of others. Therefore, it was not the living persons themselves that appeared in dreams, and the same could be analogized to appearances of the dead to show that they were equally illusory.

"Si ergo me potest aliquis in somnis videre, sibi aliquid quod factum est indicantem, vel etiam quod futurum est praenuntiantem..." To illustrate the above point, Augustine used himself – obviously a living person – as a possible counterpart to the appearing dead in dreams. This implied that, however, in Augustine's mind there were people who believed the dead could either indicate things that has already happened, or foretell things that are to come. In 11.13 he gave two examples: One is a story Augustine heard when he was in Milan. It concerns a son whose deceased father appeared to him in a dream to tell him the location of the receipt for a debt already repaid while the father was alive. The second examples concerns Eulogius, a disciple of Augustine's, who told Augustine that Augustine appeared to him in a dream to explain a particularly difficult passage in Cicero.[37] These two examples are similar to the prior discussion on the dead pointing out the location of their bodies, in that in all these cases some kind of hidden knowledge (pre-existing knowledge not known to the dreamer) is revealed. One would have noticed that Augustine did not provide specific cases of dreams that contain prophecies, despite his earlier indication that dreams could concern events of the past or of the future. This was possibly due to Augustine's theological training, which made him aware of the distinguished place of "true" prophecy in Christian theology.[38] Since the focus here was on the nature of dreams, Augustine might have hoped to avoid such examples, which could have drawn unnecessary attention from the audience to a theologically more complicated issue.

However, in 12.15, while discussing visions ("cum homines altius quam si dormirent, subtrahuntur corporis sensibus, et occupantur talibus visis"),

[36] "Haec si falsa esse responderimus, contra quorumdam scripta fidelium, et contra eorum sensus qui talia sibi accidisse confirmant, impudenter venire videbimur. Sed respondendum est, non ideo putandum esse mortuos ista sentire, quia haec dicere vel indicare vel petere videntur in somnis." St. Augustine, *De cura*, 10.12.

[37] Augustine, however, emphasized that all of this occured without his knowledge, and he did not believe it was possible for he himself to have done so.

[38] Augustine's discussion of this issue can be found in *De divinatione daemonum*.

Augustine went into an example that had certain prophetic elements.

> "Homo quidam Curma nomine, municipii Tulliensis, quod Hipponi proximum est, curialis pauper, vix illius loci duumviralitius et simpliciter rusticanus, cum aegrotaret, ablatus a sensibus, pene mortuus iacuit aliquot diebus...Videbat tamen multa velut in somnis, quae tandem aliquando post dies plurimos quasi evigilans, visa narravt. Ac primum, mox ut aperuit oculos: Eat aliquis, inquit, ad domum Curmae fabri ferrarii, et videat quid ibi agatur. Quo cum itum esset, inventus est mortuus eo momento, quo iste fuerat sensibus redditus, et pene a morte revixerat. Tunc intentis qui aderant, illum exhiberi iussum esse quando ipse dimissus est, indicavit; seque illic unde redierat dixit audisse, quod non Curma curialis, sed Curma faber ferrarius ad loca illa mortuotum praeceptus fuisset adduci."

When in those realms Curma saw dead as well as living men, including Augustine himself, and was in particular commanded to receive baptism from Augustine at Hippo. Augustine himself, certainly, was entirely ignorant of this event. Like his discussion on dreams, Augustine used this story to demonstrate that his person, as well as other things seen by Curma in the otherworldly vision were "non in rebus ipsis, sed in quibusdam similitudinibus rerum." In spite of this purpose, we can see in this story an element of knowledge of the future – the future death of Curma *faber ferrarius* of which Curma *curialis* had heard while he was in the place of the dead.

An echo of this curious story could be found, within the works of the Church Fathers, in Gregory's *Dialogues*. This concerned a certain "illustris vir Stephanus", who told Gregory the following story about himself. This Stephan had died while in Constantinople and, due to the inability to properly prepare his body for burial ("Cumque medicus atque pigmentarius ad aperiendum eum atque condiendum esset quaesitus"), was left unburied for a day ("subsequente nocte corpus jacuit inhumatum").[39] During this time

[39] The opening and embalming of the body would be a relatively foreign funerary procedure to Gregory and his Italian audience. While embalming was known to the Romans, it was not commonly practiced in the Roman world outside of Roman Egypt. See J.M.C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (London: Thames & Hudson. 1971), pp. 41-42. Erasmo also noted that, Lucan's "graphic description" of the embalming of Pompey's head in *Pharsalia*, VIII, 687-91, "which focuses on the liquids pouring out of the head rather than on the head itself...suggests that embalming was a procedure outside of Roman funerary custom". See Mario Erasmo, *Reading Death in Ancient Rome* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), pp. 115-116. Inhumation gradually replaced cremation in the Roman Era,a practice that persisted into the Christian Era, and the advent of Christianity in the West popularized burial on/near church grounds and saints' graves. On such practices in the time of Gregory, see Marios Costambeys, "Burial Topography and the Power of the Church in Fifth- and Sixth-Century Rome," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 69 (2001), pp. 169-89. However, embalming remained outside the

he was brought "ad inferni loca", but a judge refused to accept him, saying: "Non hunc deduci, sed Stephanum ferrarium jussi." He thus returned to life, "et Stephanus ferrarium qui juxta eum habitabat, eadem hora defuncuts est." After his return, however, Stephan did not perfectly repent his ways and died again three years ago. In another vision, Stephan's soul was recognized as being fought over by some very terrible men ("quibusdam teterrimis viris") and some white-clothed, very beautiful men ("quibusdam albatis et speciosissimis viris"), who dragged and aided him respectively for his sins and for his alms-giving.

It had been suggested that Gregory's account of Stephan was copied from Augustine's story about Curma.[40] However, upon closer inspection, it is unlikely to be so. First, Augustine was ultimately skeptical towards the story of Curma, and used the story as an example to illustrate his point that persons seen in visions were not their real selves, because he had appeared in Curma's vision without his own knowledge. On the other hand, Gregory regarded Stephan's story as recounting a real event, and took the simultaneous revival and death of the two Stephans as conclusive evidence of the truth of the account ("Sicque probatum est vera fuisse verba quae audierat, dum haec effectus mortis Stephani demonstravit"). Moreover, Gregory used the story to illustrate the possibility that some, by the grace of God, were allowed to return to life after death and repent their ways – those who do not, like

mainstream of Italian burial practices down to Gregory's time. For a general discussion of burial practices 500-700 in Western Europe, see Guy Halsall, "The sources and their interpretation," in Paul Fouracre ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 1, c. 500-c.700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 56-90. In any case, theologians like Augustine and Gregory emphasized that it was prayers, not burial rites, that could relieve the departed's soul. On Augustine's opinion about the deceased's body and burial, see *De cura*, 1.1-9.11, 18.22; on Gregory's opinion about burial in church, see *Dialogorum*, 4.52. Therefore, it is unlikely that embalming with the removal of internal organs would have been commonly practiced in Gregory's Italy or that Gregory would have found it worth endorsing. Archeological excavations have found that chalk, lime and charcoal were used for the preservation of corpses in late-Roman and early-medieval Italian burials. See H. Blake, "Sepolture," in *Archeologia Medievale*, Jan 1, 1983, 10, p. 182. On the other hand, embalming with spices was commonly practiced in the East to prevent decomposition. See James Kyriakakis, "Byzantine Burial Customs: Care of the Deceased from Death to the Prothesis", *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 19(1), 1974, pp. 37-72. Given Gregory's own time spent in Constantinople, it is likely that he intended to describe a funerary custom with Eastern flavor. On Gregory's stay in Constantinople and his circle there, see R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 10-12.

[40] Joan Petersen suggests three possibilities for the relationship between the two stories: Gregory borrowing directly from Augustine; Gregory and Augustine both working from a traditional story; Stephen had read Augustine and told it to Gregory but Gregory had not read Augustine. Petersen was inclined to believe the existence of a traditional story, but nevertheless believed that the Gregory received the traditional story through the medium of Augustine's writing. See Joan M. Petersen, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great in Their Late Antique Cultural Background* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), pp.87-88. For a debate on whether Gregory borrowed directly from Augustine, see A. de Vogüé, W. D. McCready, Signs of Sanctity. Miracles in the Thought of Gregory the Great (Book Review), Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique Vol. 85 Iss. 2 (Apr 1, 1990): pp.373-374. Vogüé argued that textual similarity between the two texts was evidence of direct borrowing, while McCready saw the possibility of indirect influence. Alan Bernstein called Stephen's story "almost comic". He did not touch upon the story's possible connection to the story of Curma, but said "Gregory uses folkloric techniques to set the scene." Alan Bernstein, *Hell and Its Rivals: Death and Retribution among Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), pp. 44-45.

Stephan, would be subject to apposite punishment. Thus he, unlike Augustine, believed the ultimate trueness of what Stephan reported to have seen. Had Gregory followed Augustine when he wrote this account, it seemed improbable that he would choose an example that an authoritative forerunner explicitly disbelieved. Second, with the exception that the man fated to die was a blacksmith in both stories, the two accounts differed on almost all other details: (1) Location: Curma lived near Hippo, where Augustine lived, but Stephan's story took place when the latter was in Constantinople. (2) Reason that the man was not buried: Curma was not completely dead, while Stephan was dead but could not be buried due to the chanced inability to conduct proper burial rites immediately. (3) Time remaining in the otherworld: Curma was in a coma for many days, while Stephan woke up after an evening. (4) The appearance of the judge in Stephan's story, which was theologically dubious and did not appear in Curma's story.[41] Considering the lively and divergent details in Gregory's account, it is likely that Gregory had other sources for this story.

Augustine was not the only author before Gregory who gave an account of a man mistakenly summoned to the underworld. In Eusebius's commentary on Plato's Myth of Er, he listed a number of stories on a dead man returning to life. These included a passage quoted from a now-lost work of Plutarch, in which a man named Antyllus, after recovering from a coma, said that he had died but was allowed to return to life after the lord of the otherworld officers declared that they had brought back the wrong man. The man supposed to be summoned was one Nicandas, a shoemaker, who was then teased by the young men in town for having bribed the officers of the underworld. Soon afterwards Nicandas fell ill and died.[42] Lucian's *Philopseudes* also contained a very similar story. Cleodemus recounted that after being sick for seven days he was taken to the underworld by a youth in white. In the hall of judgment there was "one person of a majestic appearance", whom Cleodemus took to be Pluto. When Cleodemus was set before Pluto, the latter "flew into a rage" and told the young man to release Cleodemus because "his thread is not yet out". The young man was then ordered to take Demylus the smith, who "has had his spindleful and more". Thus Cleodemus returned to life, and the smith, who lived nearby, indeed

[41] On the role of the judge, see infra note.
[42] *Plutarch's Moralia* XV, trans. F. H. Sandbach (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 310-13.

died soon.[43]

It is evident that these four stories resembled and diverged from one another on different points. The description of Antyllus's coma was similar to that experienced by Curma, but the figure of the lord resembled the judges in Stephan's and Cleodemus's stories.[44] In Antyllus's story, the correct man to die was a shoemaker, not a blacksmith. Cleodemus was not mistaken for another, the smith died simply because he had lived in excess of his term. And the elements of a shared name and simultaneous death/revival were not present in Antyllus's and Cleodemus's stories. Therefore, it is unlikely that the four authors used one another as direct sources, but these stories share some obvious structural similarities: the core of each story consists of a man who died but was returned to life because he was mistakenly called in place of another (except for Cleodemus), who died subsequently. Even more importantly, all four stories point towards a commonly experienced social context that underlay and enabled their continued promulgation: All took place in a city and concerned *duumvir* and/or craftsmen, urban professions. They likely drew inspiration from a population's daily experience with a highly bureaucratized political system. (Plutarch's story even contained the suspicion of bribery, which must have been normal in the common people's dealing with a bureaucracy.) In other words, these stories could only be imaginable to those who lived in a system where the authorities could locate and exert its power over an individual by name and identity, and the officials and judges of the underworld must have paralleled their earthly counterparts. Plutarch's, Lucian's and Augustine's stories all occurred near the narrator's residence, where the narrator and the story's characters lived their daily lives. By contrast, the latest story, that from Gregory, took place in distant Constantinople.[45] The geographic distance possibly reflected a differential in the political systems of the West and the East, that is, the collapse of a strong urban bureaucracy in Western Europe.

Stories of this motif seemed to have disappeared from Western Europe after Gregory's time. We will see in the next chapter how a completely

[43] See *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. Fowler, H W. & F. G. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), vol. III, p. 244. Pliny the Elder also told two stories with some likeness concerning, respectively, one Corfidius and two brothers named Corfidius in his *Naturalis Historia*, 7.53(52). In both stories the man died first returned to life and attended the funeral of the one who previously arranged his funeral. Only the element of one person returning to life and another dying was present in these stories, specifically linked together through the funerals.

[44] After considering the entire body of stories as a whole, one may question whether the appearance of a judge had been purposefully purged by Augustine, because he might have realized it was theologically problematic. However, Gregory's account retained the judge, which might be evidence that he did not borrow directly from Augustine.

[45] On later Byzantine stories about mistaken summons to the underworld, see infra.

different set of sociopolitical conditions enabled the continued promulgation of a similar belief in the Chinese context. Nevertheless, other stories, which are not so intimately dependent on the population's experience with bureaucracy, might have survived the political upheavals in Western Europe.

IV. The Soul's Prophetic Abilities: Survival of a Popular Belief

The spirit's natural propensity for prophecy might be one such surviving idea. In *De divinatione*, I, exactly after the aforementioned discussion of dreams, Cicero let his interlocutor Quintus states that: "Cum ergo est somno sevocatus animus a societate et a contagione corporis, tum meminit praeteritorum, praesentia cernit, futura providet; iacet enim corpus dormientis ut morui, viget autem et vivit animus. Quod multo magis faciet post mortem, cum omnino corpore excesserit. Iaque adpropoinquante morte multo est divinior" (*De divinatione*, I, 63). Then he cites an example from Posidonius: "Rhodium quendam morientem sex aequales nominasse et dixisse qui primus eorum, qui secundus, qui deinde deinceps moriturus esset" (64).

In the Christian era, similar accounts can be found in Gregory's *Dialogues*, IV, 26, in which he states that souls near death could sometimes prophesize by divine revelation, but other times "[i]psa aliquando animarum vis subtilitate sua aliquid praevidet." The underlying belief in the prophetic abilities of those near death has not changed, but the explanation has shifted somewhat to suit Gregory's Christian theology, even as it retained parts of the classical philosophical explanation.

Gregory's examples were unlikely to be derived directly from Cicero, not the least due to the fact that he seemed never to have cited Cicero directly. Several cases of near-death prophecies can be found in Gregory. The first concerned an *advocatus* who knew he would be buried in the church of St. Sixtus before his death, even when the choice of burial place occurred by chance after his death. "Et cum eumdem virum curis saecularibus obligatum lucrisque terrenis inhiantem fuisse noverimus," Gregory commented, "unde hoc praedicere potuit, nisi quia id quod futurum erat ejus corpori ipsa vis animae ac subtilitas praevidebat?" Other cases concerned holier men and women: A monk heard himself and a number of other monks called into the

heavenly army, and all died shortly afterwards.

Stories of this type seemed to have persisted. In Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Miraculorum*, from the first half of the thirteenth century, the children of a knight saw a white apparition and the eldest subsequently fell ill. As he was dying he said, "Septimo die moriar; post alios septem dies morietur Dirina soror mea; deinde post hebdomadam morietur soror mea minor." And indeed his siblings followed him as predicted.[46] In the very next chapter, Caesarius recounted an apparition seen to enter a church grave, and a canon soon died and was buried in that very grave. "Huiusmodi visionibus quandoque futura praesignantur," the author remarked.[47] It seems that the author believed both this ghost's and the dying child's ability to prophesize without divine intercession.[48]

In explaining Ciacco's prophetic abilities in his commentary, Boccaccio tells a similar story, which he took to be a common occurrence. According to Boccaccio, during the Black Death in 1348 in Florence, "essendo soprapresi gli uomini dalla peste e vicini alla morte, ne furon piú e piú, li quali de' loro amici, chi uno e chi due e chi piú ne chiamò, dicendo: – vienne, tale e tale, – de' quali chiamati e nominati, assai, secondo l'ordine tenuto dal chiamatore, s'eran morti e andatine appresso al chiamatore." Boccaccio was clearly very familiar with Cicero and extensively cited *De divinatione* in explaining the same passage,[49] however, it might not be that he concocted this story based on Cicero's and other classical authors'. Rather, the appearance of this story in Boccaccio is evidence that this popular belief was still alive among the Florentines of Boccaccio's day – his intended audience. Boccaccio's aim in this part of the commentary was to justify why Ciacco, a soul neither pious nor

[46] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, pp.313-314 (XI, LXIII) (1851).
[47] Ibid., p.314 (XI, LXIV).
[48] These stories might also arise out of a belief in the dead's ability to draw the living to them. In Gregory the monk who saw the vision about the heavenly army soon died. A similar story is found in Thietmar von Merseberg's *Chronicon*, where a priest who saw ghosts (presumably Christians killed in a recent Saxon raid) was told that he, too, will soon follow them: "Quem una noviter de hoc seculo egressa et sibi bene nota, quid hic vellet, interrogat; edoctaque ab eo, quare venerit, haec omnia ab his esse complete parvumque temporis eundem victurum predixit. Quod vicinis post retulit, veraque haec esse comprobavit." Thietmar, *Chronik* (ed. Holtzmann), p. 16 (Lib. I, 11 (7)) (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica 1980). See also Nancy Mandeville Caciola, *Afterlives: The Return of the Dead in the Middle Ages*, p.118 (Cornell University Press, 2016). Rodulfus Glaber's *Historiarum Libri Quinque* contains the account of a man who saw a ghostly procession of martyrs and knew he would die soon afterwards. Rodulfi Glabri, *Historiarum libri quinque, or The five books of the Histories* II, 9 (Oxford: Clarendon 1989). Slightly later Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, also remarked in his *De Miraculis* that "Cum enim hujusmodi defunctorum manifestationes nostris saepe temporibus provenerint, vix aliquis mortuo collotus, mortem longiore tempore distulisse narratur." And indeed in his story, the witness died soon. Petri Venerabilis Abbatis Cluniac, *De Miraculis Libro Duo*, p.876 (Lib I, Caput XI).
[49] However, one of the examples cited by Boccaccio, that is, the story of Cyrus' birth, was from Herodotus, rather than from Cicero. Nevertheless, this story and other stories cited by Boccaccio from *De divinatione* are of a similar nature.

virtuous, had the ability of prophecy. Other parts of the commentary, as well as Boccaccio's letters, indicate that his commentary was based on lectures to a relatively lower-class and less-educated audience –in other parts of the commentary, for example, he explained what an anchor is and retold biblical stories in great detail. In Boccaccio's own mind, classical authority such as Cicero would have been sufficiently persuasive, but he probably added the Florentine anecdote to add persuasive power for his intended audience. For it to have the persuasive power Boccaccio intended, such stories must have been widespread in Florence at the time, or at the very least his Florentine audience must have been predisposed to believe it.

Boccaccio's account exemplifies the continuation of a specific type of belief – namely, a soul's ability to prophesize at the point of death – it also reflects the persistence of a broader belief in the knowledge of the dead, which existed as an undercurrent beneath the more sophisticated and consistent layer of theological discourse. Traces of this likely prevalent belief could be discovered in stories about ghosts.

A twelfth-century parchment leaf from Canterbury tells the story of a girl named Cecilia whose ghost appeared to her erstwhile lover, a clerk.[50] The story evidently took place in the circle of ecclesiastics – most characters involved as well as the narrator were servants of the church, and contained elements that pertained to religious activities. However, after revealing to the clerk her punishment (likely related to sins of the flesh) in Purgatory, she was asked:

> "Quoniam de mortuis tot mira stiloque digna protulisti, dic, ...si de uiuis prenoscere aliquid potuisti, et de socio meo quid is futurum sit; mihi reuelare non pigeat."
>
> Et illa, "Socius," inquit, "tuus sine confessione et communione moriturus est, nisi ter in die dum uixerit psalmum sexagesimum sextum, uidelicet *Deus misereatur nostri*, dixerit."[51]

[50] Robert Easting, "Dialogue between a clerk and the spirit of a girl de purgatorio (1153): a medieval ghost story," in *Mediaevistik* 20, 2007, pp. 163-83. The story allegedly took place in 1153, but the compilation in which it is found dates from late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century.

[51] "'Since you have presented so many wondrous and worthwhile things about the dead in what you have said, tell me, if you have been able to foreknow anything of the living, what may be the future of my companion; may it be no shame to reveal it to me.' And she said, 'Your friend is to die without confession and communion, unless three times a day while he lives he say psalm sixty-six, that is God be merciful unto us.'" Ibid., p. 181.

Subsequently, the clerk asked the ghost again about his own future: "De me,...quid fieri uelit diuina dispositio, si tamen nosti, obsecro edisseras." This time the ghost refused, saying, "Nichil penitus,...de te intimatum scire ualeo, absque eo quod stimulis carnis uehementer agitaris."[52] Needless to say, there were no existing theological bases to believe such a sinner's soul could know the future, and the text itself did not provide an explanation. Therefore, the fact that the clerk – educated and in ecclesiastical service – made such an inquiry twice seemed to reveal an instinctive, or better to say, natural belief in the ghost's knowledge of the future.

In 1211, the ghost of a dead youth was said to have appeared in Beaucaire, a city in the diocese of Arles.[53] In addition to disclosing his condition in the afterlife and telling how his suffering was eased by his relative's almsgiving and masses, he also answered a large number of questions from a wide and frequently ecclesiastical audience. Among these, "[m]ultociens requisitus super hiis que haguntur in hoc seculo aut super futuris." But the ghost was reluctant to answer, "dicens non requirendum de huiuscemodi uilibus et transitoriis, asserebatque sibi permissum ut de spiritualibus responderet, non de terrenis, nisi per uices; semperque interrogatus ad consiliarium, quasi post humerum responsum expectans, flectebatur."[54] Nevertheless, later in the text the author related, "[d]e futuris interrogatus multa, constanter respondit." It was hinted that the ghost's knowledge came from the angel accompanying him, but the prior and the learned men made such inquiries to the ghost instead of the angel, and not purposefully using the ghost as a medium to speak to the angel.[55] The questioners, therefore, seemed to have believed that

[52] "I pray you explain, if you know, what the divine plan wishes to be done concerning me." And the girl's reply: "I am worthy to know almost nothing of what has been intimated concerning you, apart from that you are powerfully stirred by the incitements of the flesh." p. 181.

[53] This story was found in Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia Imperialia*, III, 103, which was most likely composed within the decade after the event. The youth died after a brawl (having forgiven his killer and received confession), and began to appear three or five days later to his young cousin in Beaucaire because she had made him promise to do so as he was dying. Though the young cousin was the only one who could see the ghost, people soon flocked to see the ghost. See Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 759-89.

[54] Ibid., p. 768.

[55] The revenant answered theological questions, not only pertaining to the state of the soul after death and matters on which he might have personal knowledge (such as the nature of the angel Michael), but also a host of other matters: whether John the Baptist doubted Jesus was Christ (no), whether the Albigensian Crusade was pleasing to God (yes), whether a priest breaking a promise to fast committed a mortal sin (no, because another priest absolved him). It is not clearly stated on what authority the ghost answered these questions – if anything his authority seemed to be presumed by his audience. It was told that the dead man always turned "ad consiliarium," who was later revealed to be the angel. But the angel's presence in the tale was negligible throughout the remainder of the story. Moreover, later the author says that "[i]tem uidet celum et uidet infernum, et stat ubi in uicino utrumque est, ut ex uicinitate sui intendatur gaudium iustorum et tristicia perditorum ([h]e can see, he said, both heaven and hell, and he stands within reach of both, so that as a result of his proximity he can contemplate the joy of the just and the bitterness of the lost)". (p. 774) And subsequently: "Mirantur omnes prescienciam, et dum agilitatem spiritus ponderant, dant admiracioni consilium, et questionum exquirunt et accipiunt per ordinem soluciones (Everyone was amazed at the dead man's foreknowledge, and while they pondered on the spirit's capacities, they brought their powers of judgment to bear on their amazement)." (p. 778) Passages like these seem to refer to the spirit's

the ghost possessed such knowledge when they posed the questions.

De spiritu Guidonis told the story of a dead man named Guy who allegedly appeared in Alés of southern France from late December 1323 to 12 January 1324 (roughly two years after Dante's death).[56] This ghost of Guy haunted his own house, thus his wife sought the aid of a prior, who then went to the haunted house and questioned Guy. Among other things, "prior interrogauit eum vtrum [sic] sciret aliquem esse salutatum vel dampnatum [sic] dum foret in tali pena". And the ghost replied that he could not answer this question because "[e]go vero spiritus sum Gydonis hic [positus] ad me purgandum de malis et nunquam fui in loco dampnatorum quia non sum dampnatus nec ero nec adhuc possum accedere ad celum locum saluatorum; et ideo non possum tibi veraciter dicere que et quot sunt dampnate et saluate." This seemed to have surprised the prior, who insisted that Old Testament prophets prophesized the coming of Christ even when alive: "Ergo a multo forciori [sic] tu, qui es modo exutus a corpore et es spiritus purgatus, melius potes videre saluatos et dampnatos quam ipsi prophete, qui puri homines fuerant quand[o] de incarnacione Christi prophetabant."[57]

The ghost emphatically rebuked the prior's mistaken belief, explaining that ghosts should not be compared to prophets. But the prior continued to ask questions about the future. "Item prior interrogauit eum si sciret quo tempore Antechristus seuiret contra electos. Respondit quod de hiis que sunt

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own power. Therefore, it is possible that the response of an angel provided a more theologically correct, post-hoc coat for the somewhat theologically problematic story.

[56] The version used here is reprinted in Ed Eleazer, *The Quatrain Version of Gast of Gy* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), which is a transcription of Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawl. A 358 (ff.1r-9v). Also consulted were two other printed Latin editions: "De Spiritu Guidonis" in Gustav Schleich, *The Gast of Gy: Eine englische Dichtung des 14. Jahrhunderts, nebst ihrer lateinischen Quelle De Spiritu Guidonis* (Berlin: Mayer & Muller, 1898), pp. LV-LXI, which was a considerably shorter version of the text; and Johannes Gobius, *De Spiritu Guidonis* (Delft: Jacobus Jacobszoon van der Meer, 1486), which was generally similar to the Oxford manuscript but differed on some dialogues. Also consulted was Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu's French translation, which also contains a useful bibliography on related literature and other translations. See Jean Gobi, *Dialogue avec un fantôme*, trans. and comments by Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris: Les Belle Lettres, 1994), pp. 167-170.

[57] The whole passage is: "Item prior interrogauit eum vtrum sciret aliquem esse salutatum vel dampnatum dum foret in tali pena. Respondit, '[Deus] non vult quod de hac materia loquar et hoc est racio omnis existens in purgatorio est dispositiones bonus, qui[a] ibi disponitur ad summum bonum et eternum: ideo omnis spiritus debet esse verax et non mendax. Set nullus spiritus talis dicere poterit veraciter de dampnacione et saluacione aliqua nisi fuerit in vtroque loco scilicet in celo videndum quot et que fuerunt saluate et inferno ad videndum que et quot fuerunt dampnate. Ego vero spiritus sum Gydonis hic [positus] ad me purgandum de malis et nunquam fui in loco dampnatorum quia non sum dampnatus nec ero nec adhuc possum accedere ad celum locum saluatorum; et ideo non possum tibi veraciter dicere que et quot sunt dampnate et saluate.' Tunc prior ille cum impetu spiritus sui loquebatur dicens, 'Modo videtur quod tu es spiritus quidam mendax et fallax, quia sacra scriptura dicit quod prophete in veteri lege veritatem dixerunt de incarnacione domini nostri Iesu Christi et de modo eius incarnandi et de operibus eius veritatem dixerunt et tamen Christum incarnatum nunquam viderunt in hac vita. Similiter plura vero dixerunt de resurrecione mortuorum et tamen adhuc resurrecionem non perceperunt. Ergo a multo forciori tu, qui es modo exutus a corpore et es spiritus purgatus, melius potes videre saluatos et dampnatos quam ipsi prophete, qui puri homines fuerant quand[o] de incarnacione Christi prophetabant.'" Irregular spellings are from the original text. Eleazer, *Gast of Gy*, pp. 103-104.

diuina, non certitudo apud nos nec questio [sic]."[58] "Tunc prior quesiuit vtrum sciret quot pape deberent esse ante finem mundi. Respondit, 'Deus ipse nouit futura et ego non cognosco nisi ea que reuelantur michi [sic]. Futura enim non reuelantur michi, et ideo nexcio vobis veritatem huius questionis dicere."[59]

As texts penned in the ecclesiastical circle, these three stories display varying degrees of theological imprint. All three ghosts answered theological questions (most significantly, the effectiveness of suffrage), which might be a sign that the ghosts' authority was used for religious ends. The story of the girl Cecilia contained an interesting interpolation about the necessity of reciting prayers "non neglegenter, non cum sincopa uel sub nimia festinatione, ut quorundam nos est clericorum qui cicius ictu cuiuslibet maleatoris spiritus sancti uerba furando oblatrant."[60] This detail suggests the ordinary and concrete concern of a religious man (probably a monk). Moreover, the account of the afterlife according to Cecilia closely resembled that in Venerable Bede and could have been reworked from the latter.[61] Gervase of Tilbury, the author of the ghost of Beaucaire, also frequently cited Gregory the Great and compared Gregory's arguments with what the ghost said. Both represent the continuation of canonical church texts and testify to their influence in these texts penned by churchmen. The ghost of Guy even gave long and verbose explanations that corrected his ecclesiastical interlocuter's mistaken beliefs.

Despite of the ecclesiastical colour of these stories, the interlocutors who readily questioned the ghosts about the future remind us of Dante *personaggio* asking Ciacco "se tu sai..." It was true that all the three ghosts in these stories alleged that they were in Purgatory, rather than in Hell. But one must remember, until Dante penned the *Divina Commedia*, Purgatory was still very much in the process of formation. Even in the *Commedia*, the mode of knowledge of souls in Purgatory did not differ significantly from those in Hell: they were ignorant of the present but knowledgeable of the future, as exemplified by Currado Malaspina who asked Dante *personaggio* for "novella

[58] Ibid., p. 159.
[59] Ibid., p. 164. This question and the question above also appeared in the 1486 printed version, but the questions and answers were more concise. Beaulieu suggested that these questions, along with two others, were added in the 1486 printed edition. Beaulieu, *Dialogue avec un fantôme*, p. 10. But the fact that they appeared in longer form in a number of other Latin manuscripts, such as the one quoted here, suggests that they were probably older.
[60] "Quod mihi diligentius intuenti, simpliciter prolatum non uidetur. Clericus enim psalmum prescriptum ter in die bene dixisse uidetur, si mattutinorum officium, si et horas beate Marie semper uirginis, necnon et uigilias mortuorum non neglegenter, non cum sincopa uel sub nimia festinatione, ut quorundam nos est clericorum qui cicius ictu cuiuslibet maleatoris spiritus sancti uerba furando oblatrant, sed cum dulcedine et timore diuino pronuntiauerit." Robert Easting, "Dialogue," p. 177 (91-96 in the Latin text).
[61] Ibid., pp. 166-67.

vera di Val di Magra o di parte vicina," and then foretold Dante's own destiny to him (*Purgatorio*, VIII, 115-117, 133-139). From the internal logic of these ghost stories, the state of ghosts in Purgatory (instead of Hell) provided a reason for their appearance – they returned to ask for masses, prayers and almsgiving from their living relatives and friends.[62] Nonetheless, the form of their knowledge as presented in these stories provided important insights for understanding the knowledge of souls in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*.

First, there was a significant experiential characteristic within the ghosts' knowledge. All three ghosts referred to things they saw or heard, or knew from their own experience. The English girl Cecilia could not tell anything of the interlocutor's father because she did not know the latter ("De patre...tuo nichil certum teneo, nam neque ipsum dum uiueret noui"), while she could tell with certain that the interlocutor's mother had been separated from Purgatory.[63] Concerning the information brought by the ghost of Beaucaire, Gervase of Tilbury even commented: "Ideoque magis experto magis consentio."[64] The ghost of Guy, similarly, could not see and had not been to heaven or hell, and thus refused to speak on these places. This experiential aspect is similar to how Dante's souls relied on the newly dead to bring information to them, because within Dante's construction, they no longer experienced the living world after death.

However, not all of the ghosts' knowledge was experientially explained.[65] The ghost of Guy knew the presence of the Eucharist bread hiding beneath the priest's robe.[66] More remarkably, the ghost at Beaucaire revealed an almsgiving act known only to one questioner,[67] hinted at the sinful deeds of a

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[62] This is often combined with another common motif – the ghost while alive had agreed with another person to visit one another after death. This motif is found in both Cecilia and Beaucaire, and also in many other stories such as *Decameron* 7.10 and Guibert of Nogent's mother. Cf. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages* (trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998), p.50.

[63] Robert Easting, "Dialogue," p. 176.

[64] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, p. 774. The ghost's sight is mentioned in various places: "spiritum omnia ad oculum habere, nulloque medio a conspectu arceri" (p. 766), "omnes anmas uidet que sunt in purgatorio, et audit quarundam gemitus..." (p. 772) and "[i]tem uidet celum et uidet infernum..." (p. 774).

[65] The ghosts' knowledge frequently contained mystical, or unexplained elements, though it would not have been impossible to create experiential explanations for them. For example, ghosts' knowledge of the identity of those about to die was often explained by them seeing or overhearing this information.

[66] "Item prior interrogauit eum si vnquam vidisset corpus Christi postquam transiuit ab hoc mundo. Respondit quod sic, 'et modo illud video coram pectore tuo in quadam pixide.' Et tamen nullus sciuit priorem secum habere corpus Christi alio modo quam secundum communionem quam illo die recepit in missa sua." Eleazer, *Gast of Gy*, p. 138.

[67] This questioner was a knight, presumably a friend of the dead man's, who wanted to test the validity of the ghost ("ad gestorum auditorumque probacionem") and said to the girl: "Heus,...uirgo, quere a consanguineo tuo si quis aliquod ei hodie impendit beneficium." The ghost then disclosed that "militem illlium duos pro anima sua denarios cuidam pauperi in egressu uille sancti Egidii exhibuisse, quod sibi soli cognitum fuisse miles confitebatur." *Otia imperialia*, p. 764.

questioning prior, knew that a friend had just died,[68] identified all the questions sent by a bishop before they were read out to him,[69] and revealed the details of a plot to assassinate his uncle and cousin. Such knowledge, as they were unexplained but still widely and frequently presumed by the audience, probably testified to a general belief in the somewhat mystical power of supernatural beings.

Whether the ghosts' knowledge was experientially explained or remained in a mystical and vague form, such knowledge retained a relatively neutral character – they appeared neither sacred (from God) nor profane (from demons). To this belonged the ghost's knowledge of the future, which was usually intermingled in the narrative with knowledge of things past and present. In the story of Cecilia, the clerk asked about his parents, then about the prayers that aided the dead, then about his friend's future and his own, and then about how the ghost could be saved. In other words, he asked about the future just as he asked about everything else, presuming the ghost's knowledge of these matters and according no special place to knowledge of the future. Similarly, questions about the future were dispersed between other questions in both the ghost of Beaucaire and the ghost of Guy. In the former, for example, "[m]ultociens requisitus super hiis que haguntur in hoc seculo aut super futuris."[70] In the latter, Guy was asked a number of theological questions, then when will the Antichrist come, and then whether the ghost could hear corporally. At a subsequent questioning, he was asked about his suffering, and then about the number of popes before the present time and Doomsday.

To be sure, unlike the ghost of Beaucaire, Guy explicitly refused to answer questions about the future, possibly because it was a more theologically purged text. The ghost of Beaucaire often gave answers that had little theological bases. For example, he answered that he would be allowed to speak to the living "ultra id tempus quo ista uirgo maneret."[71] By contrast, the account of the ghost of Guy displayed deeper theological influence. The theologically correct and complex answers provided by the ghost indicates an effort to purge the text, and the structure of this narrative appears to be

[68] "Vt uerbum probetur effectu, curritur ad satis contiguam domum, et illum iam obiisse reperiunt quem dixerat." Ibid., p. 768.
[69] On which the author commented: "Mirantur omnes prescienciam..." Ibid., p. 778.
[70] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, p. 768.
[71] Ibid., p. 768. Although the ghost of Beaucaire was at first reluctant to answer questions about the future, his reason was that "non requirendum de huiuscemodi uilibus et transitoriis" and such concerns distracted from spiritual matters.

purposefully correcting certain erroneous beliefs about death and the afterlife. However, the theological upper-layer did not fully conceal the belief exemplified by the prior's questions, who almost uncritically asked the ghost about the future and even regarded the latter's authority above that of an Old Testament prophet.[72] The fact that the author (possibly authors) of this text would have thought a prior could hold views such as this (and that there were needs to correct such views) is powerful evidence that they were far from extinct.

The neutral characteristic of the ghosts' knowledge – or beliefs about these ghosts' knowledge – is apposite to the ghosts' identities: they were not saints, but also not infamous sinners. At the same time, their interlocuters seemed to assume that they would have prophetic ability without knowing whether they received such divine grace. This implied a belief that these ghosts could speak of the future by virtue of their existence as ghosts, that such otherworldly existence had a natural propensity for uncanny knowledge. This might have been a remnant of what was previously discussed as the prevailing belief of the classical world in the neutral, unearthly knowledge of ghosts. Dante's portrayal of the dead's knowledge could have been a distant echo of this ancient tradition: these souls seem able to prophecy merely by virtue of being dead, and they display both an uncanny knowledge of the future and an experiential limitation to their knowledge –an inability to learn of events on earth unless told by newly arriving souls.[73]

Hitherto, scholars have discussed the influence of the vision tradition on Dante's portrayal of the dead. However, the focus of this genre of literature, in which a traveler visits the otherworld and reports it to the living, was frequently on the traveler. In this genre, souls in the otherworld were pale and passive: they most never speak unless spoken to, and they display limited personality. Dante's vivid portrayal of the otherworldly inhabitants thus drew much attention from scholars, but where did this innovation come from? The ghosts who visit this world were much more active: since the classical tradition, they speak on their own volition, unlike souls in classical tales of the

[72] It is noteworthy that it was the ghost (and not a particularly holy one) who gave the "correct" answer while the prior who presented the erroneous views.

[73] There are two other possible reasons for the dead's ignorance of the present. First, Dante might have been familiar with the aforementioned theological tradition that stated departed souls do not automatically know the affairs in the world of the living. Therefore, it might have been a theologically motivated correction. Second, when describing Cavalcante in Inf. X, Dante might have been imitating a passage in *Aeneid*, "Verane te facies, verus mihi nuntius affers,/Nate dea? vivisne? aut, si lux alma recessit,/Hector ubi est?" – although this scene took place as an encounter with a traveller in the real world, and therefore Andromache did not know the tidings brought by Aeneas. On this point see Moore, *Studies in Dante*, p.178.

underworld who rarely speak unless spoken to. Like the ghosts discussed above, Dante's souls call out to him and make themselves heard. Moreover, ghosts display passionate concerns about earthly affairs as well. The ghost of Cecilia spoke of the lustful sin she had committed with her former lover to whom she appeared: "quia te carnali concupiscentia nimis ardenter dilexeram."[74] The ghost of Beaucaire professed to have loved his cousin "istam inter omnes consanguineas a se in seculo nostro magis dilectam" and therefore appeared to her.[75] Similarly the ghost of Guy said he appeared to his wife because he loved her more than he loved the prior. This recalls the earthly passions that characterize the souls in *Inferno*, who in spite of their eternal torment continued to love and hate what they had loved and hated in life.

For long, scholars have speculated on popular and folkloric influences in the *Divina Commedia*, but the sources of such influences had remained obscure and elusive. However, though the Divina Commedia predominantly belongs to the stream of visionary literature and otherworldly journey, it is possible that Dante drew on other kinds of sources to construct his underworld. By this reexamination of the problem of sinners' prophecy in Dante, and of the ghosts who like Dante *personaggio* crossed the boundary between the living and the dead, new insight could be revealed.

[74] She also alluded to her betrayal of her lover. See Robert Easting, "Dialogue," p. 175.
[75] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, p.770.

Chapter 2: Resurrection and the Bureaucratic Underworld

I. Two Chinese Resurrection Stories

"八年八月己巳，邸丞赤敢謁御史：大梁（梁）人王里髡徒曰丹，□□七年，丹矢傷人垣離里中，因自刎殹，□之于市三日，葬之垣離南門外。三年，丹而復生。丹所以得復生者，吾犀武舍人。犀武論其舍人尚命者，以丹未當死，因告司命史公孫強，因令白狐穴屈（掘）出。丹立墓上三日，因與司命史公孫強北之趙氏之北地柏丘之上。盈四年，乃聞犬狆（吠）雞鳴而人食。其狀類（顙）益（嗌）、少麋（眉）、墨，四支（肢）不用。"丹言曰：死者不欲多衣。死人以白茅為富，其鬼賤（荐）於它而富。丹言：祠墓者毋敢詯（哭），詯，鬼去敬（驚）走。已，收腏（餟）而𣪊（罄）之，如此鬼終身不食殹。丹言：祠者必謹騷（掃）除，毋以淘洒（灑）祠所。毋以羹沃腏（餟）上，鬼弗食殹。"[76]

"[On] the eighth year, eighth month, [day of] *ji-si*,[77] *di-cheng* Chi (邸丞

[76] The transcription is largely based upon plates and text from 天水放馬灘秦簡集釋, with some modifications based on newer research. See 孫占宇, 天水放馬灘秦簡集釋 (蘭州：甘肅文化出版社，2013), pp. 59-60 (plates) and pp. 269-76 (text and annotations). The following English translation is mine.

[77] The text is not clear this is the eighth year of which king or emperor's reign, but Xiwu's death is documented in *Zhanguo Ce*: "Qin defeated Eastern Zhou, fought Wei at Yique, slew Xiwu" (《戰國策・魏策・魏一》: "秦敗東周，與魏戰於伊闕，殺犀武"), 293 BCE. Because references to such historical characters are usually contemporaneous with the document, it is speculated that this story dates from the eighth year of King Zhao of Qin (秦昭王), or 299 BCE. However, in the eighth month of 299 BCE, there is no day of *ji-si* (己巳). Some scholars have suggested this may have been an error in recording. See 天水放馬灘秦簡集釋, pp. 269-70, n. 1. Yan Changgui argued that, since the later part of the story concerned Zhao, and the Di (邸) in *di-cheng* might be a specific place in Zhao (rather than a rank in local bureaucratic system), the text should use the Zhao calendar, which would be the eighth year of Huiwen King of Zhao (趙惠文王八年, 291 BCE) and the day of *ji-si* would be the fourth or fifth day of the eighth month. 晏昌貴, 放馬灘簡《邸丞謁御史書》中的時間與地點, 出土文獻（第四輯）, 2013, pp. 297-303. However, as Li Longjun has persuasively pointed out, the narrator *di-cheng* Chi mentioned "the Zhaos' northern lands (趙氏之北地)" as was conventional to name a foreign country, while he simply named Daliang, the capital of Wei, without mentioning the state. Moreover, he proposed that the phrase "吾犀武舍人" (lit. "I Xiwu *sheren*") – traditionally interpreted by scholars as Dan's first-person statement that "I am Xiwu's *sheren*" – could be interpreted as "our [general] Xiwu", with contemporaneous linguistic evidence. Thus the narrator was very likely a subject of Wei, and the text used the Wei calendar: the eighth year would be in the reign of King Zhao of Wei (魏昭王), 289 BCE, with *ji-si* as the seventeenth day of the eighth month. If so, the year Dan returned to life (293 BCE) would be the same year of Xiwu's death. 李龍俊, "放馬灘秦簡《丹》篇所涉年代新考," in 珞珈史苑, 2016, pp. 23-29. Li Longjun's interpretation is quite illuminating. But even if this new interpretation does not stand, the year here still very probably referred to that of Wei, because the context of the narrative was clearly one of Wei. However, given that the report supposedly took place in the eighth month of the eighth year, and in the Sexagenary cycle, *ji* is the sixth of *tiangan* and *si* is the sixth of *dizhi*, it is also possible that these numbers are mystical and do not refer to a historical date. In the system of divination based on *yi* (易), six and eight are both important *yin* numbers (*yin* is associated with death and earth). For example, when explaining the character six (六), *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字, early 2nd century CE) states that "the numbers of *yi*, *yin* changes at six, is proper at eight" (易之数，阴变于六，正于八). As we would see later, the spy of Qin, Zhao Chun and Sun Jiao (three records from different periods) all returned to life after six days. (In subsequent periods, six seemed to have been replaced by seven. For example, in a Tang transcription of the spy of Qin and another version of Sun Jiao, the description of "six days" was substituted by "seven days". See infra.) Considering also the marvelous nature of the content, the whole text might be fictive and only mirrored the format of real bureaucratic reports. Some scholars have suggested that the Dan text might be fictive, but did not seem to doubt the nature of the date

赤) humbly reports to the *yushi* (御史): A shaven criminal from Daliang, Wang-*li*, named Dan [...] the seventh year, Dan wounded another man with arrow in Yuanli-*li*, slit his own throat. [His body was exposed] at the market for three days, then buried outside the south gate of Yuanli. [After] three years, Dan returned to life. The reason Dan returned to life was a *sheren* (舍人) of our [general] Xiwu.[78] Xiwu said to his *sheren* in charge of lives (尚命), that Dan was not yet fated to die, thus [the *sheren*] told the Magistrate of Lives (司命使) Gongsun Qiang, and [Gongsun Qiang] ordered a white fox to dig [him] out of the grave. Dan stood on the grave for three days, then with the Magistrate of Lives Gongsun Qiang went north to the Zhaos' northern lands, atop the cypress hills (柏丘). After four years, [he could] hear dogs bark, roosters crow and eat like a man. His appearance resembles the strangled, [with] sparse eyebrows, [and] is dark. [His] limbs are of no use.

"Dan says: The dead do not desire many clothes. The dead take cogon grass (白茅) as riches, ghosts gathering them become rich. Dan says: Those who pay honor to graves (祠墓者) should not cry. [If they] cry, the ghosts [will be] scared away. After [the rite], [if they] collect the food [offered to the dead] and [eat] all of them, then the ghosts will never eat [the offerings]. Dan says: Those who pay honor to the dead should carefully clean [the site], do not scatter unclean water at the honoring site. Do not pour soup on the food, [or] the dead will not eat [the offerings]."

This story about a man named Dan (丹) who rose from his grave three years after his suicide, was written on six pieces of bamboo slips and

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and still regarded it as factual. See, for example, 馬軼男, 放馬灘秦簡《丹》篇文本性質的再思考, in 國學學刊, 2019, vol.2, pp. 13-20; 黃傑, 放馬灘秦簡《丹》篇與北大秦牘《泰原有死者》研究, 簡帛網 2014.10.14 (http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=2085). In my opinion, it could be similar to *gaodi ce* (告地策) from later periods, which were purportedly written to bureaucrats in the underworld and followed the formats of official documents. For example, a *gaodi ce* unearthed from a Han tomb at Jiangling Fenghuang Mountain (江陵鳳凰山 168 號漢墓) begins with: "The thirteenth year, fifth month, [day of] *Geng-chen*, Jiangling-*cheng* humbly reports to Dixia(underworld)-*cheng*" (十三年五月庚辰，江陵丞敢告地下丞). This was likely the thirteenth year of Emperor Wen of Han (漢文帝), or 167 BCE. On the form of *gaodi ce*, see 陳松長, 告地策的行文格式與相關問題, 湖南大學學報(社會科學版), Vol. 22, No. 3, May 2008, pp. 21-25. On *gaodi ce*, generally see, Michèle Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, "Death and the Dead: Practices and Images in the Qin and Han," in John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski ed., *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC – 220 AD)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 970.

[78] I followed Li Longjun's interpretation here. See 李龍俊, "放馬灘秦簡《丹》篇所涉年代新考. Besides the linguistic evidence provided by Li, I am of the opinion that since the same word *sheren* appeared again in the next sentence ("犀武論其舍人尚命者"), if they referred to different persons, there might be a clearer textual distinction between the two. Therefore, it is likely that the text only mentioned one *sheren* of Xiwu, namely the one in charge of lives (尚命). But the traditional and more literal interpretation that Dan was also a *sheren* of Xiwu is possible too.

excavated from a tomb in Fangmatan, Gansu in 1986.[79] Dated to 3rd century BCE (during the late Warring States period), it is the earliest excavated text of its type found in China.[80] It consists of the report of a low level official (邸丞) named Chi (赤) to the royal secretary (御史), and follows the conventions of standard bureaucratic reporting of the period. The report describes how Dan committed suicide (for fear of punishment), but Xiwu (犀武), a general and compatriot of Dan's, said he was not fated to die yet. Xiwu found a *sheren* (舍人)[81] in charge of lives (司命) to make a request on Dan's behalf,[82] thus the Magistrate of Lives (司命使) sent a white fox to dig Dan out of his grave, at which point Dan had already been dead for three years. After standing atop the grave for three days, Dan followed the Magistrate of Lives to the north, where he stayed four years and partly regained the bodily functions of a living person. On this authority Dan gave a detailed account of the likes and dislikes of ghosts and how rites honoring the dead should be conducted.[83]

A similar story, dated slightly later to the Qin Dynasty, was written on a wooden tablet possibly unearthed in Hubei.[84] The narrative was considerably similar to Dan's, but the part concerning resurrection was highly concise, serving as a mere preamble to the resurrected's account about ghosts' preferences and rituals: "[In] Taiyuan (泰原)[85] there was a dead, [who] returned to life after three years. [The resurrected] was brought to Xianyang (咸陽),[86] and said....." (泰原有死者，三歲而復產，獻之咸陽，言曰……)[87]

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[79] On the general information and excavation of these documents, see 天水放馬灘秦簡集釋, 概述, pp.1-6; 甘肅省文物考古研究所等, 甘肅天水放馬灘戰國秦漢墓群的發掘, in 文物, 1989, Vol.2.

[80] As it was explained in n. 2, the date in the Dan text was likely to be 289 BCE. Based on philological and historical evidence, scholars believed that the transcription of this part of the document was no later than the Qin unification (221 BCE). See 天水放馬灘秦簡集釋, 概述, pp. 1-2.

[81] *Sheren* (舍人, lit. house person; similar to *menke* 门客, lit. gate guest) in the Warring States period was similar to but differed somewhat from a vassal, retainer or protegé in that there were no clearly defined duties and obligations. Aristocrats and persons in positions of power kept *sheren* in their households (hence the origin of the name) and it was often the case that some of them possessed extraordinary virtues or abilities.

[82] It is not clear from the text whether Xiwu made the request for Dan while alive or dead. If we follow Li Longjun's interpretation above, Xiwu would have died the same year that Dan returned to life.

[83] For the mystical nature of the number three, the identity of the Magistrate of Lives (司命使) Gongsun Qiang (公孫強), representation of the white fox, cypress hills and cogongrass, the disabilities of Dan's body, the details of the rituals mentioned by Dan and the nature of ghosts (鬼), see 姜守誠, 放馬灘秦簡《志怪故事》中的宗教信仰, in 世界宗教研究, 2013, Vol.5, pp.160-175.

[84] This wooden tablet belongs to a collection donated to Peking University in 2010. Scholars basically agreed that these texts were transcribed during the reign of Qin Shihuang (秦始皇, 221 – 210 BCE). Based on the geographical locations mentioned, they were probably unearthed in Hubei, and possibly from the tomb of a local magistrate of Qin. See 北京大學出土文獻研究所, 北京大學藏秦簡牘概述, in 文物, 2012, Vol. 6, pp. 65-73, for the wooden tablet mentioned here, see p. 68 and p. 71 (plate).

[85] Taiyuan could possibly mean "great plain", that is, it may not refer to a specific location. Li Ling suggested that this refers to the plain around Xianyang. 李零, 北大秦牘《泰原有死者》簡介, in 文物, 2012, Vol. 6, pp. 81-84. Jiang Shoucheng argued Taiyuan (泰原) might refer to Taiyuan-jun (太原郡), then known as Jinyang (晉陽), close to modern-day Taiyuan (太原). 姜守誠, 北大秦牘《泰原有死者》考釋, in 中華文史論叢, 2014.3 (115), p. 145.

[86] Xianyang was the capital of Qin. The resurrected was likely shown to the Emperor or his officials as a rare

Both documents focus on the rituals related to the dead. The resurrected at Taiyuan said that clothes buried with the dead should not be cleaved and should not be unknown to the dead while alive, that burial shoes and objects should not be broken, that yellow bean sprouts (黃圈) are like gold, grains (黍粟) are like coins and cogongrass (白茅) are like silk to the dead, and that women dead for three years would marry again in the underworld and thus should no longer be buried with their husbands in life, etc. Dan's advice against pouring soup on food and crying before making the offering is also found here. However, the Dan text was unearthed in Gansu (northwestern China) while the Taiyuan text was (probably) unearthed in Hubei (mid-southern China in the Changjiang basin), and there was no evidence of direct textual borrowing between the two despite their relative contemporaneousness (within a century of the Qin Unification, c. 3rd century BCE). Yet the forms of their narratives were highly similar: Both dictated the rituals (somewhat similar) after an account of resurrection and in the mouths of the resurrected. Both returned to life after three years. Therefore, these two texts were likely related,[88] reflecting a pervasive belief of their times.

However, the necessity of invoking the resurrected's authority to dictate these rituals also indicated that these rituals were not universally and unquestioningly accepted: the text of the dead of Taiyuan ended with an explanation of 黃圈, which were made by peel yellow beans and put them under earth (to let them sprout). This particularly signified the attempt to introduce new custom and beliefs. The more detailed prescriptions of the Taiyuan text included the prohibition of flexed burial and the breaking of burial goods. Both were testified by archeological excavations of Qin tombs, and differed considerably from mainstream Chinese customs, possibly influenced by nomadic customs due to Qin's relatively peripheral geographic and cultural position on the northwestern frontier of China.[89] Thus, these

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occurrence.

[87] The full text reads: "泰原有死者，三歲而復產，獻之咸陽，言曰：死人之所惡，解予死人衣。必令產見之，弗產見，鬼輒奪而入之少內。死人所貴黃圈。黃圈以當金，黍粟以當錢，白菅以當緜。女子死三歲而復嫁，後有死者，勿并其冢。祭死人之冢，勿哭。須其已食乃哭之，不須其已食而哭之，鬼輒奪而入之廚。祠，毋以酒與羹沃祭，而沃祭前，收死人，勿束縛。毋決其履，毋毀其器。令如其產之臥殿，令其[illegible]（魄）不得茖（落）思。黃圈者，大叔（菽）殿，[illegible]（撈）去其皮，置於土中，以爲黃金之勉。" This transcription follows that in 李零, 北大秦牘《泰原有死者》簡介.

[88] Since the discovery of the Dead of Taiyuan tablet, scholars agreed on the close relationship between the two texts and often studied the two together.

[89] It should be noted that flexed burial was characteristic of lower-class burials in Qin, while kings' and aristocrats' tombs were more similar to other Chinese states. Scholars suggested that the ruling class and the common people of Qin possibly belonged to different ethnic groups: The ruling class might have originated in the east, while the common people were the local *Quanrong* (犬戎). See 梁云, "從秦墓葬俗看秦文化的形成," 考古與文物, 2008, Vol. 1, pp. 54-61; 陳洪, 李宇, 武麗娜, and 李斌, "再談秦墓屈肢葬淵源及其相關問題," 文博, 2014, Vol. 1, pp. 33-37. The breaking of burial goods was characteristic of nomadic customs and was also characteristic of

texts may have been intentionally fabricated to change the Qin customs. Scholars have pointed out that, as recorded in other excavated bamboo slips, the rites of Qin seemed to consist of pouring wine on the food and smearing the sacrificial food on the ritual site, which were specifically opposed by these stories.[90] In other words, they were indicative of a silent competition between different cultures: While Qin was successful in its military conquest of the other Chinese states, it continued to be subject to their cultural influences.

Nevertheless, these two documents reflected a relatively indigenous belief in an early period of Chinese history when outside cultural influences were limited.[91] To the extent of my knowledge, the elements of being buried for three years and the specific details of resurrection in Dan's story (being dug out by a white fox, standing on the grave for three days, etc.) were not found elsewhere. Likewise, the prominent concern with the form and procedure of the rites honoring the dead (祭祀), which dominated these two texts, was characteristic of Chinese culture at least since the Shang Dynasty (c. 13th – 11th century BCE).[92]

Furthermore, Dan and the dead of Taiyuan also presented a lifelike view of the world of the dead. In Dan's case, Xiwu, who had been powerful while alive, continued to command influence through his *sheren* and could even make requests to the Magistrate of Lives. There existed a parallel system of bureaucracy governing the length of lives, which was subject to the influence of the powerful. The predominant concerns of the dead were about material

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Shang burials, but among the Warring States it was found only in Qin, in the form of broken mirrors. See 馬利清, 出土秦鏡與秦人毀鏡習俗蠡測, in 鄭州大學學報(哲學社會科學版), Nov. 2009, Vol. 42, No. 6, pp. 146-152. On the relationship between the two stories (Dan and the dead of Taiyuan) and the customs of the time, see 陳侃理, 秦簡牘復生故事與移風易俗, in 簡帛, Vol. 8, 2013, pp. 69-82. Because these were both lower-class customs, they corresponded to the likely lower-class nature of the texts (Dan and the dead of Taiyuan) that attempted to change them.

[90] See 陳侃理, ibid., p. 78. The prohibitions for ritual offerings recorded in these stories did not exist in solitude. Another excavated bamboo slip, which survived only in fragment, contained: "When going to the grave, do not cry. [If one] cries, the dead are afraid to eat [and] flee." (The entire fragment is: "其死者，毋持刀刃上冢，死人不敢近也。上冢，不欲哭，哭者，死者不敢食，去。即上冢，欲其□。") See 黃傑, 放馬灘秦簡《丹》篇與北大秦牘《泰原有死者》研究. This element concerning the visit to the tomb is similar to the two stories here, though the nature of this fragment is unclear.

[91] Instances of cultural borrowing could be found in Chinese texts before and during this period, such as the rabbit in the moon (顧菟在腹) in *Tianwen* (天問) and the story of the fox and the tiger (狐假虎威) in *Zhanguoce* (戰國策・楚策一), both of which may have had Indian origins. See 季羨林, 印度文學在中國, in 季羨林文集第四卷, p.172; 陳洪, 佛教與中古小說 (上海: 學林出版社, 2007), pp.24-27. The 28 constellations of ancient China and India were also remarkably similar, which were suspected to have been imported into India some time between early Zhou Dynasty and mid-Warring States Period (c. 11th century – 4th century BCE). See 新城新藏 (Shinzo Shinjo), 中國上古天文, 沈璿(譯), 1936, pp.19-25; and 季羨林, 中印文化交流史, in 季羨林文集第四卷, p.367. However, these traces were scattered and scarce.

[92] See generally, Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC – 220 AD) (John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski eds.). Leiden: Brill, 2009.

goods: they desired food, clothes and coins. They even remarried among themselves. There was no "transcendental" imagination about a different world, or about rewards and punishments in the afterlife.

II. Resurrection in the Histories[93]

These excavated texts have no well-matching counterparts in contemporaneous texts that were passed down to our times (傳世),[94] probably because texts passed down were usually written by well-educated, illustrious authors, while the anonymous authors of the aforementioned two texts were much closer to the common people. Before *zhiguai xiaoshuo* (志怪小說) came into existence during the Jin Dynasty (in early 4th century CE), cases of resurrection were mainly recorded by two types of works. One group of people interested in resurrection stories were *fangshushi* (方術士), characterized by their expertise in divination and alchemy. They were sometimes trusted by powerful rulers but in general of dubious social standing.[95] These people either sought or claimed knowing the way to become *xian* (仙), supernatural beings who were immortal and possessed many miraculous abilities. Therefore, they recorded resurrection stories within the biographies of *xian* (仙), as an aspect of *xian*'s supernatural abilities.[96]

[93] "Histories" refer to the Twenty-Four Histories, or Orthodox Histories in Chinese historiography, the most renowned and authoritative of Chinese histories. For the years the Histories covered and the years in which they were compiled respectively, see Appendix.

[94] Although there were no well-matching counterparts, somewhat similar records could be found. For example, on text found in Zhang Shujing's tomb (173 CE), it was mentioned that yellow beans and melon seeds could be used by the dead to pay their taxes ("黃豆瓜子，死人持給地下賦"). See Jiang Wen, "To Turn Soybeans into Gold: A Case Study of Mortuary Documents from Ancient China," in *Bamboo and Silk* 2(1), 2019, pp. 32-51. Moreover, in Youyang Zazu: "The daughter of a common man Su Diao [in] Nanyang *xian* died [for] three years, opened the casket by [her]self [and] returned home. [She] told about [underworld] generals: 'Small red beans and yellow beans, the dead who possess one *dan* of these two [kinds of] beans, do not suffer.' [She] also said [one] could make caskets out of catalpa wood." (南陽縣民蘇調女死三年，自開棺還家，言夫將軍事。赤小豆、黃豆。死有持此二豆一石者，無復作苦。又言可用梓木為棺。)

[95] For example, in the biography of Emperor Wu of Han (漢武帝, reigned 141-87 BCE) *Shiji* (史記 by 司馬遷, lit. Records of History), were recorded several stories of the emperor's dealings with *fangshushi*. For example, the emperor believed that Li Shaojun (李少君) was several centuries old, and followed his instructions to conduct alchemy. "Li Shaojun died of illness. *Tianzi* (lit. son of heaven, the Emperor) believed that [he] morphed away into immortality." Shaoweng of Qi (齊人少翁, lit. young old man) did not have such good fortunes. He rose into the Emperor's favour by allegedly summoning the spirit of a deceased concubine favoured by the Emperor. But later he fed a silken fabric written with words to an ox, and told the Emperor that there was a "marvel" (奇) inside the ox's abdomen. They killed the ox and found the written fabric, but the Emperor was suspicious and his handwriting was recognized. Thus he was killed and the event was suppressed. These were the first two of many examples in Emperor Wu's biography, see 孝武本紀. From these records, it could be seen that the educated literati, such as the historian Sima Qian, usually had a highly suspect view of *fangshushi*.

[96] The *fangshushi* mentioned here refer to the narrow definition of those who seek immortality, such as those

The other group of people who paid attention to resurrection stories were historians, who were educated intellectuals with predominantly political perspectives. *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan* (春秋左傳, 4th century BCE)[97] recorded: "In the summer [of the eighth year of the Duke Xuan of Lu, 601 BCE], [Lu] allied with Jin to fight Qin. The Jins caught a Qin spy, [and] killed him in the market of Jiang. [After] six days [the spy] awoke."[98] The writer's perspective was entirely practical – a killed spy returned to life. Due to the rarity that such events happened to be politically related, their records were few and far in-between.[99] Excavated texts like Dan and the dead of Taiyuan only partly helped to fill the vast blank.

However, around the beginning of the Common Era, with the influence of the idea of *tian-ren ganying* (天人感應, resonance between Heaven and humans)[100] and the rise of *chenwei* (讖緯, originally divining through exegesis of classical texts, later extended to interpreting strange events as omens),[101] historians began to collect resurrection stories with much greater interest as inauspicious aberrations divining political disturbances. The *Book of Han* (漢書, 1st century CE) recorded:

"[Under the reign of] the Emperor Ai, in the fourth month of the fourth year of Jian-ping (3 BCE), in Shanyang, Fangyu, a woman [named] Tian Wuse (田無嗇) gave birth to a son. Two months before birth, the baby cried in the

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described in Ge Hong (葛洪)'s *Shen-xian Zhuan* (神仙傳). However, others might have a broader conception of *fangshu* (方術). For example, in the *Book of Later Han*, *Fangshu Lie-zhuan* (方術列傳), there were several biographies congruent with *Shen-xian Zhuan*, but it also included more broadly the biographies of people known for accurate divinations and other powers. For example, Gongsha Mu (公沙穆) was presented as a good Confucian and local official. As the *ling* (令, county magistrate) of Hongnong (弘農), when the crops were threatened by pests, he raised an altar and prayed (to heaven): "The people have fault, that is because of my shortcoming, please permit me to present myself [as the target of punishment]." After a torrential rain the pests disappeared, and he was revered by the people as *shenming* (神明, a divine being somewhat like a god). Similarly he predicted a flood and told the people to flee to the highlands, thus only the people of Hongnong were unharmed by the disaster. 後漢書・卷八十二・方術列傳. By virtue of these miraculous deeds he made it into the *Fangshu Lie-zhuan*, but he did not fit in the *fangshushi* discussed here. The next chapter will discuss *fangshushi* and their stories in greater detail. See *infra*.

[97] There is considerable debate on the identity of the writer of *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan* and the date of its composition, but scholars generally agree it was written in 4th century BCE.

[98] "夏，會晉伐秦，晉人獲秦諜，殺諸絳市，六日而蘇。"《春秋左傳・宣公八年》

[99] Two other stories are found in *Shi-ji* (史記, 2nd – 1st century BCE), concerning Zhao Jianzi (趙簡子, a powerful vassal of Jin whose descendants became the kings of Zhao, ? – 476 BCE) and Duke Mu of Qin (秦穆公, a powerful duke of Qin, 683 – 621 BCE) respectively. The main characters were both very sick and travelled in spirit to another world of the gods, where the Heavenly Emperor (上帝) revealed future political events to them. These stories are of a different narrative character and will be discussed later. Other strange events and disasters such as astronomical events (e.g. comets, eclipses), earthquakes and rare events such as a woman becoming a man were also recorded as aberrations but without divinations or explanations.

[100] For *tian-ren ganying*, see generally Pirazzoli-T'serstevens, "Death and the Dead", p.987.

[101] For *chenwei*, see generally Marianne Bujard, "State and Local Cults in Han Religion", in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One*, pp. 786, 798-799; Joachim Gentz, "Language of Heaven, Exegetical Skepticism and the Re-insertion of Religious Concepts in the *Gongyang* Tradition", in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One*, pp. 830-838.

womb. When [she] gave birth, [she] did not raise [him], [and] buried him in the field. Three days [later], one passed by and heard the sound of crying. The mother dug [open the soil] and adopted [him].

"[Under the reign of] the Emperor Ping, in the second month of the first year of Yuan-shi (1 CE), in Shuofang, Guangmu, a woman [named] Zhao Chun (趙春) died of illness, lay in casket for six days, then came out of the casket. [She] herself said [she] had seen her dead father, [who] said: "[You are] twenty-seven-years old, [and] should not die." The *taishou* (太守) [of Shuofang] Tang (譚) reported this. ..... Some say, the uttermost *yin* becomes *yang*, a man from below will be on top."[102]

These two stories were recorded together in *Records of the Five Elements* (五行志), which was predominantly filled with reports of strange weather, earthquakes, eclipses, and other natural disasters. Matters recorded also included: A calf had a hoof growing on its back; a mouse danced with its tail in its mouth at the gate of a palace; two dragons rose from a well; a horse gave birth to a human baby; a woman became a man; a man became a woman; and a woman gave birth to siamese twins.[103] All these events signaled the harmony of the five elements (五行) had been disturbed and were regarded as ill-boding aberrations (妖).

This tradition was continued in later Histories. *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志, 3rd century CE) included the following event: "This year [fourth year of Yong-an, 261 CE], a man of Anwu [named] Chen Jiao (陳焦) died, [and] was buried. [He] returned to life [after] six days, [and] came out through the earth."[104] The *Book of Later Han* (後漢書, 5th century CE) recorded:

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[102] "哀帝建平四年四月，山陽方與女子田無嗇生子。先未生二月，兒啼腹中，及生，不舉，葬之陌上，三日，人過聞啼聲，母掘收養。平帝元始元年二月，朔方廣牧女子趙春病死，斂棺積六日，出在棺外，自言見夫死父，曰：'年二十七，不當死。'太守譚以聞。京房易傳曰：'"幹父之蠱，有子，考亡咎"。子三年不改父道，思慕不皇，亦重見先人之非，不則為私，厥妖人死復生。'一曰，至陰為陽，下人為上。" 漢書 • 卷二十七 • 五行志.

[103] In the order presented in the text, these events were "景帝中六年，梁孝王田北山，有獻牛，足上出背上"; "昭帝元鳳元年九月，燕有黃鼠銜其尾舞王宮端門中"; "惠帝二年正月癸酉旦，有兩龍見於蘭陵廷東里溫陵井中"; "史記秦孝公二十一年有馬生人"; "史記魏襄王十三年，魏有女子化為丈夫"; "哀帝建平中，豫章有男子化為女子，嫁為人婦，生一子"; "（平帝元始元年）六月，長安女子有生兒，兩頭異頸面相鄉，四臂共匈俱前鄉，尻上有目長二寸所". 漢書 • 卷二十七 • 五行志.

[104] "是歲，安吳民陳焦死，埋之，六日更生，穿土中出。" 三國志 •吳書 •卷四十八. *Soushen Ji* (搜神記) recorded a slightly different version of this story: "吳孫休永安四年，安吳民陳焦死七日，復生，穿冢出。烏程孫皓承廢故之家得位之祥也". It said that the dead returned to life after seven days, and interpreted the event as an auspicious sign that Sun Hao (孫皓), as heir to a family whose fortunes had been on the wane, would become the emperor. Notably, the resurrection was reported as "auspicious" (祥) here, contrary to previous divinations, because it was from the perspective of the "man from below". Though Chen Shou (陳壽), author of the *Records*, did not record the divination, it is likely Chen Shou and *Soushen Ji*'s author Gan Bao (干寶) worked from very similar sources. Chen Shou might have intentionally omitted the divination that supported Sun Hao's claim to the throne, possibly because as a historian he had a personal disinclination towards political interpretation of strange

"[Under the reign of] the Emperor Xian, in the years of Chu-ping (190-193 CE), in Changsha there was a man surnamed Huan (桓氏). [He] died [and] lay in casket for over a month. His mother heard sounds in the casket, opened it, [and he] was alive. Divination said: 'The uttermost *yin* becomes *yang*, a man from below will be on top.' Subsequently the Duke Cao rose from a minor magistrate."[105] Following it was another story:

"In the second month of the fourth year of Jian-an (199 CE), a woman of Wuling, Chong-xian [named] Li E (李娥), was over sixty years of age [and] died. Her family laid [her] in a cunninghamia casket, [and] buried her several *li* outside the city. After fourteen days, a passer-by heard sounds from her grave and told her family. [Her] family went and heard the sounds, and thus dug [her] out, then [she] was alive."[106]

The earliest *zhiguai xiaoshuo* (志怪小說), *Soushen Ji* (搜神記, early 4th century), recorded the same story, but in a much longer form and with much greater details. The time, location, protagonist's name, age and days buried (14) were identical. However, in the *Soushen Ji* version, Li E was able to come out from her grave because her neighbor attempted to steal from her grave. She was mistakenly summoned to the underworld by the Magistrate of Lives (謬為司命所召) and was therefore sent out. However, she did not know the way to return and was concerned her body had already been buried. Fortunately, she encountered her (dead) cousin, who pled to the underworld officials on her behalf. These officials then made the ghost of another mistakenly summoned man accompany her, and the ghost instigated Li E's neighbor to dig her out. The story then continued with a lengthy account of a letter Li E carried from her cousin to her cousin's son, and their subsequent encounter.

Gan Bao (干寶, 286 – 336), the author of *Soushen Ji*, was a historian himself, and even penned a *Book of Jin* (now-lost). But his purpose and interest

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signs: in the other two Books of the *Records*, records of such signs were with no interpretations as well. From parts where Chen Shou quoted his sources directly, it could be seen that such beliefs were very prevalent. For example, in the *Book of Shu* (蜀書), when ministers advised Liu Bei to take the title of emperor, two reports, which Chen Shou cited, stated that many people (over eight hundred according to one) reported various auspicious signs according to *chenwei* that supported Liu Bei's claim to the throne (群下前後上書者八百餘人，咸稱述符瑞，圖、讖明徵). Yet Chen Shou seldom recorded these signs and did not give any interpretations. Therefore, even though his sources for the *Book of Wu* might have contained many such divination records, he possibly recorded the events and omitted the explanations.

[105] "獻帝初平中，長沙有人姓桓氏，死，棺斂月餘，其母聞棺中聲，發之，遂生。占曰：'至陰為陽，下人為上。'其後曹公由庶士起。" 後漢書・志第十七・五行五.

[106] "建安四年二月，武陵充县女子李娥，年六十餘，物故，以其家杉木槥敛，瘞于城外数里上，已十四日，有行闻其冢中有声，便语其家。家往视闻声，便发出，遂活。" 後漢書・志第十七・五行五.

in writing *Soushen Ji* was considerably different than how he would have written as a historian. *Soushen Ji* transcribed many accounts of aberrant events from previous histories, but lengthy and detailed narratives like that of Li E came closer to literary works. Though the *Book of Later Han* was written later than *Soushen Ji*, it likely did not borrow directly from the latter, because it contained a different account of how Li E was dug out, as well as a description of Li E's casket which was not found in *Soushen Ji*. Nevertheless, when contemporary historians study beliefs about the supernatural since Jin, they usually tended to focus on *zhiguai xiaoshuo* for the latter's abundant details and engaging narratives. As a result, it seemed to have been overlooked that the way resurrection was represented in Histories underwent significant changes.

The *Records of the Five Elements* in subsequent Histories continued to report stories of resurrection. The *Book of Song* (宋書), written between the 5th and 6th centuries, contained nine accounts of resurrection, three of which were explicitly linked to divinations of political changes. The *Book of Jin* (晉書), concerning an earlier dynasty but compiled only in the 7th century, largely copied the nine accounts from the *Book of Song* along with their divinations. The *Book of Sui* (隋書), also written in the 7th century, contained only one case of resurrection. The *New Book of Tang* (新唐書), written in the 11th century, contained four. One more was found in the *History of Song* (宋史). The *History of Jin* (金史) and the *History of Ming* (明史) each contained one, but both cases concerned returning to life through the body of another newly dead (借尸還魂). For example, the case recorded in the *History of Jin* was reported to have occurred in 1173 (大定十三年): Zhang's son was dead and returned to life, saying that he was Wang's son who had died three years ago and only returned to life through the body of Zhang's son. Wang tested the boy, and the boy knew the things of his family. The reporting official suggested that the resurrected should be Wang's son, but Emperor Shizong (金世宗) disbelieved the story and ruled him to be Zhang's son instead. The reporting official was probably a Han ethnic, but the emperor was of Jurchen (女真) ethnicity and known for his insistence on preserving Jurchen customs.[107] This story stands in contrast with a story found in the *Book of Song* (宋書, and the *Book of Jin* 晉書 which copied the former), reportedly occuring during the reign of Emperor Hui of Jin (晉惠帝, reigned 290-306 CE): A woman was forced to remarry when her husband was away and died of illness (possibly

[107] 金史・五行志.

out of grief). Her first husband later returned. Lamenting her death excessively, he opened her grave and she returned to life. Her second husband heard of this matter and disputed her marriage to the authorities. The *mishu-lang* (秘書郎, a high-ranking official) Wang Dao (王導) argued: "This is an extraordinary matter and should not be decided on common reasoning. [Thus she] should be returned to her former husband." (此是非常事，不得以常理斷之，宜還前夫。) This advice was followed.[108] On the contrary, the Jurchen emperor vetoed a recommendation based on a belief in the reality of resurrection, which was probably the reason this event was recorded. However, through his official's actions, we could see that the belief in resurrection had become much more widespread. Unlike Wang Dao who participated in the imperial administration's discussion of the appropriate judgment, the Jurchen emperor's officials did not regard the matter as one in need of much discussion – they simply gave their recommendation that the resurrected be returned to his former family pending the Emperor's approval ("擬付王建為子").

As a form of writing, Histories have a strong tendency to follow their predecessors. All the four Histories that recorded resurrection with divinatory interpretations – the *Book of Han*, the *Book of Later Han*, the *Book of Song* and the *Book of Jin* – followed the same divination as was first recorded in the *Book of Han* ("the uttermost *yin* becomes *yang*, a man from below will be on top"). However, since the composition of the *Book of Sui* in the 7th century, there were no longer any divinations specifically associated with records of resurrection.[109] This was not because divinations had disappeared from the Histories. In fact, the *Book of Sui* attached divinations to most other human aberrations.[110] Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修), one of the chief editors of the *New Book of Tang*, explicitly stated his opposition to divination in the preface to its *Records of the Five Elements*: "[We] record the disasters and aberrations, and

[108] 宋書・卷三十四・志第二十四・五行五.

[109] For all the records of resurrection in Histories, see Appendix.

[110] For example, the *Book of Sui* contained 20 records of "human aberrations" (裸蟲之孽). Of these, 15 contained divinations, which included records of strange appearances, strange behaviors, siamese twins, giving birth to monsters, etc. The one account of resurrection, as well as two accounts of beast transformation and two accounts of giving birth to flesh eggs (肉卵), were not accompanied by divinations. 隋書・卷二十三. In the *Old Book of Tang* (舊唐書, compiled 941-945), the *Records of the Five Elements* (卷三十七) were filled with accounts of aberrations accompanied by divinatory explanations (though there were no records of resurrection). The prevalent influence of *chenwei* could also be seen in Vol. 111-120 (the last 10 out of 120 volumes) of *Kai-yuan Zhan Jing* (開元占經, 8th century CE, whose author Gautama Siddha was an astronomer and astrologer of Indian descent who introduced zero into China), which contained a collection of divinations from earlier dynasties. In Vol. 113, the foregoing story from *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan* was listed alongside resurrection stories of later dynasties (including the man surnamed Huan and Li E, whose stories will be discussed below) as the sign of "[when] the dead return to life, great ill in the country, the crops die, wars begin" (人死復生，國有大病，五穀死，兵起).

remove the corresponding divinations" (著其災異，而削其事應雲). However, in the case of the *New Book of Tang* itself, probably because the body of the *Records of the Five Elements* was actually compiled by Liu Yisou (劉義叟), an astronomer known for accurate divinations,[111] divinatory information was still largely preserved. Nevertheless, none of the four resurrection records in the *New Book of Tang* were accompanied by divinatory interpretations.

Following the principle proposed by Ouyang Xiu, the compilers of later Histories generally reduced the number of divinatory interpretations in the *Records of the Five Elements*,[112] but the tradition of recording aberrant events were preserved. After the Song Dynasty, historians continued to record large numbers of "human aberrations" (人痾, in which resurrections were traditionally included): there were still triplets, quadruplets, siamese twins, giving birth to beasts or monsters, animal transformations, gender transformations, etc. However, records of resurrections almost stopped completely. The last record of resurrection in its original and simple form (a man or woman returns to life after death, without the later element of returning to another's body) was found in the *History of Song* (compiled between 1343 and 1345), concerning a person who returned to life after fourteen days in 1186. For the last three dynasties (spanning six centuries), no record of a simple resurrection made it into a History, and only two records of returning to life in the body of another were found. Considering the fact that resurrection stories continued to be very popular in *zhiguai xiaoshuo* and other forms of literature from *Soushen Ji* down to the Qing Dynasty and even to the present day in China, resurrection certainly did not disappear from the Chinese people's imagination: *Taiping Guang-ji* (太平廣記, a collection of stories largely drawn from earlier *zhiguai xiaoshuo*, compiled in 977-978 on the Emperor's orders) contained 128 records in its *Chapters on Returning to Life* (Vol. 375-386). *Liaozhai Zhi Yi* (聊齋誌異, a collection of short stories written in 17th – 18th century) contained 53 stories related to resurrection. Therefore, the disappearance of resurrection records from the Histories could not be attributed to a decline in the genre itself.

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[111] 宋史・卷四百三十二.

[112] The prefaces of the *Records of the Five Elements* in the *History of Song*, the *History of Yuan*, the *History of Ming* and the *Draft History of Qing* all expressed principles similar to those advocated by Ouyang Xiu. However, a few cases of divinations remained in the *History of Song* and the *History of Yuan*. For example, there were twelve records of "human aberrations" in the *History of Yuan* (compiled 1369-1370). Only one contained a divination. The event was new, but the content of the divination was directly copied from the *New Book of Tang*. *Wenxian Tongkao* (文獻通考), an important work of history completed in 1307, also did not follow Ouyang Xiu's principles and copied a large number of signs and divinations in its *Examination of Strange Things* (物異考, Vol. 295 – 314). However, divinations almost disappeared from the *History of Ming* and the *Draft History of Qing*, showing that this change was a gradual process.

Instead, resurrection records might have disappeared from the Histories because changes in their popular perception eliminated the reason that they appeared in the Histories in the first place: as aberrant (妖異) events. Of the types of aberrant events usually recorded in *Records of the Five Elements*, resurrection was the only type that almost systematically made itself widely accepted. Due to the spread of Buddhism, which borrowed the motif of resurrection for proselytic purposes, resurrection stories became extremely common starting from circa 5th century, and remained one of the major motifs in *zhiguai xiaoshuo*, as many scholars of Chinese religion and literature had already noted.[113] The increased commonality of resurrection stories had two results. On the one hand, it gradually shed its former stigma of aberration as people became more accustomed to hear these stories. This might explain why since the *Book of Sui*, resurrection stories – though still recorded – did not have inauspicious divinations attached to them.[114] On the other hand, historians' attitudes towards *zhiguai xiaoshuo* also changed. Both the *Book of Song* and the *Book of Jin* drew extensively from Gan Bao's *Soushen Ji*, and cited its author as an authority on the divinatory omens. Accordingly, the *Book of Sui* and the *Old Book of Tang* both listed *zhiguai xiaoshuo* in the section of histories in their *Records of Books* (經籍志). However, the later *New Book of Tang* and subsequent Histories all listed such works in the section of *xiaoshuo* (literary works).[115] Therefore, as a major motif in *zhiguai xiaoshuo*, resurrection probably came to be viewed as a matter no longer befitting for the Histories. All these changes led to how resurrection was portrayed in the writing and compilation of the Histories, first in its decreased perception as an inauspicious omen, and subsequently in its disappearance as an aberrant event altogether.

[113] See, e.g. 李劍國, 論南北朝的"釋氏輔教之書", in 天津師大學報, 1985, Vol. 3, 62-68; 侯旭東, 東晉南北朝佛教天堂地獄觀念的傳播與影響——以游冥間傳聞為中心, 佛學研究, 1999, pp 247-55; 王青, 西域文化影響下的中古小說, 中國社會科學出版社, 2006; 劉亞丁, 佛教靈驗記研究——以晉唐為中心, 巴蜀書社, 2016, pp.95-96; 陳洪, 佛教與中古小說, pp. 55-74.

[114] To see that the perception of resurrection as aberrant had largely disappeared by this time, one may refer to the story of Cui Han (崔涵) in 洛陽伽藍記. Cui Han was buried for twelve years, discovered, and brought before the Emperor Ming (r. 515-28) and Empress Dowager. The Empress saw the event as aberrant and inauspicious, but a high official Xu He convinced her that it was not abnormal. For the details of this occurrence and Xu He's reply, see infra. Evidently someone like Xu He no longer saw such events as inauspicious.

[115] In the *Book of Sui* they were found in the miscellaneous histories (史部・雜傳), and similarly in the *Old Book of Tang* (乙部・雜傳); in the New Book of Tang, they were classifed in *xiaoshuo* (丙部・小說). For the idea of *xiaoshuo*, which were not necessarily fictitious, in the history of Chinese literature, see 李劍國, 唐前志怪小說史, 1984, 天津:南開大學出版社, pp.1-23. For the original classification of *zhiguai* with history, see also ibid. p. 22.

III. The Underworld Bureaucracy

With the spread of Buddhism and the proliferation of *zhiguai xiaoshuo* in China since the late 3rd century,[116] resurrection stories began to multiply. While stories of resurrection were hardly found in Buddhist scriptures, stories composed for the purpose of prolysetization frequently contained the element of resurrection: A person was dead (or on the verge of death), but subsequently returned to life and told his/her experiences in the underworld.[117] The much more vivid Buddhist imagination of the underworld quickly supplanted earlier narratives, introducing elements such as underworld judgment, karma, reincarnation, and Buddhist rites that helped to avoid punishment and obtain rewards in the afterlife. In *Youming Lu* (幽明錄, first half of the fifth century), the earliest *zhiguai xiaoshuo* with clear Buddhist influences, there was the following story:

In the first year of Yong-chang of the Jin Dynasty (322 CE), A shaman from Baqiu (巴丘) named Shu Li (舒禮) died of illness and was accompanied by the local land god, *tudi* (土地神), to the Tai Mountain (泰山). They came by a beautiful place where many (dead) people chanted scripture, prayed, ate and drank in great happiness. The *tudi* asked an official what was this place, and the official replied that this was the place for monks (道人). Because the common people referred to shamans as monks (and the *tudi* was also subject to this error), the *tudi* left Shu Li in this good place. However, Shu Li was due for judgment at the Tai Mountain. When the Lord of Tai Mountain (泰山府君) found out about this error from the *tudi*, he sent a god "[with] eight hands and four eyes, holding a vajra scepter" to bring Shu Li to Tai Mountain. When the Lord of the Tai Mountain heard that Shu Li "served thirty-six thousand gods, conducted exorcisms and ritual sacrifices for others, and sometimes slaughtered calfs, pigs, goats, chickens and ducks", he sentenced Shu Li to be roasted on an iron bed, on which he was thrown by a creature with an oxen's head and a human body holding a fork. After Shu Li was tortured for two days and a night, the Lord of the Tai Mountain asked the presiding officer whether Li's life had properly ended. The officer verified the records and found Li had eight years of life left. The Lord of the Tai Mountain then sent for Li and gave him the following admonition: "[I] send you back for now to

[116] On the introduction and spread of Buddhism in China, see 湯用彤, 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史, 北京大學出版社, 2011; 嚴耕望, 魏晉南北朝佛教地理稿, 上海古籍出版社, 2007.

[117] Such stories even had a reverse effect on the scriptures, resulting in apocrypha such as *the Buddhist Follower Who Returned to Life after Death* (弟子死復生經), which was composed in China around the 5th century. See 陳龍, 地獄觀念與中古文學 (北京:中國社會科學出版社, 2016).

finish [your] remaining days. Do not take life or conduct improper sacrifice (殺生淫祀) again." Thus Li suddenly returned to life and abandoned his former life as a shaman.[118]

In this story, we see the new Buddhist elements were intermingling with the old: *Tudi*, the Lord of the Tai Mountain (泰山府君),[119] and the latter's subordinates who presided over records of human fortunes (祿籍) were all indigenous. However, the Lord of the Tai Mountain also commanded the god with "eight hands and four eyes, holding a vajra scepter" – very probably a Buddhist vidyārāja (明王, lit. wise king, gods who protect Buddhism) – and Li's torturer, with "an oxen head [and] a human body, wielding an iron fork" – whose description corresponded to that of a Gośīrṣa (牛頭, lit. oxen head, deputies in the Buddhist hell). The story centered on the punishment received by Shu Li for slaughtering animals and improper sacrifice, and served the Buddhist prolysetizing purpose by showing how Shu Li abandoned his wrongful ways after visiting hell. It also demonstrated that good monks (道人) who were implied to have followed the Buddhist teachings could enjoy their afterlives in the Houses of the Blessed (福舍). But the reason Shu Li could return to life was one which existed before Buddhism entered and became popularized in China: a bureaucratic error, in which the underworld deputy (in this case, the *tudi*) summoned a man who still had years to live.

This motif could be found in texts as early as Dan, whose reason for returning to life was that he was "not fated to die" (不當死). The stories of Zhao Chun and Li E, as well as many stories after the proliferation of

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[118] "巴丘縣有巫師舒禮，晉永昌元年病死，土地神將送詣太山。俗人謂巫師為道人，路過冥司福舍前，土地神問吏：「此是何等舍？」吏曰：「道人舍。」土地神曰：「是人亦道人。」便以相付。禮入門，見數千間瓦屋，皆懸竹簾，自然床榻，男女異處，有誦經者，唄偈者，自然飲食者，快樂不可言。禮文書名已到太山門，而身不至。推問土地神，神云：「道見數千間瓦屋，即問吏，言是道人，即以付之。」於是遣神更錄取。禮观未遍，見有一人，八手四眼，提金杵，逐欲撞之。便怖走還出門，神已在門迎，捉送太山。太山府君問禮：「卿在世間，皆何所為？」禮曰：「事三萬六千神，為人解除祠祀，或殺牛犢豬羊雞鴨。」府君曰：「汝佞神殺生，其罪應上熱熬。」使吏牽著熬所。見一物，牛頭人身，捉鐵叉，叉禮著投鐵床上，宛轉身體焦爛，求死不得。經一宿二日，備極冤楚。府君問主者：「禮壽命應盡？為頓奪其命？」校祿籍，余算八年。府君曰：「錄來。」牛首人復以鐵叉叉著熬邊。府君曰：「今遣卿歸，終畢余算。勿復殺生淫祀。」禮忽還活，遂不復作巫師。" 幽明錄. This story was quite typical of its type and era; though the main characters were not usually a shaman, they were often people who had committed the sin of taking life (殺生).

[119] Traditionally, scholars have believed that the Tai Mountain ruling over the dead (泰山治鬼) was an ancient Chinese belief dating to Western Han (c. 1st century BCE) and possibly even older. See, e.g., 杜斗城, 敦煌本佛說十王經校錄研究, 蘭州: 甘肅教育出版社, 1989; 賈二強, 唐宋民間信仰, 福州: 福建人民出版社, 2002; 范文美, 泰山"治鬼"說與佛教地獄, in 東南大學學報 Vol. 12 Supplement (Dec. 2010). However, as Luan Baoqun pointed out, the earliest clear evidence of Tai Mountain (泰山) being seen as the abode of the dead was from late Eastern Han (c. late 2nd century). This might have resulted from early Buddhist influence and scripture translation, which translated "great mountain", a common description in Buddhist hell, to 太山 (tai shan, lit. great mountain). Due to the identical pronunciation and interchangeability of Chinese characters, these very probably contributed to the belief of the Tai Mountain as the abode and ruler of the dead. 欒保群, "泰山治鬼"說的起源與中國冥府的形成, in 河北學刊, May 2005, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 27-33.

Buddhism, continued to refer to bureaucratic error as the reason that the dead were returning to life, although it was not without replacement in Buddhist resurrection stories – many stories told of dead people who were allowed to return to life because of their worshipful deeds (功德).[120] In some cases, the traditional bureaucratic aspect merged with the Buddhist concept of sinful slaughter. For example, *Guangyi Ji* (廣異記) contained a story in which Pei Ling (裴齡), a county sheriff of Chang'an (長安縣尉), was summoned to the underworld because he was fraudulently accused of killing a donkey while he only bought the donkey intestines. However, when Pei came to be judged before the king, the donkey testified: "[I] was in fact killed by the market manager (市吏), [who] sold the meat to passers-by; Pei *shaofu* was not involved."[121] The goats and pigs (likely also slaughtered by the market manager and thus were accusing him together with the donkey) all agreed. The king ordered Pei's prompt release on account that he was fated to be in office for several more years, but first had the scenes of hell shown to him. However, before Pei could be sent back to life, the underworld bureaucrats, who in their previous lives had also been bureaucrats, requested that he transcribe Buddhist scriptures and donate food to Buddhist monks on their behalf so they could reincarnate as humans. To this Pei agreed, then the two bureaucrats asked for "three thousand strings of gold and silver coins each" (金銀錢各三千貫). After Pei pleaded his poverty, the bureaucrats explained that paper money would suffice, and gave Pei detailed instructions on how paper money should be burned: "People make [paper] money in the city market, such money is mostly taken by the underworld government. You can call for the [paper] money maker, to make [paper money] in a closed room in your house. When finished, [you] can place [it] in a bag, [and you] should burn it by the water, [thus] I will be certain to receive it. When the money is received, if a horizontal wind moves the ashes, that means I received [the money]; if a wind scatters the ashes upwards, that means the underworld government and the ghosts and the gods of the earth (地鬼神) received [it], such taking is also common. But the ghosts and the gods are very hungry. When [you] burn the money, [you] can also set out a little good wine and food, and stand two bundles of grass stalk on the table (以兩束草立席上). I

[120] See, for example, in the stories of Kang Ade (康阿得, in *Youming Lu*) and Shi Changhe (石長和, in *Mingxiang Ji*), Fei Ziyu (費子玉, in *Guangyi ji*), protagonists returned to life because they did good deeds according to Buddhist beliefs. In Cui Mingda (崔明達, in *Guangyi Ji*), the protagonist was even summoned to the underworld temporarily to preach Buddhist scriptures.

[121] The market manager was charged by tens of donkeys, goats, chickens and pigs for their murder, and had been brought to the underworld already. So he falsely accused Pei to reduce his punishment.

can sit in the reeds' shadows, and thus can eat as well."[122]

These instructions echoed those found in the dead of Taiyuan, which contained instructions on how to prevent other ghosts from taking the offerings of clothing and food to the storage of the underworld government: "[One] must let the dead see [the clothing offered] when [the dead was] still alive. If [the dead] did not see [it] when alive, ghosts will take [it] and confiscate it into the *shaonei* (少內, royal storage)." "[If one] cries before the dead has finished eating [the offered food], ghosts will take [it] and confiscate it into the *chu* (廚, royal kitchen)."[123] Similarly, other excavated documents like *gaodi ce* (告地策, lit. report to the earth) and *yiwu shu* (衣物疏, lit. list of clothes and items) had a predominant concern with securing the dead's rights over their properties.[124] This reflected a sustained fear of confiscation by a strong government, even when these bureaucrats now served in a Buddhist underworld.

Regarding the content of the errors that would cause one to be mistakenly summoned to the underworld, some stories left us with more information than the simple statement "not fated to die" (不當死, 未合死, etc.) or "had years remaining" (余算未盡). *Soushen Ji* told the following story: "[Under the reign of] Emperor Xian of Han, in the Jian-an years (196-220 CE), [a man named] Jia Ou [from] Nanyang, [whose] *zi* (courtesy name) [was]

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[122] "開元中，長安縣尉裴齡，常暴疾數日。至正月十五日夜，二更後，堂前忽見二黃衫吏持牒，云：「王追。齡辭已疾病，呼家人取馬，久之不得，乃隨吏去。見街中燈火甚盛。吏出門行十餘里。煙火乃絕。唯一逕在衰草中。可行五十里，至一城，牆壁盡黑，無諸樹木。忽逢白衣居士，狀貌瑰偉，謂二吏曰：「此人無罪，何故追來。顧視齡曰：「君知死未。齡因流涕，合掌白居士：「生不曾作罪業，至此，今為之奈何。求見料理。」居士謂吏曰：「此人衣冠，且又無過，不宜去其巾帶。」吏乃還之，因復入城。數里之間，見朱門爽麗，奇樹鬱茂。前謂一官。云是主簿，主簿遣領付典，勘其罪福。典云：「君無大罪，理未合來。」齡便苦請救助。檢案云：「殺一驢，所以追耳」然其驢執是市吏殺，君第不承，事當必釋。」須臾，王坐，主簿引齡入。王問何故追此人，主簿云：「市吏便引。滴以詰問。云：「實求腸，不遣殺驢。」言訖，見市吏枷項在前。有驢羊鵝豕數十輩。隨其後。王問市吏，何引此人。驢便前云：「實為市吏所殺，將肉賣與行人，不關裴少府事。」市吏欲言。他羊豕等，各如所執。王言。此人尚有數政官錄。不可久留，宜速放去。若更遲延，恐形骸隳壞。因謂齡曰。令放君迴。當萬計修福。」齡再拜出，王復令呼。謂主簿，可領此人觀諸地獄。主簿令引齡前行，入小孔中。見牛頭卒以叉刺人。隨業受罪。齡不肯觀。出小孔，辭主簿畢，復往別吏。吏云：「我本戶部令史。」一人曰：「我本京兆府史，久在地府，求生人間不得。君可為寫《金光明經》、法華、維摩。涅盤等經。兼為設齋度，我即得生人間。」齡悉許之。吏復求金銀錢各三千貫。齡云，京官貧窮、實不能辦。吏云。金錢者。是世間黃紙錢。銀錢者。白紙錢耳。」齡曰：「若求紙錢，當亦可辦，不知何所送之。」吏云：「世作錢於都市，其錢多為地府所收。君可呼鑿錢人，於家中密室作之。畢，可以袋盛。當於水際焚之，我必得也。受錢之時，若橫風動灰，即是我得。若有風颺灰。即為地府及地鬼神所受。此亦宜為常占。然鬼神常苦飢，燒錢之時，可兼設少佳酒飯，以兩束草立席上，我得映草而坐，亦得食也。」辭訖，行數里，至舍。見家人哭泣，因爾覺痛。逼身恍惚。迷悶久之，開視遂活。造經像及燒錢畢，十數日平復如常。" 廣異記.

[123] 李零, pp. 82-83.

[124] For *gaodi ce* and *yiwu shu*, see, for example, 柳洪亮, 新出吐魯番文書及其研究, 烏魯木齊: 新疆人民出版社, 1997; 陳松梅, 河西地區魏晉告地文書中道教思想考釋, in 敦煌學輯刊, 2009, Vol. 1, pp. 94-103; 陳松長, 告地策的行文格式與相關問題.

Wenhe (南陽賈偶字文合), died of illness. At the time a deputy [of the underworld] took him to the Tai Mountain (太山). The Magistrate of Lives (司命) looked in the records, [and] said to the deputy: '[You] should summon Wenhe from another (lit. a certain) *jun*, why is this man summoned? Send him back promptly.'"[125] On his way back, Wenhe met a girl who was also mistakenly summoned. When he returned to life, he "wanted to verify the truth" (欲驗其實), and went to visit the girl's home in Yeyang (弋陽, approximately 300 km from Nanyang) as she had described to him. When her father found that Wenhe's account matched his daughter's exactly, he gave her to him in marriage.

This story was recorded in early 4th century. A roughly contemporaneous record was found in *Yi Yuan* (異苑, attributed to Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔, died c. 468 CE): "Tang Bang of Chang Mountain (長山唐邦), during the Yixi years (405-418 CE), heard people knocking at the door. [He] went out to look [and] saw two deputies clothed in red, [who] said: 'The official wants you.' [They] took [him] to the east hill of the county, into the grave of Yin An (殷安). In the grave a man said to the deputies: '[You] were supposed to take Tang Fu (唐福), why have [you] carelessly taken Tang Bang?' And ordered them whipped [and] sent [Tang Bang] out. Tang Fu died soon after."[126]

This kind of stories about mistaken identity continued to circulate, as we see in *Mingbao Ji* (冥報記, by Tang Lin 唐臨, 600-659 CE): In the thirteenth year of Zhenguan (637 CE), an imperial physician named Sun Huipu (孫廻璞) was summoned by two deputies whom he believed to be servants of Wei Zheng (魏徵, a famous minister at the time). So he took his horse and followed them. As they were on their way, Sun saw two other deputies with Han Fengfang (韓鳳方),[127] who said to the two deputies leading Sun, "You summoned the wrong man, [we] have the right one. You should release him." (汝等錯追，所得者是，汝宜放彼。) Thus he was released. He returned to his home and tied his horse, and saw his body lying with his wife. He woke up in his body sweating and saw his horse was sweating as well. This night Han Fengfang died suddenly.[128] *Guangyi Ji* (廣異記, c. 766-779) told of a county

[125] "漢獻帝建安中，南陽賈偶，字文合，得病而亡。時有吏，將詣太山司命，閱簿，謂吏曰：「當召某郡文合，何以召此人？可速遣之。」" 搜神記・卷十五.

[126] 異苑・卷六. 中華書局, 1996, p. 56. In other transcripted versions Tang Bang's place of origin was recorded as Heng Mountain 恆山 (see p. 63).

[127] The story did not mention Han Fengfang's exact identity, nor was he recorded elsewhere in history. But the narrative of the text seemed to indicate that Han was known to Sun and the author, who was contemporaneous with these events and might have expected the readers to know Han's identity as well.

[128] The story followed with another journey four years later, when Sun was summoned again to the underworld, this time actually by Wei Zheng. Sun was initially confused why an underworld deputy would come on Wei

sheriff (縣尉) named Zhang Zong (張縱), who was summoned to the underworld. But the king (王) said to the deputy: "I summoned [another] Zhang Zong, why was [this] Zhang Zong summoned? Send him away promptly." (我追張縱，何故將張縱來，宜速遣去)[129] In *Xu Xuanguai Lu* (續玄怪錄, c. early 9th century), a county sheriff of Linhuan (臨渙尉) named Zhang Zhi (張質) born in Yishi (猗氏) was called to the underworld because he was accused of ordering the execution of an innocent man. Following the underworld deputies he rode his horse to a cypress wood, and was taken into a city before the judge. However, the wrongfully executed testified that this man was not the culpable one. The judge sent for the records which revealed that Zhang Zhi's predecessor was also named Zhang Zhi but born in Jiangling (江陵), who was responsible for the wrongful death. The judge then ruled: "The name and the surname were coincidentally the same, and [you deputies] did not verify. In accordance with the law books [the deputies are to be caned] ten times. Summon the correct man instead." (名姓偶同，遂不審勘。本典決十下，改追正身。) Thus Zhang Zhi was sent back and found himself on his horse in great pain in the cypress woods.[130] Such stories continued to be very popular after the Tang Dynasty.[131]

While the theme of mistaken identity seemed to predate the widespread influence of Buddhism in China (its first appearance in the story of Jia Wenhe was predominantly concerned with Jia's marriage), Buddhist elements soon attached themselves to these stories, such as in the stories of Sun Huipu and Zhang Zong above. The extent to which Buddhism exploited this kind of stories for proselytizing purposes could be seen from the story of Huang Shiqiang (黃仕強) from the Dunhuang documents.[132] Shiqiang who did not

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Zheng's orders. The deputy explained that Wei Zheng had recently died and become a high administrator in the underworld. However, at that time Sun was travelling on imperial order, and he convinced the deputy that he should not be summoned to the underworld before he reported back to the Emperor. After returning to Luoyang and reporting to the Emperor, Sun found out that Wei Zheng had indeed died the day before the deputy appeared to him. Knowing he was soon to die, he "requested monks to perform rituals, built [Buddhist] statues [and] transcribed scriptures" (請僧行道，造像寫經). Six or seven days later he saw the underworld deputy in a dream again and was led to a palace on top of a mountain. However, some gentlemen came to him and said, "This man did good deeds, [we] cannot keep him. Let him go." (此人修福，不得留之，可放去) He fell from the mountain and lived to the day the story was recorded. According to the author, he heard the story from Sun himself. 冥報記・.

[129] However, because Zhang Zong liked to eat raw fish, before he was returned to life, he was punished by being turned into a carp and was served to one of his friends. When the carp's head was cut off, he returned to life.

[130] In this story, Zhang Zhi seemed to have gone in his corporal body, because when he was taken, he and his horse both disappeared from the official residence, and were only found after seven days.

[131] See, e.g., the story of Zheng Lin (鄭鄰) in *Yijian Zhi* (夷坚志, c. second half of 12th century), who was mistaken for another named Zheng Lin (鄭林). 夷堅甲志・卷第四十六.

[132] Eleven manuscripts of roughly the same story survive, which are classified into four versions. For the first three versions, which were largely similar, see 竇懷永, 張涌泉, 敦煌小說合集, 杭州: 浙江文藝出版社, 2010, pp. 249-63; 楊寶玉, 敦煌本佛教靈驗記校注並研究, 蘭州: 甘肅人民出版社, 2009, pp. 155-58,and pp. 331-46. For the newly published full text of the fourth version, see 竇懷永, 敦煌小說《黃仕強傳》新見寫本研究, in 敦煌學輯刊, 2018, Vol.1, pp. 14-22.

slaughter pigs was mistakenly summoned instead of another Shiqiang who slaughtered pigs, and one of the versions mentioned that the Shiqiang who slaughtered pigs was not surnamed Huang: "His name is the same [but] surname is different, why have [you] summoned him negligently?" (此名同姓別，何因浪追他來？)[133] Before Huang Shiqiang was permitted to return to life, the underworld bureaucrat ordered him to transcribe a certain Buddhist scripture (證明經) after his return, and the story itself was copied as the preface in front of this scripture, in order to demonstrate transcribing this particular scripture was a good deed. The same could be seen from the change to the iconography of Kṣitigarbha (地藏菩薩) in China and the story of the monk Daoming (道明和尚). Daoming, who was of Kaiyuan Temple in Xiangzhou (襄州開元寺), was mistakenly summoned in place of another monk named Daoming, but of Longxing Temple (龍興寺). Before returning to life, Daoming saw Kṣitigarbha, who told the monk that his depiction in devotional art had been mistaken and should be corrected according to what Daoming had seen. The text subsequently had a major influence on how Kṣitigarbha was depicted in Chinese Buddhist art.[134] Another case, which served to preach the effectiveness of Buddhist teachings, could be found in the Dunhuang version of *Mulian Rescuing His Mother from Hell* (目連救母).[135] After his descent into Hell, Mulian saw eight or nine wandering ghosts on the side of the Nai River (奈河). When Mulian asked their identity and whereabout:

> "These people answered the monk:
> Only because of having the same name and surname,
> By mistake [we] were summoned [to the underworld].
> [The officials] verified the records three or five days,
> [And we] were released to be returned.
> But [our] wives and children already buried [us] in graves,
> Leaving us alone in the barren wilderness."

These ghosts then told Mulian that they could not eat the offerings their family left on their graves, nor benefit from the paper money burnt for them. They concluded by asking Mulian to bring back a message to their living families:

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[133] This detail was found in the fourth version.

[134] See 楊寶玉, 敦煌本佛教靈驗記校注並研究, pp. 201-14, and pp. 372-77.

[135] Mulian (目連) is the Chinese name of Maudgalyāyana, one of Buddha's closest disciples. The genre *bianwen* 變文 refers to Buddhist storytelling that was popular among the common people. The moral of the entire Mulian story was that Mulian saved his mother from the tortures of hell through Buddhist good deeds.

"[We] send these words to men and women at [our] homes,
Ask them to do good deeds and save [us] from underworld misfortunes."[136]

Here the author was trying to downplay the effectiveness of more traditional Chinese rituals for the dead, such as burning paper money and making offerings at the graves, and advocated for Buddhist rituals and scripture transcription ("good deeds" 功德) which would allow these mistakenly summoned people to be saved and become able to reenter the cycle of reincarnation.

Related to the idea of mistaken summon was another equally persistent type of stories, in which the resurrected was fated to die but replaced by another. In *Soushen Ji*, a man named Xu Tai (徐泰) from Jiaxing (嘉興) dreamt of two men who showed him a record and told him his uncle, Xu Wei (徐隗), was to die. Xu Tai was an orphan raised by his uncle, thus he pled desperately for his uncle's life. "After [he had pled for] a long time, the two men said: 'In your county is there one of the same surname and name?' Tai thought of [a man], [and] told the two men: 'There is Zhang Wei (張隗), [but he is] not surnamed Xu.' The two men said: '[Such] can be forced. Considering you serve your uncle well, [we] shall let him live for your sake.'" After Xu Tai awoke, his uncle recovered from the illness.[137] Such stories might have been quite widespread at the time, because in the same collection there was already a reaction against its type: A man named Liu Chifu (劉赤父) dreamt of being summoned to become a scribe (主簿) by Jiang Hou (蔣侯), a local god.[138] As

[136] 敦煌變文匯錄, 周紹良(編), 上海: 上海出版公司, pp. 155-156.

[137] "嘉興徐泰，幼喪父母，叔父隗養之，甚於所生。隗病，泰營侍甚勤。是夜三更中，夢二人乘船持箱，上泰牀頭，發箱，出簿書示曰:「汝叔應死。」泰即於夢中叩頭祈請。良久，二人曰:「汝縣有同姓名人否？」泰思得，語二人云:「張隗，不姓徐。」二人云:「亦可強逼。念汝能事叔父，當為汝活之。」遂不復見。泰覺，叔病乃差。" 搜神記 •卷十. In *Soushen Ji*, we see also a story in Vol. 17: There was a family surnamed Chen with more than 100 members in Donglai (東萊). When cooking breakfast, the pot would not boil; when they raised the steamer (甑), a white-headed old man (possibly a dwarf) came out of the pot. The local shaman told the family that this was an extremely inauspicious omen and the entire family would die (此大怪，應滅門). To avoid the disaster they must make many weapons and barricade themselves inside the gate. They did so and later armed riders came to the gate. When they realized they could not enter the house, their general (帥) complained: "[I] told you to come quickly, [you] did not come quickly, now there is no one to be taken, how will [we] avoid punishment [for not fulfilling our duty]? North of here eighty *li* there is [a family of] a hundred and three people, take them instead." (教速來，不速來，遂無一人當去，何以解罪也？從此北行可八十里，有一百三口，取以當之。) Ten days later, this second family died completely. Their surname was also Chen.

[138] The previous story explained how Jiang Hou became a god. Jiang Ziwen (蔣子文) was a county sheriff (縣尉) towards the end of the Han Dynasty killed by robbers. After some years he appeared again, claiming that he wanted to become the *tudi* god of this place and bless its people, but that if he was not honored, he would start to create disasters. He first sent a plague, then tiny insects that went into people's ears and killed them. However, Sun Quan (孫權), then ruler of Wu, still did not believe this account. Then Jiang set fire to many places in the realm, which even reached Sun Quan's palace. Thus Sun Quan gave him the title of Zhongdu *hou* (中都侯, Marquis of Zhongdu) and had a temple raised for him. The disasters stopped, the people worshipped him greatly, and Jiang

the date came, he went to the temple to plead for his life: "[My] mother is old, [my] son is young, this [summon] is too hasty, [I] beg for release and forgiveness. Wei Guo (魏過) of Kuaiji (會稽) has many skills and talents and is good at serving gods. Please let [me] recommend him instead of myself." However, the shaman in the temple replied: "[The god] especially summoned you. Who is Wei Guo that you recommend thus?" His request was denied and he died soon after.[139]

Similarly, after the introduction of Buddhism, resurrection stories based on substitution became ladden with Buddhist elements. In *Mingbao Ji* we find the story of Ma Jiayun (馬嘉運) from Wei-*jun* (魏郡), reportedly summoned to the underworld in the first month of the sixth year of Wude (623 CE). Ma Jiayun was called to become a scribe in the underworld. Fortunately, an official Huo Zhang (霍璋) was an acquaintance of his, and taught him to testify that he did not know how to write bureaucratic documents. He thus returned to life and another named Chen Ziliang (陳子良) from Mianzhou (綿州) was called. Chen Ziliang pled that he was unlearned in letters, and recommended another Chen Ziliang (陳子良) from Wu (吳). After the first Chen Ziliang returned to life, the second Chen Ziliang died. The Buddhist influence in this story appeared thusly: First, before Ma Jiayun returned to life, Huo Zhang told Ma to take a message to his son: "On [my] deathbed [I] told you, sell the horse that I ride to build a pagoda. [How dare] you sold the horse and spent the money. Promptly do as I taught, build a pagoda." Second, Chen Ziliang of Wu, the one who ended up dying, later persistently accused Ma Jiayun (of causing his death). Though Huo Zhang had tried to protect him, it was his good deeds (saving some fish from being eaten) that prevented him from being summoned again.[140]

Ziwen came to be called Marquis Jiang, or Jiang Hou (蔣侯).

[139] "劉赤父者，夢蔣侯召為主簿。期日促，乃往廟陳請：'母老，子弱，情事過切。乞蒙放恕。會稽魏過，多材藝，善事神，請舉過自代。'因叩頭流血。廟祝曰：'特願相屈，魏過何人，而有斯舉？'赤父固請，終不許，尋而赤父死焉。" 搜神記 •卷五. It should be noted that in *Shangshu* (尚書), Jinteng (金滕), when King Wu of Zhou (周武王, died 1043 BCE) was ill, his younger brother Dan, Duke of Zhou (周公旦) pled to heaven to let the ancestor gods take him as a substitute for the king, because Dan himself "was good at serving [their] father, [had] many skills and talents, [and] was able to serve *guishen* (lit. ghosts and spirits/gods)" (予仁若考能，多材多藝，能事鬼神). The logic and reasoning of Liu Chifu was very similar to that found in Shangshu, and very likely influenced by it. It can also be observed that the idea of substitution in China had very ancient roots.

[140] 冥報記 • 卷中.

IV. Resurrection and Lifelike Corpses

From the examples cited above, we can see that the bureaucratic character of the Chinese underworld not only persisted but became well-incorporated into Buddhist beliefs of resurrection. However, if we turn back to Dan and cases similar to it, we can see some other characteristics of the traditional Chinese belief in resurrection that were seldom seen in the aforementioned stories with Buddhist influence: Dan stayed under earth for three years and was dug out of his grave, while in most of those stories, the resurrected was only dead or only appeared dead for a couple of days. Yet resurrection after a short period of death or seeming death was an equally ancient tradition in China. The spy of Qin returned to life after six days, so did later cases such as Zhao Chun and Chen Jiao. The reason of the triumph of this type of stories was understandable: They could have factual basis in near-death encounters and thus were much more experiential. However, strange stories in which the dead returned to life after a prolonged period under earth and through an extremely complicated process did not only exist but continued to persist in the time when Buddhism had already been popularized in China.

For example, *Luoyang Qielan Ji* (洛陽伽藍記, 6th century) recorded the following story: When a monk was taking bricks from old graves to build Buddhist temples, he found a living man inside, whose name was Cui Han (崔涵). Cui Han told that he had died when he was fifteen and stayed beneath earth for twelve years. Even after he recovered, he was afraid of sunlight and could not look up, and also afraid of water, fire and bladed weapons. He also told others: "Make caskets out of cypress, do not use mulberry for the interior." When asked why, he said: "I saw beneath the earth ghostly soldiers being summoned. One ghost pled: '[My] casket is cypress. [I] should be exempt.' [But] the magistrate in charge of soldiers said: 'Though yours is a cypress casket, the interior was mulberry.' And did not exempt [him]." After his words spread, the price of cypress drastically increased, and people suspected casket merchants paid him to tell the story.[141]

Several recurring elements from this story showed that it belonged to the

[141] When Cui Han described his experience in the grave, he described it in the following way: "Often [it] was like lying drunk, there was no [need to] eat. Sometimes [I] also wandered, [and] sometimes there happened to be food. [I] was like in a dream, [and] could not experience [things] clearly." (常似醉臥，無所食也。時復游行，或遇飯食。如似夢中，不甚辨了。) Cui Han's parents refused to acknowledge him, and he wandered the streets of Luoyang. He was described as always walking very fast on the main roads, and stopped completely when he was tired, never walking slowly, and people regarded him as a ghost.

same tradition as Dan: the belief in the underworld bureaucratic power, the resurrected's incomplete recovery or ghostly characteristics, the telling of burial prohibitions as related to the dead's experience in the underworld. The most prominent characteristic of this kind of stories, namely the extensive length the resurrected stayed under ground, was very counterintuitive and could not possibly have any factual basis. Similarly counterintuitive was another kind of story. When Cui Han was discovered and brought before the Emperor Ming (r. 515-28) and Empress Dowager as a marvelous occurrence. In a more traditional manner, the Empress saw the event as aberrant and inauspicious. But Xu He (徐紇), a palace official, replied: "During the Wei Dynasty a tomb was opened, [and] a house slave of Fan Mingyou (范明友), [who was] Huo Guang's son-in-law, was found. [The slave] talked about the dethronement and ascension of Han emperors, just as the histories recorded. This is not a strange matter."[142] The historical Fan Mingyou died in 66 BCE, preceding the Wei dynasty mentioned here by approximately three centuries.

From Xu He's narration, it could be sensed that whether in their respective logics or in people's understandings, the two types of stories were often associated together. Examples of living persons being buried for a long time were also plentiful. Xu He's knowledge of this occurrence was very probably from *Bowu Zhi* (博物志, by Zhang Hua 張華, c. 290 CE),[143] in which another similar event was recorded: "Towards the end of the Han dynasty there were great disturbances in [the region of] Guanzhong. [Grave robbers] opened the grave of a palace maid from Western Han, [and] the palace maid was still alive. . . . [When Empress Guo of Wei (184-235)] asked [her] about things in the Han palace, [she] spoke [of them] clearly, in well-organized form." The maid had thus been underground for at least two centuries.

Records like this were indeed quite common. In *Soushen Ji*, an unnamed woman was said to have been buried under earth for thirty years before she was dug out alive (the tree on her grave was about thirty years old);[144] a maid

[142] "昔魏時發冢，得霍光女婿范明友家奴，說漢朝廢立，與史書相符，此不足為異也。"

[143] Xu He's statement was almost taken verbatim from *Bowu Zhi*, which recorded "end of the Han dynasty" (漢末) instead of "during the Wei dynasty" (魏時). Taking the two terms together, this would have indicated that the event took place when Cao Cao was the King of Wei and *de facto* ruler of Northern China. This coincided with Cao Cao's reputation for robbing ancient graves to sustain his finances. Pei Songzhi (裴松之)'s commentary to the *Book of Wei* of *Sanguo Zhi* dated a relevant event under the twelfth month of the first year of Qinglong (233 CE) in Cao Pi's reign, and recorded that this house slave was three hundred and fifty years old. (世語曰：並州刺史畢軌送漢故度遼將軍范明友鮮卑奴，年三百五十歲，言語飲食如常人。奴云："霍顯，光后小妻。明友妻，光前妻女。")

[144] In Pei Songzhi (裴松之)'s commentary to the *Book of Wei*, it was said that this record came from *Fuzi* (傅子 by Fu Xuan 傅玄, 217-278), which predated *Soushen Ji* and was possibly copied by the latter.

of Du Xi (杜錫) was accidentally buried in the grave for more than ten years.[145] Another record of a marvelous event as such was attached to the author of *Soushen Ji*. Gan Bao's mother was prone to jealousy and pushed his father's concubine into the grave when his father was buried. After ten years, his mother died and the grave was reopened to bury her with his father, and the concubine was found alive on his father's casket.[146]

The prevalence of such records of factually impossible events makes one wonder what beliefs sustained them. Another category of somewhat related records might reveal the reason. For example, also in *Soushen Ji*, it was recorded that during the reign of Sun Xiu of Wu, many graves were destroyed in order that their stones and bricks could be taken to build the city walls of Guangling (廣陵). In one large and splendid tomb, the soldiers "broke the casket, [and found] there was a man inside the casket, [whose] hair was hoary, [whose] apparels were unfaded, [and whose] face and body were like [those of] a living person."[147] Another record told of Feng *guiren* (馮貴人), a imperial concubine of Emperor Huan of Han (漢桓帝). Her grave was robbed more than seventy years after her death, and she was found as "[her] colours were as before, only her flesh was slightly cold." The grave robbers then raped her body together, to the extent that they fought over it and their crime was discovered.[148]

Just as the records of finding living persons after many years in a grave, records of life-like corpses discovered in old graves were also numerous. *Xijing Zaji* (西京雜記)[149] told of a King of Guangchuan named Quji (廣川王去疾 or Liu Qu 劉去, died 70 BCE), who had the unfortunate hobby of opening ancient tombs in his kingdom. It was said that he opened "countless" tombs, of which "a hundred or so" had been "marvelous". Seven of these tombs were described in the book, and three of them contained lifelike corpses: In the grave of the Qiequ, Prince of Wei (魏王子且渠)[150], "on the bed [there were] two bodies, a man and a woman, both in their twenties, [with] head [towards] the east, lying naked with neither clothes nor coverings. [Their] skin and colours were like living persons, [and their] hair, teeth and nails were also like

[145] Both in 搜神記・卷十五.
[146] 搜神後記・第四卷.
[147] 搜神記・卷十五.
[148] 搜神記・卷十五.
[149] The authorship of *Xijing Zaji* was disputed. It was traditionally attributed to Liu Xin (劉歆, died 23 CE) or Ge Hong (葛洪, 283-343).
[150] This Prince of Wei was not recorded in history. The Kingdom of Wei in the Warring State Period existed 344-225 BCE.

living persons." In the grave of Duke Ling of Jin (晉靈公, died 607 BCE), "the casket had decayed [but] the body still had not decayed." Finally, in the grave of Duke You of Jin (晉幽公, died 416 BCE),[151] they "saw more than a hundred bodies ... all [of which] did not decay. There was only one man, the remainder were all women ... Their clothes, forms and colours were no different from the living." Such records continued, as, for example, in *Guangyi Ji*, wherein was found a description of the robbery of the tomb of Hua *fei* (華妃), an imperial concubine of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang (唐玄宗): About two decades after her death, "[the graverobbers] cut [open] the casket. The *fei*'s face was as living. [Her] four limbs could all bend [and] stretch. The robbers dishonoured [the body] without restraint."[152]

This last category of records was not completely fictitious, and had been verified by archeological findings. The body of Xin Zhui (辛追, wife of the Marquis of Dai 軑侯), who died in 163 BCE, was unearthed by archeologists in 1972 after more than two millennia under ground: The body's decay stopped at an early stage, many soft tissues retained considerable elasticity. Xin Zhui's hair, most of the teeth and even eyelashes were also preserved, and skin pores and fingerprints could be seen in some places. The joints in the body's limbs could be bent slightly. Her caskets and silken fabrics in clothing chests were also largely preserved.[153] The descriptions of modern archeologists corresponded to what ancient graverobbers were reported to have seen.

The marvelously intact conditions of ancient corpses were enabled by the unique funerary practices of ancient China.[154] Among the Chinese aristocracy, there was a rather zealous pursuit of the undecayed body: In the Chinese underworld, the dead lived lives not too different from the living; therefore,

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[151] The text said "King You (幽王)", but based on historical records and the territory of the Kingdom of Guangchuan, scholars have suggested that this most probably referred to Duke You of Jin. See 續博物志疏證.

[152] 廣異記.

[153] 馬王堆一號漢墓女尸研究的幾個問題, 文物, 1973 (07), pp. 74-80. On the body of Xin Zhui and her tomb, see also 長沙馬王堆一號漢墓, 湖南省博物館 and 中國科學院考古研究所 ed., two volumes (北京: 文物出版社, 1973).

[154] A male corpse in even better condition was excavated in 1975. The tomb was dated to 167 BCE (漢文帝十三年). See 湖北江陵鳳凰山一六八號漢墓發掘簡報, in 文物, 1975 (09), pp. 1-22. On the techniques of preservation, see 商承祚, 談西漢軟體尸保存問題——從馬王堆到鳳凰山, in 學術研究, 1978 (01), pp. 136-39. On its relationship with later Daoist tradition, see 李零, 中國方術考 (北京: 東方出版社, 2000), pp. 306-23. Cedzich discussed beliefs and theoretical questions related to corpse preservation, as well as its relationship to *shijie*. She linked bodily preservation to the story of Zhao Chengzi, whose body was found decayed but the "five viscera" were "still alive". From this Zhao Chengzi resurrected. Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "Corpse Deliverance, Substitute Bodies, Name Change, and Feigned Death: Aspects of Metamorphosis and Immortality in Early Medieval China", Journal of Chinese Religions 29 (2001), pp. 17-23. However, I do not think the connection between Zhao Chengzi's resurrection and the practice of corpse preservation was a very solid one. For the problem of *shijie*, see infra.

the condition of the body was of significant concern. There were many measures that sought to achieve this end – e.g. jade in mouth, jade on eyes, using jade to stuff holes in the body, even entire clothes made out of jade pieces.[155] These measures were believed to be able to seal *qi* (氣, living force) within the body to keep the body undecayed. However, this was an entirely superstitious belief, because jade had no scientific properties that delayed the process of decay. Nevertheless, other measures such as the complete sealing of tombs – which might have supposedly served to prevent the leaking of *qi* – and the extensive use of cinnabar and mercury to drive away the inauspicious (驅邪), did indeed serve to prevent the decay of dead bodies. These techniques of corpse preservation could only be afforded by the highest aristocracy, and thus was exclusive to that class, which corresponded to stories in which undecayed bodies were typically found in such aristocratic graves. This might explain why stories of undecayed body were especially prevalent in China.

While the luxurious funerary practices were exclusive to the aristocratic class, stories about remaining alive or returning to life after being buried for a long time seldom belonged to this class and were often associated with the common people or classes closer to them. The lifelike bodies produced by aristocratic burial practices very probably provided the indispensable soil from which the imagination of long-buried living persons and, going one step further, of long-dead resurrections came to be sustained. However, once it entered the popular imagination, it was no longer monopolized as the funeral procedures themselves were. In this sense, the lifelike bodies in real tombs generated imaginations of resurrections.

[155] On the extensive use of jade in aristocratic graves, see, for example, the excavation report of the graves of Liu Sheng (劉勝, who ruled over the Kingdom of Zhongshan during 154-113 BCE in Western Han) and his queen. 中國社會科學院考古研究所, 河北省文物管理處, 滿城漢墓發掘報告 (北京: 文物出版社, 1980), pp. 36-37; pp. 244-46. See also, generally, Li Shuicheng, "Eternal Glory: The Origins of Eastern Jade Burial and Its Far-reaching Influence", in *Death Rituals and Social Order in the Ancient World: "Death Shall Have No Dominion"*, Colin Renfrew, Michael J. Boyd and Iain Morley eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 315-327.

Chapter 3: Parallels and Crossroads

I. Decay and Incorruptibility

These long-existing Chinese beliefs in bodies that remained undecayed after long periods are reminiscent of another type of equally pervasive beliefs regarding the undecayed state of bodies – the incorruptible bodies of saints. Ambrose had described in a letter to his sister how the remains of two martyrs, Saints Gervase and Protase, were discovered in Milan: "We found two men of marvellous stature, such as those of ancient days. All the bones were perfect, and there was much blood."[156] And in a subsequent passage: "The glorious relics are taken out of an ignoble burying-place, the trophies are displayed under heaven. The tomb is wet with blood. The marks of the bloody triumph are present, the relics are found undisturbed in their order, the head separated from the body."[157] From Ambrose's descriptions, it seems that what had been discovered were two skeletons laid with their bones in order, along with blood-like liquids in their tombs. However, in *Confessions*, Augustine described the discovery of the two saints' bodies with praise to God: "quae per tot annos incorrupta in thesauro secreti tui reconderas".[158] Although Augustine was also in Milan at that time,[159] Ambrose's description seemed to be closer to the fact, not only because Ambrose was present at the discovery, but also because in terms of degree of miraculous occurrences, truly "incorrupta" bodies likely would not be described as bones. However, Augustine might not have embellished the condition of the bodied on purpose. He probably conceived the matter as such in accordance with the Christian theological conception of bodily resurrection in a perfect form.[160]

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[156] Ambrosius, *Epistola* XXII. 2, trans. H. de Romestin et al., in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 10* (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1896).
[157] Ibid. 12.
[158] *S. Aureli Augustini Confessionum*, Lib. IX, c. 6-7, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vol. 33(1), pp. 208-209.
[159] St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XXII.8.
[160] For bodily decay and resurrection in Augustine's thought, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 94-104. Notably, Ambrose had a more spiritual understanding of the final resurrection. (ibid., p. 110). Thus Ambrose might have been less concerned about the problem of bodily decay. Augustine's North African background – the tradition of mummification and the concern over bodily preservation – might have also contributed as underlying influences. An example of such North African belief could be found in one passage of Augustine's *Confessions* that his mother would, following North African customs, pay respect to graves with food and drinks (corrected by Ambrose's direction in Milan): "Itaque cum ad memorias sanctorum, sicut in Africa solebat, pultes et panem et merum attulisset atque ab ostiario prohiberetur..." This might hint at a more materialist conception of the world after death in North African popular belief. S. Aureli Augustini, *Confessionum*, Lib. VI, 2. This could also be seen in the Apocrypha with Egyptian backgrounds, e.g. The *History of Joseph the Carpenter* (probably Byzantine Egypt, late 6th to early 7th century), in which Jesus carefully preserved Joseph's body from corruption, and previously "the

This divergence between Ambrose's and Augustine's reports implied how bodies could become increasingly more miraculous towards incorruptibility, and how specific religious conceptions could provide the basis for the continued promulgation of such beliefs.

More concrete cases of the incorruptibility of saints' bodies were recorded in 7th and 8th century Northern Europe, notably England.[161] In most of the early cases, the tomb was opened for reburial after several years, and the undecayed body thus accidentally discovered. For example, Venerable Bede told how when the grave of St. Aethlthryth (died 679) was opened sixteen years later for reburial, her body as well as the linen in the grave were undecayed. A tumour from which she suffered before death was discovered to have miraculously disappeared.[162] Similarly, in his hagriograph of St. Cuthbert (died 687), Bede described that when the saint's grave was opened after nine years, the body was still intact, the joints were movable, and the clothes did not decay – a number of contemporaneous *vitae* recorded the same event.[163]

In the examples above, the bodies remained uncorrupted because of their sanctity, that is, out of fundamentally religious reasons.[164] The pursuit of an undecayed body as the image of a perfect body rising after the Last Judgment could be seen from, for example, Aethlthryth's healed tumour. This perspective made them differ considerably from records of undecayed bodies in China, which were recounted without clear religious motivation, and continual to exist within a mystical atmosphere as marvelous events, appreciated out of curiosity. Even when some of the indisputedly factual experiences – the seemingly miraculous preservation of a corpse, which we today know to be sometimes permitted under very specific and rare

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angels took [Joseph's] soul and wrapped it in finest linen packages", a description which the commentator found similar to mummification. History of Joseph the Carpenter, in *The Other Gospels: Accounts of Jesus from Outside the New Testament*, eds. and trans. Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Plese (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 78-95, esp. 90-92.

[161] The fact that early cases were discovered in Northern Europe might indicate that climate was an important enabling factor for such beliefs.

[162] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, IV.19.

[163] For other cases of incorruptibility in England, see the notes in Cynthia Turner Camp, *Anglo-Saxon Saints' Lives as History Writing in Late Medieval England*, (Boydell and Brewer, 2015), pp. 44-45.

[164] The later prevalence of this belief in continental Europe, and its religious significance, was discussed in Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, pp. 210-211, 222-223. A somewhat different case could be found in the fourteenth-century Middle-English poem *St. Erkenwald*, which described the people of London finding a large pagan tomb in which the intact body of a righteous pagan judge was discovered. St. Erkenwald spoke to the corpse; upon learning the corpse's soul yet suffered in hell, his tears became holy water, baptizing the corpse, which then decayed into dust. The reason for the corpse's preservation, however, was similarly due to the grace of God. Commentators had traditionally associated this story with the legend of Saint Gregory and Trajan, who was said to have resurrected, received baptism and died again by the saint's prayers. See *St. Erkenwald (Bishop of London 675-693)*, ed. Sir Israel Gollancz (London: Oxford University Press, 1922).

circumstances that could nevertheless occur by chance – might have been similar, these events were perceived and interpreted in completely different fashions. Therefore, though the appearances were similar, their reasons for formation and transmission were different. In terms of their narratives and unstated assumptions, in terms of their meanings and places in broader systems of belief, and in terms of who believed and retold these marvelous stories and why, the apparent similarities began to dissolve into their interwoven cultural contexts. A comparison, in this sense, reveals less about the beliefs themselves than about the fundamental differences in the cultures that formed them.

II. Mistaken Identity: East and West

The case of mistaken identity might be more complicated. Once present in the works of Classical writers like Plutarch and Lucian, stories about a man mistakenly summoned by underworld officials disappeared in the West after Gregory the Great, possibly because of the decline of the Roman bureaucratic system in Western Europe. However, such accounts still appeared somewhat out of place when placed and examined within the Classical myths and religious beliefs about the underworld. In the beginning of the last book of the *Odyssey*, the slain suitors were led to the underworld by Hermes with his golden wand.[165] In Euripides's *Alcestis*, the dying queen exclaimed that she saw Charon calling to her, and then "winged Hades" himself taking her.[166] Death could be ordained or determined by some process, but this process was highly mysterious, hardly open to humanly error and (sometimes) could not even be controlled by gods.[167] In the *Iliad*, Zeus weighed the *keres* of Hector

[165] "Then Hermes of Cyllene summoned the ghosts of the suitors, and in his hand he held the fair golden wand with which he seals men's eyes in sleep or wakes them as he pleases; with this he roused the ghosts and led them, while they followed whining and gibbering behind him. As bats flying squealing in the hollow of some great cave, when one of them has fallen out of the cluster in which they hang, even so did the ghosts whine and squeal as Hermes the healer of sorrow led them down into the dark abode of death. When they had passed the waters of Okeanos and the rock Leukas, they came to the gates of the sun and the dêmos of dreams, whereon they reached the meadow of asphodel where dwell the souls and shadows of them that can labor no more." Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Samuel Butler (London: A.C. Fifield, 1900), Book 24. This scene largely accorded with what Odysseus saw of the underworld in Book 11, describing an inanimate, shadowy underworld. Book 11 also described the underworld judge Minos: "Then I saw Minos son of Zeus with his golden scepter in his hand sitting in judgment on the dead, and the ghosts were gathered sitting and standing round in the spacious house of Hades, to learn his sentences upon them."

[166] Euripides, *Alcestis* (trans. David Kovacs), lines 252-256, 259-263. ("Someone is taking, is taking me (don't you see him?) away to the court of the dead. It is winged Hades, glowering from beneath his dark brows. What do you want? Let me go! Ah, what a journey it is that I, unhappiest of women, am making!")

[167] In the singular and exceptional case when Apollo "beguiled the ancient goddessed with wine" to save Admetus's life, the latter still must provide a substitute to death. Aeschylus, *Eumenides* (trans. Herbert Weir Smyth), lines 723-726.

and Achilles to decided who would die.[168] *Theogony* described the "ruthless avenging Fates ... who give men at their birth both evil and good to have, and they pursue the transgressions of men and of gods."[169] Moreover, Socrates contrasted the injustice of this world with the justice of the other: "For if, having escaped from those people there who claim to be judges, and having arrived in Hades, one finds true judges, just those who are said to sit in judgment there, Minos, Rhadamantys, Aeacus, Triptolemos and all the other half-gods who were just during their lives, would that be a bad way to go abroad?"[170] In all of these accounts, the messengers and judges of the underworld were gods or demi-gods, sometimes subject to the governings of fate even above and beyond their control. While the role of fate was not as prominent in Roman beliefs,[171] the Roman underworld inherited much from the Greek one, especially among the literary classes. In the *Aeneid*, Minos remained to serve as the judge of the underworld.[172] Horace, mourning the death of Quintilius – a mutual friend of his and Vergil's – lamented Mercury's role as the taker of the dead.[173] Some other writers dismissed such representations as myths[174] or satirized them in comical manners,[175] but their discussions and descriptions of the underworld was nevertheless largely based upon the traditional one.

It is thus difficult to see where the room for mistaken summon could have arisen in a Greco-Roman underworld, who the "white-clothed youth" that was supposedly Pluto's servant had been in Lucian's tale, or why the youths in Plutarch's tale believed officials of the underworld could be bribed.[176] Moreover, the characteristics of the traditional Classical

[168] Homer, *The Iliad*, Book 22.
[169] Hesiod, *Theogony* (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White), lines 215-220.
[170] Plato, *The Apology of Socrates*. See Alice van Harten, "Socrates on Life and Death", Cambridge Classical Journal 57 (2011), pp. 165-183. Socrates (or Plato) might not necessarily believe this, but it would have reflected at least some beliefs of his time. As we saw in the Myth of Er, the Moirai, "daughters of necessity", also governed human fate.
[171] Noel Robertson and B.C. Dietrich, "Fate," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[172] Vergil, *Aeneid*. VI.431-433 ("Nec vero hae sine sorte datae, sine iudice, sedes: quaesitor Minos urnam movet; ille silentum / conciliumque vocat vitasque et crimina discit.").
[173] Horace, *Odes*, I.24.
[174] E.g., Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*. ("Adeone me delirare censes, ut ista esse credam?")
[175] See, for example, Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*, *Charon*, and *Menippus*, etc.
[176] The problem of the mysteries tradition was too vast and complicated to be fully dealt with here, especially due to the scarcity and vagueness of the materials remaining to us. However, it could be certain that the concept of mistaken summon was even less concordant with this tradition, which emphasized ritual purity, as well as rewards and punishments in the afterlife based on moral judgments. For example, the Orphic Hymn to Plouton: "You alone were born to judge deeds obscure and conspicuous". In *The Orphic Hymns*, trans. Apostolos N. Athanassakis and Benjamin M. Wolkow (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 18. Moreover, in the entities that participated in the underworld, it differed not too much from Homer. For example, the Orphic Hymn to the Chthonic Hermes presented a depiction similar to Homer's: "You dwell on the road all must take, the road of no return, by the Kokytos, / you guide the souls of mortals to the nether gloom." 57. For Orphic beliefs about the underworld, see Radcliffe G. Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes and the "Orphic"*

underworld were highly mythic and static, emphasizing the sterility of Hades.[177] By contrast, such beliefs about fallible, bribable underground officials and a bureaucratic process of summoning the dead seemd to presume the imagination of a lively underworld that extensively mirrored the world of the living. Possibly because the mirroring of reality was a commonly satirical characteristic, one commentator interpreted the mistaken summon story in Plutarch as "comical". However, as it had been discussed in Chapter 1, based on the natures of the four cases of mistaken identity found in Classical and early Christian texts, it did not seem that they constituted a self-reproducing literary tradition with a singular source: the variations in their details suggested that they were likely drawn separately from oral or different unknown sources. Furthermore, the appearance of the blacksmiths and shoemaker might not be coincidental. Both occupations were associated with death and the underworld in later European folkloric traditions, and the existence of these stories might suggest such popular beliefs had already come into existence in Roman times.[178] This distinctive characteristic of this body of belief indicated either that it was the result of a cultural transmission but had already become well-melded with existing local beliefs, or that it was generated indigenously from the common people's experience and imagination about the bureaucratic system. However, they never truly enter into the more literary high culture, and thus did not leave more traces of the

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Gold Tablets (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Alberto Bernabe and Ana Isabel Jimenez San Cristobal, *Instructions for the Netherworld: The Orphic Gold Tablets* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

[177] See, e.g., A. Henrich, "Hades", in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, noting that Hades "was not a recipient of cult. Like Thanatos, he was indifferent to prayer or offerings." And that his "union [to Persephone] was without issue; its infertility mirrors that of the nether world".

[178] Blacksmiths were popularly associated with the devil, hell and sometimes even rebirth in the Middle Ages. See Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, trans. Stephen Corrin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 106-108. The theme of blacksmiths cheating the devil or Death seemed to also have been prevalent, possibly because they were perceived to be crafty. The late-fourth-century *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, whose Greek original had been lost (a roughly contemporaneous Latin translation survived), recounted a story of a former-blacksmith, now-monk defying the Devil with marvelous abilities: "Quodam autem tempore, cum ad fabrilia opera vigilaret in silentio noctis, conversus diabolus in formam mulieris speciosae, venit ad eum tamquam aliquid operis ei deferens. Tum ille arreptum manu nuda de fornace ferrum candens, in faciem ejus injecit. At illa clamans et ululans aufugit, ita ut omnes fratres, qui in circuitu commanebant, ululatum ejus fugientis audirent, et ex eo jam vir ille in usu habuit, ferrum candens manu nuda tenere, nec laedi." This marvelous ability had no scriptural precedent. Andrew Cain, *The Greek Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 154. Thus it most likely bore testimony to a then-prevalent belief in the power of blacksmiths through their craft and their ability to defy nefarious, otherworldly agents. A medieval version could be found in the legend of Saint Dunstan, who used his blacksmith tools to defy the devil. See Hilary Powell, "Demonic Daydreams: Mind-Wandering and Mental Imagery in the Medieval Hagiography of St Dunstan", in *New Medieval Literature* 18 (2018), pp. 44-74. Stories in which the blacksmith's power was presented in a more sinister light did not seem to have survived from the Classical period, but medieval visions described demonic smiths in their infernal environments. See, e.g., Visio Tundali. A fourteenth-century poem complaining about the noises and odours of blacksmiths' forge might provide some social context for such beliefs. See George Edmondson, "The Noise of Neighbors: An Essay on 'The Blacksmiths' and Unrelated Matters", in *Modern Philology* 117 (2019). Finally we have the story of the Smith cheating the Devil of his soul in Brothers Grimm. On shoemakers, recall the story in *De nugis curialium* Dist.iv 12, in which the shoemaker of Constantinople had sex with the body of a dead lady with whom he had been enamoured. See Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, ed. Montague Rhodes James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), pp. 364-69.

much larger background from which they came into existance. As a result, such stories remained foreign to the more cohesive (though not unchanging) body of myths and legends recorded or produced by Classical writers.

In this case, the possibility of cultural transmission could not be decisively ruled out. The setup and the inner logic of these stories were very well-accounted for within the Chinese traditional underworld, which was populated by ghosts who ate, drank, got married, made merry, had their belongings confiscated, and served as soldiers or bureaucrats as they had done in life.[179] All their developments and possible variations could be fully and clearly traced. However, given that existent materials were not sufficient to establish possible missing links, the attempt to trace such stories to a common origin might be, in the end, futile. Yet this defect does not render the study of these stories and their respective characteristics meaningless. They could serve as lenses that reflected the imaginations of living people, within their respective social and cultural environments, not only of the afterlife, but also of this one.

All the mistaken summon stories recorded in Europe were noticeably urban. Furthermore, the mistakenly summoned man and the man fated to die always lived in the same city. By contrast, Chinese stories of mistaken summons could span hundreds of kilometres. In the story with the two Chen Ziliang, the initially summoned Ma Jiayun was from Wei-*jun*, in modern-day Hebei and Henan (northern China); the first summoned Chen Ziliang was from Mianzhou, in modern-day Sichuan (southwestern China); the second Chen Ziliang was from Wu, around modern-day Jiangsu (southeastern China).[180] Hundreds if not thousands of kilometres separated any one of these locations from the other.

This might have been a reflection of the respective imaginations about the extent of bureaucratic power in the two cultural environments. While the

[179] This might have been characteristic of primordial popular beliefs in general. For example, Heinrich von Herford recorded a strange event said to have occurred in 1349 in the town of Cyrenbergh, into which came a ghost named Reyneke who could only be seen as a hand. Reyneke said he was a good Christian baptized in Gottingen, and he lived with the other dead "in monte Kyrkenberch ... qui est juxta opidum Cyrenbergh." As to what they did, he said: "Comedimus, bibimus, uxores ducimus, generamus, filias desponsamus et filiis uxores accipimus, seminamus, motimus et alia qualibet sicut et vos facimus." He said they were the good dead, who lived in Kyrkenberch, but the bad dead lived in Mount Berenberch, "illi vero ribaldi sunt, disturbia multa suscitantes et terras involventes". Quite impressively, this ghost was able to provide a great feast for his host ("mensam pulchram cum omnibus requisitis, pane triticeo, vino bono, cervisia bona, carnibus lixis, et assis et ferina"). He also claimed to be able to give a man good fortunes. Henrici de Hervordia, *Liber de rebus memorabilioribus sive chronicon* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1859), pp. 279-280.

[180] See 譚其驤, 中國歷史地圖集・隋唐五代十國時期 (北京: 中國地圖出版社, 1982).

ancient Roman state exercised considerable power over long distances, it relied extensively on governance by local elites and often preserved the social hierarchies of the societies they conquered.[181] The Roman census was seen to be extraordinarily burdensome and disruptive in provincial societies, and was frequently resisted.[182] The policing power was also shared between Imperial and local authorities.[183] By contrast, the bureaucratic nature of the Chinese state allowed it to exercise considerably tighter control over the local population, especially with the implementation of the *huji* (戶籍, household registration) system since the unification of China under the Qin Dynasty. The laws of Qin required households and persons to register in their places of residence,[184] and bamboo slips have been unearthed that preserved detailed household records in local villages from 3rd century BCE.[185] Also according to excavated documents, the laws of early Han required census to be conducted every year in the eighth month, and all changes of residence be recorded within ten days under penalty of a fine of four *liang* of gold.[186] Internal borders and roads were controlled, thus official documents were required for travel and migration.[187] For example, in the bamboo slips unearthed at Zhangjiashan, we find the following report and answer probably from late-3rd

[181] E.g., Greg Woolf noted: "Imperial aristocracies thus depended on devolving a great part of their running costs on local elites of various sorts: creoles, descendants of traditional rulers, new cadres recruited from subject societies, and the like. Ancient empires were therefore of necessity tolerant of regional diversity …… The early Roman empire of the first three centuries of the Common Era broadly conforms to this pattern …… The early empire was divided into provinces, but each governor presided over a large number of semi-autonomous communities, most notionally organized as republics, but in fact differing from one another widely except in their duties to the Roman state …… The communities of the Empire had their own cults, constitutions, generally their own laws, and often their own monetary systems." Greg Woolf, "Inventing empire in ancient Rome", in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 311-322. For Roman Egypt, see Alan K. Bowman and Dominic Rathbone, "Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt", Journal of Roman Studies 82 (1992): pp. 107-127; for the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean, see Myles Lavan, Richard E. Payne and John Weisweiler eds., *Cosmopolitanism and Empire: Universal Rulers, Local Elites and Cultural Integration in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016). See also C. J. Howgego, Volker Heuchert and Andrew M. Burnett eds., *Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005) on issues of coinage and identity in Roman cities.

[182] See Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 351-354. A memorable and illustrative example is the following: "When the emperor Claudius urged the Senate to favor his grant of senatorial status to nobles of Gaul, he illustrated the law-abiding nature of the Gauls by reminding the Senate that they had not revolted during the taking of the first census in their province." p. 352.

[183] See generally Christopher Fuhrmann, *Policing the Roman Empire: Soldiers, Administration, and Public Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[184] For an overview of the implementation of the household registration system in the Qin Dynasty, see Robert D.S. Yates, "Introduction: The Empire of the Scribes", in *Birth of an Empire: the State of Qin Revisited* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), pp. 150-153.

[185] See 黎明釗, 里耶秦簡:戶籍檔案的探討, 中國史研究, 2009(2), pp. 5-23; 沈剛, 里耶秦簡所見民戶簿籍管理問題, 中國經濟史研究, 2015(04), pp. 94-144. See also Hsing I-tien, "Qin-Han Census, Tax and Corvée Administration", in *Birth of an Empire: the State of Qin Revisited* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), pp. 155-186.

[186] 黃錦前, 張家山漢簡《二年律令》校釋 (MA Thesis, Wuhan University, 2005).

[187] See, e.g., Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 55-57, on passports and road checkpoints. Gaodi Ce (告地策) were their counterparts for "moving" to the underworld, see supra. For a comprehensive study of the types of travel documents in Qin and Han, see 李曉偉, 秦漢通行憑證研究 (MA Thesis, Henan University, 2016).

or early-2nd century BCE:[188] "The *shou* of Beidi (北地守) submitted: A slave (奴, or indentured servant) Yi (宜) fled, passed the fortress road [and] left from the territory guarded by *shuzu guan dafu* (戍卒官大夫, a guard officer) [named] You (有), [and] was not caught. How to punish [You]? The *ting-wei* (廷尉, highest juridical minister) answered: You should be [sentenced to] *nai* (耐, shaving the beard) [with] *shu* (贖, possibility to pay a fine instead)."[189]

These laws and the extensive bureaucracy that enforced them, which were rotated around the country, generated the deeply ingrained experiences of a state that exerted its power both widely and deeply, along with its errors, corruptions and cruelties. In *Dingming Lu* (定命錄, lit. records of determined fate), there was the following account of a real-life mistaken summon: "[During the] Tang [dynasty], Zeng Qin (曾勤) was the county sheriff of Guantao in Weizhou (魏州館陶縣尉), [and there was] an order to apprehend one possessor of *yao* books (妖書) Wang Zhi (王直) hiding within the county. The *cishi* (Zeng Qin's superior) Jiang Qinxu (蔣欽敘, c. 660-745) reported to higher authorities: '[If] the criminal was not apprehended within a hundred days, [I myself and all my subordinates will] receive a medium-low evaluation (中下考).'" Over fifty days had already passed and Zeng Qin was presumably becoming worried, but a shaman (巫) told him he will come to no harm. After a hundred days, Wang Zhi was still not apprehended, thus Zeng Qin (as well as Jiang Qinxu) lost his salary. However, the Emperor at the time was making ritual offerings at his ancestral graves and issued a pardon (巡陵恩赦), thus Zeng Qin came to no harm as the shaman predicted. Nevertheless, despite sending out officials to search for Wang Zhi, their efforts came to no avail. "Then another diviner said: 'On such month and such date, Wang Zhi will definitely be caught [and] sent [here] with hands tied behind his back.' Indeed someone in the territory of Xiangzhou (相州) caught another Wang Zhi, [who] was sent with hands tied behind his back on said date." However, when they interrogated this Wang Zhi, it turned out he was not the Wang Zhi

[188] Though this particular case was not dated, there were twenty-two cases reported on a total of 227 bamboo slips identified as *Zou Yan Shu* (Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases). With the exception of two (likely historical) cases from the Spring and Autumn Period (8th to 5th century BCE), the remainder, where dated, were from either the reign of Qin Shi Huang (reigned 247-221 BCE as King of Qin, and 221-210 BCE as Emperor) or of Han Gaozu (reigned 206-202 BCE as King of Han, 202-195 BCE as Emperor). See 李学勤,《奏谳书》解说(上), 文物, 1993 (8), pp. 26-31. Note also that out of the twenty cases from Qin and Han, eight dealt prominently with absconding, passports, internal borders, etc.

[189] 江陵张家山汉简整理小组, 江陵张家山汉简《奏谳书》释文(一), 文物, 1993(8), pp. 22-25. ("北地守讞：奴宜亡，越塞道。戍卒官大夫有署出，弗得，疑罪。廷報：有當贖耐。") For an English translation and notes, see Anthony J. Barbieri-Low and Robin D.S. Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China: A Study with Critical Edition and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 1240-1244.

they were looking for, and they let him go.[190]

This event was probably recorded because of the allegedly accurate prophecy of the diviner, a rare occurrence. However, in a highly strict bureaucratic system that exerted considerable pressure on lower-level officials like Zeng Qin to apprehend wanted criminals without the assistance of photography and fingerprinting, one could only imagine such events did not occur infrequently. The geographic reach over which the state effectively exercised its power was also considerable. The capital of Xiangzhou during Tang is at Anyang (安陽), while Guantao is near Handan (邯鄲). Today, travelling by highway, the distance is roughly 76 kilometres.

Thus, it might have been difficult for Roman plebians to imagine low-level bureaucrats acting in coordination between cities or provinces, but for their Chinese contemporaries, such imagination was grounded in factual experience. The Classical and early-medieval stories of mistaken summons to the underworld were grounded in a world where the city (not cities) remained the focus of social life and popular imagination. While the bureaucracy was able to exercise considerable power within the city and in its vicinities, the projection of its power – or of the overarching power of a state – outside its boundaries seemed to be of secondary importance.[191] By contrast, the tight social control exercised by Chinese rulers since antiquity meant that it was easy for the population to imagine the projection of a central power over long distances. On the other hand, it should have been difficult for the population to imagine that such mistakes could take place in a small geographic area. The limited mobility and strict control on movements meant

[190] The original work had been lost, but this story survived in 太平廣記・卷第二百八十三. Judging by the *cishi* Jiang Qinxu, this story likely took place in early 8th century (Jiang was said to have been Weizhou *cishi* in his later years). Another high-level official Bian Chongji (邊沖寂), who took away Zeng Qin's salary, also appeared in the story. His name was recorded as a famous *shi* (知名士) in the ninth year of Kaiyuan (開元九年, 721 CE). 杜佑, 通典. Thus the original author of this story (which might not have been the author of *Dingming Lu*) must have had considerable familiarity with high-level officials of the Kaiyuan era, and might have been relatively contemporaneous or not too long after the reported event.

[191] An example could be seen from the differences in policing practices. In discussing Roman state policing, Christopher Fuhrmann recounted two letters by Cicero: in one, he promised his friend Atticus to apprehend a slave on the latter's behalf; in the other, he requested that a friend, P. Sulpicius Rufus, military commander in Illyricum, to apprehend and return a slave who had allegedly run away with many of his books. Fuhrmann, *Policing the Roman Empire*, p. 21, and infra. Despite the prohibition on harbouring fugitive slaves and the importance of slave-holding for economic interests of the Roman patricians, in Cicero's times there seemed to be no institutionalized ways of enforcing these claims and patricians like Cicero relied on their informal circles of friends. Later, after state involvement in the process considerably increased during the Roman Empire, laws required local magistrates to advertise the names and descriptions of absconded slaves, and permitted provincial governors to give permission to search the estate of another – accompanied by one of the governor's attendants, if necessary. While these represented substantial efforts on the part of the state, the social control exercised was heavily reliant on local elites and the projection of power across localities seemed somewhat limited if compared with the case of the guard You above.

that within a small locality, the residents and low-level deputies would have known one another well. Only when the officials did not know the wanted person – for example, when acting on higher orders across long distances, like the arrest of Wang Zhi in Xiangzhou on the request of Weizhou – such mistakes became likely to happen. At the same time, for substitution stories, when a summoned individual recommended another to take his place, such stories often occur within shorter geographic distances because the substitute must be known to the recommender. In this way, differences of material conditions were reflected as differences of imaginations.

At the same time, similarities on the other aspect must be noted. Whether or not there was any cultural transmission, and whether or not these stories were more prevalent among the lower classes, it was the similarity in social structures that enabled these stories to come down to us. Namely, in both ancient China and Classical Rome, there existed a class of literati. Such educated writers might be fundamentally skeptical about the veracity of marvelous stories, but they recorded them out of curiosity or amusement. The existence of this class of writers in China provided the fertile soil from which *biji xiaoshuo* would emerge. In the West, this attitude was reflected in the writings of authors from Herodotus to Pliny, Cicero and Plutarch. This paradigm of moderate skepticism could be exemplified by Pliny's comment after recording the story of a man returning to life and correctly fortelling his brother would now die: "Plena praeterea vita est his vaticiniis, sed non conferenda, cum saepius falsa sint, sicut ingenti exemplo docebimus."[192]

This literate class, as well as the cities and the bureaucratic system, went into decline after the fall of the Western Empire. Accompanying these material changes was the ideological change with the advent of Christianity. The religious authority of the latter fundamentally changed the ways in which such marvelous stories were received, understood and disseminated. If the Greco-Roman underworld originally had little room for bureaucratic error, the Christian underworld had even less. In the all-encompassing cosmos of Christianity, every marvelous event had to be interpreted in a way consistent with its worldview. Augustine's skepticism towards Curma's story was not significantly different from earlier Roman writers, but he struggled to find an interpretation to situate the event within Christian theology.[193] By Gregory's

[192] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, Book VII, 53.

[193] Calling the story a "migratory legend", William Hansen commented that "[t]he bishop struggled to come to terms with Curma's story. He accepted the simple man as a truthful narrator but rejected the reality of his visions." *The Book of Greek and Roman Folktales, Legends and Myths*, ed. William Hansen (Princeton: Princeton

time, the moral of the story had become entirely Christianized: the element of mistake was subsumed under a divine will that gave the man an opportunity to repent his former ways. This, perhaps, marked an appropriate end to this theme in the West, after which it disappeared completely.

While we have seen the effect of Buddhist preaching on resurrection stories in China, the shift was of a different characteristic: preexisting stories, like those of mistaken identity, were more co-opted than subsumed. In comparison with Western Christianity, Chinese Buddhism had two prominent differences: First, its centripetal tendency towards a singular religious orthodoxy was weaker.[194] Also markedly different from Catholicism in early medieval Europe, where nearly all texts were produced by the clergy, Chinese Buddhism did not have a monopoly on literacy. Although Buddhism achieved tremendous success, and some converts who belonged to the literary class did write to proselytize,[195] there remained a large literary class who were not particularly interested in Buddhism.[196] Many *biji xiaoshuo* contained considerable number of stories related to Buddhist teachings, but this did not represent a special commitment on the authors' part. For example, *Guangyi Ji* contained a substantial body of stories concerning karma and reincarnation, but at the same time it also contained irrelevant and even irreverent stories, such as an old fox taking the form of a Buddha to fool the devout.[197] In such collections, the Buddhist stories were often recorded because of their literary merits or the strong moral impressions they gave. Therefore, the proliferation

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University Press, 2017), p. 156.

[194] Comparing Buddhist missions to later Jesuit missions, the sinologist Zürcher commented: "Buddhism derived its strength and power from its lack of coordination, from the spontaneous character of its beliefs, and from the complete absence of central control." E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: Brill 2007), xxvi. Most Chinese scholars could probably agree that a strong political authority played an indispensable role in why no central Buddhist authority formed in China. For example, the central government issued *dudie* (度牒, permission to become monks, which exempted the carrier from taxes and corvées), thus controlling who could and could not become monks. The central government also defined heretical Buddhist beliefs and took measures to expunge scriptures regarded as heretical by it. See, e.g., 何蓉, 國家規制與宗教組織的發展：中國佛教的政教關係史的制度分析, 社會, 2008(6).

[195] The author of *Mingbao Ji* (冥報記, lit. records of underworld karma), Tang Lin (唐臨), was such a Buddhist convert. But he was an exemplary Confucian bureaucrat at the same time. The *Old Book of Tang* (舊唐書) recorded a number of stories about Tang Lin, including the following. When Tang Lin was *Dali qing* (大理卿, official in charge of judicial appeals and revisions), Emperor Gaozong summoned all prisoners sentenced to death for questioning. While the prisoners sentenced by previous *Dali qing* cried and pled their innocence, the prisoners sentenced by Tang Lin remained silent. Puzzled, the Emperor questioned them and they replied: "[We] indeed committed the said crimes [our]selves. Tang-*qing*'s judgment was not wrongful or abusive. Thus [we] have no desire [to overturn the sentence]." ("高宗又嚮親錄死囚，前卿所斷者號叫稱冤，臨所入者獨無言。帝怪問狀，囚曰："罪實自犯，唐卿所斷，既非冤濫，所以絕意耳。"") Here, Tang Lin's Buddhist beliefs (against taking life in general) were subjugated to his duties as a Confucian bureaucrat, so long as his judgments were just.

[196] In Tang, the place of Buddhism was not without controversy, and some Confucian intellectuals persisted in attacking Buddhism, arguing, e.g., that the tax exemption granted to monasteries and monks were a burden on the state, and that Buddhism was a foreign religion. See, for example, 韓愈, 論佛骨表.

[197] 廣異記.

of Buddhist stories did not subsume the earlier traditions. On the other hand, the Chinese state tightly controlled any narratives that could cause political disturbance, but was usually unconcerned with establishing a Buddhist (or Daoist) orthodoxy. Ideologically it was always Confucian, which was concerned with the ethics and social relationships of this world; the otherworldly – with the critical exception of one's ancestors – was usually relegated to the ideologically unimportant but also unregulated domain of "ghosts and spirits/gods" (鬼神). Thus the worlds of the marvelous remained comparatively unbridled, capable of freely metamorphosizing between myriad beliefs, but rarely doing so as a result of political or religious pressures from above.

It might be illustrative to end with two stories of underworld bureaucratic errors from the Byzantine Empire. In the twelfth-century *Timarion*, whose authorship is disputed, the protagonist fell gravely ill and was summoned to the underworld, but when the underworld medical doctors were called to examine him, they realized that he was not supposed to die yet. Thus he was given leave to return to life.[198] In the similarly anonymous fifteenth-century *Mazaris's Journey to Hades*, he was "brought to Hades before his time by a plague in the capital."[199] While these stories were directly influenced by Lucian, it could still be said that their ability to survive and promulgate themselves was enabled by the continuation of political and literary traditions in the Eastern Empire.

III. The Prophecy of the Ghost

This constitutes the context in which the prophecy of Dante's dead should be understood. The belief that ghosts can prophesize might have originated in a primordial belief in the general supernatural powers of unworldly beings, of which ghosts were a part. As we saw above and will continue to see below, the terms used to refer to ghosts often carried great ambiguities in ancient cultures. In Chinese *gui* (鬼) referred to the dead, or ghosts, but also to strange spirits and demons of all sorts, especially at the

[198] For summary and discussion, see Ingela Nilsson, "Hades Meets Lazarus: The Literary Katabasis in Twelfth-Century Byzantium", in *Round Trip to Hades in the Eastern Mediterranean Tradition* (Leiden: Brill 2018) pp. 322-341, and Przemysław Marciniak, "'Heaven for Climate, Hell for Company': Byzantine Satirical Katabeseis", in the same volume pp. 342-355.

[199] Lynda Garland, "Mazaris's Journey to Hades: Further Reflections and Reappraisal", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 61 (2007), pp. 183-214.

level of popular belief.[200] In Greek and Latin the terminologies were also frequently interchangeable, with several words used to refer to ghosts being used for other spirits.[201] Corresponding to the somewhat undifferentiated bodies of beliefs of the supernatural, the beliefs of their powers were often undifferentiated as well. For example, Sarah Iles Johnston noted the various ways in which the dead were believed to help and harm the living, among which giving advice to the living either spontaneously or through rituals was but one.[202] This latter function evidently presumed some supernatural knowledge.

Explanations of how such knowledge was acquired by the ghosts after death were often given, usually in experiential manners such as seeing or hearing. For example, in *Pharsalia* the dead soldier, recalled to life through necromancy, told the things he heard from the great men below, and the great men supposedly saw the threads woven by the Fates.[203] Similarly, in Plutarch's story, the resurrected Thespesius heard the voice of Sibyl, which allowed him to learn about his own time of death, the eruption of Vesuvius, the destruction of Dicaearcheia, and Vespasian's death by illness.[204] In Chinese beliefs, ghosts often explained their supernatural knowledge from having heard about or read the records of fate in the underworld, mirroring the voluminous and detailed bureaucratic records of this world. For example, in the story of Li E, her cousin could foretell a plague to his family because he was serving as a underworld deputy.[205] Except for the deputies, it was also easily presumed that ghosts in general had access to records of human fates. In *Youming Lu* a man named Huan Gong (桓恭) often shared his food with an ancient grave. The thankful ghost appeared to him and told him, "According to your records, [you] should become the *cishi* of Ningzhou." And the

[200] For the general ambiguity surrounding the character of *gui* in ancient China, see, for example, Andreini Attilio, "Categorie dello 'spirito' nella Cina pre-Buddhista," in *Lo spirito. Percorsi nella filosifia e nelle culture*, ed. Maurizio Pagano (Milan: Mimesis, 2011), pp. 71-106; and Mu-chou Poo, "The Concept of Ghost in Ancient Chinese Religion", in *Religion and Chinese Society: Ancient and Medieval China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), pp. 173-191. Among other things Poo noted that in the pre-Qin era *gui*, or ghosts and *shen*, or spirits/gods, were often used interchangeably especially among the common people. For a comparison of the Chinese concepts for the dead and supernatural to those in other ancient cultures, especially its similar ambiguity to Roman ideas, see Mu-chou Poo, "Introduction", in *Rethinking Ghosts in World Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 9-10.

[201] D. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome: Ghost Stories from Classical Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), pp. 23-25.

[202] Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 16, 29.

[203] See supra.

[204] Plutarch, *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance*, in *Moralia*,VII, trans. F. H. Sandbach (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), pp. 565-66.

[205] 搜神記・卷十五. Also see supra.

prophecy came true.[206]

Parallel to the rationalized prophecies, whether in China or in the West, prophecies were also commonly given by ghosts or other similarly supernatural beings without explanations or indications of how they came into such knowledge. For example, in Plutarch's biography of Cimon, he retold how the Spartan general Pausanias, when in Byzantium, mistakenly killed a local girl named Cleonice.[207] Her phantom then continuously haunted him at night. He was driven from Byzantium by Cimon and his allies after the outrage this event provoked. Then, "he had recourse to the ghost-oracle of Heracleia, and summoning up the spirit of Cleonice, besought her to forgo her wrath. She came into his presence and said that he would soon cease from his troubles on coming to Sparta, thus darkly intimating, as it seems, his impending death."[208] It was not explained why this ordinary girl acquired the power of prophecy after death. *De divinatione* also told of a prophecy given by nameless ghost. Simondes buried an exposed body and was subsequently told by the ghost that a ship he was about to take would sink.[209] Moreover, the case of the Rhodian man who on his deathbed named six men in the order they would die seemingly pointed to the same kind of belief.[210] Another inexplicable prophecy also occurred in Phlegon of Tralles: The head of a hermaphrodite baby prophesized the great disaster that will befall Aitolia.[211]

Unexplained ghostly prophetic powers frequently appeared in Chinese records as well.[212] For example, *Shuyi Ji* recorded the following event: "In the

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[206] 幽明錄.

[207] Pausanias summoned her to his chamber. She requested the attendants to remove the light, but tripped in the darkness, and he killed her thinking she was an intruder.

[208] Plutarch, Cimon, 6.4-6.6.

[209] Cicero, *De divinatione*, I. 56. The plot and moral of this story were quite similar to that of Huan Gong, only without the indication about how the nameless ghost acquired knowledge of the future.

[210] Cicero, *De divinatione*, I. 64.

[211] Phlegon of Tralles, *Book of Marvels*, William Hansen trans. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), pp. 28-32. The baby was born in Aitolia. The baby's father, who had died, returned as a ghost and demanded that the citizens give the baby to him, seemingly with knowledge of what would occur if they did not obey him. However, they still hesitated, and the ghost ate the baby, leaving only the head, which then gave the prophecy. The prophecy could be interpreted as coming from the ghost of a eaten baby or a monstrous being, but in any case it clearly had the characteristic of a supernatural being. In the subsequent story, a slain Syrian commander "stood up from among the dead" and warned Romans, who were pillaging the bodies of the vanquished army, that "Zeus Kronides is angry beholding your ill deeds, / wrothful at the slaughter of an army and at your doings, and / will send a bold-hearted tribe against your land / that will put an end to your rule, and you will pay for what you have wrought". Ibid. pp. 32-33. Here the explanation seemed to be an experiential one, in which the dead came to know the future by learning (or probably hearing of) the will of Zeus in the otherworld. Subsequently the Roman general Publius went mad and began to speak prophecy, finally prophesizing his own death in the jars of a great red wolf. After he was entirely eaten except for the head, his head then gave a final prophecy. Ibid. pp. 34-37.

[212] For the characteristics of Chinese conception of divination and knowledge of future, and a comparision with Ancient Greece, see Lisa Raphals, *Divination and Prediction in Early China and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

first year of Chengkang (承康) [under the reign of] Lü Guang (呂光, reigned 386-399), a ghost (鬼) cried in the streets of the capital: 'Brothers [will] slaughter one another. The people [will] suffer.' [The government] sent magistrates to seek [the ghost] but found nothing. That year, [Lü] Guang died, [his] son Shao took his place. [After] five days, Shao's older brother of *shu* birth (born to a concubine) usurped, killed Shao and made himself Emperor."[213] The ghosts that appeared in such records came close to auspicious or inauspicious signs, which were generally related to otherworldly beings. Another record recounted of a "huge ghost" (大鬼) that appeared at the Lei Gate (雷門, lit. thunder gate) of Kuaiji (會稽) and show signs whenever fortune or misfortune befell. It forecasted the death and promotion within the Xie family (the most prominent clan in the area), as well as the great upheaval of Sun En (孫恩, begun in 399 CE).[214] If the *gui* described above were hard to distinguish from the general category of supernatural beings, the common people also readily believed that the ghosts of the dead in particular had similar prophetic abilities. In *Shuyi Ji*, a man named Liang Qing (梁清) had a ghost dwell in his household in the capital. This ghost beat the maid with a stick, moved jars and plates to set food on the table, and the sounds of eating and drinking were heard. Liang Qing asked him to show himself, thus the ghost appeared and said that he used to be a man of Jingzhao (京兆, the territory near the capital) and had nowhere to go after his death. He heard that Liang Qing was a good host, and thus decided to come. Liang Qing then received him well. "When Qing planned to seek [the top position of] a certain *jun*, [he] asked the ghost first. The ghost said: 'What [you] are planning must come to success.'" When the appointment came, indeed it was as the ghost said.[215]

Truly this kind of undifferentiated supernatural powers could be explained as other cases above, such as seeing the threads of Fate, reading the

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[213] 述異記. ("呂光承康元年，有鬼叫于都街曰：兄弟相滅百姓弊。儆吏尋視尋之，則無所見。其年光死，子紹代立。五日，紹庶兄篡，殺紹自立。") During Lü Guang's reign there were no Chengkang years, which might thus be an error in the record. Two *Shuyi Ji* were written, both towards the end of the 5th century. Since both works were lost and extant contents were only preserved in *Taiping Guangji*, which did not distinguish between the two works, it is no longer possible to distinguish between the records from the respective works. One *Shuyi Ji* was authored by Zu Chongzhi (祖沖之, 429-500), a renowned mathematician and astronomer. The other was authored by Ren Fang (任昉, 460-508), a famous man of letters.

[214] 太平廣記・卷第三百二十三. The marvelous and inexplicable nature of such events could also be captured as in the following story: "In Angu (安固) there was a man named Li Daoyu (李道豫). During the Yuanjia Years, [one day] his dog lied in the middle of the road, [and] Yu kicked it. The dog said: 'You will die soon, why kick me?' Not long after, Yu died." 異苑. ("安固李道豫，元嘉中，其家狗臥於當路，豫蹴之。狗曰：'汝即死，何以蹋我？' 未幾，豫死。")

[215] 述異記 or 太平廣記卷第三百二十三. When the ghost came, Liang Qing had ordered his maid to make food for *la* month (臘月, the twelfth month) offerings to his ancestors. Thus the ghost was probably attracted by the food.

records of Lives, or hearing some prophecies in the otherworld. When they were so explained, they became defined, rationalized and demystified, thus losing their inexplicability. This makes one question whether there first existed the threads of Fate or the records of Lives, or indeed whether the beliefs in prophecies of otherworldly beings preceded the need of explanation.

When the souls of the common dead in the pagan world could easily explain their prophetic abilities through seeing the weavings of Fate, ghosts in the Christian Era could no longer do so,[216] because the equivalent to the weavings of Fate, the mirrors of prophecy, were placed in Paradise. Only blessed souls, like Cunizza da Romano, could speak the words of prophecy by viewing these mirrors of God's knowledge:

> "Sù sono specchi, voi dicete Troni,
> onde refulge a noi Dio giudicante;
> sì che questi parlar ne paion buoni."[217]

However, souls like Ciacco and Farinata had no such rationalized and sanctified source of prophetic knowledge at hand – it was denied to them by the very nature of theological definition. But the difficulty in explanation did not eradicate the belief itself, as the unthinking questioners of the dead had shown. The primordial state of such beliefs evaded rationalization, just as they did not always need the threads of Fate to make themselves accepted. Furthermore, when Christian discourse took action to denounce or correct the belief of the general prophetic power of the dead (like in the conversation between the prior and Guy), it in fact testified the continued vitality of such beliefs. Dante's natural, almost unquestioned acceptance of the dead's ability to prophesize would be easier to understand in such a context. But Dante was in no way an unquestioning writer: When Dante *personaggio*'s exchanges with Farinata and with Cavalcante sharply revealed the flaws within their knowledge, the need for explanation emerged. Probably to account for both the orthodox belief that the dead did not know the conditions of the living, and the poet's own, possibly somewhat instinctive sense that they were able to know the future, the "farsightedness" was invented.

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[216] See supra for the treatment of the problem of prophecy by Christian theologians.
[217] Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, IX. 61-63.

Part II

Background: Evidence of Exchange

The year before the Soviet-Afghan War began, a team of Soviet-Afghan archeologists excavated six graves at the mound of Tillya-tepe, or Golden Hill.[218] Among the treasures, there were a coin, a signet ring, a carved jewel, and a mirror. The coin was an aureus of the Emperor Tiberius. The ring bore the image of a woman with spear and shield, with the inscription "Athena" in Greek. The jewel showed a bull in Indian style. The mirror was cast with Chinese ideograms. These graves are dated to around the first century after Christ.[219]

Also in Afghanistan, at Begram, a large collection of Roman glass, together with Indian ivory and Chinese lacquer were unearthed between 1937 and 1939.[220] Most of the glass dated from late first-century BCE to early second-century CE, though others were of later manufacture.[221] The ivory probably dated to first-century CE.[222] The lacquer were dated early first-century CE by Elisseeff,[223] and more recently to 74 BCE – 23 CE by Zhang Liangren.[224]

At Khlong Thom (in modern Thailand), facing the Indian Ocean, archeologists found Indian, Sasanian and Roman-style gems, as well as a small gold coin that imitated Roman ones. Here were also discovered fragments of Chinese bronze mirrors from Eastern Han.[225] The site dated to two periods, 1st century BCE – 2nd century CE, and 3rd – 5th centuries CE.[226]

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[218] For the initial publication of the archeological finds in English, see V. I. Sariandi, "The Treasure of Golden Hill", *American Journal of Archeology* 84.2 (Apr. 1980), pp. 125-131.

[219] See, e.g., John Boardman, "Three Monsters at Tillya Tepe", *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 9.1-2 (Jan. 2003), pp. 133-146.

[220] Sanjyot Mehendale, "Begram: along ancient Central Asian and Indian trade routes", *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale* 1/2 1996, pp.47-64.

[221] For detailed descriptions of the vessels, their dating and parallels in dated contexts, see David Whitehouse, "Begram: The Glass", *Topoi* 11-1, pp. 437-449. Whitehouse notes also that there is one significant group, Group 11, that finds no close parallels in Mediterranean manufacture.

[222] Sanjyot Mehendale, "The Begram Ivory and Bone Carvings : some Observations on Provenance and Chronology", *Topoi* 11-1, pp. 485-514.

[223] Cited in Mehendale, "The Begram Ivory and Bone Carvings", p. 500.

[224] Liangren Zhang, "Chinese Lacquerwares from Begram: Date and Provenance", *International Journal of Asian Studies* 8(1) (2011), pp. 1-24.

[225] Brigitte Borell, "Gold Coins from Khlong Thom", *Journal of the Siam Society* 105 (2017), pp. 151-177; Sophie Peronnet, "Overview of Han Artefacts in Southeast Asia with Special Reference to the Recently Excavated Material from Khao Sam Kaeo in Southern Thailand", in *Unearthing Southeast Asia's Past* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2013), pp. 155-169.

[226] Amara Srisuchat, "Earthenware from Archeological Sites in Southern Thailand: The First Century BC to the Twelfth Century AD", in *Earthenware in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2003), pp. 249-260.

Possibly of a similar nature could have been the discovery of a Roman-style coin featuring Antoninus Pius dated to 152 CE in Óc Eo, on the southern tip of Vietnam, where it was found alongside Chinese bronzes of the Han dynasty by Louis Malleret.[227]

At Arikamedu in southern India, Mortimer Wheeler's excavation unearthed large numbers of Roman glass. Among them, however, was a fragment with a shape not found in Mediterranean manufacture, which Wheeler nevertheless classified as Roman.[228] However, after recent excavations in Guangxi, Brigitte Borell suggested that the fragment closely resembled the local glass manufactures of southwestern China, and probably travelled west to India. Later excavation at Arikamedu unearthed "four spool-shaped objects" that closely resembled the Chinese *er dang* (耳珰), likely manufactured in Arikamedu for Chinese clients.[229]

In the late 1960's, British archeologists excavated the port city of Siraf, on the Persian Gulf, that flourished until late 10th century.[230] At the site of the Great Mosque they found a bronze coin from the reign of Theodosius I (376-394), possibly redeposited when the mosque was built. They found also voluminous fragments of Chinese ceramics, Chinese coins, and a bronze mirror that was either Chinese or a "close Islamic copy", of the Tang dynasty several centuries later.[231]

Here I do not intend to repeat the detailed debates on whether records of various western countries in Chinese histories, such as 黎軒,[232] 條支,[233] 大

[227] Timothy Darvill, "Oc Eo, Vietnam", in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[228] R.E.M. Wheeler et al., "Arikamedu: An Indo-Roman Trading Station on the East Coast of India", Ancient India 2 (1946), pp. 17-124, Plate XXXIV. B., p. 102.
[229] Brigitte Borell, "The Glass Vessels from Guangxi and the Maritime Silk Road in the Han Period (206 BCE−220 CE)", in *Unearthing Southeast Asia's Past* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2013), pp. 141-154.
[230] David Whitehouse, "Siraf: A Medieval Port on the Persian Gulf", *World Archeology* 2.2 (Oct. 1970), pp. 141-158.
[231] David Whitehouse, "Excavations at Siraf: Fourth Interim Report", *Iran* 9 (1971), pp. 1-17.
[232] First appearing in the *Records of History* (史記 •卷一百二十三 •大宛列传), 黎軒 Lixuan was said to be north of Anxi (安息, most likely the Parthian Empire). After Han's envoy visited Anxi, the king sent an ambassador along with "giant eggs of birds and magicians [lit. people good at illusions] of Lixuan" to the Han Emperor (以大鳥卵及黎軒善眩人獻於漢). It was written as Liqian (犁靬) in the *Book of Han* (漢書). In *Wei Lue* (魏略, by Yu Huan 鱼豢, ? – late 3rd century), Liqian was reported as another name for Da Qin. In the *Book of Later Han* (後漢書, by Fan Ye 范曄, early 5th century), Lijian (犁鞬) was reported as another name for Da Qin.
[233] Also found in the *Records of History*, 條支 Tiaozhi said to be west of Anxi, bordering the Western Sea. Like Lixuan, they were well-studied in illusions ("國善眩"). The *Book of Han* agreed with this description, adding a mythical hearsay from Parthian elders. In the *Book of Later Han*, Gan Yin (甘英), sent on a mission to Da Qin, arrived at Tiaozhi and decided to go no further. There had been much debate on where Lixuan and Tiaozhi were. For a review of the various positions and their respective evidence, see 龔纓晏, "20 世紀黎軒、條支和大秦研究述評", 中國史研究動態 2002(8), pp. 19-28. As Lixuan and Tiaozhi sometimes appeared together and sometimes

秦,[234] 拂菻[235] referred to places in the Roman Empire, to what extent *Serica* resembled China,[236] or how Chinese silk came to the Mediterranean.[237] The

separately, Leslie and Gardiner have argued that they should be read together as Seleucid Antioch. Donald Leslie and Kenneth H.J. Gardiner, *The Roman Empire in Chinese Sources* (Rome: Bardi, 1996). This view has been rejected by Pulleybank on linguistic evidence as well as the evidence that they also frequently appeared separately. Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "The Roman Empire as Known to Han China", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 119(1) (Jan.-Mar., 1999).

[234] Records of 大秦 Da Qin appeared relatively late. The earliest description was found in *Wei Lue* (魏略), a now-lost work partly preserved through passages copied in other books. The passages on Da Qin were found in Pei's commentary on *Sanguo Zhi* (裴注三國志・魏書・烏丸鮮卑東夷傳第三十). In the early 5th century *Book of Later Han*, the country of Da Qin (大秦國) was described along with an account of the ambassadors of Andun, King of Da Qin, who arrived in the ninth year of Yan-xi under the reign of Emperor Huan (166 CE). ("至桓帝延熹九年，大秦王安敦遣使自日南徼外獻象牙、犀角、玳瑁，始乃一通焉。其所表貢，并无珍異，疑傳者过焉。") 後漢書・卷八十八・西域傳第七十八. It is unlikely that they were the Roman Emperor's ambassadors, and more likely that a group of merchants sold their merchandise in southeast Asia and bought local merchandise to bring to the court. See 張緒山, "羅馬帝國沿海路向東方的探索", 史學月刊 2001(1), p. 90; Peter Fibiger Bang, "Commanding and Consuming the World: Empire, Tribute and Trade in Roman and Chinese History", in *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), p. 120. Pulleyblank has suggested that Andun could have referred to Antoninus Pius (reigned 138-161) or Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (reigned 161-180), and found the linguistic evidence "one firm link to Rome itself" in spite of "not much else". Pulleyblank, "The Roman Empire as Known to Han China", p. 78. Records of Da Qin also appeared in the Book of Jin (晉書), the Book of Song (宋書), the Book of Wei (魏書), and History of the North (北史). It is worth noting that considerable elements of Chinese descriptions of Da Qin were fantastical, which the author of the Book of Later Han had called "strange and much absurd, thus [I] do not record them" (譎怪多不經，故不記雲). For Da Qin in the imagination of ancient China, see 龐乃明, "亦真亦幻大秦國：古代中國的羅馬帝國形象", 世界歷史 2017(5): pp. 141-155. Da Qin was also generally used to refer to Western imports. For example, the Han poet Xin Yannian (辛延年) described a beautiful *hu* girl (胡姬): "On [her] head the jade of Lantian, behind [her] ears the pearls [or beads] of Da Qin" (頭上藍田玉，耳後大秦珠). Consider also the famous Nestorian stele from the Tang Dynasty (大秦景教流行中國碑), which recorded how Emperor Taizong (唐太宗) let a Nestorian temple be built, called Da Qin Temple (大秦寺).

[235] The earliest mention of 拂菻 Fulin appearing in the fourth century, variously said to refer to Francia, Constantinople, Bethlehem, and Rome, etc. See 張緒山, "'拂菻'名稱語源研究述評", 歷史研究 2009(5), pp. 143-151. In Du Huan's *Jingxing Ji* (經行記, 8th century), it was equated to Da Qin. However, as Xu Jialing notes, the territory to which the name referred may have changed through history. 徐家玲, "拜占庭還是塞爾柱人國家？——析《宋史・拂菻國傳》的一段記載", 古代文明 3(4), 2009, pp. 63-67. Xu Jialing argued that while Fulin may have referred to countries further west earlier, the description of Fulin in the History of Song corresponded better to the Seljuk Empire, likely due to political changes in Central Asia.

[236] Descriptions of *Seres* or *Serica* included the following: Pliny the Elder described the Seres in *Naturalis Historia* 6.20. Mention was also made in 12.1 and 12.41 of the vast sum spent on such purchases. In 6.24 he also reported a second-hand description of the Serae, who were very tall, blond and blue-eyed. Bostock and Riley's commentary suggested that the Seres should not be confused with the Serae. Samuel Lieberman, on the other hand, believes the Serae in the second passage also referred to the Chinese, and Pliny's description was for Central Asians under Chinese dominion. Samuel Lieberman, "Who Were Pliny's Blue-Eyed Chinese?", *Classical Philology* 52(3) (Jul. 1957), pp. 174-177. For a discussion of preceding works that identified Central Asian peoples that fit the description, see William Woodthorpe Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1966), pp. 110-111. Strabo, *Geography* XV described *serica*, or silk, as made from the bark of plants, and the *Seres* as an extraordinarily long-lived people. In Ptolemy's *Geography* I.11.7, he named "the *Seres*, Sina and Cattigara" as on the eastern extremity of Eurasia. "Marinus tells us that a certain Macedonian named Maen, who was also called Titian … noted the length of this journey, although he did not come to Sera in person but sent others there." For a discussion of the merchant Maës, see M. Cary, "Maës, Qui et Titianus", *The Classical Quarterly* 6:3/4 (Jul. – Oct. 1956), pp. 130-34. Yang Gongle has argued partly based on this evidence that Roman merchants reached Luoyang in early 2nd century CE, but Zhang Xushan believed that there is not sufficient evidence to come to this conclusion. 楊共樂, "誰是第一批來華經商的西方人", 世界歷史 1993(4), pp. 117-18; 張緒山, "關於公元 100 年羅馬商團到達中國問題的一點思考", 世界歷史 2004(2), pp. 111-14. Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece* 6.26.6-10 described silk as coming from an insect, Seria as an island made by a river named Ser, and the Seres as of Ethiopian, Scythian or Indian origin. For a discussion of the context and production of this text, see Juan Pablo Sánchez Hernández, "Pausanias and Rome's Eastern Trade", *Mnemosyne* 69(6) (2016): pp. 955-77. Citing fantastical and inaccurate description of "Seres" in Roman authors, Campbell thus argued against Roman knowledge of China. Duncan Campbell, "A Chinese Puzzle for the Romans", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* (1989), pp. 371-376.

[237] Calling prior studies "much is asserted, little is proven", Manfred G. Raschke argued for a limited view of the

oasis cities of the Central Asian steppes and the port cities on the Indian Ocean have largely vanished, leaving behind few written records of their own.[238] Even the names by which they are known to us are often ascribed to them by historians and in the languages of other cultures. Yet the exchange existed, not only of the merchandise but also of the technology that made them, by peaceful trade and migration, as well as by violent displacement of population through war and enslavement. These events were more likely to leave certifiable traces. There had been a story of how captured Chinese papermakers bringing paper to the Islamic world after the Battle of Talas (751). This story, however, was largely a tale. But through scientific analysis of the remaining paper material, it is still possible to deduce the process of the dissemination of paper, which started earlier than that famous battle, and was in a rather slow fashion.[239]

The transmission of stories, however, hardly left such clear traces. In some sense it could be paralleled by the transmission of images, as both were relatively latent and silent in the records. The images were often more easily identifiable when they were accompanied by inscriptions, such as the image of Athena excavated in Tillya-tepe. In texts of high culture, similar traces were left when writers were known to have read or explicitly cited earlier works. However, when stories were passed from one place to another, their characters, objects and locations often changed to the audience's own. Even their plots and morals changed based on the inclinations of those receiving them. In this way, they were passed onto the next destination.

"silk trade": most of the silk were gifted from China and later found their way to the Roman Mediterranean through multiple Central Asian middlemen. Manfred G. Raschke, "New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East", in *Politische Geschichte* (Provinzen und Randvölker: Mesopotamien, Armenien, Iran, Südarabien, Rom und der Ferne Osten [Forts.]) (1978), pp. 604-1361. Fergus Millar was skeptical of the existence of a "Silk Road" that traversed Central Asia to western China by land, finding contact through India and Palmyra more likely. Fergus Millar, "Looking East from the Classical World: Colonialism, Culture, and Trade from Alexander the Great to Shapur I", *The International History Review*, 20:3 (1998), pp. 507-531. While noting the necessity for speculation, Gary Young thought both overland and Gulf trades were likely in the Classical Period, though trade interests had limited influence on Roman policies. Gary K. Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade: International Commerce and Imperial Policy 31 BC – AD 305* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 179-180. David Graf argued that the overland route had begun to operate as early as the first century BCE. David F. Graf, "The Silk Road Between Syria and China", in *Trade, Commerce and the State in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 443-529. For a review of the historiographical development of the so-called Silk Road, see Alfred Andrea, "The Silk Road in World History: A Review Essay", Asian Review of World Histories 2(1) (2014), pp. 105-127, who concluded that the terms were "evocative, albeit inexact".

[238] Much historical imagination had been captured by the possibility of direct contact, but indirect contact started much earlier and was much more pervasive. Consider, for example, India's contact with China and the Mediterranean respectively. For early cultural exchanges between China and India, see the works of Ji Xianlin (季羡林) cited in supra note. For commercial and religious exchanges, see Xinru Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges AD 1-600* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[239] See Jonathan Bloom, *Paper before Print: the History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 42-47. Although there were no contemporaneous records of Chinese papermakers, a Chinese captive of the Battle of Talas, Du Huan, in the records of his captivity told that Chinese gold- and silversmiths, weavers and painters worked in the Islamic world. 杜環, 經行記, 大食國.

However, in iconology, specific elements, especially when they appeared in combinations, could help us recognize their existence. On several statues of camels unearthed in Xi'an, all from graves dating to the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE), the wineskins carried by the camels bore the images of a drunken Bacchus, surrounded by ivy vines and flanked by Corinthian pillars.[240] On the reverse end, Alicia Walker has argued that the image of *feng huang* (a Chinese mythical bird often translated as phoenix) was adopted in middle-Byzantine art.[241] Even though motifs and images were morphed and remolded within the process of transmission and adoption, some clues would emerge under careful scrutiny and reveal their latent commonalities. Although always accompanied by the danger of false identification, the same could perhaps be said of stories.

[240] 葛承雍, "醉拂菻：希臘酒神在中國", 文物 2018(1), pp. 58-69.
[241] Alicia Walker, "Patterns of Flight: Middle Byzantine Appropriation of the Chinese Feng-Huang Bird", *Ars Orientalis* 38 (2010), pp. 188-216.

Chapter 1: The Snake-woman Lamia

Angelo Poliziano, the Florentine humanist and philologist, wrote his *Praelectio in Priora Aristotelis Analytica* titled "Lamia" in 1492. Recalling his childhood memory of Lamia, Poliziano recounted: "Mihi quidem etiam puerulo avia narrabat esse aliquas in solitudinibus Lamias, quae plorantes gluttirent pueros. Maxima tunc mihi formido Lamia erat, maximum tericulum."[242] Poliziano's description, though seemingly drawn from the oral tradition, echoed ancient authors as well. In *Biblioteca Historica*, Diodorus Siculus said Lamia was a Libyan queen who, after the death of all her children, ordered all babies in her realm killed. "Wherefore among us even down to the present generation, the story of this woman remains among the children and her name is most terrifying to them."[243] There were other contexts in which Lamiae were vaguely linked with monstrous figures, often in a fashion of children's tales.[244] Horace's *Ars Poetica* used Lamia as an polemic example against overly grotesque scenes: "Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris: / Ne, quodcumque volet, poscat fibi fabula credi; / Neu pransea Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo."[245] And in his *Geography*, Strabo named Lamia alongside the Gorgon, Ephialtes and Mormolyce as "fear-inspiring myths" to scare children.[246] Later, Tertullian compared the absurdities of the Valentinian sect to wet nurse's tale: "Iam si et in totam fabulam initietur nonne tale aliquid recordabitur se in infamia inter somni difficultates a

[242] *Angelo Poliziano's* Lamia*: Text, Translation, and Introductory Studies*, ed. Christopher S. Celenza (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 194-95. To be sure, in this *Praelectio*, the overall image of Lamia was depicted in a metaphorical and literary tradition, and served as a philosophical instrument: "[N]am fabellae, etiam quae aniles putantur, non rudimentum modo sed et instrumentum quandoque philosophiae sunt." Therefore, his narration about Lamia from his childhood memory could also have been a fiction. As a *praelectio*, however, he might at least expect his audience to recognize the description as one familiar to them – in other words, he probably expected that his audience had heard such stories as children.

[243] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 20.41.3-6. A surviving fragment from Duris of Samos may have contained an earlier version of the Lamia myth, in which the beautiful Libyan woman lost her children because of the jealousy of Hera. She thus turned into a monster who killed other's children. See Daniel Ogden, *Dragons, Serpents and Slayers in the Classical and Early Christian Worlds: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.98. It is worth noting that Diodorus Siculus repudiated "the myth that [Lamia] threw her eyes into a flask", saying that such an account resulted from the queen not caring about the events around her when she drank freely. It seems that Diodorus Siculus was trying to rationalize a preexisting myth, in which Lamia ate children and could remove her eyes. This myth of Lamia with removable eyes was recorded by Plutarch in his "On Being a Busybody" in *Moralia*. Following Plutarch ("nescio doctior an gravior"), Poliziano also described that Lamia had "oculos exemptiles", and that "[i]ta semper domi caeca, semper foris oculata." *Angelo Poliziano's* Lamia, pp. 194-97.

[244] In addition to the following examples, a number of classical writers also made passing references to the Lamia. For example, in *Peace*, Aristophanes praised the comic poet as the only who dared to attack the greatest, "that beast with the sharp teeth and the terrible eyes that flashed lambent fire like those of Cynna, surrounded by a hundred lewd flatters, who spittle-licked him to his heart's content; [who] had a voice like a roaring torrent, the stench of seal, the unwashed balls of a Lamia and the arse of a camel." Aristophanes, *Peace*, 758. Scholia on these lines from later centuries contained a story similar to the one from Duris of Samos. Ogden, *Dragons, Serpents and Slayers*, p.98. See also, Irven M. Resnick and Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr., "'The Sweepings of Lamia': Transformation of the Myths of Lilith and Lamia", in *Religion, Gender and Culture in the Pre-Modern World*, Alexandra Cuffel and Brian Britt eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 79-104, esp. p. 98, n. 28.

[245] Horace, Ars Poetica, 338-340.

[246] Strabo, The Geography, 1.2.8.

nutricula audisse, Lamiae turres et pectines Solis."[247]

Besides the Lamia who came somewhat close to nefarious witches hunting children, she also existed in people's imagination as the seductress-monster. The earliest such story was found in Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius*, as "the best known story" among the many exploits of the miracle-working philosopher. A young man named Menippus, who was a "philosopher" – learned but poor – met a beautiful woman while he was alone on the road. The woman, whom the narrator called "an apparition (φάσμα)",[248] claimed to have come from abroad and sought intercourse with the young man. She invited him to her house with promises of her song, good wine and sexual intercourse. Following her suggestions he went to her at night repeatedly, "for he did not yet realise that she was a mere apparition".

"Then Apollonius looked over Menippus as a sculptor might do, and he sketched an outline of the youth and examined him. and having observed his foibles, he said: 'You are a fine youth and are hunted by fine women, but in this case you are cherishing a serpent, and a serpent cherishes you.'"

Apollonius went on to insist that "this lady is of a kind you cannot marry", yet Menippus was set on marrying her, and Apollonius came to the wedding. Facing the display of the lady's lavish wealth – "the silver and gold and all the rest of the decorations of the banqueting hall" – Apollonius asked: "Have you heard of the gardens of Tantalus, how they exist and yet do not exist?" And it was answered: "Yes, in the poems of Homer, for we certainly never went down to Hades." Then Apollonius replied: "[Y]ou must regard this world of ours, for it is not reality but the semblance of reality. And that you may realise the truth of what I say, this fine bride is one of the vampires, that is to say of those beings whom the many regard as lamias and hobgoblins." These beings, he said, desired "the delights of Aphrodite, but especially [...] the flesh of human beings, and they decoy with such delights those whom they mean to devour in their feasts." The bride tried to deny the charges and "rail at philosophers". "However, the goblets of gold and the show of silver were proved as light as air and all fluttered away out of their sight, while the winebearers and the cooks and all the retinue of servants

[247] Tertullian, Adv. Valent., III.3.

[248] For the nomenclature of apparition (φάσμα), I consulted D. Felton, "Apuleius' Cupid Considered as a Lamia (*Metamorphoses* 5.17-18)," *Illinois Classical Studies* 38 (2013), pp. 229-244, p. 232, n. 15; Graeme Miles, "Hippolytus, the Lamia and the Eunuch: Celibacy and Narrative Strategy in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius," *Classical Philology* 112 (2017): pp. 200-218, p. 213.

vanished before the rebukes of Apollonius." Thus Apollonius forced her to admit that "she was a vampire, and was fattening up Menippus with pleasures before devouring his body, for it was her habit to feed upon young and beautiful bodies, because their blood is pure and strong".[249]

While Lamia in the Classical tradition had originally been that of a hideous female child-killing monstrosity, the image of Lamia began to appear as one of seductress after this period, which might suggest that it was introduced into Europe at the time of or shortly before the story of Apollonius. The seductress Lamia then merged with the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible translated by St. Jerome, Isaiah 34:14 was rendered as:

> Et occurrent dæmonia onocentauris,
> et pilosus clamabit alter ad alterum;
> ibi cubavit lamia,
> et invenit sibi requiem.

Here, Jerome used the word *lamia* to translate the Hebrew Lilith,[250] indicating that he believed the two had similar properties.[251] Jerome probably was familiar with the Apollonius-esque depiction of Lamia as seductress, which influenced his choice of word. Medieval texts that mentioned Lamia also contained these meanings in parallel. When Isidore of Seville named Lamia in his *Etymologiarum*, he stated: "Lamias, quas fabulae tradunt infantes corripere ac laniare solitas, a laniando specialiter dictas."[252] This Lamia was a child-killing one. However, when Hincmar of Rheims, who was familiar with and drew from Isidore of Seville's work,[253] wrote his treatise on Lothar's attempted divorce from his queen Theutberga, he discussed *lamiae* as seductresses and witches. Condemning harmful magic that disrupts legitimate marriage, he discussed clothing, potions and chants with the power of enchantment, the last of which were performed "a strigis", and made men "fascinati et quasi enerves". Then the archbishop continued: "Quidam autem

[249] Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, trans. F. C. Conybeare (London: William Heinemann, 1912), Book IV, XXV, pp. 402-09.
[250] See David Walter Leinweber, "Witchcraft and Lamiae in 'The Golden Ass'", *Folklore* 105 (1994), pp.77-82, p.81.
[251] For another appearance of the word lamia in Vulgate Lamentations 4:3, see Nicolas K. Kiessling, "Antecedents of the Medieval Dragon in Sacred History", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89(2), 1970, pp.167-177, p.170. Notably the rendering here was more metaphorical and literary.
[252] Isidorus Hispalensis, *Etymologiae*, Lib. VIII, 102.
[253] See Simon Corcoran, "Hincmar and his Roman legal sources", in *Hincmar of Rheims: Life and Work*, Rachel Stone and Charles West eds., (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2015), p. 138.

a lamiis sive genichialibus feminis debilitati, quaedam etiam feminae a dusiis in specie virorum, quorum amore ardebant, concubitum pertulisse inventae sunt."[254] Only slightly later, when John of Salisbury cautioned against divination and magic rituals, there was a child-eating Lamia described by him: "Praeterea infantes exponi lamiis, et nunc frustratim discerptos, edaci ingluvie in ventrem traiectos congeri, nunc praesidentis miseratione reiectos in cunas reponi. Quis vel caecus hoc ludificantium daemonum non videat esse nequitiam?"[255] And finally, in the fifth story of the ninth day in the *Decameron*, Calandrino described to Bruno "una giovane qua giú, che è piú bella che una lammia, la quale è sí forte innamorata di me, che ti parrebbe un gran fatto."[256] Here the reference was evidently to the beautiful seductress, not the ugly monster-witch.

These are only some examples among many, which help to delineate the multi-faceted image of Lamia in these centuries.[257] The child-eating witch-monster coexisted with the Lilith-seductress. But it is notable that the medieval seductress actually differed from Philostratus's seductress. While Philostratus's Lamia fattened Menippus to feed on his flesh, the medieval *lamiae* only enervated and debilitated their human victims.[258] This implied

[254] Hincmarus Remensis, *De divortio Lotharii regis et Theutbergae Regina* (ed. L. Böhringer), Conc. 4, Suppl. 1, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hanover: Hahn 1992), Interrogatio - Responsio 15, p. 205. For an English translation, see Hincmar of Rheims, *The Divorce of King Lothar and Queen Theutberga, trans. Rachel Stone and Charles West* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.237.

[255] Joannis Saresberiensis, *Policraticus*, II, 17.

[256] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 9.5.

[257] Sometimes Lamia was also categorized with ghosts, spirits or apparitions. In Philostratus' narrative, Lamia was called an apparition (φάσμα) and an empusa. In discussing an early Irish synod from the late 6th century that condemned Christians "qui crediderit esse Lamiam in speculo, quae interpretatur Striga" and required them to do penance, Marina Montesano suggested that the mirror, a common divination instrument, indicated a reference to necromancy, and thus the *lamia* here "should be interpreted as spectres of the dead". See Synodus Episcoporum Patricii, Auxilii, Issernini, in *Patrologiae cursus competus*, Vol. 53, col. 825, XVI; Marina Montesano, *Classical Culture and Witchcraft in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Basel: Palgrave Macmillan 2018), p. 89. This was not an isolated case, and hints of the blurred boundary between Lamia and ghosts could be found in other texts. *Otia Imperialia* III. 85 and 86 respectively classified Lamia with dracs and phantasms (85, "De lamiis et dracis et fantasiis"), and with nocturnal larvas (86, "De lamiis et nocturnis laruis"). The aforementioned story of Henno in Book IV of De Nugis Curialium was titled "Item de apparicionibus." It was sandwiched between a story of a knight who seized his wife from the dead and continued to live with her, whose children were called "sons of the dead" (IV, 8, "Item de fantasticis aparicionibus [sic]", likely the same story as II. 13), and a story of the Lord of Lydbury North who "de cetu nocturno feminarum choreancium pulcherrimam rapuit, de qua contractis sponsalibus filium suscepit", and lost her because he taunted her that "he had caught her from among the dead" ("indignanter inproperium uiri sui ferens, quod eam a mortuis rapuisset", IV, 10, "Item de eisdem aparicionibus"). In the latter case, the wife's disappearence was described in a similar manner that "in auras euanuit manifesta uisione multorum". A longer version of the same story appeared in II. 12, which contained more details about the mansion in which the Lord of Lydbury North found the women dancing, but did not explicitly name the dancing women as the dead. This story also contained an account of her son Alnodus' piety. It followed a story in which a man married a lady of the lake (II. 11), and preceded the story above (II. 13), which in turn preceded a story in which a shape-shifting demon killed babies (II. 14). Thus, we can see that the snake (dragon)-women here were also categorized alongside the dead.

[258] It was also notable that in the *Golden Ass*, 1.17, the two witches who cut Socrates' throat and collected his blood were called "lamiae" (not in the killing scene, but in a later passage). Here the *lamiae* were lethal, but they collected the blood rather than drank it, suggesting a more witch-like, rather than monstrous, depiction. Only much later, in Edward Topsell's *History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents* (1658, first published 1607-08), Lamia was

that the medieval seductress Lamia inherited much more from the image of Lilith-succubus, than from Philostratus's Lamia. Equally notably, when Lamia was mentioned in the Middle Ages, only abstract notions and summary characteristics remained, and there were no stories linked with this name any more. This makes us doubt whether the medieval Lamia was still a living one that continued to circulate orally within the common belief, or whether it was a self-replication of nomenclature among the literary classes, used to describe a vague fear of the otherworldly.

Although stories that clearly named a *lamia* seemed to have disappeared after Philostratus, folklorists often classified a number of medieval stories, which contained similar elements of a snake-like woman who married a man and subsequently left or was exorcised, with Philostratus's story of Lamia.[259] For example, a story in Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* (12th century) told of a man named Henno, who found a beautiful lady by the shore and took her to be his wife. Though she appeared virtuous, her mother-in-law noticed that she "shunned sprinkling of holy water and carefully avoided the consummation of the mass". Thus her mother-in-law spied on her bath and saw both she and her maid turn into dragons. The mother then told her son, and they seized the two and had holy water sprinkled on them. Both reverted to their demonic forms and passed through the roof, leaving behind the children "of this demon-woman".[260]

Otia Imperialia (early 13th century) contained a story of the knight Raymond, who encountered a lady "second to none in beauty", "mounted on a richly- caparisoned palfrey, and wore sumptuous clothes and ornaments". He wooed and married her on the condition that he must never see her naked. After their marriage he became fabulously wealthy and illustrious, and she bore him "very good-looking sons and daughters". However, one day he insisted on seeing her in her bath, and "the lady immediately turned into a serpent" and disappeared, returning only invisibly at night to see her little

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described, among other characteristics, as a monster who seduced men with their beauty and devoured their victims. But Topsell was familiar and even retold the Apollonius story from Philostratus, which might explain why he returned to this earlier depiction of Lamia's harm. Topsell also characterized the woman in Philostratus as a "Phairy". pp. 353-355. However, in the end, Topsell seemed to question whether Lamia was real or a poetical allegory.

[259] For a discussion of the folklorist classifications, see Jacques Le Goff, "Melusina: Mother and Pioneer", in *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 211-212.

[260] *Distinctio IV*, *Item de apparicionibus ix.*, in Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, ed. Montague Rhodes James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), pp. 174-76. Later stories could be seen in *Otia imperialia*, I, 15 and III, 57; and *Gesta Romanorum*, Cap. 160. For more examples and relating analysis, see Ting Nai-tung, "The Holy Man and the Snake-Woman: A Study of a Lamia Story in Asian and European Literature," *Fabula*, 8 (1), 1966, pp. 160-62.

children.[261] This story, after significant literary revisions, became an important influence for Jean d'Arras's Mélusine.

In his path-breaking work, "The Holy Man and the Snake-Woman: A Study of a Lamia Story in Asian and European Literature," Ting Nai-tung sorted these stories into the archetype of "the holy man and the snake-woman" found in China, India and Europe.[262] He hypothesized that the original form of this story was the *King and the Lamia* in Indian folklore "first appeared somewhere near Kashmir".[263] It was first imported to Europe in the form recorded by Philostratus, and was introduced to Europe again, in a form as found in the two aforementioned stories, during the Crusades. Tracing both the Apollonius story and the medieval stories to a supposed Indian origin, Ting's study greatly expanded the scope of the research on the Lamia or the snake-woman. The similarities between these stories are undeniable. However, following the typological method of the folkloric tradition, Ting had discarded a great number of stories that did not contain what he saw as the core stem of the snake-woman story. A further examination of these tales in their cultural contexts, along with other stories to which they might have been connected in the popular imagination, could reveal or complement some already missing parts of the multifaceted face of Lamia.

When Ting tried to find the counterpart of the Lamia stories in China, he identified Feng Menglong's *Tale of the White Lady* (白娘子永鎮雷峰塔, completed 1624) as the earliest Chinese tale with all core elements of the Lamia story, that is, a snake-woman married a man but was doubted by her husband's family and/or friends, and was subsequently exorcised by a holy man.[264] However, tales of encounters with snake-women had circulated in China for many centuries. In *Boyi Zhi* (博異志, early 9th century), there was a story supposedly took place in the second year of Yuanhe (元和, 807 CE). Li Huang (李黃), the son of a *Yantie-shi* (鹽鐵使, overseer of salt and iron), while in the Eastern Market of Chang'an,[265] saw a carriage drawn by oxen with servants and maids. Peeking inside the carriage, he saw a lady clothed in

[261] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, I, 15, pp. 88-91. The collection also contained a somewhat similar but shorter story, that of the Lady of Éparvier, III, 57, who had "an unfailing habit of leaving church in the middle of the celebration of mass". When her husband and his men held her back, she was "carried off by a diabolical spirit and flew away" at the moment when the words of consecration were pronounced. p.664.

[262] Ting Nai-tung, "The Holy Man and the Snake-Woman", pp. 145-191.

[263] Ibid., pp. 152-58.

[264] Ting Nai-tung, "The Holy Man and the Snake-Woman", p. 146, and pp. 170-73. The story could be seen in 馮夢龍, 警世通言, 白娘子永鎮雷峰塔.

[265] The Eastern Market was more frequently visited by high-level officials whose residences were often nearby. Thus the story took place in a luxurious and aristocratic setting.

white of peerless beauty. He was told by the servants that she was surnamed Yuan (袁), was previously widowed, and only now finished her time of mourning and thus came to the market to buy new clothes. Desiring to woo her, he paid for her purchases, and was invited to return to her residence. He followed the carriage and arrived at the residence by the evening. He was greeted by a servant and subsequently by an old lady clothed in green-blue (青服老女郎), who told him that she was the aunt of the lady in white. She told him that their family owed a debt of thirty thousand copper coins (錢), and that if he could pay the debt, the lady in white could serve him. After Li Huang sent for the amount, he was invited into the western hall. The white lady joined them, and a full banquet (飯食畢備) was served by six or seven servants (六七人具飯). He stayed for three days, drinking and making merry in all manners imaginable (一住三日，飲樂無所不至). On the fourth day he was bid to return by the aunt and went out, and his servants noticed an unusual stench about his person (有腥臭氣異常). After returning home he soon began to feel ill and lied down to sleep. Even as he was speaking to his wife, his body beneath the blanket started to disappear. As they lifted the blanket there was only water where his body had been, and his head alone remained. (但覺被底身漸消盡，揭被而視，空注水而已，唯有頭存。) His family searched for the woman's residence, but only found an empty garden with a tree. Fifteen thousand coins were found above the tree, and fifteen thousand beneath the tree. Nothing else could be seen. When they asked the neighbors, the neighbors answered that a giant white snake was often seen beneath the tree, but nothing else.[266]

This story was similar to Philostratus's in many aspects: The man met an attractive woman when he was out on an excursion. He was invited to her house, where he was sumptuously entertained. After copulating with the woman he developed strange physical defects (facial looks in Philostratus, stench in this story). However, in this story there was no exorcist like Apollonius, and the man died subsequently.

Li Huang's horrendous end was not a singular case. In contemporaneous

[266] 谷神子, or 鄭還古, 博異志. Its author Gushenzi 谷神子 was a pseudonym of Zheng Huangu 鄭還古, who became a *jinshi* sometime between 806-820 and subsequently became an official. To this story, another very similar story of a man named Li Guan (李管) is appended. Also the son of a high-level official (鳳翔節度, regional commander of Fengxiang), and during an excursion in the outskirts of Chang'an, Li Guan met an oxen-drawn carriage outside the city, and followed the beautiful woman inside the carriage to her residence. After dusk he saw a lady clothed in white of unearthly beauty. After he left the residence and returned home, he suffered from a severe headache and died due to his brain cracking open. His servants reported that although Li Guan said he smelled a wondrous fragrance, they only smelled the stench of snakes. When his family searched for the residence, they found only a dead tree with traces of a large snake.

Chinese stories, there were a great many examples in various collections of men who married or copulated with unearthly women (though not necessarily a snake), and were eaten. A story in *Chaoye Qianzai* (朝野僉載, by Zhang Zhuo 張鷟, 658-730) tells of a young man who, on the official postal road, met a extraordinarily beautiful woman in blue-green clothes (青衣女子) traveling alone. He took her back to his house, gave her food and drinks, and slept with her. In the morning the room's door did not open, and no reply came when they were called. Peeking into the room from the window, it was discovered that only his skull remained, and the remainder was eaten (惟有腦骨頭顱在，余並食訖). As the family broke into the room, they saw a large bird above the beam, which dashed out of the door. This monster, according to some, was Luocha Mei (罗刹魅, Mei of Rakshasa).[267]

Guangyi Ji (廣異記, by Dai Fu 戴孚, written during the Dali years, 766-779) told another similar story of the son of the *cishi* of Jizhou (冀州刺史). As he was going to the capital on his father's order, he met a large retinue with a beautiful woman, and was told she was the widow of the *cishi* of Youzhou (幽州刺史) and thus returning to the capital. He wooed and copulated with her in the wilderness, abandoned his trip to the capital and took her home. Though the parents were puzzled, the bride answered their questions intelligently, and the family soon became delighted with the multitude of her servants and horses. After thirty days or so, the new bride's horses trampled each other, and she sent the servants out to take a look, then barred the door of their chamber. The next morning, the family's servants came and found no servants, then they went to the stables and found no horses. They reported this strange occurrence to the parents, who came to the chamber, called for their son with no reply, and ordered the windows and doors be broken down. A great white wolf lunged at them and escaped, and their son was almost entirely eaten (遭食略盡).

Moreover, in *Youyang Zazu* (酉陽雜俎, by Duan Chengshi 段成式, died in 863), there was a story which allegedly took place in the years of Zhenyuan (貞元, 785-805 CE). A commoner named Wang Shen (王申) lived beside the road and often served water to travelers. One day a young woman, clothed in blue-green with a white headscarf (衣碧襦，白幅巾), came by to ask for water. She said that she was widowed, only recently finished mourning, and was going to visit her relatives. She appeared charming and had an unhumanly

[267] 張鷟, 朝野僉載, 卷六.

gift for needlework, thus Wang Shen and his wife took her in to be their son's wife. The night of the wedding the bride told her husband to bar the door lest thieves come in. That night, Wang Shen's wife dreamt that her son said to her that he was almost eaten. At first Wang Shen disbelieved her, but after she dreamt of the same again, they took a candle and broke down the door. A creature with "round eyes, crooked teeth and bluish body" (有物圓目鑿齒，體如藍色) lunged towards them and escaped. All that remained of their son was his skull and hair (其子唯余腦骨及髮而已).[268]

These three stories – though the monsters appeared in them were not snake women – shared significant similarities with the story of Li Huang. They all took place on the road or during an excursion, namely in a context of travel. The woman wore white or blue-green clothes, or had an original form of a white or blue-green monster.[269] Finally, except for the second one whose death was vaguely described as "almost entirely eaten", other victims were all eaten or melted until only their skulls remained.[270]

A story in which an unearthly, lethal woman was exorcized, though unsuccessfully, could be found in *Xuanguai Lu* (玄怪錄, by Niu Sengru 牛僧孺, 779-848). While going from Luoyang (洛陽) to his country residence, Wang Huang (王煌) saw a grave near the road and a beautiful lady in white mourning. He was told by her maid that her husband had died while visiting Luoyang and she had to now seek a new marriage. Thus he took her to his country house in Zhitian (芝田) and wed her. After some months he went to Luoyang on business and met the Taoist monk Ren Xuanyan, with whom he was friendly. Ren Xuanyan saw his countenance and was greatly alarmed, asking him: "What are you coupling with, that caused your countenance to be thus?" Wang Huang laughed and answered that he had taken a lady.[271] Ren Xuanyan replied: "You did not couple with a lady, but a *gui* of *weishen* (威神

[268] 段成式, 酉陽雜俎續集卷之二, 支諾皋中.

[269] The white clothing might be related to the young women's alleged identity as young widows, and corresponded to the colours of their actual form. The colour white also had a mystical association with the unworldly. In Dan, the body was dug out by a white fox. Blue-green (青 or 蒼), had a similarly mystical connotation. See, e.g., milk of a dark (blue-green) goat (青羊乳) used in resurrection of Xu Xuanfang's daughter, infra.

[270] The story of Li Guan, see supra note, had the victim die from his skull cracking open. Here there was also a clear focus in the narrative on the victim's head. As to why only Li Huang melted while others were eaten, it might be due to the intimate association between snakes and water. There were a couple of stories about victims, whose deaths were caused by snakes, melted into water, as well as snakes killed and melted into water. See 李舟弟, 邓甲 in 太平广记・卷第四百五十八・蛇三; and 番禺书生 in 卷第四百五十九・蛇四.

[271] 夫人, lit. lady, was a euphemism for a concubine. In earlier parts of the text Wang Huang and the woman performed marriage rites, and he seemed intent on marrying her. However, when Wang Huang talked to the Taoist monk here, he used the expression 納一夫人, which meant taking a concubine.

之鬼, lit. a phantom of an awesome god[272]). If [you] can end [your relationship] quickly, [you] can yet live. But after another ten or twenty days, [your] chances of living would have disappeared, even I could not save [you]." Wang Huang did not believe the monk and returned to his country house. Another ten or so days later, he went into Luoyang and met Ren Xuanyan again. Ren Xuanyan held his hand and wept, saying that the woman would come tomorrow at noon, and at that time Wang Huang would die. Seeing Wang Huang still disbelieved him, he gave Wang Huang a *fuzhou* (符咒, written incantations) which could be thrown at the woman to reveal her true form. The next day at noon the woman indeed came, and Wang Huang threw the *fuzhou* at her, and her face instantly turned into that of a *naizhong-gui* (耐重鬼, lit. weight-bearing phantom). The angered *gui* threw Wang Huang on the bed and stomped him dead. Then the Taoist monk came and explained the *gui*'s nature to Wang's servant: it was a *gui* stomped under the right foot of the Heavenly King of the North (北天王, a Buddhist god of Indian origin), seeking a replacement after a set term of three thousand years.

Although the method of killing in this story was not by eating or melting, its general setup resembled the preceding stories. The method of killing might have made to suit the monster's identity – a *gui* stomped under the foot of a Buddhist Heavenly King. In addition to a pseudo- Buddhist monster, the appearance of a Taoist exorcist also increased its religious flavour, which made it closer to the scene in which Apollonius first revealed Lamia's nature to Menippus. The exorcists discovered the victims' strangeness by observing their countenance. The essence of the following conversations between the exorcist and the young man was also similar: The exorcist first commented that the problem was related to the young man's romantic endeavours. After a reply by the young man, who completely did not understand the problem, the exorcist then stated marriage between the young man and the woman was impossible, and pointed out that the reason for this impossibility was the woman's inhuman nature.[273]

Based on Indian folkloric sources, Ting believed that the original form of

[272] The Chinese *gui* 鬼 is somewhat like the Greek *phasma*, in that in addition to ghosts, it could refer to a broad range of supernatural beings. From the remaining parts of the story, the Taoist monk revealed that the *gui* was stomped under the foot of a Heavenly King. Thus it was first called a phantom of awesome god (referring to the Heavenly King), and then called a weight-bearing phantom (referring to it position beneath the god's foot). This kind of phantom does not appear in Buddhist scriptures and was likely an invention by the writer.

[273] These two stories also resembled each other in another aspect: Both exorcists did not fully explain the monster's nature in the first meeting with the young men. Only after the subsequent encounter with the female monster was her nature fully explained. This could have resulted from a choice in narrative technique, but given the other similarities in the two stories, the two-stage revealing might not be a mere coincidence.

the story was that of a sorcerer killing a rather innocent snake woman for her treasure, and the story only later took on a religious form that justified the robbery.[274] However, the breadth and variety of the aforementioned Chinese stories, which resembled the Apollonius story in other aspects but contained explicit evidence of the female monster's lethalness, seemed to indicate that the innocent snake-woman was not the sole aspect of Lamia. In fact, if there were no underlying preexisting beliefs about Lamia's potent ability to do harmful deeds, a story in which a seemingly innocent woman was tested and persecuted likely could not be readily accepted.[275] Therefore, the more complete body of Chinese sources might help to reconstruct the cultural environment in which stories like that of Apollonius were generated and circulated.

Circumstantial evidence of the existence of such beliefs was also found in the Classical World. In the famous story of Cupid and Psyche in Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, Psyche was married to a mysterious young man, and taken to a splendid palace. However, her husband prohibited her from seeing his face. Later, when her sisters visited her, they told her out of jealousy that her husband was a giant snake who was fattening her up to be eaten. If there were no such stories like this circulating at the time, then Psyche would have seemed much too ready to believe her sisters that her husband was a serpent preparing to eat her. It was also quite notable that Cupid was compared to a serpent in the oracle of Apollo because of his nature as a god of carnal love. This, as well as other commonalities in the story's specific settings – marrying a mysterious (beautiful) spouse and being taken to an otherworldly luxurious residence – probably demonstrated that Apollonius's story was not a solitary case in its cultural environment.[276]

In China, stories of snake-men marrying earthly women also existed. In *Soushen Hou Ji* (搜神后記, a work whose authorship was in doubt but which had at the latest come into existence by the 6th century),[277] there was the

[274] Ting Nai-tung, "The Holy Man and the Snake-Woman", p. 152.
[275] In two Indian stories discussed by Ting, the female monster indeed killed or devoured human beings. However, he only seemed to consider this as evidence of the stigmatization of the initially innocent monster when the story took on a religious form. Therefore, he did not pay more attention to the baleful character (both Indian stories were Buddhist stories with very different morals from other stories discussed here), and did not consider the possibility that relatively innocuous and baleful varieties of snake-women co-existed. See, ibid., pp. 154-57.
[276] On this point, see also Felton, "Apuleius' Cupid Considered as a Lamia (*Metamorphoses* 5.17-18)," pp. 229-244.
[277] *Soushen Hou Ji* was traditionally attributed to Tao Qian, a famous poet and writer, but this attribution had been continuously questioned. However, in the preface of *Gaoseng Zhuan* (高僧傳, by Hui-jiao 惠皎, 497-554), this book was already mentioned. Thus it must have come into existence by the 6th century. This corresponded with the eras in which the stories in *Soushen Hou Ji* supposedly took place. The book's literary style also conformed with

following story:

> "In the Taiyuan years of Jin (晉太元中, 376-396 CE), a *shi* (士人, similar to a gentleman) married his daughter to a neighboring village. ..... When [the bride] arrived, [there was a great mansion with] many successive gates and overladden pavillons, comparable to [the residences of] kings and princes. Beneath the corridor pillars were lit lamps, [where] a richly dressed maid waited, [and] in the bedroom the bed curtains were very beautiful. At night, the daughter held her wetnurse and wept, and was unable to speak. The wetnurse slid her hand into the curtains secretively and felt around, [and] found a snake, [which was] as thick as a pillar that could only be circled by several people holding hands, [and] twined around the daughter from foot to head. Startled, the wetnurse went out. The maids waiting at the lamps beneath the pillars were all small snakes, and the lamps were the snakes' eyes."[278]

Although there are some commonalities between this Chinese snake-man story and the story of Cupid and Psyche, which implied a possibility of cultural exchange, it is difficult to determine whether this type of story was indigenously Chinese or influenced by cultural exchanges.[279] However, stories of the snake-woman in China appeared notably later than her male counterpart. The snake-woman story of Li Huang discussed above, along with the similar one appended to it (both dated from the beginning of the 9th century), were the only two such stories before the Song dynasty.[280] In the

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other contemporaneous works.

[278] 搜神后記 卷十.

[279] The kind of stories, in which snake-men copulated with women, widely existed in contemporaneous and subsequent Chinese stories. For example, *Lieyi Zhuan* (列異傳, said to be written by Cao Pi 曹丕 but also contained events from as late as the Ganlu years, 256-260 CE, which were after Cao Pi's death; however, the book was likely compiled in the 3rd century or not long afterwards), *Guang Gujin Wuxing Ji* (廣古今五行記, by Dou Weiwu 竇維鋈, said to have lived during the Tang Dynasty; the latest event recorded in this book was said to have taken place in 780 CE, thus by convention the book should have been compiled not too long afterwards), *Xiaoxiang Lu* (瀟湘錄, whose authorship is disputed, was probably written towards the end of the 9th century) all contained stories of snake-men marrying or seducing mortal women. This might have been related to the Chinese indigenous belief that Snakes were gods or spirits associated with water, thus the aforementioned story of the daughter of the *shi* of Taiyuan could have arisen from the custom of marrying – or sacrificing – a girl to a local god. For example, the famous story of Ximen Bao (西門豹) told that when Ximen Bao was the magistrate (令) of Ye (鄴) during the reign of Marquis Wen of Wei (魏文侯, reigned 445-396 BCE), the local shamans sacrificed girls to the river god in the name of marriage, and the human sacrifices were sent into the river on a decorated float and allowed to drown. Ximen Bao stopped this ritual by throwing the shamans into the river. 史記 •卷一百二十六 •滑稽列傳第六十六. This kind of a wedding had similarities with the one that was supposedly given to Psyche, who was left out for "funereal marriage" in a sacrificial manner to an unearthly being described with serpentine characteristics. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*. This does not necessarily suggest that there was a direct link between these beliefs, since they could have sprung independently from primitive beliefs about human sacrifices.

[280] Yijian Zhi (夷堅志, by Hong Mai 洪邁, composed between 1162-1202) contained at least six snake-woman stories. One of these stories was even similar to that of the Lady of Rousset from Gervase of Tilbury. See infra.

early stories that contained animalistic seductresses in human form, they appeared as birds (e.g. white egret[281], white dove[282]), alligators,[283] otters[284], foxes[285] or pigs[286], but not snakes. The role of snake-women as seductress very probably had been introduced in China by Buddhism, since Buddhist scriptures often associated snakes with women of vice. For example, *Zhujing Yao Ji* (諸經要集, a collection of Buddhist scriptures completed in 659 CE) frequently compared women to (poisonous) snakes, prominently because of their carnal temptation towards men.[287] The extent to which this belief influenced popular imagination could be seen in an early Buddhist story about the journey to hell, in which the lustful were punished by being turned into "the forms [of] swans, wild ducks, and snakes" (鵠鶩蛇身).[288] Only after Buddhist preaching had created the connection between snakes, women and lustfulness, it became possible for stories like that of Li Huang to come into existence. The same could perhaps be said about other monstrous females that ate their lovers – prior to the influence of Buddhism, there were stories about men who died as a result of copulating with inhuman females, but they simply died and were never eaten.[289] The element of being eaten was likely introduced into the Chinese imagination through the Buddhist Rakshasa, whose characteristic was the ability to take the form of beautiful woman and the consumption of human flesh. These characteristics, as well as Buddhism's constant and vehement condemnation of any kind of sexual contact, probably gave rise to the man-eating female monster who seduced as a beautiful

[281] See 素衣女子 in 搜神後記・卷九.

[282] See the story of 蘇瓊 in 幽明錄.

[283] See the story of 張福 in 搜神記・卷十九.

[284] See the story of the dark-blue otter (蒼獺), whose human form wore blue-green clothes with an blue-green umbrella (上下青衣，戴青傘), in 搜神記・卷十八.

[285] See the story of 阿紫 in 搜神記・卷十八.

[286] See the story of the *shi* surnamed Wang, who slept with a young woman and tied a golden bell on her arm. He had someone follow the woman when she left, but the house she went into had no women. The bell was found on the front hoof of a sow in the pen. 搜神記・卷十八.

[287] "夫在家俗女。恚毒多過。佛說邪諂甚於男子。或假涂面首。雕飾姿莊。或綺羅花服。誑誘愚夫。或驕弄唇口。邪眄歌笑。或咨嗟吟詠。瞻視轉變。或出胸露手。掩面藏頭。或緩步徐行。搖身弄影或開眼閉目。乍悲乍喜。幻惑愚夫。令心妄著。如是妖偽。卒難述盡。凡夫迷醉。皆為所惑.....近則失國破家。觸則如把毒蛇。" 诸经要集卷第七, 奖道部第十二, 诫女缘第三. It described various ways in which women seduced men, and said "touching [her] was like holding a poisonous snake". In another passage of the same section it was said that women were worse than poisonous snakes, "it is better to place one's body into the mouth of a poisonous snake, than to have any contact with women" (又薩婆多論云，寧以身份內毒蛇口中，不犯女人). The comparison of women to snakes appeared also in 卷第十二, 欲盖部第二十, 五欲缘第二; 卷第十四, 十恶部第二十三, 邪淫缘第三; 卷第十五, 慳貪緣第八. In Chinese literature (under the influence of Buddhism), there were also many stories in which women were punished by being turned into snakes or in manners related to snakes (e.g. giving birth to a snake). See 吴可久 in 太平广记・卷一百七・报应六; 僧令因, 衛中丞姊, and 张氏 in 太平广记・卷四百五十九・蛇四; 嵩阳杜昌妻柳氏 and 广州化蒙县丞胡亮 in 朝野佥载・第二卷.

[288] See the story of 趙泰 in 幽明錄.

[289] For example, in *Soushen Hou Ji*, a man surnamed Du met, flirted with and presumably copulated with a woman dressed in white. After she became a white egret and flew away, he "found it abhorrent, and died of illness" (杜惡之，便病死). 搜神後記・卷九. This is a fairly typical pattern of death caused by otherworldly beings.

woman and ate her victims.

Thus, Ting's hypothesis that the snake-woman story had come from India might not have been unfounded, but it took place in a much broader cultural context than the desiccated story stem abstracted by folklorists. Although its dissemination was enabled by Buddhist proselytization, its earliest forms found in China were rarely religious or directly appropriated for religious purposes, even in an era when Buddhist beliefs had become very prevalent. This calls into question Ting's hypothesis that the initial story was one of a harmless snake-woman who became stigmatized as harmful when the story took on a religious colour.

In the Western side, folklorist classification of Melusine-like stories with Lamia was also over-simplified. In many aspects, the medieval snake-women were distinct from Philostratus's Lamia: Although these women were frequently described as "demon", "dragon" or "serpent", which had clear negative connotations in the Christian context, the overall colouration of the story was relatively neutral and even presumed their innocence. In the story of the Lady of Rousset, although she disappeared as a serpent, in the narrative the responsibility was laid on her husband who broke his promise when they married. After her disappearance, she returned to see her children on some nights, showing a kind of maternal tenderness. A daughter of hers, who married a Provençal noble and Gervase's kinsman, was described as "inter coetaneas et confines suas plurimum extitit graciosa, et eius iam successio ad nos usque peruenit".[290] Neither she, nor her daughter, nor their descendants were perceived in a stigmatized fashion. While the story of the Lady of L'Éparvier was much more attuned to Christian values – it simply contained a lady who "nec enim poterat consecrationem dominici corporis presentialiter sustinere" and was exorcised by the consecration – the highly similar story appeared in the later romance *Richard Coer de Lion* suggested that a religious taboo did not equate a negative representation of the woman in question. Henry II married Cassodoren, the beautiful princess of Antioch, who "dare never look upon the sacrament". This was permitted by the king, who lived in harmony with her for fifteen years. But an earl persuaded Henry to restrain her during the sacrament, then she flew through the roof with her daughter.[291] Like the Lady of Rousset, this narrative did not characterize

[290] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, I.15, p. 90.

[291] Maria Cristina Figueredo, *Richard Coeur de Lion: An Edition from the London Thornton Manuscript* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of York 2009) Vol.2, pp. 9-10. For a discussion on this episode, noting also the generally neutral portrayal of Cassodoren, see Vol.1, pp. 121-127. For another edition, see Karl Brunner, *Der mittelenglische*

Cassodoren as evil, and she was seen as a fitting mother to the heroic protagonist. As a snake-woman who also produced notable progeny, Melusine's children were described as having various physical abnormalities. When one of her sons set fire to a monastery, killing another son who had become a monk, her husband attributed blame to her serpentine nature, causing her to leave. However, the narrative never clearly attributed the tragedy to her identity or her children's strange appearances, and her husbands' words were indeed later regretted. It also stressed Melusine's gentleness as a wife and mother, who "plouroit si tendrement que tous en avoient grant pitié".[292] Thus even in this story one could see the competing elements and her supposed descendants likely did not see her non-human identity as an infamous origin in their family history. Therefore, the religious taboos that frequently appeared in medieval Lamia stories – holy water, sacrament, mass, etc. – did not imply that these women were always viewed negatively by their audience.

If we consider the following Chinese story, the core of the body of these medieval Lamia story might become clearer. This story was recorded in *Yijian Zhi* (夷堅志, composed 1162-1202), and supposedly took place in 1187: The county magistrate of Danyang (丹陽), surnamed Sun (孫), married a wife who was of peerless beauty (顏色絕艷) and wore white clothes (素衣衫). She strictly forbid anyone, even the maids, to approach when she bathed. ("但每澡浴時，必施重幃蔽障，不許婢妾輒至，雖揩背亦不假手。") Sun asked his wife the reason on several occasions, but she always smiled and did not reply. After they were married for ten years, Sun was slightly drunk one night, waited until his wife went into the bath, and jokingly sneaked into the curtains to take a peek. He then saw a great white snake in the bathtub. Sun fled in fear, but his wife learnt of his transgression and pled to continue to sleep with him. He agreed, but because of his great mental disturbance, died soon.[293] The white snake-woman here echoed earlier Chinese stories about white snakes or white monsters, but the elements of bathing, taboo of being seen naked, serpentine transformation and husband peeking out of lust closely resembled the Lady of Rousset. This makes one notice that the Lady of Rousset was quite unique among similar European stories in that her taboo was completely irrelevant to Christianity. Although the Lady of Rousset was recorded in a later collection than the story of Henno's wife in *De Nugis*

Versroman über Richard Löwenherz, pp. 90-91, lines 197-234.

[292] Jean d'Arras, *Mélusine*, Louis Stouff ed. (Dijon: Bernigaud Priva, 1932), p. 259.

[293] 夷堅支戊志・卷二.

Curialium, the lack of a religious element might be a hint that it came from an earlier variety of the story: In a highly religious environment such as medieval Europe, an originally non-religious story could easily acquire religious characteristics, but the reverse process was difficult. As soon as the religious element appeared, it tended to perpetuate itself during subsequent transmissions. On the other hand, in the story of Henno's wife, the element of the religious taboo – her avoidance of holy water and consummation of the mass – served the purpose of triggering suspicion in the mother-in-law, who then peeked and saw the transformation. This implied that the mere existence of her irreligiosity probably would not have been sufficient to convince her husband, while in later stories (e.g. Lady of L'Éparvier, *Richard Coer de Lion*) the sole element of irreligiosity seemed sufficient. This likewise might testify to the process of gradual religionization during the transmission of this story.

Thus, the medieval snake-woman might have originally been an innocent one. Except for their taboo or religious avoidance, they were presented as fundamentally in conformity with Christian morality.[294] In this they differed from the Lamia who appeared as a seductress to Menippus. We note also that neither the child-killer Lamia nor the seductress-Lamia had any children, probably because of their entirely evil nature presumed by the audience. The benign Lamia and the harmful Lamia, therefore, were probably separated from the very beginning by the ways in which they were perceived within the texts' narration and the emotion of the audience. However, in the Christian context, the benign Lamia would gradually be coloured as religiously suspicious (probably because of her pagan background) and thus drawn closer to the harmful one. The Melusine story had initially begun with the breaking of a taboo – it was only the addition of the religious element that gave it the appearance of being exorcised, creating its superficial similarity to Philostratus's Lamia.

However, this is not to say that Philostratus's Lamia was completely unrelated to the medieval snake-women. In fact, an investigation of the body of Chinese tales revealed the distant but not insignificant connections between such tales, which due to the lack of materials might not have been easily preserved in the West. From his study of the *Tale of the White Lady*, Ting Nai-tung drew the connection between Philostratus's Lamia and medieval snake-woman stories, because the *Tale of the White Lady* was similar to each in

[294] E.g., Henno's wife was described as virtuous. The Lady of Rousset refused to have sex with the knight unless he married her first.

different aspects. However, the *Tale of the White Lady* was already the result of a confluence of the two traditions: Its earlier part resembled the story of Li Huang – a man went to the snake-woman's abode and was lavishly entertained; here he was not killed, but only accused of and punished for serious theft committed by his wife, which ruined his life. The subsequent parts resembled stories of more innocuous snake-women – her constant faithfulness to her husband, and her serpentine transformation being seen by her husband's friend. Based on the composite image of the snake-woman, Ting believed that this kind of "female spirit who provides wealth and luxury but enfeebles men at the same time" could be traced back to Ishtar, who "was held in both admiration and fear".[295] This might be true and in accordance with common psychology. But these two-folded aspects, when they were disseminated and reproduced through stories, were at the same time distinct. Such distinctiveness was made manifest in the different ways in which stories were created, told and received: this difference divided the benign Lamia from the lethal one. By tracing the developments of these kinds of stories through their own logic and characteristics, a fuller picture of people's imagination of their relationships with the otherworldly may be presented, and we may come to better understand how such stories were disseminated and received in different cultural contexts. Thus, for example, it allowed us to see that the exorcism of Philostratus's Lamia and the exorcism of Henno's wife were of fundamentally different sources: in the latter case, the element of exorcism was reinvented under the Christian necessity of battling pagan beliefs.

After investigating all these stories of the snake-woman in Europe, Philostratus's Lamia still stood out as unique on another dimension: she invited Menippus to her residence. This led to another distinctive element within the story, namely the disappearance of her wealth. In Philostratus's story, we read that "the goblets of gold and the show of silver were proved as light as air and all fluttered away out of their sight, while the wine-bearers and the cooks and all the retinue of servants vanished before the rebukes of Apollonius".[296] Apollonius compared this fabulous wealth to "the gardens of Tantulus". However, in the *Odyssey*, the water was described as "swallowed up" by the earth when Tantalus bent down to drink, and the winds blew away the fruits when he reached for them.[297] The disappearance of the water

[295] Ting, "The Holy Man and the Snake-Woman", p. 148.
[296] Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, p. 407.
[297] Homer, *The Odyssey*, XI, 582-593.

and the fruits was described in a manner that emphasized the material causality, while Lamia's gold, silver and servants vanished as mere illusions. The difficulty to find a counterpart to the disappearance of Lamia's wealth in the Western tradition signified her foreignness.[298]

On the other hand, in Chinese stories of otherworldly beings, the disappearance of wealth and luxuries was a recurring theme. In *Guangyi Ji* there was a story as follows: "In the Tianbao years (742-756 CE), [Pei Hui (裴徽)] walked alone outside [his] country residence. On the way [he] saw a woman, [her] appearance was extraordinarily beautiful, [her] eyes [and her] beauty were alluring. After a while, Hui asked: "Why are you traveling alone?" [She] answered: "The maids had some errands [to run], [but] were tardy in returning, thus [I] came out to wait for them." Hui was literarily talented, and flirted with promiscuous verses. Though the woman's expression did not change, she answered him similarly. As they came to [the woman's] home, [she] invited Pei to visit [her]. The halls and the roofs were magnificent and beautiful. After [they] went inside the gate, [Pei] heard an old maid saying angrily: "How can a lady let other men come [to her residence]? Is such action in [accordance with] *mingjiao* (名教, Confucian teachings)?" The woman argued that it was a worthy (賢) guest at the gate. Many in the household greeted [the guest]. Some time after, the old maid came out and saw Hui respond [to the household servants] with a *shi*'s propriety (舉動深有士風). Soon [they] lighted the lamps and hung the curtains, and invited Hui to be seated. Several maids served, all [were] beautiful, [their] fragrance sweet and rich, [their] movements full of grace. Soon [the old maid] let the young lady come out, and said: "It is not necessary to shy away from Pei-*lang*." The woman came out and did not go in again. Hui peeked and saw the bedroom was busy with the noise [of servants], [who] were setting splendid bed curtains and brocade mattress, as [for] one desiring to wed. [His] heart was delighted and wished to remain, then [his] abdomen [felt] bloated and [he] rose to go to the toilet. [Pei] had an ancient sword that could drive away inauspices. After [he] finished, [he] took the paper that wrapped the sword, [and] suddenly saw the sword shone brightly. Taking [the sword] he wanted to return, but no longer saw the mansion and [its] people. [He] looked around and saw [he] was within thorn bushes on a solitary grave. Thus he cried loudly, the household servants recognized Hui, [and] held candles to seek

[298] Ting also noted the foreignness and uniqueness of Philostratus' story: "There is no other version of this story—or even any tale remotely resembling it—in ancient or modern Greek literature." See Ting Nai-tung, "The Holy Man and the Snake-Woman", pp. 159-60.

him. [He was] over a hundred steps from [his] country residence, stared and could not speak, [and] after a long time finally came to his senses.[299]

Here, Pei's ancient sword caused the fabulous mansion and beautiful women to vanish as soon as it was drawn, recalling the ancient belief that the ghosts feared bladed weapons.[300] This ability to conjure splendid dwellings and wealth was not exclusive to ghosts in the Chinese tradition. *Youming Lu* told the story of Chunyu Jin (淳于矜):

> In the Taiyuan years of Jin (376-396 CE), Chunyu Jin, [who lived] in front of the Buddhist pagoda of Waguan Temple, was young and fair of skin. [After] he accompanied a guest to bid farewell, south of the Stone Fortress (石頭城), he met a girl of beautiful complexion. Jin was delighted [by her] and wooed [her]. Since the hearts of the two coincided, [they] went to the north corner of the fortress, [and] together fulfilled [their] delightful desires. Then they parted, [and] agreed on a time to meet again. [Then they] desired to become husband and wife. The girl said, to find a husband like you, [I have] no regrets [even if I] die. I have many brothers, and my father and mother are still alive. [I] shall ask my father and mother. Jin let her return to ask her father and mother, and they were also willing to marry her [to him]. [Thus] the girl ordered the maid to take a hundred *jin* of silver, and a hundred *pi* of silken cloth, [to] help Jin get married. After a long time, he had two sons, and was going to become chief secretary (秘書監). The next day indeed riding messengers came to

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[299] "河東裴徽，河南令回之兄子也。天寶中，曾獨步行莊側，途中見一婦人，容色殊麗，瞻靚艷泆。久之，徽問："何以獨行？"答云："適婢等有少交易，遲遲不來，故出伺之。"徽有才思，以艷詞相調，婦人初不易色，亦獻酬數四。前至其家，邀徽相過，室宇宏麗。入門後，聞老婢怒云："女子何故令他人來，名教中寧有此事？"女辭門有賢客，家人問者甚眾。有頃，老婢出，見徽辭謝，舉動深有士風。須臾，張燈施幕，邀徽入坐。侍數人，各美色，香氣芬馥，進止甚閑。尋令小娘子出，云："裴郎何須相避。"婦人出，不復入。徽竊見室中甚闊，設綺帳錦茵，如欲嫁者。獨心喜欲留，會腹脹，起如廁。所持古劍，可以辟惡，廁畢，取裹劍紙，忽見劍光粲然。執之欲回，不復見室宇人物，顧視在孤墓上叢棘中。因大號叫，家人識徽，持燭尋之。去莊百餘步，瞪視不能言，久之方悟爾。" 廣異記.

[300] On the ancient belief, see supra. Another story in which a weapon with exorcising property revealed the illusory nature of the ghostly residence could be found also in *Guangyi Ji*: "A man from Langye passed through the city of Ren, and in the evening stayed outside the city. The host was delighted to receive him, and set out various fruits [for the guest]. The guest took a small dagger with rhinoceros horn hilt (犀靶小刀子) from beneath his robe, in order to slice the pear. The host's expression changed, and vanished suddenly. [All] within [the guest's] sight were things within a mound. The guest was much afraid, but held the dagger to protect himself. Then [he] saw a hole on the side of the mound. The sun shone brightly into it. [He] saw the casket had rotten, the fruit plates were tree leaves. The guest crawled out, asked the people around [it], but no one knew the mound." (瑯邪有人行過任城，暮宿郭外。主人相見甚歡，為設雜果。探取懷中犀靶小刀子，將以割梨，主人色變，遂奄然而逝。所見乃冢中物也。甚懼，然亦以此刀自護。且視冢傍有一穴，日照其中頗明，見棺櫬已腐敗，果盤乃樹葉貯焉。匍匐得出，問左右人，無識此冢者。) As in the story of Pei Hui, the disappearance of the host, the objects and the environment were triggered by the guest's exposure of the rhinoceros-horn-hilted dagger. It was perhaps because rhinoceros horns were believed to have exorcising properties, or simply because of the dagger itself.

summon [him], [with] carriages and horses escorting, accompanied by drums and trumpets. After some days, a hunter passed by to seek Jin. [The hunter] had tens of dogs, [they] broke straight into [Jin's house], barked at [Jin's] wife and sons. [They] all became *li* (狸, foxes or raccoon dogs). Silken cloth, gold and silver were all grasses, bones of the dead and mockstrawberries.[301]

Again, the wealth conjured by the *li*-woman as well as her own beautiful human form disappeared (reverted to their original forms) at the moment she came face to face with the dogs. Though Apollonius's Lamia did not create her illusory wealth based on a tomb or other worthless objects, the characteristic of her conjurations was very similar, and so was the process of their disenchantment.

Neither China nor the Classical West began with an indigenous belief in the conjuration of such illusions. In more ancient times in China, the prevalent belief was one of transformation (化), as could be seen in *Shanhai Jing* (山海經): For example, the young daughter of Emperor Yan (炎帝), Jingwei (精衛), drowned while swimming in the Eastern Sea. Thus she became a bird who carried wood branches and stones in a continuous attempt to fill the Sea.[302] The mother of Yiyin (伊尹) became a hollowed mulberry tree, from which Yiyin was born.[303] Such transformation was definitive and conclusive, similar to the kind of permanent changes described by Ovid in *Metamorphosis*.[304] The character 幻 (illusion) began as the reverse of the character 予 (give), and meant "to give falsely, to deceive". In *Shangshu, Wuyi* (尚書·無逸, attributed to the Duke of Zhou,), there was the phrase "诲張為幻", meaning "to deceive [others] with lies".[305] On the other hand, *Liezi* (列子), a philosophical work that incorporated significant Buddhist influences, said: "*Qi* that have life, forms that have shapes, [they] are all illusions (有生之氣，有形之狀，盡幻也)."[306] Here, 幻 began to take on the meaning of illusion. Similarly, the

[301] "晉太元中，瓦官寺佛圖前淳于矜，年少潔白。送客至石頭城南，逢一女子，美姿容。矜悅之，因訪問。二情既和，將入城北角，共盡歡好，便各分別。期更克集，便欲結為伉儷。女曰：'得婿如君，死何恨？我兄弟多，父母並在，當問我父母。'矜便令女婢問其父母，父母亦懸許之。女因敕婢取銀百斤，絹百匹，助矜成婚。經久，養兩兒。當作秘書監，明日，騶卒來召，車馬導從，前後部鼓吹。經少日，有獵者過，覓矜，將數十狗，徑突入，咋婦及兒，並成狸。絹帛金銀，並是草及死人骨蛇魅等。"幽明錄.

[302] 山海經·北山經.

[303] 呂氏春秋·孝行覽·本味.

[304] Athena disguised Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, but it was a temporary disguise on his person, not the seeming creation of something from nothing or the illusion of something completely different.

[305] *Liutao* (六韜, believed to have come into existence during the Warring States Period) contained: "False and marvelous crafts, curses by witchcraft in heterodox ways [and] inauspicious words, deceive (幻) and confuse the good people [and] the monarch must stop them" (偽方奇技，巫蠱左道，不祥之言，幻惑良民，王者必止之).

[306] The dating of *Liezi* is heavily disputed. Traditionally it was believed to have been written in the Warring States

word that properly describes such phenomenon, *illusio*, only appeared in Late Latin,[307] while its original meaning had been mocking or jeering. From the scene of its disenchantment, one could see that Lamia's illusion was completely conjured from nothing but thin air – to a modern reader this might not seem like much, but it might have appeared more counterintuitive to a Classical audience, whether Greek, Roman or Chinese.[308] This specific kind of illusion, as well as the way to dispel it, was very probably from India.

After Philostratus' time, the belief in such illusions of mansions, feasts and other fabulous wealth seemed to have lie dormant for some time. However, after the millennium, a somewhat similar belief came to be recorded again. In early accounts of the Sabbath, in which feasts of the gathering usually only consisted of merry-making with abundant food and wine (without demon worship, child-killing, cannibalism and other profane activities), speaking the name of Jesus Christ and making the cross were believed to have the exorcising ability to make the entire feasts disappear. In "Quod fugat demones" from Stephen of Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversis Materiis Praedicabilibus* (c. mid-13th century), a priest in Geneva was taken to a feast by sitting on a flying beam. When he made the sign of the cross before eating, everything disappeared except the wine cellar he was in, which turned out to be in Lombardy.[309] In "De muliere vas sibi competens equitante" from Rudolf von Schlettstadt's *Historiae Memorabiles* (c. 1300), a monastery servant followed a woman to a feast by anointing and enchanting his saddle, which took to the air (while the woman rode on an anointed vase). He already saw the feast, but when he tried to make the saddle fly faster by speaking the name of Jesus Christ, he fell into the mud with the saddle and the feast was lost to him.[310]

Period, but as Ji Xianlin (季羡林) showed, a story from Liezi was entirely copied from Sheng Jing's translated text (生經, a Buddhist scripture translated in 285 CE), meaning it could not have been compiled before 285 CE. 季羡林, 佛教十五題・列子與佛典.

[307] In Jerome's Latin Vulgate: "Quoniam lumbi mei impleti sunt inlusionibus et non est sanitas in carne mea." Vulg. Psa. 37.8.

[308] The difficulty with which this belief was assimilated into China could be seen in later stories that frequently required some smaller or worthless objects as the basis of the illusion, e.g., the leaves, grass, bones of the dead and mockstrawberries, supra, etc. Nor were such grand illusions of luxuries and feasts common in Roman descriptions of witchcraft.

[309] Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon dominicain du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Albert Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Henri Loones, 1877) 97, pp. 88-89.

[310] Rudolf von Schlettstadt, *Historiae Memorabiles*, 33, ed. Erich Kleinschmidt (Koln: Bohlau-Verlag, 1974) pp. 93-94. In this case, from the description it did not seem like the feast itself disappeared, because the hostess herself continued to fly on. However, the falling was definitely not simply falling down in a material sense, because the servant did not seem able to go on by foot to the banquet he had already seen by eye. Therefore, it could be said that the feast was lost to him due to his action. On flying and the name of Christ, see also Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, III. 93, p. 743. We will return to these cases later, see infra.

Whether these disappearing feasts belonged to a tradition that continued from Philostratus' Lamia, or reentered Western Europe in subsequent centuries through the medieval tradition of learned magic, it is not quite certain.[311] A parodic description of such a banquet, on the one hand linked to earlier medieval tales of banquets, and on the other hand linked to the learned magic tradition, appeared in Boccaccio's *Decameron* VIII.9. In this story, two poor painters tricked a rich but gullible doctor that they could introduce him into their wondrous gatherings, with fabulous decorations, beautiful women and lavish banquets. However, on their way there, the doctor was prohibited from speaking the name of Christ and being afraid. When riding on the beast (which was one of the painters in disguise), the doctor was afraid and said "Dio m'aiuti!" His mount used this as an excuse to throw him into a ditch. This element was very similar to the servant who fell from the flying saddle, but the hosts of the feasts were said to be two disciples of Michael Scot.[312] Boccaccio's tale was entirely a prank, such a feast evidently never existed and was never seen. However, in later periods, such feasts themselves seemed to have entered the literary realm and began to leave a wider impression. In *Orlando Innamorato*, the disenchanted mansion vanished in a similar manner: "Or Dragontina fa lamenti insani, / Che vede il suo giardino esser perduto. / Lo anel tuti e soi incanti facea vani: Sparve il palagio e mai non fo veduto; Lei sparve, e il ponte e il fiume con tempesta." (1.14.47)[313] Subsequently, the disappearing banquet persisted as a theme in Shakespeare's *Tempest*[314] and Milton's *Paradise Regained*.[315] However, at a popular level it also continued to exist, probably following earlier traditions of the Sabbath. In seventeenth-century Scotland, there were people who believed that "the

[311] At least in Scripture and Classical authors, this ability was rarely seen. However, the medieval tradition of learned magic bore strong Arabic influences and illusions were believed to be an ability attributed to magicians. For example, in Antonio da Montolmo's fourteenth-century treatise, he mentioned the illusions of spirits: "Debet esse sagax et sapiens, ut spirituum cognoscat illusiones et eorum secreta retineat." Antonio da Montolmo's De Occultis et Manifestis, in *Invoking Angels*, Claire Fanger ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), p. 282.

[312] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron* VIII.9 (Milan: BUR, 2013).

[313] Boiardo belonged to the Italian literary circle with which such treatises of magical learning were widely circulated at the time.

[314] William Shakespeare, The Tempest, Act III, Scene iii, in which Ariel, a spirit in service to the good magician Prospero, makes a banquet disappear before three men who had wronged Prospero. The stage directions left us with: "*Thunder and lightning. Enter ARIEL, like a harpy; claps his wings upon the table; and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes.*" The "quaint device" was a flipping table specially made for the play. The difference between the vanishing scene here and the Greek harpies is analogous to that between the gardens of Tantalus in Homer and Philostratus: in the original, the corporeal or material characteristic of the disappearance was stressed, whereas in the later scene, the disappearance was instant and magical.

[315] John Milton, *Paradise Regained*, Book II. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness with a splendid feast and beautiful servants who were said to be fairies and recalled the fairies of medieval knights' stories (338-377). However, Jesus rebuked and condemned Satan, and thus: "Both table and provision vanished quite, / With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard; / Only the importune Tempter still remained …" (402-404). It is not clear whether the feast disappeared as a result of Jesus' rebuke, or whether Satan made them disappear after the offer had been refused. The description of harpies seemed to echo Shakespeare.

fairies' or witches' revel and feasts vanish as soon as 'a sacred name or formula [was] uttered'."[316]

[316] Canon J. A. MacCulloch, "The Mingling of Fairy and Witch Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Scotland", *Folklore* 32(4): 1921, pp. 227-244, p. 229.

Chapter 2: Philinnion: A Fragment of a Belief

Phlegon of Tralles, a freedman who lived in Hadrian's time (117-38 CE) and wrote in Greek, left us with a marvelous story, the surviving parts of which began as such:

> ". . . [the nurse] went to the door of the guest room, and in the light of the burning lamp she saw the girl sitting beside Machates. Because of the extraordinary nature of the sight, she did not wait there any longer but ran to the girl's mother screaming, 'Charito! Demostratos!' She said they should get up and come with her to their daughter, who was alive and by some divine will was with the guest in the guest room."

From the remainder of this story, we find out that Machates was a young man who was staying as a guest in Charito and Demostratos' house. The girl, their daughter, had died less than half a year ago. When the disbelieving mother Charito was finally convinced by the nurse to go see the guest and the girl, "she peered in and thought she recognized her daughter's clothes and features" and decided to confront the girl the next morning. "At dawn, however, it turned out that by divine will or chance the girl had left unnoticed." Being interrogated by Charito, Machates "was anxious and confused at first, but hesitantly revealed that the girl's name was Philinnion. He told how her visits began, how great her desire for him was, and that she said she came to him without her parents' knowledge. Wishing to make the matter credible he opened his coffer and took out the item the girl had left behind—the golden ring he had obtained from her and the breast-band she had left the night before." The mother recognized these and grieved greatly. Thus, Machates agreed to tell them when she came again.

Philinnion came at her usual hour at night. "Machates pretended that nothing was wrong, since he wished to investigate the whole incredible matter to find out if the girl he was consorting with, who took care to come to him at the same hour, was actually dead. As she ate and drank with him, he simply could not believe what the others had told him, and he supposed that some grave-robbers had dug into the tomb and sold the clothes and the gold to her father. But in his wish to learn exactly what the case was, he secretly sent his slaves to summon Demostratos and Charito.

> "They came quickly. When they first saw her they were speechless and panic-stricken by the amazing sight, but after that they cried aloud and embraced their daughter. Then Philinnion said to them: 'Mother and father, how unfairly you have grudged my being with the guest for three days in my father's house, since I have caused no one any pain. For this reason, on account of your meddling, you shall grieve all over again, and I shall return to the place appointed for me. For it was not without divine will that I came here.' Immediately upon speaking these words she was dead, and her body lay stretched out visibly on the bed. Her father and mother threw themselves upon her, and there was much confusion and wailing in the house because of the calamity. The misfortune was unbearable and the sight incredible."

The inhabitants of the city heard the events and decided to "go to the tomb, open it, and see whether the body lay on its bier or whether [they] would find the place empty ... When [they] opened the chamber into which all deceased members of the family were placed, [they] saw bodies lying on biers, or bones in the case of those who had died long ago, but on the bier onto which Philinnion had been placed we found only the iron ring that belonged to the guest and the gilded wine cup, objects that she had obtained from Machates on the first day. Astonished and frightened", they went to Demostratos's house and saw the dead girl lying on the ground in the guest room.

At this point, the inhabitants of the city thought the matter "serious and incredible". "There was considerable confusion in the assembly and almost no one was able to form a judgment on the events." But Hyllos, a respected seer and augur in the city, said they "should burn the girl outside the boundaries of the city ... and perform an apotropaic sacrifice to Hermes Chthonios and the Eumenides. Then he prescribed that everyone purify himself completely, cleanse the temples and perform all the customary rites to the chtonic deities." In private the seer also told the narrator—the text was fashioned in the form of a letter, and the narrator was probably a magistrate of the city—to "sacrifice to Hermes, Zeus Xenios and Ares, and to perform these rites with care." Machates "became despondent and killed himself."[317]

Philinnion's story had perplexed commentators, who could not

[317] *Phlegon's Book of Marvels*, trans. William Hansen (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 25-28.

determine if the girl had been telling the truth when she said she could have returned to life, or if she had been a baleful revenant who would – and supposedly did – drain Machates' life.[318] Parallels had also been drawn to the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, where the failed resurrection brought the suicide of the lover.[319] But the differences between this tale and that of Orpheus and Eurydice were too considerable for them to be considered similar: Indeed, except for the element of the failed resurrection of a woman with whom the man had a relationship, there were hardly any similarities. Even the nature of the relationship was not similar: Orpheus sought his wife, whereas Philinnion was married to someone else before her death.[320] As to the resurrection element, Orpheus undertook the journey to the underworld as a great task of bringing back his wife, while Machates did not know Philinnion was dead, and only had brief intercourse with her in the living world.

Other scholars debated whether Philinnion was harmful to Machates, or whether Philinnion was a ghost, revenant, or demon.[321] However, it seems that none of the commentators were able to situate this tale well in the Western tradition.[322] In his commentary on the text, Hansen posed a series of

[318] See the commentary in Hansen, p. 77, and Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 160-161.

[319] Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts*, p. 161. Sarah Johnston believed that the story was similar to Orpheus and Eurydice, except that the resurrection was not initiated by Machates, the living lover. Sarah Iles Johnston, "Many (Un)Happy Returns: Ancient Greek Concepts of a Return from Death and Their Later Counterparts", in *Round Trip to Hades in the Eastern Mediterranean Tradition*, Gunnel Ekroth and Ingela Nilsson eds. (Brill, 2018), pp. 356-369.

[320] Though the first part of this story was lost, a brief summary was preserved in a 5th-century commentary to Plato's Republic. See *Phlegon's Book of Marvels*, Appendix 1, pp. 199-200.

[321] H. J. Rose argued that Machates was either the same as Philinnion's husband Krateros or standing in for him (on the evidence that he gave her an iron ring), and that, like Haimon committed suicide after Antigone's suicide, the dead draws her spouse to the underworld with her through the "magical" nature of marriage. As later scholars have argued, the text itself does not support this interpretation, because he neither seemed to recognize Philinnion nor knew she was dead. H. J. Rose, "Antigone and the Bride of Corinth", *The Classical Quarterly* 19.3/4 (1925), pp. 147-150. J.C. Lawson had argued that Philinnion was a "corporeal revenant", representing an ancient origin of later folk beliefs in revenants. J.C. Lawson, "ΠΕΡΙ ΑΛΙΒΑΝΤΩΝ. Part I." *The Classical Review* 40(2) (May, 1926), pp. 52-58. Felton agreed that Philinnion's story was a revenant story, but acknowledged that "the ancient Greeks had no separate term to describe revenants" and Phlegon used the same word to describe Philinnion and later insubstantial apparitions. D. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome: Ghost Stories from Classical Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), pp. 25-26. Deborah Prince also believed Philinnion was a revenant, whose "revival … [was] generally short-term, lasting anywhere from minutes to days". Deborah Thompson Prince, "The 'Ghost' of Jesus: Luke 24 in Light of Ancient Narratives of Post-Mortem Apparitions", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29.3 (2007), pp. 287-301. On the other hand, both Ogden and Combs considered her a ghost (even if a revenant at the same time). Jason Robert Combs, "A Ghost on the Water? Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49-50", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127.2 (2008): pp.345-358. Julia Doroszewska argued that she might have been prematurely dead – possibly died married but before the marriage was consummated – and thus returned to seek "a husband substitute" in Machates. Recognizing her revenant and ghostly nature, Doroszewska also compared Philinnion to Lamia and other female demons, and believed her to be less bloodthirty but perhaps equally dangerous, leading Machates to death: "We can only wonder what would have happened to Machates if Philinnion had not been recognized by her family." Julia Doroszewska, "When the Dead Love the Living: A Case Study in Phlegon of Tralles's Mirabilia", *Scripta Classica* 12 (2015), pp. 137-149. These authors seemed uncertain whether Philinnion was capable of reviving.

[322] Hansen found two Irish folktales, recorded respectively in 1936 and 1944, that had the similar elements of a

questions left unanswered by the text: "Since the dead as a rule remain dead, why has Philinnion exceptionally returned for the present, and why does she have an extraordinary chance at a permanent return to life? Why is her opportunity connected with an apparently unrelated activity (namely, consorting with her parents' guest) and conditional upon an apparently arbitrary term of time (namely, three nights)? And precisely what divine taboo do her parents violate by bursting into the room?" Hansen believed they remain unanswered, as an "effect of the text", because Phlegon of Tralles desired to create "in its readers ... a sense of other-worldly mystery arising from the idea that there exists a largely unseen world that is parallel to ours, a world with its own rules and logic, a world that seems to comprehend us but eludes our own understanding".[323]

The commentator's sense of the incomprehensibility of the events was shared by the townspeople within the text itself. Confronting the girl's body left lying in the guest room, their great fear and confusion indicated that they could not understand what had taken place, until the city's seer decided to burn it – probably as an inauspicious disturbance in the division between this world and the other one – and performed rites of purification to end this matter. Indeed the other world was unseen and elusive, especially when it was presented in such a fragmented and solitary manner as in Phlegon's text. However, it is possible to find clues to its rules and logics in places other than the Western context.

In *Soushen Hou Ji*,[324] there is a story as follows:

"In the Jin Dynasty, Li Zhongwen, *taishou* of Wudu (武都太守李仲文)

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female lodger who married the host's son who was dead, pp. 79-85. Some details and some sequence of themes in these two folktales were highly similar to Phlegon's, but the possibly cannot be ruled out that the folktales were influenced by Phlegon's text. Moreover, the prominent element of three days in Phlegon's story seemed to be missing in these Irish folktales (the terms of time highlighted by Hansen were a year and a day and seven years). In any case, it is difficult to believe that such Irish folktales were the source of Phlegon's story.

[323] Hansen, p. 74, and he was not alone. J.R. Morgan, concerned with the epistolary narrative of the story, similarly attributed the unanswered question to the partial knowledge of the (possibly fictitious) letter-writer and seemed to imply the omission was a literary choice: "The documentary internal mode of narration implicit in the epistolary form is brilliantly exploited here. Neither letter-writer could possibly be in a position to know what took place on the divine level. Were the gods showing compassion to Philinnion or punishing her? Given that her body has not decayed, are we to imagine that she has been living this half-life ever since her death? The tokens show that she has been returning to her grave, but exactly what conditions apply to her visits to her home, and why must she not be recognised by her parents? What and whose is the divine will referred to on several occasions? Is the revenant Philinnion in any sense a person, the real Philinnion, or is her personhood forfeit, and she become no more than her appetites, with no moral restraint, or worse? What are its intentions? … " Evidently he also had doubts about whether Philinnion was harmful. J.R. Morgan, "Love from Beyond the Grave: The Epistolary Ghost-Story in Phlegon of Tralles", in *Epistolary Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden: Brill 2013), pp. 293-321.

[324] For the authorship and date of *Soushen Hou Ji*, see supra.

lost his daughter [during his term] at the *jun* [of Wudu], aged eighteen years. As a temporary measure, [the father] buried [her] north of the *jun* city. [Later] Zhang Shizhi replaced [Li] as *jun [taishou]*. Shizhi's son was named (*zi*, 字) Zichang, was twenty years of age, [and] accompanied [his father] at the official residence. [He] dreamt of a girl, seventeen or eighteen years of age, [whose] beauty was rare. [She] herself said: "[I] was the daughter of the previous *fujun* (府君), had the misfortune of dying early, and now should return to life. [My] heart loves and delights in [you], and thus [I] come to meet and submit myself [to you]." Thusly five or six nights, and suddenly [she] appeared during the day, untied her clothes, the fragrance was extraordinary. Thus they became husband and wife. [They] slept together, [her] clothes were all stained, as a virgin. Later Zhongwen sent a maid to check on his daughter's grave, because his deceased wife asked [him].[325] [The maid] went into the official residence [and] saw one shoe of the daughter beneath Zichang's bed. [She] took it and wept, [and] cried [that the Zhangs] opened [the girl's] grave. [She] took the shoe back [and] showed it to Zhongwen. Zhongwen was surprised and astonished, [and] sent to ask Shizhi: 'How did your son obtain [my] deceased daughter's shoe?' Shizhi called [for his son and] asked, his son told everything from beginning to end. Both Li and Zhang thought the matter strange. [They] opened the casket to see [what happened], [and discovered that] the girl's body had already grown flesh, [her] appearance was as before. [Her] right foot wore a shoe, [but there was] none on [her] left foot. The night after, Zichang dreamt that the girl came and said: 'I was about to return to life, [but] now [my grave] was opened. From now, [I] will die and [my] flesh will rot, [and I] cannot return to life. [My] heart of ten thousand regrets, what more could I say!' [She] wept and departed."[326]

[325] The original text goes as so: "因過世之婦相問". This text did not specify the matter, but based on the context and the general characteristics of ghost stories in China, the girl's mother seemed to have already passed away, but was not buried with her (likely buried in the ancestral grave or at her father's current post). Therefore, she was concerned about her daughter who was buried in a faraway place and in some way, likely in a dream, mentioned it to her husband. It is not clear whether her daughter's condition was already known to her, but it is possible, especially because the sensitivity of mothers towards daughters who secretively met with men was a prevalent theme.

[326] Translation based on 搜神后記 and 新輯搜神后記. When the two versions differ some editorial choices were made. Notably, 新輯搜神后記 contains a passage at the beginning of the girl's final words: "The highest love between husband and wife meant [growing] old together (偕老). But [you] carelessly forgot [my] shoe, and caused [this matter] to be revealed." This passage does not appear in most versions and did not fit the context well (since she came every night, it was difficult to understand why she would have thought that it was the man who forgot her shoe). Thus I did not include it.

In many aspects, this story resembled that of Philinnion. First, it concerned a dead girl who sought resurrection. She slept with a young man who was staying in her former residence. She also said she was able to return on permission of the powers of the underworld. Her relationship with the young man was discovered through a female servant of her family, which was confirmed by her private belonging, probably accidentally left in the man's room – a shoe here, and for Philinnion it was "the breast-band she had left the night before" (in addition to the gift of a golden ring). Finally, after being disturbed by her own parents, she could no longer return to life and expressed her great regret.

A somewhat different story, also concerning the failed resurrection of a young woman, could be found in *Lieyi Zhuan*:

> "[In the] Han [dynasty], a *sheng* surnamed Tan (談生, a student of Confucianism) was forty years old [and] had no wife. [He] often read *Shijing* (詩經, Book of Songs) with great emotion [out loud].[327] At midnight, a girl aged fifteen or sixteen years, [whose] beauty and dress were peerless, came to submit [herself] to the *sheng*, [and] spoke words [as between] husband and wife. [She] said: 'I am not like others. Do not shine light on me with fire. After three years, [you] can shine light on me.' [They] became husband and wife. [After she] gave birth to a son, [who] was already two years old,[328] [he] could not restrain [himself]. At night, [he] waited until [she] had fallen asleep, [and] in stealth shone a light [on her] to see [her]. Above her waist flesh had grown, as a woman, but beneath her waist there were only bare bones. [His] wife awoke, and said: 'You betrayed me. I was about to live, how could [you] not restrain [yourself] for a year, and shone a light on me?' The *sheng* apologized and wept ceaselessly. [His wife] said: 'Though [my] conjugal bond with you is forever severed, but [I] care for my son. If [you] are poor and cannot sustain a living, come with me for now [and I] will leave you something.' The *sheng* followed her, [and] entered a magnificent hall. The building and the furnishing were extraordinary. [She] gave him a pearl robe, [and] said: '[You] can sustain yourself [with it].' [She] ripped the bottom edge of the *sheng*'s clothing for keeping, and left. Later the *sheng* took the robe to market,

[327] Probably because *Shijing* contained many love poems.
[328] Based on the time recounted in the story, it is likely that *xusui* was used: the baby was one year old as soon as he was born, and became two years old on the next New Year's Day.

the house of the King at Suiyang (睢陽王家)[329] bought it, [and he] received ten million *qian* (錢, copper coins). The King recognized it and said: 'This is my daughter's robe, how did it come to market? This must have been [from] graverobbing.' Then [the King] arrested and interrogated him with torture. The *sheng* told the truth. The King did not believe [his words] and went to see the daughter's grave. The grave was completely intact as before. [The King] opened the grave to see, beneath the casket lid was indeed found [the *sheng*'s] clothing edge. [The King] called for his son to see, [and the son] was just like the king's daughter. The King then believed it, and summoned Tan-*sheng*, gave him many gifts, regarded him as a son-in-law, [and] requested [the Emperor] to make his son a *langzhong* (郎中, a court official)."[330]

In this story, the young woman's resurrection was not interrupted by her parents, but by her impatient husband. The story suggested that she should have stayed with him for three years, and then could come back to life. This might have been in common with the three days in Philinnion's story. As Philinnion who was interrupted after two days, the taboo was broken after two years, one away from the girl's successful resurrection. Also like Philinnion, the girl exchanged mementos with her husband, which confirmed the truth of the story when her husband's memento was discovered in her grave. All three stories involved the suspicion of graverobbery.

In these stories, the processes of resurrection were unfortunately interrupted. However, happy stories about successful resurrections were also recorded in China. In *Soushen Hou Ji*, there was a very similar story of a girl who sought resurrection and copulated with a young man:

"In the Dongping years [of the Jin dynasty], Feng Xiaojiang [was] the *taishou* of Guangling, [and his] son was named Mazi, aged twenty-or-so years. [Mazi] was lying alone in the stable, and at night dreamt of a girl, aged eighteen or nineteen years, [who] said: 'I am the

[329] This must have referred to one of the Kings of Liang (梁王) in the Western Han Dynasty, whose capital was at Suiyang. The first King of Liang ruled 178-169 BCE, and last King of Liang was deposed in 9 CE.

[330] The clothing edge beneath the casket lid appeared in another story in *Soushen Ji* related to ghosts, about a Daoist practioner of Yingling (营陵道人), who "could let people meet those who were already dead" (能令人与已死人相见). Following the Daoist's instruction, a man went to a place to meet with his dead wife. They conversed as when they were alive. When the man left, his clothing edge was caught in the door. He ripped it off and departed. Later, when the man died and was to be buried together with his wife, they found his clothing edge beneath the wife's casket lid. 搜神记・卷二.

daughter of the former *taishou* Xu Xuanfang, had the misfortune of dying early. Since [I] died it had been roughly four years. [I] was wrongfully killed by *gui* (鬼), according to the Book of Lives, [I] should live to more than eighty years. [Thus] I was permitted to return to life. [I] need [someone to] rely on, such that [I] can live. And I was fated to become your wife. Can [you] grant my request, [and] save [my] life?' Mazi answered: '[This I] can do.' Thus [she] set a date with Mazi [when she] should come out [of the grave]. When the set date came, on the floor in front of [Mazi]s bed [there was] hair just at the level of the floor. [Mazi] ordered servants to sweep [it] away, [but it] became more clear, thus [he] realized [this] was the girl in the dream. Therefore [he] sent away the servants, then the person's forehead gradually emerged, followed by [her] head and face, in the time to cook a meal, the bodily form had already emerged. Mazi let her come sit across [from him] on the couch (榻), [and she] spoke words [that were] very marvelous. Thus [she] slept with Mazi, [and] warned him often: 'I am yet weak, you should constrain yourself.' [He] asked: 'When can [you] come out [of the grave]?' [She] answered: '[I] should come out on my own day of birth.' [Her] birthday had not yet come, [she] went to the stable. [Her] words and sounds were heard by all. The girl counted that [her] birthday came, [and] taught Mazi in detail the ways to dig herself out and care for [her]. After these words [she] bowed and left. Mazi followed her words, on that day, with a red rooster, a plate of *shu* rice, a *sheng* of clear wine, paid honor before her grave, [which was] ten steps or so from the stable. After the ritual, [he] dug the casket out, opened [it and] looked [inside]. The girl's body was entirely as before. [He] gently carried [her] out, set [her] within felt curtains. [There was] only a slight warmth beneath her heart, [and] breath in [her] mouth. [He] ordered four maids to watch over and care for her. Often [they] sprayed the milk of a dark goat (青羊) on her eyes, then [they] opened. [Her] mouth could swallow porridge, [and] gradually could speak. Within two hundred days [she] could stand and walk holding a stick, after a year (期), [her] complexion, skin, strength all returned to normal. Thus [they] sent to report to the Xu clan (her family), all the clan came. [They] chose an auspicious day to send gifts of engagement, [the wedding] lasted three days, thus [they] became husband and wife. [They] had two sons and a daughter. The older son was named (字) Yuanqing, [and]

was *mishu-langzhong* (秘書郎中) in the early years of Yongjia. The younger son was named (字) Jingdu, [and] was *taifu-yuan* (太傅掾). The daughter married Liu Ziyan of Jinan, [who was] the grandson of *zhengshi* (徵士, a man of great learning but refuse to serve the court) Yanshi."

The resurrected girl clearly reiterated the reason for which she was able to return to life: she was not fated to die. Her statement that she was "wrongfully killed by *gui*" was a typical expression for people who were mistakenly summoned by underworld bureaucrats[331] (*gui* here referred to underworld deputies). In this case, she was fated to live to eighty years, thus the powers of the underworld permitted her to return to life. However, also like other cases of resurrection, the mere permission was not sufficient because her body had died for a long time and had been buried.[332] The detailed instructions, complicated steps, and lengthy recovery of bodily functions were reminiscent of the ancient description of the resurrection of Dan.[333] In other words, the story displayed the old Chinese belief in the corporeal characteristics of resurrection. This showed that this story was not only the earliest recorded version[334] among stories of successful resurrection of young women through copulation, but also the one with the deepest imprint of ancient beliefs. In later stories, such imprints gradually faded. In *Guangyi Ji* (late 8th century), there are two such stories.

"In the Kaiyuan years (713-741), the daughter of the *sima* of Yizhou, Zhang Guo (易州司馬張果), aged fifteen years, died of illness. [He] could not bear to bury [her] far away, [thus] temporarily buried (瘞) [her] beneath the pavilion (閣) of the eastern court. Later he became the *zhangshi* of Zhengzhou, because the distance was far and [he] would have to accompany her casket [from Zhengzhou back to their ancestral grave] again, thus [he] kept [her casket at Yizhou]. Then Liu Yi (劉乙) replaced him [as the *sima* of Yizhou]. His son often stayed in the pavilion. One dusk [he] was still walking outside the gate, [and] saw a girl [of] fleshy beauty come from outside. Liu suspected there was a man who had agreed to elope [with her], thus he approached

[331] The two stories infra also referred to "fated to live again" (命當重活) and "fated to return to life" (命當更生), which implied the same.
[332] Like in the case of Li E, supra, it was necessary to rely on a living person to dig her out of her grave.
[333] See supra.
[334] For the dating of *Soushen Hou Ji*, see supra note.

and greeted her.[335] [She] gladly [became] intimate [with him], stayed [and] slept together. Her expression was full of longing, her manners were graceful and elegant. Liu loved and treasured [her] above all. Later [she always] came at dusk, [and] departed at dawn. Several months later, [she] suddenly said to Liu: 'I am the previous *sima* Zhang's daughter, unfortunately died young, [and] was buried near this pavilion. [I am] fated to live again (命當重活), [and] unite harmoniously with you. Three days later, you can dig [me] out. Slowly wait for [my] breath [to recover]. Be careful – do not abruptly scare or harm [me].' [She] pointed out her burial place and departed. When the day came Liu was much delighted, alone with a trusted servant, [he] dug at night [to] four or five *chi* deep, [and] found a lacquer casket. [He] slowly opened [it and] looked inside. The girl's complexion was lively, [her] body warm and soft, none of [her] clothes and makeup were soiled or damaged. [He] raised and placed [her] on the bed, there was a faint breath [under her] nose. A while later, there was breath in [her] mouth. [He] fed her thin porridge, [she] could swallow [it] little by little. Come the next dawn [she] returned to life, gradually [she] could speak and sit up. Several days [later], [he] started to fear that [his] parents would learn [of the matter], thus with the excuse of studying [his] books [and] being inconvenient to leave the pavilion, [he] often had food and drink sent into the pavilion. Yi suspected strangeness in [his] son, thus [when] his son was accompanying guests out, [he] sneaked a look into his son's chamber, [and] saw the girl inside. [He] asked her the reason, [she] replied in full, [and] the casket was still beneath the bed. Yi said emotionally to his wife: 'As this is [because] the fated date of the underworld [was bent by] *zhigan* (此既冥期至感),[336] why did [he] not make it known [to us] earlier?' Thus [they] hid [her] in the hall. The son could not find the girl [and] was greatly scared. The father then said [to him]: 'As this is a very rare coincidence (申契殊會), not [found] in a thousand years, what harm [was there] in telling me? You hid [this matter] too

[335] Liu suspected that the girl was finding her lover with whom she was eloping, because she seemed to be coming from outside into their residence after dusk without greeting the master. This behavior was not proper for girls of respectable social standing, thus Liu suspected she might be a frivolous girl whom he could try to make his lover (and replace her supposed former lover).

[336] Liu Yi was an official of not insignificant rank, and thus very probably either an aristocrat or a scholar, or both. His attitude, as well as the general atmosphere of great rejoicing in this story, showed that quite unlike historians of prior dynasties who took resurrections to be inauspicious, these events had by this point become well-entrenched in the beliefs of even the Chinese upper classes. Cf. supra the attributed comments of Wang Dao 王導, who thought the woman's resurrection was an "extraordinary matter" (此非常事). Liu Yi's tone here implied that he saw the unusual event to be very rare and auspicious.

much.' Thus [he] sent a messenger to Zhengzhou (where the girl's father was now an official), reported the events in detail, [and] thus requested marriage. The parents were sorrowful [but also] surprised and rejoiced, and agreed on a date to come to the marriage. Thus they became a wonderful couple and later had several sons."

The similar story of Liu *zhangshi*'s daughter goes as such: Liu was *zhangshi* of Jizhou (吉州长史), whose oldest daughter died of illness at the age of twelve during his term. After his term, he accompanied her casket back home by river, along with a friend and colleague Gao Guang (司丘掾高廣) whose term also finished. When the two families' respective ships came to Yuzhang, the river was frozen and they anchored for the winter, with the two ships a hundred or so steps from one another. Gao Guang's son was over twenty years of age, fair and intelligent. One night he was alone on the ship reading, and saw a beautiful maid who said she came from the *zhangshi*'s ship, said their candles had gone out and asked to light the candles. Gao's son flirted with the maid, but she introduced her master's daughter instead. Gao thought she was referring one of Liu's surviving daughters, and gladly agreed. The next night the girl came and slept with him, and came every night afterwards. After a month or so, she told him that she was the dead daughter of the *zhangshi*, "fated to return to life" (命當更生), and asked him to tell his family if he wished to marry her. Gao's son was surprised but greatly delighted and agreed. She then told Gao's son: "[I] will return to life after three days. Make [my family] open [my] casket. At night let frost and dew cover [my] face, make [me] drink thin porridge, then [I] will live." Gao's son told his father, and then went to the Lius to make the request. The girl's mother refused angrily, disbelieving his words. At night, however, the girl's parents both dreamt of their daughter, who said: "I am fated to return to life, Heaven (天) let [me] couple [with Gao's son]. One would have thought [you would] rejoice and agree. Now [you] are so stubborn, [do you] not wish me to live again?" Because of the dream and because Gao's son described the girl's appearance and clothes exactly, they agreed. Following the girl's instructions she returned to life. "[Within] one day [she] began to breath, [her] eyes opened slightly. By the evening she could speak. In a few days, [she] was as before [she died]." The maid who first met Gao's son had died before the girl, and her casket was also in the ship. After the girl returned to life, she bade farewell tearfully to the maid. She wed Gao's son and they had several sons.

In these two stories, there were still instructions for the resurrection

process, but they became much more simplified, and the process of bodily recovery became much quicker – the resurrected girls recovered completely within a few days. All three cases of successful resurrections hinted at some ways in which resurrection could fail: Xu Xuanfang's daughter warned that the young man should constrain himself before she could resurrect; Zhang Guo's daughter warned that living persons must not scare or harm the resurrecting girl; Liu's daughter seemed to suggest that if her mother did not agree to open the casket, she would be suffocated when she revived.[337] This means that the casket could not be opened too late, but more importantly it could not be opened too early. One of the most critical elements of success was that their caskets were opened exactly at the appropriate time – for Xu Xuanfang's daughter, it was her birthday; for the other two girls, it was three days after they told the matter to their lovers. We could speculate that if their lovers, after hearing of the matter, opened the caskets too early, they would have found that some flesh had begun to grow on the bodies, like Li Zhongwen's daughter and Tan's wife, but the resurrection would have been interrupted and the girls would no longer be able to return to life.

From this body of stories, perhaps we could attempt to deduct what might have happened if Philinnion had not been disturbed by her parents and completed her meetings with the young men for three days. In fact, it could be better situated in a comprehensible cultural context if we take into consideration another body of stories about the female dead copulating with living men.

In *Soushen Ji*, there is the story of Xing Daodu. When he was travelling for his studies, four or five *li* outside the city of Yongzhou, he saw a great mansion and a maid in blue-green clothes at the gate. He requested a meal and was granted entrance, and inside met a lady of Qin, who told him that she was a dead daughter of King Min of Qin (秦閔王)[338], was going to marry in Cao but died without a husband (possibly before the wedding). She asked to become his wife. After three nights and three days, she said to him: "You are a living man, and I am a ghost. With you [I] lay together, such meeting could last three nights, [but you] cannot stay for long, [else] there will be disaster." (君是生人，我鬼也，共君宿契，此會可三宵，不可久居，當有禍矣。) She gave him a gold headrest as memento. He was seen out of the gate by the

[337] A number of resurrection stories involved the family disbelieving the resurrection and delayed in open the casket. As a result, the resurrected often sustained significant bodily harm. See, e.g., the story of 顏畿 in 搜神記・卷十五.

[338] There was no such historical King of Qin and was likely a literary invention.

blue-green-clothed maid. After a few steps, he could no longer see a mansion, and there was only a mound. Greatly scared, he fled and went to Qin, where he attempted to sell the headrest. The girl's mother encountered this and heard the story from him. With doubt, she sent for the grave to be opened, and found that all were intact except from the headrest, and beneath the dead girl's clothes there were marks of their intimacy. Thus the queen believed the story, exclaiming: "Great is the divinity of my daughter (我女大圣). [She] has died for twenty-three years, and could still meet with the living. This is truly my son-in-law."

In this story, as well as two other stories from *Soushen Ji* – Ziyu (紫玉) and the daughter of Cui (崔氏女) – the dead girls married living men at their tombs for three nights. The number three, in a general sense, marked the boundary between the living world and the otherworld in the Chinese tradition. Dan and the dead of Taiyuan both returned to life after three years. Previously Dan's body was exposed at the market for three days, and after being dug out he stood on the grave for three days.[339] In *Mozi* (墨子), an even earlier text, it was reported that Du Bo (杜伯), being wrongfully executed by his liege, King Xuan of Zhou, returned as a ghost after three years to kill the King.[340] Three days and three years were of great importance in Chinese *li* related to birth and death at the level of formal regulations.[341] Thus it is probably no coincidence that the lover of Ziyu, who died of sorrow after their parting, returned three years after her death and met her ghost. In the story of the daughter of Cui, she not only slept with Lu Chong for three nights, but returned on the third day of the third month[342] with their three-year-old son. This implied that their son, as a living child to be returned to his father, could not stay in the otherworld for more than three years.[343] In the story of Zheng Demao from *Xuanshi Zhi* (宣室志), Zheng was travelling alone and met a

[339] See supra.

[340] 墨子・卷八・明鬼下. "周宣王殺其臣杜伯而不辜，杜伯曰：'吾君殺我而不辜，若以死者為無知則止矣；若死而有知，不出三年，必使吾君知之。'其三年，周宣王合諸侯而田於圃，田車數百乘，從數千，人滿野。日中，杜伯乘白馬素車，朱衣冠，執朱弓，挾朱矢，追周宣王，射之車上，中心折脊，殪車中，伏弢而死。當是之時，周人從者莫不見，遠者莫不聞，著在周之《春秋》。"

[341] On the other hand, the relationship between weddings and "three days" was considerably weaker. In the *li* regulation of weddings, there was only the requirement that the bride should pay homage to her husband's ancestral temple after three months. The only related appearance of "three days" in wedding celebrations was in a context of mourning for the departure of the daughter from her original family and the acceptance as a member of her husband's family – therefore it was related to both death (as a daughter) and birth (as a wife). See infra.

[342] The third day of the third month was a festival called *shangsi* (上巳), when people usually went to the river to cleanse themselves of impurities.

[343] This son was supposedly the ancestor of Lu Zhi 盧植 (died 192 CE), a famous Confucian scholar and statesman in Eastern Han. It ended with the statement "To this day, his descendant Zhi, *zi* Zigan, is renowned throughout the realm." (至今其后植，字子干，有名天下。) The tone of the narration seemed to suggest that this story first formed around Lu Zhi's era, though it was only recorded later.

beautiful maid, who told him that Lady Cui wanted to marry her daughter to him. Zheng knew they were not human (鄭知非人) and wanted to refuse, but were forced to go to a great mansion, where he married a girl of unprecedented beauty. After a hundred or so days, though he was amourous of the girl, he wanted to leave and asked if she could leave with him. However, she answered that she could not, because the underworld was divided from the world of the living. Zheng insisted on leaving, and his wife said that she will welcome him again in three years (后三年，當相迎也). Zheng indeed died three years later.[344] In *Guangyi Ji*, Yang Yuanyin's dead father gave him three hundred thousand copper coins, and told him to spend them quickly. Three days later, the merchants where he spent the money all found the coins turned to paper money.[345] In a larger context, weddings with otherworldly women, either divine women (神女) or baleful monsters, also often lasted three days, like Li Huang's three-day stay in the white snake-woman's mansion.[346]

In early stories, the appearance of the number three was relatively consistent. After the introduction of Buddhism, in which the period the souls of the dead lingered before reincarnation was demarcated by periods of seven days: From the first seven days (头七), to the three seven days (三七, three times seven, or the twenty-first day), and finally the seven seven days (七七, seven times seven, the completion of burial rites on the forty-ninth day after death).[347] On corresponding dates, Buddhist ritual ceremonies need to be performed for the dead. Thus, the number seven became associated with the otherworldly and partly replaced three.[348] In earlier resurrection stories, the

[344] 宣室志.

[345] 廣異記.

[346] For Li Huang's story, see supra. In Youming Lu, there is a story about a man's marriage to the river god's daughter, which lasted three days, and he was sent back with gifts on the fourth day. A case of three years could be found in *Wenqi Lu* (cited in *Taiping Guangji*), in which a man made a woman in a painting come to life and become his wife. They had a son after a year, and when their son was two years old, a friend of his told him that his wife was *yao* and gave him an exorcising sword. His wife discovered the sword. Saddened by her husband's mistrust of her, she revealed that she was a *xian* (仙, divine being, or goddess) and took her son with her back into the painting. This story shared considerable similarities with earlier stories about Lamia-like women, only with the difference that she was benevolent. This is only an example among many of this type of benevolent, divine women married to mortals but leaving because of suspicion that she was *yao*. In this sense, it is closer to the medieval European snake-woman. This story also shared the three-years element with Tan-*sheng* and Lu Chong's stories, which also contained the woman's son. It is evident that these stories had considerable continuity and conformity between them.

[347] The condition of ths soul during this period is called 中阴身. See, for example, 杂阿毗昙心论卷第十下・择品第十一之二. Correspondingly, the period of the development of the fetus was also demarcated by periods of seven days. See, for example, 大智度论・卷第四; 诸经要集・卷二十・八苦缘第三; 道地经・五种成败章第五..

[348] Seven is a number that commonly appears in Buddhism, e.g. the Seven Treasures (七宝), the Seven Buddhas (七佛, of whom the Shakyamuni, the Buddha of the Present, was the last), the Parents of Seven Lives (七世父母, one's parents in the present life and past six lives; when Buddhist service is performed for one's parents, it is customarily not only to perform them for parents of this life, but for parents of all seven reincarnations), the Seven

days before resurrection were often six (two times three), but later texts sometimes changed the number to seven when transcribing. For example, in the earlier version of the record of Chen Jiao's resurrection in *Sanguo Zhi* (3rd century), he was reported to have "returned to life [after] six days" (六日更生). In the later *Soushen Ji* (4th century), the same event was reported as "died [for] seven days [and] returned to life" (死七日復生). In the *Zuo Zhuan* (左傳, late 4th century BCE) version of the spy of Qin, the killed spy returned to life after six days (六日而蘇), but *Kaiyuan Zhan Jing* (開元占經) reported *Zuo Zhuan* as "[the spy] returned to life [after] seven days" (七日復生).[349] *Guangyi Ji* also recorded the story of Li Shi (李湜). Li became a lover of the three goddesses who were wives of the God of the Hua Mountain (華岳). Every year on the seventh day of the seventh month, he went to meet his unearthly lovers. His family saw that he lay breathless and would awake after three days. This relationship continued for seven years until an exorcist said he had an inauspicious air about him (有邪氣) and gave him a *fu* (符, written incantation). The next time Li went, the three women could not approach him. Two scolded him, but one who loved him most wept and warned him that he should not speak of the matter for three years.[350] In this story, the numbers three and seven were already intermingled. *Taiping Guangji* recorded a story that supposedly took place in the fifth year of Dali (大曆, 770 CE). Li Yuanping (李元平) met a girl at dusk and slept with her. After seven nights, she told him that they had been lovers in their former lives. She would now be reincarnated (托生時至) and become his wife sixteen years later.[351] Here, seven replaced three, and reincarnation replaced resurrection. Thus, even within the Chinese tradition, the stratification was evident. Philinnion's story, if it could be placed alongside this body of stories, would fit well with the pre-Buddhist tradition, as it was characterized by the number of three days and supposed corporeal resurrection.

As Philinnion gave her golden ring to Machates, in the aforementioned three stories from *Soushen Ji*, a memento was also given to the man by the dead woman. Ziyu gave her husband a brilliant pearl with the diameter of one *cun* (somewhat longer than an inch). The daughter of Cui came to meet her husband after four years, and left him with their three-year-old son as

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Sufferings (七苦), etc.

[349] 開元占經・卷一百一十三. The author also mistakenly transcribed Li E's story as she had died for forty years (instead of fourteen days). In the author's time, resurrection after seven days in general had already become much more common.

[350] 廣異記.

[351] 太平廣記・卷.

well as a gold bowl. More generally, in stories where a dead woman was involved with a living man, the exchange of gifts or mementos was a very prevalent element, such as the exchange of brocade beddings and sachet for a jade hairpin in the story of Wang Gongbo in *Shanhe Bieji*,[352] the exchange of rouge for two jade rings in the story of Cui in *Bowu Zhi*,[353] the exchange of a jade goblet interlaced with gold and a pair of jade bracelets for a chest of embroidered clothes in the story of Wang Xuanzhi in *Guangyi Ji*,[354] the exchange of a silver goblet for ten *pi* of silk fabric in the story of the magistrate of Xingfan also in *Guangyi Ji*, and the exchange of a turtle shell hairpin for a jade ring in the story of Cui Luoshi in *Youyang Zazu*,[355] etc. Usually, the man's story was verified when the respective mementos were either found or missing beside the woman's body. That is to say, in stories without resurrection or with failed resurrection, the exchange of gifts between the dead woman and the living man served the purpose of verifying the story and was therefore very prominent. This explains why the same element was hardly seen in stories of successful resurrection – because nothing could show the veracity of the events better than the girl's resurrection itself.

Returning to Hansen's list of unanswered questions within Philinnion's story, we find that all questions seemed to have well-established, interconnected answers within the body of stories concerning romantic relationships between a dead woman and a living man. "*Since the dead as a rule remain dead, why has Philinnion exceptionally returned for the present, and why does she have an extraordinary chance at a permanent return to life?*" In the Western tradition, permanent return to life was incredibly rare. However, we saw in the stories above that they were well-accepted in the Chinese tradition. Though the people in the stories indeed cited the rarity of such events, the boundary between life and death was made less impermeable by the composing and recounting of these stories. Resurrection in the Classical tradition, outside the heroic narrative in which the hero descends into the underworld to bring back one of the dead (Heracles and Orpheus), seemed to be severely questioned, as testified by the controversy surrounding the reality of Plato's Myth of Er.[356] Nevertheless, cases of such resurrection were recorded, within which mistaken summons to the underworld were quite prominent. Behind these mistaken summons was a belief, like the Chinese one,

[352] 山河別記, most of which is lost, but some stories were copied into and survived in 太平廣記.
[353] 博物志. Cui also stayed three days in the tomb.
[354] 廣異記.
[355] 酉陽雜俎.
[356] See supra.

that a person not yet fated to die could be taken to the underworld and permitted to return to life again, like in Plutarch and Lucian.[357] Also in Plutarch, there was a Thespesius of Soli who returned to life "[o]n the third day, at the very time of his funeral". But Plutarch probably rationalized the event and had his kinsman who acted as his guide explain, "you are not dead, but through a divine dispensation are present here in your intelligence, having left the rest of your soul, like an anchor, behind in your body."[358] That is, Plutarch implied that he was not fully dead. But his return to life at the third day and his temporary summon to the otherworld through divine will, probably provided a background in which Philinnion's failed resurrection could be understood.[359] Philinnion, like the mistakenly summoned men and Thespesius, might have been not yet fated to die and returned with the permission of the "divine will". However, without the Chinese body of stories to provide a fuller context, we might not be able to see this link, because they had already manifested in very different stories.

"*Why is her opportunity connected with an apparently unrelated activity (namely, consorting with her parents' guest), conditional upon an apparently arbitrary term of time (namely, three nights)?*" We see that the association of the number three with the boundary between this world and the other was prevalent in China. Notably, while the number three had several significances in the Classical tradition, it was not commonly associated with the underworld.[360] Thus it was quite worth noting that in the aforementioned story of Thespesius in Plutarch, he returned to life on the third day.[361] If Philinnion's case could be considered as one of resurrection, the shared element of the number three, appearing in resurrection cases, could have

[357] See supra.

[358] Plutarch, *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance*, pp. 562-64. In fact, this Thespesius was originally named Aridaeus, and only after he met the kinsman in the otherworld, the latter told him: "You were [Aridaeus] before, but henceforth you are Thespesius." This change of name would signify a new stage in the man's life, in a sense very close to rebirth.

[359] In Plutarch there is another case in which death was related to the number three, namely the story of Timarchus, who conducted a ritual underground for "two nights and a day" (this would mean that he emerged from underground on the third day after he descended). During the ritual he heard a voice that said many things to him, including the prophesy of his death after three months. He indeed died three months after. Plutarch, De Genio Socratis, in *Moralia* VII (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

[360] See, e.g. Emory B. Lease, "The Number Three, Mysterious, Mystic, Magic," in *Classical Philology* 14 (1919): pp. 56-73; Annemarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Schimmel suggested that three frequently represented multicity and wholeness in many cultures, and were often used to divide a whole or represent its different aspects. Both supernatural beings and characters in stories also often came triads. But the number did not appear specifically linked with the otherworld.

[361] This story was evidently modelled after Plato's Er, but the Myth of Er did not contain the element of the number three with regard to the time duration of the resurrection – Er's body was found ten days after his death, and he resurrected on the twelfth day. Plato, *The Republic*. Book X. The souls of the dead were described as remaining for seven days and setting out on the eighth, and they travel for four days to come before the Moirae and draw lots to be reincarnated – totaling twelve days.

more significant meanings, and the relationship between Plutarch's story and Philinnion's story might be closer than previously imagined. Philinnion's supposed resurrection would be completed on the third night after she first met the young man, thus the difference between "three nights" and "the third day" might not be a clear-cut one, with a common link to the number three.[362]

Moreover, in the Chinese tradition, the dead girls' copulation with the living men was not "an apparently unrelated activity", and very likely directly contributed to their resurrection. In the Daoist tradition, the technique of *fangzhong shu* (房中术, the art within the bedchamber) was based upon a theory of nourishing and exchanging *qi* (气, life force) through sexual intercourse. Therefore, the men's sexual intercourse could be understood as the giving of *qi* to the dead girls, which allowed them to revivify.[363] Surely, these stories were probably not directly based upon such specific and complicated theories, but a vague belief that sexual intercourse had the power to reestablish the tie of the dead to the living world could be sensed. If Philinnion's resurrection had a similar connection to her relationship with Machates, a distant echo of this belief in the West could be heard in Walter

[362] Another case of "third day" and "three days" intermingling could be found in the tradition of Jesus Christ's resurrection, with the two descriptions coexisting in the New Testament. See infra.

[363] *Fangzhong shu* only applied to the living, not the dead. However, it contained the idea that sexual intercourse, if conducted in a specific way, could nourish and preserve *qi* (living force), and thus was able to keep one's appearance young, prolong one's life, and even make one immortal. From such notions, it would not be hard to generate the idea that *qi* could be given from the living to the dead through sexual intercourse and thus help the latter to revive. In fact, the relating theory about *yin qi* (陰氣, the passive *qi*, related to the moon, water, females, etc.) and *yang qi* (陽氣, the active *qi*, related to the sun, fire, males, etc.) was often used to explain male debilitation after intercourse with otherworldly women, because they were believed to be beings of extreme *yin*, who desired and drained the *yang qi* from men, and get benefit from it. However, in the stories we have discussed, this harmful characteristic did not seem very apparent. See supra. For *fangzhong shu*, see, e.g., 十問, 合陰陽, 天下至道談, 養生方, etc. in 長沙馬王堆漢墓簡帛集成, ed. 裘錫圭 (北京: 中華書局, 2014); 朱越利, 馬王堆帛書房中術的理論依據, in 宗教學研究, 2003 (2), pp. 1-9, and 2003 (3), pp. 1-7; 李零, 中國方術考, pp. 341-540, 中國方術續考. For the change of *fangzhong shu* in Daoist tradition, see 朱越利, 論六朝貴族道教房中術的產生, in 世界宗教研究, 2001 (3), pp. 45-54; 方仙道和黃老道的房中術, in 宗教學研究, 2002 (1), pp. 1-11; 論葛洪的陰丹術, in 西南民族大學學報(人文社科版), 2007 (7), pp. 11-114. For the iconology relating to *fangzhong shu* in the Eastern Han Dynasty, see 羅二虎, 東漢畫像中所見的早期民間道教, in 文藝研究, 2007 (2), pp. 121-29; 衛恆先, 漢畫像石交合圖研究, .in 中國美術, 2019 (3), pp. 70-77. On an example of *fangzhong shu*'s influence on *biji xiaoshuo*, see, for example, 張慶民, 陸氏《異林》之鐘繇與女鬼相合事新論, in 文學遺產, 2008 (1), pp. 141-44. On possible relationship between *fangzhong shu* and the Indian tradition, see R. H. Van Gulik, "Indian and Chinese Sexual Mysticism", in *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survy of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1644 A.D.* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 339-359. It should be noted that although most surviving materials on *fangzhong shu* were mainly from male perspectives, using the female partner as a tool to gain the benefits, but in early records of *fangzhong shu*, it was often an art taught to male practitioners by female *xian*. Thus women played the role of teachers, which implied that in earlier times *fangzhong shu* might have been initially a secret art circulating among female *wu* (巫, shamans). This coincides with the relative equality of male and female status in early materials such as those excavated at Mawangdui. See, for example, 董濤, 漢代方術活動中的女性角色, 華南師範大學學報(社會科學版), 2012 (4), pp. 5-11. Moreover, the significance of sexual intercourse in these stories of resurrected girls could, in another sense, relate to the aforementioned stories about long-buried bodies that were "as living": The copulation episodes in these resurrection stories were often described in highly sensual tones, while the discovery of lifelike female bodies were often accompanied by graverobbers having intercourse with them.

Map's *De Nugis Curialium*. II. 12 and IV. 10 (a much shortened version) recounted the same story, of the lord of Lydbury North. He took a beautiful woman from a great band of many noble women dancing at the midnight – in IV. 10, she was described as having been taken from the dead ("quod eam a mortuis rapuisset"). He had sex with her for three days, and on the fourth day she opened her eyes and agreed to become his wife (on the condition that he must never mention the place she came from).[364] Phlegon's story was unlikely to be a direct influence on Walter Map, since their stories appeared vastly different – a failed resurrection in one, a successful pursuit of a ghostly wife in the other. Therefore, it is more probable that both were remaining traces of a larger body of tradition, which might have circulated orally and were mostly lost. Considering that in Chinese stories, otherworldly marriage often took place over a period of three days, it became possible to see a connection between Philinnion, the Lord of Lydbury North, and the three-day wedding that King Herla attended in the pygmies' world.[365]

"*And precisely what divine taboo do her parents violate by bursting into the room?*" This question might not be answerable solely based on European texts, since Philinnion's was the only recorded case of such an attempt at resurrection in the West. However, in the Chinese stories, we see clearly that if the girl's tomb was opened or her condition was discovered before the prescribed time, the process would be disturbed and the resurrection would fail. In Philinnion's case, the Greco-Roman audience might have difficulty in imagining how the girl would be able to have a corporeal relationship with the man and exchange material gifts if she was not corporeal. It was not clear in the narrative how she came out of the grave. When the townspeople arrived, the text only mentioned that "we opened the [burial] chamber" – in other words, it was closed but not necessarily sealed or locked. Considering her activity ended with her body falling down dead where she was discovered, the audience might suppose that she opened her own tomb from inside and came out. By contrast, in the Chinese imagination, the distinction between the corporeal and non-corporeal was not so clear-cut, and it was easy and normal to imagine a ghost engaging in corporeal activities while remaining in her grave. This was probably also why, unlike in the Chinese stories where the subject of the failed resurrection remained inside their graves, Philinnion's body was found outside – only in this way could it have

[364] Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, II.12 and IV.10.

[365] Previously the pygmy king attended Herla's own wedding, but from the description it did not appear that Herla's own wedding (in this world) took three days. Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, I. 11. This story was usually discussed as a case of the Wild Hunt.

made sense to a Greco-Roman audience. Therefore, when Philinnion's parents burst into the room, they indeed came face-to-face with their daughter's body in the process of resurrection, which was equivalent to the casket being opened prematurely.

From this perspective we might also be able to form a hypothesis on why Philinnion had been married before her death – other than Praklos Diadochos's summary, which mentioned that "she died as a newly-wed" and "[h]er husband had been Krateros", her marital status or her husband seemed completely irrelevant to the surviving parts of the story and was never mentioned or even hinted at. This made it difficult for scholars to determine the significance of this description, and there had been much debate.[366] In the Chinese body of stories, depending on the dead woman's identity, the stories' logic differed. Most common was an unmarried girl who had died not too long ago, and the story usually concerned her parents, who would regard the man as their son-in-law whether or not the girl was resurrected. If the woman was married and had died for considerable time, e.g. hundreds of years, the focus of the story became her ability to tell ancient events and her relationship to illustrious contemporaries through birth and marriage. For example, the lady met by Cui Luoshi was said to be "the wife of Liu *fujun* of Pingling, the daughter of *shizhong* Wu Zhi" (平陵劉府君之妻，侍中吳質之女). Wu Zhi was a famous official and general of Wei (die 230 CE). Cui supposedly met her during the reign of Emperor Xiaozhao of Qi (齊孝昭帝, reigned 560-561 CE),[367] three centuries after the woman's time. When Cui questioned her further about her husband, she replied that her husband was the second son of Liu Shao (劉劭, a famous official and man of letters, died 240-249 CE). Though her husband had no record in history, the lady was able to speak with Cui of the remarkable events between Han and Wei, all in accordance with the history of Wei ("什乃與論漢魏大事，悉與魏史符合", the "history of Wei" here probably referred to the *Book of Wei* in *Sanguo Zhi*), especially events related to her family.[368] Here, in the story's logic, the woman was married to broaden her social relationships, making it possible for her to tell events related to her husband's family.

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[366] See supra note.

[367] In the original text, the year was reported as that of Emperor Xiaozhao of Wei (魏孝昭), but there was no Emperor Xiaozhao for any Wei Dynasty. Of all the Emperors in Chinese history, there is only a Xiaozhao of Qi. Later it was mentioned that Cui Luoshi died during the Tiantong years (天統, 565-569 CE), ten years after his meeting with the lady. If he met the lady in 560 CE and died in 569 CE, the number of years would have coincided. Thus it is very likely that the text was in fact referring to Emperor Xiaozhao of Qi.

[368] This characteristic is in accordance with resurrection stories in which the resurrected had been buried for hundreds of years, without the element of copulation.

However, if the woman was married and her husband was still alive, the element of copulation began to cause problems. Here we might be reminded of the aforementioned judgment of Wang Dao: the resurrected woman should be returned to her former fiancé, who opened her grave and found her returning to life (though there was no clear connotation of copulation within the process of resurrection here), instead of her husband before death.[369] However, when the man who copulated with the dead woman was not even her former lover, the story took on the colour of adultery. For example, in the story of the county magistrate of Xinfan (新繁縣令), the dead woman who slept and exchanged gifts with him turned out to be the wife of the same county's retired sheriff. When the husband came to move his wife's casket back to their ancestral grave, he visited the magistrate and recognized the silver goblet buried with his dead wife. After learning the entire story from the magistrate, he opened the casket in anger and found that his wife's body lay embracing the silk fabric gifted her by the magistrate. Outraged, he piled firewood and burned her body.[370] A similar story could be found in *Xu Xuanguai Lu* (續玄怪錄): A man opened the casket of a well-loved concubine and found that one of her shoes was missing while a man's shoe appeared inside her casket. The concubine's missing shoe was found in a young man's grave a hundred or so steps from hers, and the young man's body was missing a shoe as well. When the four shoes were taken out, they made two pairs. Thus the concubine's master was outraged and smashed her casket with insults (碎其柩而罵之).[371] In the preceding stories about unmarried girls or ancient married women, the sexual relationship was never portrayed negatively and often accepted by both families. Whether or not they resurrected, the women's bodies and their graves were never injured. When and only when the woman was married and her husband was still alive, her behavior would be viewed negatively and her body and grave would be destroyed. Therefore, suppose this kind of story was transplanted to a cultural environment in which resurrection of a dead body was perceived as more aberrant, and the audience expected the body to be disposed of as an inauspicious sign, the type of story that contained a negative connotation and a drastic disposal of the body might leave a deeper imprint. Therefore, the element associated with this negative connotation, namely her previous marriage, might have been retained even if its plot significance had been lost within the fragment – for the result of the body's destruction, the husband's

[369] See supra.
[370] 廣異記.
[371] 續玄怪錄.

envy had been replaced by a religious reason, which this audience would have found more well-grounded.

Due to limitations in surviving materials, it is difficult to concretely determine the relationship between the story of Philinnion and the body of Chinese stories. However, the relative foreignness of the Philinnion story – seen from, e.g., the townspeople's reaction and the seer's abhorrence – implied that it was probably a somehow recently imported one. Notably, the first person to mention "divine will" in the story was the nurse, when she reported to her mistress that "[Philinnion] was alive and by some divine will was with the guest". The mother at first disbelieved the nurse and thought her mad, but the nurse insistently urged the mother to see her own daughter. The nurse, only described by the text as "the old woman", seemed the first and the most ready to believe Philinnion's returning from the dead. On the other hand, the townspeople were astonished but were convinced by the evidence. However, their predisposition did not seem to be a receptive one. Though Machates and her parents, who were of similar social standing to the town's citizens, felt greater sorrow due to their personal connections with the girl, they did not seem more readily inclined to believe the returning. Finally, the seer, who had the most negative attitude towards the event, also held the greatest authority on such matters. Considering the audience shared the same cultural understandings with the townspeople and the seer, they likely would have found the seer's disposal of the body appropriate. Thus, this story did not belong to this class of people. By contrast, the nurse was likely of a much lower social standing than the rest of the family, the townspeople and the narrator – she might have even been a slave, and could have been of a different ethnicity than the town's citizens. This might be a hint that stories like this were brought by or spread by people like her.

Comparing Phlegon's story with Chinese stories and looking for their commonalities do not imply an attempt to trace the story to a Chinese origin. In fact, all Chinese stories discussed here were recorded later than Phlegon's. Moreover, although the body of stories found in China was much more complete and well-recorded, this could only mean that this type of story was better received and internalized by the Chinese audience. At least we can be sure that the Chinese educated upper class, who would record such stories, were less disinclined to accept them. It has already been discussed how resurrection went from aberrant to normal in the Chinese historiographic context: The early resurrection stories retold in this chapter were

contemporaneous with the records of resurrection events as aberrations in the Chinese Histories – in the story of Li Zhongwen's daughter, we could still see traces of this skeptical attitude. Both fathers "thought the matter strange" (並怪) and decided to open the casket, causing her resurrection to fail. But the stories' overall tone towards the resurrected was entirely positive, and the narrative implied that blame should be laid on the disbelieving fathers. There was a clear change of attitude in later stories, when families happily received their resurrected daughters-in-law. Considering that the proliferation of such stories in *biji xiaoshuo* and the disappearance of resurrections as aberrations in the Histories were also contemporaneous, and that the authors of *biji xiaoshuo* belonged to the same social class and literary circles as the authors of the Histories, we can safely suggest that the composition and dissemination of *biji xiaoshuo* had an indispensable role in the normalization of such beliefs.

From Phlegon's fragment, it might be speculated that the spread of such stories in the Classical World was more impeded by influences embodied in the seer. The townspeople, although their attitudes appeared somewhat neutral, were readily subject to the authority of such religious figures. We can only wonder if in the absence of such a religious authority, these stories could have spread more widely and even become normalized as in the Chinese case. But it cannot be forgotten that there existed a reciprocal relationship between religious authorities and the population they presided over. As discussed in the previous treatment of *Pharsalia*, the raising of the dead was frequently associated with the despised practice of necromancy in the Roman world. The general abhorrence concerning the rising dead and necromancy enabled the proscriptions of such religious authorities to be readily accepted. Therefore, even if there was no seer to burn Philinnion's body, the preexisting aversion towards such beliefs in the popular imagination could impede these stories' further promulgation as well.

Chapter 3: Empty Tomb and Flight

I. Empty Tomb and the Three Days

Until now, we have not touched the resurrection story *par excellence* in Western history. The earliest accounts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ were in the four Gospels, which varied in their narratives to some extent. However, they all agreed that Jesus Christ was crucified on the Passover Friday, and was resurrected on the first day of the week, Sunday, the third day after his death according to the evangelists. Jesus was buried in a tomb that was sealed with a large stone, but after his resurrection, he disappeared from the sealed tomb. Even when the witnesses did not enter and see the interior of the tomb (Matthew), the angels announced such by their divine authority. Furthermore, Luke and John both mentioned the linen remaining on the ground. Luke wrote: "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." (Luke 24.12). John also described the head napkin: "[Peter] seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed." (John 20.6-8).

Taking the disappearance of the body as a sign of deification was not rare in the Classical World. The bodies of Aeneas and Romulus were both said to have disappeared, which was evidence of their ascension as gods.[372] But in the sense that Jesus's body was kept in a sealed environment and disappeared, it was closer to the case of Aristeas in Herodotus' *Histories*. Herodotus recounted the legend which he heard from Proconnesus (Aristeas's hometown) and Cyzicus: "It is said that this Aristeas, who was as well-born as any of his townsfolk, went into a fuller's shop at Proconnesus and there died; the owner shut his shop and went away to tell the dead man's relatives, and the report of Aristeas' death being spread about in the city was disputed by a man of Cyzicus, who had come from the town of Artace, and said that he had met Aristeas going toward Cyzicus and spoken with him. While he

[372] For Aeneas's death and disappearance, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities*, 1.64.4-5, trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), pp. 212-13. Ovid seemed to have also implied Aeneas's disappearance and deification. *Metamorphoses*, 14.581-608. On the other hand, Livy's description was much vaguer in *Ab Urbe Condita Libri* 1.2.6. On more accounts about Aeneas, see O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy*, pp. 105-106. On the disappearance of Romulus, see, e.g., Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 14.805-851 and *Fasti*, 2.481-509; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 1.16.1-8; Plutarch, *Romulus*, 27.3-8. On more accounts and a detailed comparison with the resurrection of Jesus, see Richard C. Miller, *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 175-76.

argued vehemently, the relatives of the dead man came to the fuller's hop with all that was necessary for burial; but when the place was opened, there was no Aristeas there, dead or alive. But in the seventh year after that, Aristeas appeared at Proconnesus and made the poem which the Greeks now call the Arimaspea, after which he vanished once again."[373]

All these stories about death, deification, disappearance and reappearance seemed to be in accordance with the narrative of Jesus Christ. However, the linen cloth and the head napkin left by the resurrected could find no counterpart in the Classical World.

In Chinese stories about *shijie xian* (尸解仙, lit. immortal [who became thus through] body disintegration), the empty casket and the clothes left inside were one of the typical descriptions. In *Liexian Zhuan* (列仙傳, lit. biographies of various immortals), Gu Chun (谷春), an official (郎) during the reign of Emperor Cheng of Han (漢成帝, reigned 33-7 BCE), died of illness. However, his body did not become cold, thus his family did not nail the casket. After three years he was seen seated on the county gate, which scared the inhabitants. His family "opened the casket; there were [his] clothes without the body" ("發棺有衣無尸"). He stayed on the gate for three nights and departed.[374]

The attribution of *Liexian Zhuan* to the famous scholar Liu Xiang (劉向, 77-6 BCE) was often questioned, and scholars generally agree that there were later additions and edits to the compilation.[375] However, *Liexian Zhuan* reflected many beliefs that fell out of favour afterwards, thus it was likely an

[373] Herodotus, *Histories*, 4.14. In Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, 6.9.6-8 was recorded a somewhat similar story about the disappearance and heroification of Cleomedes of Astypalaea.

[374] 列仙傳. After Gu Chun left the county gate he went to Chang'an and stopped on the Heng gate (one of the gates of the Chang'an city). Later he went to Taibai Mountain, where a temple was built for him and he sometimes came to the temple.

[375] Yang Shoujing agreed with Chen Zhensun (陳振孫) that the text was not authored during the Western Han Dynasty, citing *Liexian Zhuan*'s reference to Buddhist scripture. 楊守敬, 日本訪書志・卷六. By contrast, Li Jianguo argued that the main text and the odes in *Liexian Zhuan* were authored differently, and the main text was likely authored by Liu Xiang himself. 李劍國, 唐前志怪小說史, pp. 180-193. Based on references to *Liexian Zhuan* in other datable texts, Yu Jiaxi suggested that it came into existence after Emperor Ming (漢明帝) but before Emperor Shun (漢順帝). 余嘉錫, 四庫提要辯證, 北京: 中華書局, 1980, pp. 1202-11, esp. 1206-07. Wang Qing suggested the compilation was likely gradual, and the final form came into existence between 140-303 CE. 王青, "《列仙傳》成書年代考", 濱州學院學報 21(1) (2005), pp. 42-44. Chen Hong believed there to be a lost ancient version, but the version close to today's came into existence between 165-204 CE. 陳洪, "《列仙傳》成書時代考", 文獻 2007(1), pp. 45-52. Most recently Yang Xiaoli has argued that the work should date to the Western Han Dynasty, based on its significant differences with later ideas. 楊曉麗, "《列仙傳》成書時代考", 文學與文化 2018(1), pp. 25-31.

earlier work. For example, the element of alchemy (煉丹術, a technique of producing pellets with marvelous abilities, most prominently granting immortality) was very prominent in *Shenxian Zhuan* (神仙傳, lit. biographies of gods-immortals, by Ge Hong 葛洪, 283-343 CE) and later narratives about *xian*. But it was hardly present in *Liexian Zhuan*.[376] Moreover, *Liexian Zhuan* preserved four cases of "going up and down" (上下) with smoke (隨煙氣) or with wind and rain (隨風雨).[377] This is an ancient expression used in *Shanhai Jing* (山海經, lit. scripture of mountains and seas),[378] in which mountains were sometimes described as conduits between heaven and earth used by shamans (巫), who went up and down (上下) or ascended and descended (升降) through them.[379] Smoke, wind and rain shared the commonality with mountains that they were seen to exist between heaven and earth; therefore, in terms of this characteristic, these four cases in *Liexian Zhuan* still bore the imprint of ancient shamanism, which would soon be replaced by *xian* with greater and more marvelous powers. These earlier characteristics were also reflected on *Liexian Zhuan*'s view of *shijie*. Later works, like *Shenxian Zhuan*, presented *shijie* as an inferior way to become *xian*. When it was not employed as a means of becoming immortal, the already-immortals often used *shijie* as a trick to deceive mortals – making them believe in the immortal's death, so that the latter may be free of their bother. Later *xian* narratives largely followed the same paradigm, but such beliefs had no traces in *Liexian Zhuan* at all.[380] Therefore, *Liexian Zhuan* was likely compiled before such ideas became dominant – considerably earlier than Ge Hong's time.

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[376] 楊曉麗, "《列仙傳》成書時代考", pp. 27-29.

[377] Chisongzi (赤松子) and Chijiang Ziyu (赤將子輿) were described as "going up and down with wind and rain" (隨風雨上下), though Chisongzi was also described as capable of burning himself (能入火自燒). Ningfengzi (寧封子) set fire to himself and "went up and down with the smoke" (積火自燒，而隨煙氣上下). Chang Rong (昌容) was only described as "travelling up and down" (往來上下) without the means being mentioned.

[378] The origins of *Shanhai Jing* stretched into mythical times and could not be ascertained, but most scholars could agree that its contents were no later than the Qin Dynasty. *Sima Qian* already mentioned it in *Shiji*, but Liu Xiang (劉向, the same as the ascribed author of *Liexian Zhuan*) edited it and gave it the current form. See, e.g., 萬群, "從漢語史角度看《山海經》的成書年代", 中國典籍與文化, 2013(2), pp. 4-11; 晁福林, "'山海經圖'與《山海經》成書問題補釋", 晉陽學刊 2016(02), pp. 41-58.

[379] For example: "在登葆山，羣巫所從上下也。" 卷七 •海外西經. "有靈山……十巫，從此升降。" 卷十六 •大荒西經. "……有山名曰肇山。有人名曰柏子高，柏子高上下于此，至於天。" 卷十八 • 海內經.

[380] Yang Xiaoli discussed *shijie* in extensive detail, suggesting that three stages of beliefs in *shijie* were preserved in *Liexian Zhuan*, but the latest stage of belief in *shijie* as an escape trick was relatively less represented. However, *shijie* categorized by Yang as escape tricks in *Liexian Zhuan* differed considerably from later tricks employed by the immortals. Later tricks were used either to be rid of one's family, or be rid of a powerful host (often a monarch). The two records that Yang believed to be *shijie* tricks in *Liexian Zhuan* were that of Wu Guang (務光) and Qin Gao (琴高). Wu Guang's story was largely similar to earlier accounts of him committing suicide instead of taking the kingship Tang (湯) wanted to abdicate to him (*Zhuangzi*, 莊子 • 讓王), along with other honourable hermits who made the same choice, and had a very different moral. Therefore Wu Guang's appearance in *Liexian Zhuan* would be more appropriately perceived as the deification of an ancient person of virtue. In Qin Gao's story, he disappeared twice. The first time he completed a heroic quest (entering a river to take the dragon's son), and he disappeared again after he came back. In both occurrences there was no hint of his disappearance as later tricks. To explain such stories as tricks was probably anachronistic.

Though endowed with the characteristics of inferiority and trickery, in Ge Hong's *Shenxian Zhuan*, the remaining of clothes after the body's disappearance continued to be prominent. In the biography of Ge Xuan (葛玄), Ge Xuan was described as "especially skilled at healing, [forcing] all *guimei* (鬼魅, ghosts and spirits) [to] show themselves, to send [them] away or to kill [them]." He can abstain from food for years, sit in a fire without burning, enter a deep spring without being wet, emerge from a sunken boat and walk on water, etc. The Emperor of Wu (Sun Quan 孫權) kept him at court, and he was unable to obtain leave. Thus he said to his disciple: "I am forced to stay by *tianzi* (天子, the emperor), [such that] I have no time to make great pellets. Now [I] shall *shijie*, leaving at midday on the thirteenth day of the eighth month." On said date he went into the room and expired, but his colours did not change. His disciples watched over his body with incense. After three days, at midnight there was a great wind that extinguished the lights. When the wind ceased, they "suddenly lost track of Xuan['s body], and only saw the abandoned clothes lay on the bed, the belt was not untied" (忽失玄所在，但見委衣床上，帶無解者).

Two other examples could be seen in the biography of Wang Yuan (王遠). Wang Yuan was especially adept at divinations. He stayed with *tai-wei* Chen Dan (太尉陳耽[381]) for over forty years; there were no deaths in the Chen family including their servants, and all their affairs prospered. Suddenly he told his host: "I am fated to leave [now], [and] cannot stop long. Tomorrow at midday [I] shall leave." When the time came, Chen Dan did not dare to bury him and only set him in casket. "At night on the third day, [they] suddenly lost his body. The clothes and headwear were not untied, as moulted by a snake" (至三日夜，忽失其尸，衣冠不解，如蛇蛻耳). Previously he had stayed with a commoner named Cai Jing (蔡經), whose "bone form [showed that he] should become *xian*" (骨相當仙). Wang Yuan told him that he was fated to become immortal, but he did not pursue Dao since a younger age, thus "had little *qi* but much flesh, [and] could not go up" (氣少肉多，不得上去). Therefore Cai "shall *shijie*, as passing through a dog hole" (當為尸解，如從狗竇中過耳). Wang Yuan taught him the key points and left. Later Cai suddenly felt his body burning like fire. His family poured water on him, and the water evaporated as if it were poured on burnt stone. After three days, he almost only had bones left, covered himself with a blanket and suddenly disappeared. When his family looked inside, there was "only [his] skin, [with]

[381] According to the *Book of Later Han*, Chen Dan was known for "loyalty and integrity" (忠正), and died in prison in 185 CE. He was *tai-wei* 173-175 CE. 後漢書・帝紀第八・孝靈皇帝 and 列傳第四十七.

head and feet like cicada exuvia" (唯有皮，頭足具如蟬蛻也). After more than a decade, he suddenly returned home with a young appearance.

This last case pictorially depicted a belief which might have an ancient source. In tombs of the late Shang dynasty (before c. 11th century BCE), four jade cicadas had been excavated, two in the corpses' mouths and two as accessories.[382] These jade cicadas, as burial goods, probably represented the belief in transcending the boundary between death and immortality through the metaphor of moulting. The funerary practice of placing jade cicadas in the dead's mouth and on the corpse continued into and became very pervasive in the Han Dynasty, regardless of the social class of tomb owners.[383]

While excavated jade cicadas testified to the ancientness of the belief of death as moulting, the nomenclature of *shijie* appeared relatively late (c. 1st century CE). However, the notion of *xingjie* (刑（形）解, lit. form disintegrate), as a form of immortality, already appeared in the bamboo slips excavated at Mawangdui (before mid-2nd century BCE).[384] In *Shiji*, Sima Qian recorded that *fangshushi* claimed to be able to *xingjie xiaohua* (形解銷化, lit. form disintegrate and dissolve or morph).[385] When Sima Qian recounted the death of a *fangshushi* Li Shaojun (李少君), he wrote: "Li Shaojun died of illness. *Tianzi* (lit. son of heaven, the Emperor) believed that [he] morphed away into immortality (天子以為化去不死也)."[386] The term used here is *huaqu* (化去), and in this context was identical to *xingjie xiaohua*. Thus it could be seen that *xingjie xiaohua* was also related to immortality, and was very probably equivalent to *xingjie* in the Mawangdui text. The commentary of Fu Qian (服虔, late Eastern Han Dynasty, c. 3rd century CE) explained *xingjie xiaohua* as *shijie*, and another commentary, *Shiji Zhengyi* (史記正義, c. 7th century), citing *Hanshu Qiju* (漢書起居), recounted that the Emperor opened Li Shaojun's casket and discovered only his clothes and headdress were left, which was a

[382] According to ancient texts, placing items in the dead's mouth was a traditional burial practice to prevent the dead from hunger in the underworld. Aristocrats used jade while commoners often used rice. 王煜, 謝亦琛, 漢代蟬形口琀研究, 考古學報 2017(1), pp. 73-95, esp. pp. 73-74. However, jade cicada as mouth stuffing might have a different connotation, representing the belief of the soul flying out of the dead's mouth to achieve immortality common to different cultures at different times. For example, in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* 7.53, Aristeas's soul was described as leaving his body in the form of a raven. See also, e.g., Jan Bremmer, The Early Greek Concept of the Soul, pp. 16-18 and 63-64.

[383] 王煜, 謝亦琛, 漢代蟬形口琀研究, p. 75.

[384] The tomb owner was buried in the twelfth year of Emperor Wen (文帝十二年, 168 BCE). For the text in question, see 十問 (lit. ten questions), in 長沙馬王堆漢墓簡帛集成・陸, ed. 裘錫圭 (北京: 中華書局, 2014), pp. 139-151, "刑(形)解" appeared in the fourth question, p. 143.

[385] 史記・封禪書. As previously mentioned, Sima Qian was highly skeptical of such claims.

[386] 史記・孝武帝本紀.

typical description of *shijie*.[387] This showed that several centuries later, people had readily applied the concept of *shijie* to the earlier *xingjie xiaohua*. However, it has been questioned by scholars whether *xingjie* (or *xingjie xiaohua*) and *shijie* were different concepts rooted respectively in spiritual immortality versus in bodily immortality, especially since the former was only documented in these two materials without a clear definition.[388]

The first text that mentioned *shijie* was Wang Chong's *Lun Heng* (論衡, by 王充, 1st century CE), a polemical text against such superstitious beliefs. Notably, it also discussed *shijie* in a context closely related to *xingjie xiaohua*. After retelling Li Shaojun's story based on Sima Qian's record, Wang Chong attacked the so-called Daoist practitioners (*fangshushi*): "The foolish and ignorant people say that [the Daoist practitioners] departed by *shijie*, [and] did not die actually." He asked the rhetorical question of what *shijie* was, and answered that *shijie* could be either "the body died [and] the spirit departed" (身死精神去), or "the body did not die but was deprived of skin" (身不死得免去皮膚). He denied that there was anything special about the former – if that was the case, everyone would be a *xian*. As to the latter, he cited the lack of evidence: "The Daoist practitioners died, [their] bones and flesh were all there, no different from normal dead corpses." However, in explaining what would be acceptable as *shijie*, Wang Chong seemed to reveal some knowledge of contemporary ideas of *shijie* not far from our understanding: "[Like] the departure [and] rebirth of cicadas, the shell moulting of turtles, the skin moulting of snakes, the antler shedding of deer, the shell shedding of crustaceans, departing with bone and flesh, that could be called *shijie*."[389] Accordingly, he denied Li Shaojun's supposed *shijie* because of the lack of evidence: "Taishi-gong [Sima Qian] was Li Shaojun's contemporary. [At] Li Shaojun's death, though the person who viewed the corpse was not

[387] Although *Hanshu Qiju* claimed to be a contemporaneous record, it was most likely penned much later. However, Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* (抱樸子) cited the same material (but as from 漢禁中起居注), which suggested that it had already come into existence by the 4th century CE.

[388] See, e.g., Donald Harper, "Resurrection in Warring States Popular Religion", Taoist Resources 5(2) (1994), pp. 13-28, esp. 26-27; Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "Corpse Deliverance, Substitute Bodies, Name Change, and Feigned Death: Aspects of Metamorphosis and Immortality in Early Medieval China", *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2001), pp. 1-68, esp. pp. 10-11 ("while *xingjie* seems to indicate that a person's body simply dissolves and vanishes, *shijie* implies the event of death, evident in the adept's mortal remains"). On the contrary, based on the context of *xingjie* and earlier texts like Dan, Han Jishao and Zhang Lujun argued that spiritual and bodily immortality were closely interlinked. For more information about the debate, see 韓吉紹, 張魯君, 試論漢代尸解信仰的思想緣起, in 宗教學研究 2012(2), pp. 276-81.

[389] It must be noted that Wang Chong refused to accept the divinity of Daoist practitioners even if they could act like the moulting animals: "Nowadays those Daoist practitioners died, [even if their] bodies are like rebirth, [it] still could not be called *shijie*." Because cicadas could also be reborn, it did not make these insects divine, thus rebirth was not a sign of divinity, not to mention the Daoists whose bodies were not "like rebirth". Still, the fact that he mentioned these moulting animals and linked them with *shijie* was indicative of the beliefs of his time.

taishi-gong, it sufficed to see the [death's] veracity. If [he] truly did not die, but *shijie* and departed, taishi-gong would have recorded the condition, [and] would not have said [he] died." Also concerning Li Shaojun, in an earlier passage Wang Chong had raised the supposition that if Li Shaojun had died in the wilderness and his body was eaten by beasts, then the common people would have thought he truly departed as a *xian*.

Here, almost all later elements of *shijie*, namely the disappearance of the corpse and/or evidence left behind like a cicada's shell, already appeared, albeit in a highly disbelieving and polemical voice.[390] It should be noted that Wang Chong himself refused to admit the veracity of both types of *shijie*, either in spiritual or in corporal form ("the body died [and] the spirit departed", versus "the body did not die"), but his refutation provided evidence from the contrary perspective that indeed both types of descriptions might be believed by the "foolish and ignorant people" of his time as *shijie*. This makes one question whether previous debates about *xingjie xiaohua* and *shijie* based on the dichotomy between spiritual immortality and bodily immortality provided the proper framework. Though the same dichotomy was also employed by Wang Chong, he was by no means discussing a theoretical question – Wang Chong was only interested in refuting such beliefs from judging material evidence. This reminds us that, from a factual level, the *fangshushi* claiming to be able to achieve immortality through *xingjie* must face the same problem at the end: Unless their bodies were, like Wang Chong suggested, eaten by beasts without witnesses, their dead bodies would eventually be discovered "no different from normal dead corpses". Because this problem posed severe challenges to the claim of immortality, as Sima Qian and Wang Chong's skepticism has shown, the *fangshushi* who claimed to possess such abilities must provide evidence to convince non-believers.[391] It

[390] It should be noted that Wang Chong was a radical materialist who furiously attacked any weaknesses in the veracity of events that he regarded as superstitious. For example, on the legend that Huangdi (黃帝) rose into heaven on the back of a dragon, Wang Chong wrote: "Dragons do not rise into heaven. [If] Huangdi rode [one], that is clear Huangdi did not rise into heaven. Dragons gather clouds and rain, thus ride [on them] and travel; [when] the clouds scatter and the rain stops, [they] descend again into the depths [of water]. If [it is] true that Huangdi rode a dragon, [he] would have drowned in the depths along with [the dragon]." This formulated only a small part of his refutation of the legend, but should suffice to demonstrate his highly materialist and critical perspective. Refutations based on the veracity of reported events were also very common, e.g. on the supposed ascension of the King of Huainan: "The King of Huainan died because he conspired to rebel [against the Emperor], all under heaven heard [the event], all at the time saw [the event]." Similarly he questioned the reliability of people like Lu Ao (盧敖) or Xiang Mandu (項曼都), who claimed to have attained Dao but have no other witnesses. 論衡・道虛 (on the vanity of Dao).

[391] Citing Ofuchi (who showed that Ge Hong consciously refuted Wang Chong), Cedzich has noted that "the promoters of immortality arts developed their ideas in the same epistemological framework used by Wang to disprove them, they may even have been aware of the central issues before Wang articulated them". Cedzich, "Metamorphosis and Immortality", pp. 15-17.

might not be coincidental that later narratives about *shijie* even satisfied Wang Chong's standards for more credible evidence: the disappearance of the body and the moulting of clothes or skin, exemplified by the aforementioned case of Cai Jing in *Shenxian Zhuan*.[392]

Therefore, the main concern in the formation of the concept of *shijie*, if it had been derived from *xingjie xiaohua*, might not have been whether it was immortality of spirit or of body. The nature of immortality was a prominent concern to philosophers, theologians and modern scholars of religion, but not to the *fangshushi* eager to convince the common people and powerful patrons, and probably not to the latter, namely their audience, either. Thus, the formation of *shijie* was probably less of a theoretical evolution of the concept, and more of a continuous but vague claim of immortality that responded and defended itself against ongoing criticism by generating narratives that would be more and more credible to its receiving audience. However, probably after it had won over its audience, the charges of bodily death were not as pressing or damaging against their reputations as Wang Chong's, and then it could begin to create much more marvelous narratives to fascinate its audience. Therefore, in *Shenxian Zhuan*, *shijie* became an inferior way to achieve immortality or a mere trick, while superior paths allowed the Daoist to become *xian* directly and no longer required *shijie* as moulting.[393] Besides the Daoists' own desire to evade death, this change might also reflect the desires of their audience, who paid and hosted these Daoists. Although *shijie* bestowed immortality, it still involved death once. The audience, like the Daoists themselves, naturally found paths to immortality without death more impressive and desirable.

Although in the very beginning, *shijie* might have only been a narrative

[392] The disappearance of the body, along with clothes or skin remaining, was not the only form of *shijie*. As we saw in *Liexian Zhuan* in supra note, other forms could include *huojie* (disintegration by fire, or self-immolation), *shuijie* (disintegration by water, or casting oneself into water), *bingjie* (disintegration by weapons), etc. The common element was that there was usually no body remaining. The remaining objects were also of various types. Other than clothes and skin, there were swords, books, shoes, and bamboo sticks, etc. We will return to this topic later.

[393] Interestingly, similar examples of disappearance of body and remaining of clothes/other items could be seen in early Buddhist proselytizing stories. In *Gaoseng Zhuan* (高僧傳, lit. biographies of great monks, by Huijiao 慧皎 497-554 CE), there were five cases of monks whose bodies disappeared after death, often with clothes, shoes or other belongings remaining. 佛圖澄: "唯得缽杖不復見尸". 竺佛調: "共發冢開棺，不復見尸，唯衣履在焉". 涉公: "卒后七日[苻]堅以其神異，試開棺視之。不見尸骸所在，唯有殮被存焉". 杯渡: "乃共開棺，唯見敗衣" after someone saw him elsewhere on the third day after his funeral. 邵碩, whose body disappeared after two days, and someone saw him elsewhere with only one shoe, which was lost during the funeral. These stories were not core to Buddhist proselytizing in China, which relied heavily on karma and punishment in hell, rather than claims of immortality. When recorded here, they were as monks with some marvelous abilities (神異). Therefore, it never represented the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism.

strategy to evade the embarrassment of being found dead as the common people, after such discourse was well-formed and widely accepted, an entire system of Daoist theories concerning *shijie* came into existence.[394] Later scholars often based their discussions of *shijie* on the definitions given to it in Daoist scriptures, which were formulated systematically at and after Ge Hong's time.[395] In Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* (抱樸子, early 4th century), the definition and description were still relatively simple: "The superior ones raise [their] form and ascend to *xu* (虛, lit. void),[396] which is called *tian xian* (天仙, lit. heavenly immortal). The middling ones roam the famous mountains, which is called *di xian* (地仙, lit. earthly immortal). The inferior ones die first and then moult, which is called *shijie xian* (尸解仙, lit. corpse-disintegrated immortal)." Thus Li Shaojun, whose body according to Ge Hong was not found, departed by *shijie*, as did others in whose caskets were only found bamboo sticks.[397] However, in *Zhen Gao* (真誥, late 5th century), there were complicated and detailed descriptions of various types of *shijie* and their signs.[398] For example, *taiying lianxing* (太陰煉形), a concept taken to be central to *shijie* in later discussions, first appeared in *Zhen Gao*: It referred to the procedure of resurrection during which the five viscera (五臟) remains alive but the body decays, and after a certain period ("thirty years, twenty years, or ten years, three years") the body reforms and the practitioner resurrects.[399] Cedzich, in her article on *shijie*, suggested that the preservation of the five viscera as living was related to the corpse-preservation techniques found in Mawangdui.[400] This relationship certainly existed, in the sense that there existed something common beneath the preservation of the five viscera "as living", corpses "as living" like in Mawangdui, previously discussed stories about bodies buried underground for many years but appeared "as living", resurrection of people being buried for many years, and finally failed

[394] That the phenomenon of *shijie* preceded its theoretical formation or explanation could be seen in *Liexian Zhuan*, which contained descriptions of achieving immortality through the disappearance of the body but never mentioned *shijie* or similar concepts.

[395] Earlier Daoist scriptures like *Taiping Jing* (太平經) in the final years of Eastern Han only mentioned *shijie* as a definition of resurrection but did not theoretically expound upon it in detail. See infra.

[396] Though Chinese *xu* literally means "void", it is not quite the same as the void, but can be understood as the opposite of solidity or fullness. It denotes a condition that is continuously waiting to be fulfilled, and thus is able to generate life. For example, see *Daode Jing* (道德經).

[397] 葛洪, 抱樸子・內篇・論仙.

[398] 陶弘景, 真誥・卷四, 卷五, 卷十, 卷十二, 卷十六.

[399] Scholars have suggested that the idea of *taiying lianxing* in *Zhen Gao* might have come from an earlier, now-lost work called *Jian Jing* (劍經). However, *Jian Jing* certainly came into existence considerably later than Ge Hong's work, and reflected beliefs post-Baopuzi. Han Jishao suggested that *Jian Jing* might have inherited the concept from late-Han *Taiping Jing* (太平經, 卷七十二). 韓吉紹, "《劍經》與漢晉尸解信仰", 文史哲 2018(3), pp. 78-88. But the latter only contained the broad definition of *shijie* as resurrection ("重生者獨得道人，死而復生，尸解者耳").

[400] Cedzich, "Metamorphosis and Immortality", pp. 17-19. For Mawangdui, see supra.

resurrections like Tan-*sheng*'s wife, who was seen as "above her waist flesh had grown, as a woman, but beneath her waist there was only bones". However, this had already come very far from the original meaning of *shijie*: resurrection certified by the disappearance of the body. As the series of examinations about the formation of *shijie* above has shown, the narrative of the phenomenon of *shijie* might have originated for simple and practical reasons, and the tradition of the preservation of the body or parts of the body only later became grafted onto or merged with *shijie* in *Zhen Gao*. Therefore, explaining and tracing these conceptions from an intellectual and rational perspective might complicate the problem and only help to continuously construct a labyrinth of interwoven concepts, from where the studies of religions often began.

When the evangelists recounted the resurrection of Jesus Christ, they also faced severe challenges from non-believers and persecutors.[401] From the texts of the Gospels, it could be seen that perhaps the most prominent and serious charge was that Jesus's followers had stolen his body. In Matthew 28:11-15, there was even an explicit refutation of this charge, stating that Roman soldiers took bribes from the Jews to tell such a lie. Therefore, the linen (and the napkin) that appeared in Luke and John might have been a subtler refutation of the charge of stealing the body, in the sense that the linen and the napkin were left in a manner that was almost as if the body disappeared and allowed them to fall to the ground.

The linen of Jesus Christ and the clothes left by *shijie xian* might have been mere coincidental, generated from the common need to provide evidence that certify a narrative of immortality. However, these two bodies of stories also coincided in another important detail. Scholars have pointed out that different traditions with regards to the number of days between Christ's Passion and resurrection coexisted within the Bible. Besides the common account that he resurrected "on the third day", Jesus himself also prophesized several times that he will resurrect "after three days" of his death.[402] Moreover, the story of Jonah, which was referenced with regards to Jesus's

[401] On the apologetic tone of early Christianity, see generally, Wayne C. Kannaday, *Apologetic Discourse and the Scribal Tradition: Evidence of the Influence of Apologetic Interests on the Text of the Canonical Gospels* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[402] The prophecy of "after three days" appeared in Matthew 27:63 (though from the mouths of Jesus's enemies); Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:34.

resurrection, also stated "three days and three nights". It has been suggested that for some reasons, the tradition of the "third day" triumphed during the compilation of the Gospels, and contradictions between the four Gospels were reconciled. However, some traces were left in the aforementioned places.[403]

Before Jesus Christ made the third-day or three-day resurrection well-known in the West, as had been briefly discussed in the previous chapter, the link between the number three and resurrection was quite scarce. This could be seen in Biblical scholars' debates over to what "the third day according to the Scriptures" referred, since such a tradition was by no means self-evident in the Old Testament.[404] On the hand, McCasland tried to demonstrate that the three-day resurrection was a pervasive belief at the time by arguing that festivals related to the resurrection of a god/hero, such as those of Hyacinth, Attis and Osiris, often took place over three days. This evidence is rather questionable, since the three festivals were actually of different lengths,[405] and another hero associated with resurrection, Adonis, had a two-day festival.[406] Furthermore, festivals unrelated to death and resurrection, such as the Ionian Apaturia, also lasted three days.[407] Thus it is difficult to ascertain to what extent the number of days was a product of the festival calendar. Perhaps most importantly, in none of these cases could be found stories of actual three-day resurrections of the revered god or hero.

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[403] Selby Vernon McCasland, "The Scripture Basis of 'On the Third Day'", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 48(3/4) (1929), pp. 124-37. Even W. L. Craig, who firmly argued for the historicity of the third-day resurrection, acknowledged the existence of the "three days" tradition. W. L. Craig, "The Historicity of the Empty Tomb of Jesus", *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985), pp. 39-67.

[404] Matthew 12:40 referred to Jonah. On the other hand, C.H. Dodd said: "Indeed it seems impossible to find any other scripture which speaks of rising (or being raised) on the third day, and there is a fairly wide consensus to accept Hos.6:3 as the place which Paul (or more properly those from whom he received the tradition) intended." C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: the sub-structure of New Testament theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), p.77. However, McCasland has argued that Tertullian was the first one to make this reference. Selby Vernon McCasland, "The Scripture Basis of 'On the Third Day'", pp. 132-34. Carroll agreed with this assessment, adding also that it did not refer to individual resurrection and the "two/three" combination was "a way of expressing a short period of time". M. Daniel Carroll R., "Hosea", in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Daniel-Malachi*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), pp. 256-57.

[405] Regarding Osiris, Plutarch wrote that Osiris's festival was four days. He was said to have died on the seventeenth of Athyr, and the finding of Osiris's body in the sea was reenacted on the nineteenth day, and a figure was made from soil, water, spices and incense. McCasland's source was Frazer, whose source for Osiris was Plutarch's *Moralia*. See Sir James Geroge Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris: Studies in the History of Oriental Religion* (London: MacMillan, 1906) pp. 211-224 (this later became part of *The Golden Bough*). Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, in *Moralia* Vol. 5 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936). Hyakinthia was three days. The interpretation of the celebration of Attis in Frazer differed considerably from modern understanding, according to which the 24th probably commemorated the death and the 25th commemorated the joy of resurrection, which would give it a two-day cycle similar to the festival of Adonis. It was also part of the much longer festival of Cybele. See "Cybele", in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[406] Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 126.

[407] See "Apaturia", in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*; Jon D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1983), pp. 84-85. Thesmophoria, sacred to Demeter and Persephone, and Anthesteria, sacred to Dionysus, were also three days, but these were arguably not unrelated to death. See "Thesmophoria", in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*,.

On the contrary, the Chinese resurrection stories consistently and frequently linked with three days. As we have seen in the previous chapter, "three days" appeared frequently in stories of female resurrection in the type very close to Philinnion's. In the cases of the *fangshushi* discussed above, the element of three days was also prominent: Gu Chun returned after three years and sat on the gate for three nights. Ge Xuan and Wang Yuan's bodies both disappeared (*shijie*) after lying for three days. Cai Jing's body dissolved, leaving only the skin, after three days of heat. These were not solitary examples. *Taiping Guangji* (太平廣記), an all-encompassing collection of marvelous records compiled in 977-978 CE, contained 39 stories of resurrection after three days or three nights, alone with many other cases of three days as related to otherworldly encounters.[408] In early texts like Dan and the Dead of Taiyuan, the dead returned to life after three years, which very probably corresponded to the funerary *li* regulating three years of mourning for parents (三年之喪). The funerary *li* also regulated bodies be laid into their caskets after three days. Notably, in the same *li*, three days were also related to birth: whether for boys or for girls, they stayed with their mothers in the room for three days after birth and were only taken out and shown to their fathers after three days. Therefore, in China, the association of three days and, in a more general sense, the number three, might have such bases at the level of formal regulations.[409]

This element of three days in the Chinese tradition seemed to be indigenous. It was deeply rooted in many aspects of beliefs related to birth and death, and the earliest written records in China on these subjects already contained this connection. Therefore, even the element of three entered China through cultural transmission, it must have taken place at such an ancient time, such that it hardly left any trace in the written records. On the other

[408] One example is marriage to otherworldly women, see supra. Other examples include dying three days after encountering otherworldly beings, fighting with otherworldly beings for three days, strange omens lasting three days, etc.

[409] Specifically, *li* regulated that three days after death the dead was laid in the casket, and buried after three months. Mourning lasted for three years. Mourning by fasting should not last more than three days. Clothes of mourning should be worn after three days. Etc. See, 禮記・檀弓, 王制, 曾子問, 喪服小記, 雜記下, 喪大記, 問喪, 間傳, 喪服四制; 儀禮・士喪禮, 士虞禮. It should be noted that these regulations applied to people other than *tianzi* (lit. the son of heaven, the King of Zhou) and *zhuhou* (諸侯, the rulers of subordinate states). See, e.g., 禮記・王制. About three days in the regulation of births (also applying to the royal houses), see 禮記・內則. Another interesting regulation linked three days to marriage: families that married off their daughters do not extinguish the candles at night for three nights in memory of their departed daughter; families into which brides marry do not celebrate for three days out of respect for the bride's longing for her family. This also takes place in a context of departing and receiving. See 禮記・曾子問. Not all parts of these regulations were strictly followed at the popular level – for example, when Li E returned to life after fourteen days, Chen Jiao returned to life after six days, etc. they were certainly already buried. However, because the *li* was one of the Five Scriptures (五經) in Confucian tradition, it was continuously promulgated and taught. Furthermore, when it first formed, it must have been rooted in pre-existing concepts or practices.

hand, such constant reference to the number three concerning death and birth was rare in other ancient Eurasian traditions.[410] But interesting cases could be found in Sumerian myth. Although seven and twelve were prominent in Sumerian myths, where death and the otherworld was concerned, "three days" appeared twice in very significant places, both concerning a journey.[411] Gilgamesh and Ur-shanabi completed the journey of a month and a half in three days, coming to the Waters of Death.[412] Inanna, before descending to the underworld, told her messenger to seek help in heaven if she did not return in three days.[413] Within it there was a logic: if someone could return from the realm of the dead, that would be completed within three days. Scholars have noted that, although Inanna did not return, it is possible that the three days and nights could be related to Jonah's time spent inside the fish's belly.[414] However, Jonas's story was not one of resurrection, although it was cited in the New Testament as the scriptural source of "three days". Even if it was so, whether the implication of the three-day resurrection had other sources was still worth probing.[415]

As discussed above, the story of Philinnion could have been a resurrection story or closely linked to one, so it probably evidenced the existence of a three-day tradition outside of and unaffected by the Christian tradition: Though it was a 2nd century story, Philinnion's case was so markedly different from that of Jesus Christ in almost all aspects, thus direct

[410] For example, the appearance of the number "three" in the Indian *vedas* usually denoted a triad of gods, ideas, etc., e.g., Rig-Veda had "three goddesses", "three worlds", Vishnu's three steps, etc. This is very similar to when the number three appeared in ancient Greek mythology.

[411] Even in contexts related to death and the otherworld, seven and twelve were very common. For example, Enkidu was weakened for twelve days before he died. Gilgamesh mourned him seven days and seven nights. At Uta-napishti's place Gilgamesh tried to stay awake for seven days to win immortality. Inanna passed through the seven gates of the underworld and came to the seven judges of the underworld. On the other hand, Enkidu had sexual intercourse with the harlot for seven days and seven nights, which signified the critical change in his form of life.

[412] *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. Andrew George (London: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 82. In another tradition of Gilgamesh, when Gilgamesh spoke to the soul of Enkidu, who had gone and was kept in the underworld, Enkidu's reply about what kind of people lived best in the underworld contained some interesting descriptions not in conformity with traditional views of the barren underworld: The man with seven sons lives best – "among the junior deities he sits on a throne and listens to the proceedings". The dead lived, ate, drank, had possessions and had sexual intercourse – though it might have been metaphorical, the account appeared very lively. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, pp. 187-89.

[413] Samuel Noah Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961).

[414] George M. Landes, "The 'Three Days and Three Nights' Motif in Jonah 2:1", Journal of Biblical Literature 86(4) (Dec. 1967), pp. 446-50, pp. 448-49.

[415] Although the mainstream in the Gospels had become "the third day", in the Apocrypha there were traces of resurrection "after three days". In Acts of Thomas, 59, Jesus was described as "who came and was crucified and after three days was raised from the dead". *New Testament Apocrypha Vol.2*, Wilheim Schneemelcher ed., R. McL. Wilson trans. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), p. 364. In the Gospel of Nicodemus B, Enoch prophesized, "Then we [Enoch and Elijah] will be sent by God to oppose the Antichrist, and be killed by him. Then after three days we will arise and be snatched up in the clouds for a meeting with the Lord." In Ehrman, *The Other Gospels*, p. 265.

borrowing seemed improbable.[416] Furthermore, the other tradition concerning the time duration of Jesus's resurrection, namely the third day, could be found in Plutarch's Thespesius.[417] Probably because Thespesius's case was one of temporary death – or, according to Plutarch's own narrative, he did not truly die – it did not seemed to have been considered together with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, since the latter was return from true death, not to mention the peculiar element that it was accompanied by the disappearance of his body as proof of his divinity. However, these distinctions might not have been so clear-cut at the very beginning. It was very likely that the story of Jesus was not created from a holistic idea of what sacred resurrection should be – in the formation and retelling of this story, its constructors and listeners would already have had an idea in mind of what resurrection could have been like, though not necessarily such a sacred version. In the Mediterranean region around the time of Jesus Christ, there could have existed a cultural background in which resurrection was associated with three days/the third day at a popular level. Traces of this belief could perhaps be found in Plutarch's Thespesius and Phlegon's Philinnion. Here, it is worth noting that the story of Philinnion was foreign to its audience, but seemed much more familiar to the nurse, whose position in society was not very far from those occupied by Jesus Christ and his earliest followers.

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[416] For an example of the influence of Jesus's story on Greek novel, see Andy M. Reimer, "A Biography of a Motif: The Empty Tomb in the Gospels, the Greek Novels, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*", in *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, eds. Jo-Ann Brant, Charles W. Hedrick, and Chris Shea (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), pp. 297-316. It is also possible that an association of seven with death/rebirth existed at that time, as in IV Ezra: "Then shall the world be turned into the primaeval silence seven days, like as at the first beginnings; so that no man is left. And it shall be after seven days that the Age which is not yet awake shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. And the earth shall restore those that sleep in her, and the dust those that are at rest therein, [and the chambers shall restore those that were committed unto them]" (7. 30-32); "Seven days they have freedom, that during these seven days they may see the things aforesaid, afterwards they shall be gathered together in their habitations" (7. 101). *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English vol.2*, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), pp. 582-83, 589.

[417] It was less probable that Plutarch was directly influenced by Jesus's story on the point of resurrection on the third day. Plutarch was roughly contemporaneous with the era Jesus was said to have lived in; therefore, in his time, Jesus's story must not have had such a pervasive influence. Moreover, Plutarch's *De Genio Socratis* contained another case which was only loosely related with the theme of resurrection, and the possibility of the influence of Jesus's story was even lower. This case similarly contained the element of the third day. It was an account of a mystical ritual in which the participant stayed underground for "two nights and a day", that is, he emerged on the third day. Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis*, in *Moralia* VII. (See also fn infra). In this context, such mystical rituals underground may contain connotations of journeying to the underworld. In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, Apollonius took part in a similar ritual which was described as follows: "Those who enter it are clad in white raiment, and are escorted thither with honey-cakes in their hands to appease the reptiles which assail them as they descend. But the earth brings them to the surface again, in some cases close by, but in other cases a long way off." Its similarity with the underworld journey was not only in the honey-cakes (Psyche), but also in appearing at a different place that was sometimes far away. Apollonius in fact emerged from underground after seven days with a tome of Pythagoras. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, VIII. XIX, pp. 378-83. For emerging from the underworld at a different place, see, for example, Lucian, *Menippus*.

II. Flying on the Bamboo Stick

In *Shenxian Zhuan*, a story about the Daoist practitioner Fei Changfang (費長房) went as follows: When Fei Changfang was a market manager (市掾), there was an old man who sold medicine on the market. Fei Changfang saw the old man jump into an empty urn after sunset, thus he knew the latter was not an ordinary man. Fei Changfang served the old man diligently and was permitted to follow when the old man jumped into the urn. Fei Changfang did so, and found himself in a palace of *xian*. The old man told Fei Changfang that he was a *xian* who had been delinquent in his bureaucratic duties,[418] and was thus punished by being sent to the mortal world. After some time, the old man said that he will be leaving soon and asked whether Fei Changfang can follow him. Fei Changfang said he would like to leave, but did not want his family to know. Thus the old man gave him a green bamboo stick (青竹杖) and told him: "You take the bamboo home, then say you are sick, place this bamboo stick where you lie, then come quietly." Fei Changfang did what he was told, and his family found him dead and buried his body. Fei Changfang went to the old man, "as in a trance, not knowing where he was" (恍惚不知其所). The old man gave him three tests, he passed the first two but could not pass the third. Then the old man said to him, "You cannot obtain the Dao of *xian*. [I] grant you to become the master [of *guishen*] on earth, [you] can live to several hundred years." And gave him a *fu* that granted him this power. Then Fei Changfang was worried he could not return home. The old man gave him a bamboo stick and told him to ride on the bamboo stick. "As if asleep, [he] already returned home" (忽如睡覺，已到家). His family thought he was a ghost. After he told them his experiences, they opened his casket and found only a bamboo stick, and thus believed him. The bamboo stick he rode was thrown away, and became a blue-green dragon (視之乃青龍耳). He thought he had only left for a day, but when he asked his family, they said that he had been gone for a year.[419]

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[418] Ge Hong played an important role in the bureaucratization of *xian*. In *Liexian Zhuan*, the bureaucratic characteristic of this otherworld was hardly described. *Xian* were sometimes described with positions linked with their abilities (e.g. 雨師, in charge of rain). However, there were no descriptions of bureaucratic duties or punishments for delinquent duties. By contrast, in the aforementioned story of Wang Yuan and Cai Jing, Wang actually told Cai that the latter "could be taken as an official" – namely, a bureaucrat in the world of *xian*.

[419] Fei Changfang also appeared in the Book of Later Han, by Fan Ye. Fan Ye's narrative largely corresponded to Ge Hong's, but ended differently. Ge Hong's narrative ended with the descriptions of Fei Changfang's marvelous powers. Fan Ye, on the other hand, told that he eventually lost his *fu* and was killed by the horde of *gui* (后失其符，為眾鬼所殺). 後漢書・卷八十二・方術列傳.

In this story, there are many elements that might be recognized as shamanistic. However, besides what could be extracted as reflections of common belief or psychology, there were peculiar characteristics worthy of examination. The bamboo sticks here had two functions: as a substitute for body to cheat the commoners' eyes, and as the vehicle to take the practitioner to the other world. Both functions were common in Chinese stories relating to *xian*. For the former function, in *Shenxian Zhuan*, there was the story of Li Changzai (李常在, lit. Li always-there, so called because he was said to have lived for centuries), a Daoist practitioner who had two young disciples. He gave each a green bamboo stick to place on their beds, and to leave with him without telling their families. The families then found them dead and buried them. Afterwards another disciple saw Li Changzai with these youths, who asked letters be brought to their families. Thus the families opened their caskets, and only the bamboo sticks were found.[420] Another similar story in *Shenxian Zhuan* recounted that two days after the death of Cheng Xiangong (成仙公, lit. immortal man surnamed Cheng), his friend saw him travelling on the back of a white mule.[421] He told his friend that he was temporarily going to Mi Xi (迷溪, lit. creek of lost), but would return soon. He forgot his *dao* (刀, Chinese bladed weapon) beside the door and shoes at the place for chickens to rest (雞棲), and asked his friend to tell his family to collect them.[422] His family heard this message and was astonished, and said: "The *dao* and the shoes were together in the casket, how could [they] be outside?" The casket was opened. "There was no longer a body seen. Inside the casket [there was] only a green bamboo stick, more than seven *chi* long." This was roughly Cheng Xiangong's height.[423] Other stories of using green bamboo sticks as a substitute for the body, either contemporaneous or later, usually followed in the same manner.[424]

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[420] 神仙傳.

[421] Cheng Xiangong told his host that he was ill. After four days he was found dead and buried. Because two days after he was seen again, from him falling sick to being seen again, seven days had passed. However, it was also mentioned that 經兩日，猶未成服 (after two days, the mourning clothes had not been put on) – an explicit connection between three days and mourning rites. It is possible that the resurrection took place within three days because the stories were supposed to give the impression that the dead were resurrected before or just when mourning rites were supposed to begin. Remember Plutarch's Thespesius and Plato's Er both returned to life under similar conditions. The returning to life in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, Liber VII, LIII also often occurred at the funeral.

[422] The door might be a place of entrance and exit, and the chicken rest here might refer to a rooster, which was often associated with exorcising ghosts due to its association with the dawn.

[423] 神仙傳.

[424] For example, in the story of Qilin Ke (麒麟客) in Xu Xuanguai Lu (續玄怪錄), he gave his host Zhang Maoshi (張茂實) a long bamboo stick, written with *fu*, and told him to set the bamboo stick beneath his blanket. He took Zhang Maoshi to a *xian* world by riding on a qilin and tigers. After the journey, he accompanied Zhang Maoshi back, took away the bamboo stick, and told Zhang Maoshi to lie back in bed. Zhang Maoshi's family told him that he lied in bed senseless for seven days. In Xu Xian Zhuan (續仙傳), Ma Ziran (馬自然) waited at his brother's

As a vehicle, green bamboo sticks were generally viewed as having the power of moving its rider to very faraway places in an instant. For example, in *Shenxian Zhuan*, Jie Xiang (介象) had many marvelous abilities, including invisibility, transformation into plants and animals, forcing a market's people to sit down and cannot stand, etc. The King of Wu (Sun Quan 孫權) summoned him to Wuchang. Sun Quan learned the art of invisibility from him, and could pass through the palace and harem gates unseen. Later,

> "[Jie Xiang] and the former monarch (先主, referring to Sun Quan) discussed together what fish was superior for *kuai* (鱠, thin-sliced raw fish). Xiang said: '*Zi* (鯔, flathead grey mullet) are superior.' The former monarch said: 'This fish is in the sea, how could [we] obtain [one]?' Xiang said: '[I] could obtain [one].' Thus [he] ordered a square pit to be dug in the palace court and filled with water, Xiang then asked for bait, and lowered fishing line into the pit. In less than a meal's time, [he] caught a *zi*. The former monarch was pleasantly surprised, and asked Xiang: 'Could [it] be eaten?' Xiang said: '[I] took [it] for *kuai* for Your Majesty, how could [it] not be eaten?' Then [he] asked the chef to slice it. The former monarch asked: '[Too bad] no ambassador from Shu has come. Having [Shu] ginger for *kuai* is most delicious, the ginger does not compare. How could [it] be obtained?' Xiang said: '[That] is easy to obtain. Please send a man and give him five thousand coins. I will write a *fu* and place it inside a bamboo stick, let him close [his] eyes [and] ride the stick. When the stick stops, [let him] buy ginger. After [he] buys ginger, [he should] close [his] eyes again.' The man followed his words, riding the stick, in an instant [he] had already arrived in Chengdu. Not knowing where he was, [he] asked passers-by, [who] said it was in the middle of Shu, thus [he] bought ginger. At this time, the ambassador of Wu, Zhang Wen, was in Shu. [Zhang Wen's] servants coincidentally saw the man sent to buy ginger, was greatly astonished, [and] wrote a letter to send home. This man bought ginger [and] returned to the kitchen, the *kuai* was just prepared."[425]

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house for his brother's return. After three days he died, just before his brother returned home. His brother's family buried him. But the next year, someone else saw him elsewhere. Thus his casket was opened and there was only a bamboo stick.

[425] 神仙傳・卷九. Later, Jie Xiang desired to leave but Sun Quan would not permit it. Shortly afterwards he died. He had died at midday and appeared in Jianye (建鄴, today's Nanjing, approximately 500 km from Wuchang 武昌) at dusk. When this was reported to Sun Quan, his casket was opened. There was no body, and only a *fu* was left.

The quick transportation bestowed by bamboo sticks was not confined to riding. In *Gaoseng Zhuan*'s biography of Bei Du (杯渡, lit. cup crossing, so-called because he could cross a river in a wooden cup), the story of a man of Wu named Zhu Lingqi (朱靈期) was recorded. When returning to Gaoli (高麗, Korea), his ship was blown away by storm, after nine days he found himself stranded on a land. Zhu Lingqi and his companions begged and went for over a thousand *li*, and reached a splendid temple. They begged the holy monks (圣僧) of the temple to send them home. The holy monks told them that they were over two hundred thousand *li* (about a hundred thousand kilometers) from their home, and gave them a green bamboo stick: "Throw this stick in water in front of [your] ship. Close [your] eyes [and] sit quietly. Without labour, [the stick] will let you return quickly." A *shami* (沙彌, śrāmaṇera, an acolyte) led them, and only seven *li* they returned to their ship. They followed the monk's instructions, and "only heard the ship pass on top of mountains and trees, [and] there was no water." After three days they returned home, and the bamboo stick disappeared.[426]

What could be traversed by bamboo sticks was not only vast expanses of space. In the cases presented above, we already saw that the far-away destinations of the journey (except in Jie Xiang's case) often had the connotation of otherworldliness. There were also cases in which a bamboo stick was used as a vehicle to send the soul back from the world of the dead. In *Mingxiang Ji*, a man named Li Qing (李清) died of illness and returned to life after a night. He said he was summoned by two men who took him by a bamboo cart very swiftly and saw an acquaintance of his who had been dead for thirty years. Following the acquaintance's advice, he sought the aid of a Buddhist monk, who helped to let the underworld bureaucrats agree to his return. Then his acquaintance gave him a green bamboo stick and asked him to ride on it with eyes closed. In an instant Li Qing returned home and became a pious Buddhist follower.[427]

Another case with less Buddhist flavour was Gu Yuanzhi (古元之)'s story in *Xuanguai Lu*. Gu Yuanzhi died of drinking, was placed in casket three days after his death, but his relative wanted to say farewell to him again, opened the casket and found him alive. According to Gu Yuanzhi's account, a divine man (神人) said that he was Gu Yuanzhi's distant ancestor and needed Gu

[426] 高僧傳・卷十. This story appeared in Bei Du's biography because Zhu Lingqi saw Bei Du's room at the faraway temple, and the monks asked them to bring a bowl and a sealed letter to Bei Du.
[427] 冥祥記.

Yuanzhi to serve him on his journey to *Heshen Guo* (和神國, lit. harmonious divine country). The ancestor gave Gu Yuanzhi his baggage to carry, and a bamboo stick to ride and follow. The bamboo stick "flew [and] lifted very fast, [and] was always in midair" (飛舉甚速，常在半天). After travelling in *Heshen Guo*, the divine ancestor gave Gu Yuanzhi wine to drink. After several cups, he was intoxicated and woke up alive. Gu Yuanzhi then abandoned worldly pursuits and took to travelling, and it was not known how he ended – implying he became a Daoist practitioner.[428]

Green bamboo sticks, as vehicles for the transportation of souls in resurrection stories, were clearly related to stories about otherworldly travel. However, this function seemed unrelated to its function as a substitute for the body. Yet deeper connections probably existed. In addition to green bamboo sticks, another type of items often left in empty caskets was shoes. In *Liexian Zhuan*, Huangdi (黃帝), a legendary divine emperor, was buried in a mountain. After a landslide, his casket was found empty except for his sword and shoes.[429] A similar case concerned a concubine of Emperor Wu of Han (漢武帝) and the mother of Emperor Zhao (漢昭帝), Gouyi *furen* (鉤翼夫人). Emperor Wu ordered her death, but later when Emperor Zhao ascended to the throne and moved her remains to another tomb, it was discovered that there was no body, only her silken shoes remained.[430] *Soushen Ji* contained the following story: As a *shangshu-lang* (尚書郎), Wang Qiao (王喬) was appointed the county magistrate of Ye (葉縣令),[431] but he came to the capital on the first day of every month (朔日).[432] The emperor found it strange that he came often but with no entourage, and told the tai-shi (太史, court historian also in charge of astronomy and calendar) to wait for and observe him. The tai-shi reported that when Wang Qiao came, a pair of wild ducks were seen flying from the southeast. Thus they caught the ducks, but the ducks turned into a pair of shoes, and it was recognized that these were the shoes the Emperor gifted to the officers of *shangshu*.

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[428] 玄怪錄. Another similar story concerned the famous minister of Tang, Li Linfu (李林甫). A Daoist practitioner gave him several stems of bamboo (which would comprise a stick) to ride on. Li Linfu rode the bamboo stick to a city of *xian*. When he rode the bamboo stick back, he saw his body sitting on the bed with eyes closed. 盧肇 (mid 9th century), 逸史, found in 太平廣記・卷十九.

[429] 列仙傳. It also accounted another version of Huangdi's ascension – that he rode a dragon into the heavens, which had been rebuked by Wang Chong.

[430] 列仙傳. This case was also found in Soushen Ji. 搜神記・卷一.

[431] According to commentators, although older versions referred to 鄴縣, the county here should be 葉縣, which would correspond to the record in other sources as well as the southeast description in the later text (鄴縣, on the other hand, is to the northeast of Luoyang). See 搜神記, 汪紹楹校注, p. 7; 新輯搜神記, 李劍國輯校, pp. 41-42. The journey from Ye County to Luoyang is about 150 km.

[432] Literally, the day of the new-moon, that is, the first day of the month in the lunar calendar.

In Wang Qiao's story, the shoes were both the vehicles by which he travelled, but also implied to have been his body, which seemed to have been taken to Luoyang by his marvelous travel. We have seen the association between bamboo sticks and dragons,[433] and the association between shoes and birds. Furthermore, the likeliness between bamboo stick-dragon and shoe-bird could be seen in the following story:

> "In Nanye county there was a *jian-jiang* (監匠, artisan that worked on government command) Chen Lian (陳憐) of Han [Dynasty], who communicated with the supernatural. [When he was posted elsewhere,] at night he rode a dragon to return home. His wife became pregnant. [His] mother suspected that [she] cheated with another man, looked in secret and knew that it was Lian riding a dragon. [When] the dragon arrived at home [it] then became a green bamboo stick. Lian [placed it] in front of the door. [His] mother did not know, thus took the stick away. Suddenly a brilliant light filled the house, [the dragon] soon flew and disappeared. Lian lost his stick, thus stepped on (御) two swans to return."[434]

It had not been clearly stated why these particular items were believed to be substitutes for the body, and at the same time means of marvelous travel. However, based on the characteristics attributed to these items, they could have been left behind as a sign to the story's audience that their owners had the power to transport themselves to the otherworld.

In Europe, the history of witches flying on broomsticks was very obscure. It could be said that three pre-existing traditions of nightly flights circulated before broomsticks and similar inanimate objects entered the stage. The first type was exemplified by Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, in which witches, after rubbing themselves with ointments, transformed into animals that could fly, such as owls.[435] Likely influenced by Apuleius, the Paduan poet Albertino

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[433] In addition to the story of Fei Changfang above, this is also seen in the story of Su Xiangong (蘇仙公). He could go to the country market a hundred and twenty *li* away to buy fish and return in an instant. He had a bamboo stick that others said must be a dragon. When he became *xian* and left, he left his mother with a sealed cabinet. Everything she needed would appear when she knocked on the cabinet. However, she must not open it. After three years she began to doubt and opened the cabinet, and saw a pair of white cranes fly away. After that the cabinet lost its power. Attributed to 神仙傳 in 太平廣記・卷十三, but no longer found in the current version of 神仙傳.

[434] Said to be from 南康記, by 鄧德明 (5th century). The original work was lost, and this story is preserved in 太平御覽・卷七百一十・服用部十二.

[435] Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, III. 21. Ovid also described such witch-like birds in *Fasti* VI. 131-168 (in 141-42,

Mussato retold how, around 1319, he became gravely ill, had himself anointed and dreamed that he grew feathers to become an owl.[436] The second type was by riding on beasts, usually in a group led by a goddess. For example, in the famous Canon Episcopi (c. 906 CE), the belief in night flight was condemned as: "quaedam sceleratae mulieres, retro post Satanam conversae, daemonum illusionibus et phantasmatibus seductae, credunt se et profitentur nocturnis horis cum Diana paganorum dea et innumera multitudine mulierum equitare super quasdam bestias, et multa terrarum spatia intempestae noctis silentio pertransire, eiusque iussionibus velut dominae obedire, et certis noctibus ad eius servititum evocari."[437] Herodias was later to be added to this attribution.[438] In Burchard of Worms' *Decretum*, following the canon's language and description, the following penance was prescribed: "Credidisti ut aliqua femina sit, quae hoc facere possit, quod quaedam, a diabolo deceptae, se affirmant necessario et ex praecepto facere debere, id est cum daemonum turba in similitudinem mulierum transformatam, quam vulgaris stultitia hic strigam holdam vocat, certis noctibus equitar debere super quasdam bestias, et in eorum se consortio annumeratam esse? Si particeps fuisti illius incredulitatis, annam unum per legitimas ferias poenitere debes."[439] The third type, which might be called shamanistic, was the flight of the soul that temporarily left the body, sometimes in the shape of a bird. This was described in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*: "reperimus inter exempla Hermotimi Clazomenii animam relicto corpore errare solitam vagamque e longinquo multa adnuntiare, quae nisi a praesente nosci non possent, corpore interim semianimi . . . Aristeae etiam visam evolantem ex ore in Proconneso corvi effigie."[440]

The earliest known descriptions of witches on broomsticks did not seem to have appeared until the 15th century. Among these was the well-known illustration of two women, one on a broomstick and the other on a stick, in the

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he suggested they might have been old women transformed into birds by incantation: "sive igitur nascuntur aves, seu carmine fiunt / neniaque in volucre Marsa figurat anus"), and *Amores* I, 8, 13-14 ("hanc ego nocturnas versam volitare per umbras / suspicor et pluma corpus anile tegi"). Note that although this might have been for literary effect, Ovid's tone seemed not completely certain in both cases. Vincent of Beauvais also compared *stringes* to owls in his Speculum Historalis II. 95. Alex Scobie, "Strigiform Witches in Roman and Other Cultures", *Fabula* 19(1) (1978), p. 80.

[436] See Montesano, *Classical Culture and Witchcraft in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, p. 124. The similarity and possible influence could be deduced by the common details and the fact that both used the word "bubo" for owl.

[437] *Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis libris duo de synodalibus causis et disciplinis ecclesiasticis*, F. W. H. Wasserschleben ed. (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1840), p. 355.

[438] Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, p. 92.

[439] Burchard of Worms, *Decretum*, XIX. 70. See also XIX. 90. In Hermann Joseph Schmitz ed., *Die Bussbücher und das kanonische Bussverfahren* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1898), p. 425.

[440] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, Liber VII, LIII.

illustration of a mid-15th century manuscript of *Le Champion des Dames*.[441] Interestingly, in Molitor's 1487 illustration, witches were depicted partially transformed into animal forms but still flying on forked sticks.[442] The link between the Waldensian witchcraft accusations and their flight on broomsticks had sometimes been mentioned.[443] It was possible that wide dissemination of flight on broomsticks were solidified and fostered through witch trials. However, the very idea of flight by riding stick-like or other types of inanimate objects appeared much earlier and was not formed under force.

"In Alsacia est monasterium, quod nominatur Stega," in a chapter titled "De muliere vas sibi competens equitante" within *Historiae Memorabiles*, Rudolf of Schlettstadt recounted, "et ibi fratres servum eorum cum duobus asinis in Sarburg castellum, quod tria miliaria a claustro distat, pro sale transmiserunt." This servant, being delayed for some reason, stopped at a small village in the house of a woman, "que consuevit recipere transeuntes". Because it had been raining, he placed his asses' saddles by the fire with him to dry. "Circa vero mediam noctem hospita surrexit et ungentum [sic] de pixide sumens servo vidente inunxit vasculum ac desuper sedens. Quid facere intenderet, ignorabat. Post modicum tempus dum aliqua verba preceptoria protulisset, in aera se vasculum sublevavit ac eam leviter deportavit. Servus hec videns mirabatur et ignorabat, quo eius hospita pervenisset. Ad pixidem velociter ibat et sicut eius hospita fecit similiter et ipse faciebat illa verba pronuctians, que ab ea audivit. Cum his super sellam asini sedebat et, sicut eum hospita sua precesserat, sic ad eam per omnia sequebatur. Et cum ad eam pervenisset, eum pacifice salutabat et inter alia verba dixit: Omnino nichil comedas nec bibas nec aliquid loquaris, posset enim in tuum cadere detrimentum. Invenerat enim hospitam in prato pulcro cum dominis et dominabus cum juvenibus ac puellis cum timpanis et choris cum magna habundancia comedentes. Hospita servum, ne quid mali pateretur, subito deducebat. In via autem servus velocius peregere cupiebat, unde ac hec verba conveniencia prorupebat: In nomine domini procedamus. His dictis servus in lutum cecidit sua hospita procedente. Hoc facto diluculum inminebat. Servus sellam supra dorsum suum ponebat et ad

[441] See *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700: A Documentary History*, eds. Alan Kors and Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 34-35, 145; Serinity Young, *Women Who Fly: Goddesses, Witches, Mystics, and Other Airborne Females* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 169.
[442] Kors and Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, p. 147.
[443] See, e.g., Wolfgang Behringer, "How Waldensians Became Witches: Heretics and Their Journey to the Other World", in *Communicating with Spirits, Vol. 1* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2005), pp. 155-192; Natalie Kwan, "Woodcuts and Witches: Ulrich Molitor's *De lamiis et pythonicis mulieribus*, 1489-1669", *German History* 30(4): pp. 493-527, p. 499.

hospitam suam venire cum desiderio cupiebat. Et cum pervenisset, sale asinos oneravit et ad claustrum veniens reqievit, laboraverat enim multum. Cum autem monachi, quare tam tarde venisset, improperarent, cepit eis ea, que acciderant, narrare et ea cum juramentis maximis confirmare."[444]

Marina Montesano commented that in this story from the end of the thirteenth century, "the ointment and the flight recall the Apuleian tradition".[445] The element of ointment indeed appeared in Apuleius. However, even to someone completely ignorant of the Apuleian tradition, the Christian rituals of anointing might have given rise to such imaginings. Furthermore, in Apuleius's story, the witch rubbed herself with the ointment and transformed into an owl to fly; in this story, the items anointed and bestowed with the power of flying were a vase and a saddle – both inanimate objects.[446] Therefore, the flight appeared very different as well.

Besides the characteristic of the flight, the attitudes and reactions of the persons in this story were also worth noting. When the servant saw the behaviour of his hostess, it was repeatedly mentioned that he did not know what she was doing. Furthermore, the servant also seemed to believe that it was less reproachable to follow a woman, who would be recognized as a witch by later generations, to this questionable feast, than to return late without reason after being sent to buy salt. Accordingly, the monks did not seem to have further blamed him after having verified the truth of his testimony. The chapter ended here and the author did not seem to have further comments.

An earlier example of flying by inanimate object could be found in Stephen of Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversis Materiis Praedicabilibus* (c. mid-13th century). In a chapter titled "Quod fugat demones", the author reported a story he heard from a priest in Geneva ("Audivi a quodam fratre sacerdote, Guillelmo Gebennensi nomine"). "[I]n Gebennensi dyocesi fuit quidam homo de quo dicebatur quod de nocte ibat cum mulieribus que vulgariter dicuntur *bona res*, et quod super hoc argueretur a sacerdote suo, dicente quod non credebat quod hoc esset nisi purum figmentum. Promisit ei sacerdos quod non molestaret eum de cetero super hoc, si ipse eum secum duceret in illo

[444] Rudolf von Schlettstadt, *Historiae Memorabiles*, ed. Erich Kleinschmidt (Koln: Bohlau-Verlag, 1974), 33, pp. 93-94.
[445] Montesano, *Classical Culture and Witchcraft in medieval and Renaissance Italy*, p. 112.
[446] Montesano seemed to identify the servant's ass as the vehicle of flying, but when mentioning the action of flying, the text went as "sellam asini", and after his fall it was described that the servant carried it on his back ("Servus sellam supra dorsum suum ponebat"), which was unlikely if he had an ass with him.

facto; qui, consilio istarum, [eum] vocavit, ut de lecto suo cito nudus surgeret, ut cum eo iret, quia vehiculum erat eis paratum; qui, de primo sompnio [sic] nudus surgens, invenit ante hostium suum trabem, quam de mandato illius hominis quasi equum ascendit sacerdos: cui inhibuit ille ne aliquo modo se signaret, quia erubescebant signum illud ille domine. Tunc visum fuit illi sacerdoti quod subito reperiretur et portaretur in quodam maximo cellario, ubi vidit maximam multitudinem dominarum psallencium cum torticiis et luminaribus, et mensas positas et bonis refertas. Tunc, postquam satis lusissent, factus est clamor ibi: 'Eamus, sedeamus et comedamus.' Cum autem sedissent ad mensam et sacerdos cum eis et deberent comedere, sacerdos ille, ut erat assuetus, manum levavit et mensam signavit; quo facto, omnia luminaria et alia que ibi apparuerant evanuerunt, et demones cum maximo impetu inde fugerunt, et illum nudum in Lumbardia, in quadam cellario solo inclusum, super quoddam vas vinaticum reliquerunt. Qui in mane ibi inventus a domini cellarii servis, vix evasit quin tanquam latro suspenderetur. Et eum dicebat dictus frater fuisse socium suum in seculo."[447]

The timber, "quam ... quasi equum ascendit sacerdos," was somewhat reminiscent of the saddle and the vase in the servant's story – except that the timber was not expressly anointed and incanted upon (the probability cannot be ruled out that it was done before the priest arrived). The nightly flight, the distance covered (though the distance in the servant's story did not seem as miraculous as Geneva to Lombardy), and the disappearance of the feast at the sign of the sacred. The utterance of the Lord's name and the fall from flight in a watery environment recalled Gervase of Tilbury's description that night-fliers immediately fall into the ground if they speak the name of Christ. Indeed, according to Gervase, one such woman from Beaucaire fell into the Rhône for this reason.[448] But it must be noted that in the servant's story, the warning he received was that "[o]mnino nichil comedas nec bibas nec aliquid loquaris, posset enim in tuum cadere detrimentum", that is, he fell because he said something, not because he invoked the name of the Lord. This implied that this story might have formed in a context that was originally

[447] Etienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon dominicain du XIII^e siècle*, ed. Albert Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Henri Loones, 1877) 97, pp. 88-89. At the end of Peter Damian's Epistola 119 (86-88), there was an account of a young boy in his monastery, who was taken to a locked room in a nearby mill and offered a banquet at night. This story did not describe the means of transportation, and there was also no disappearance of the banquet through an exorcising element. This account later appeared in Hélinand of Froidmont, who was cited in Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale* 26.63, and finally appeared in *Malleus Maleficarum*. It is worth noting that when Peter Damian began to tell this story, he also considered the possibility that it was the work of humans or of angels – in his mind, it had not yet unequivocally become the work of demons.

[448] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, III. 93, pp. 742-743.

non-Christian, in which the taboo was unrelated to Christian belief, like that of the Lady of Rousset. If we suppose the story was that of a witch luring an innocent man to the Sabbath, she should encourage him to eat, drink and partake in the entertainment, because her purpose would have been to make the victim part of her sinful cohort. But the prohibition was the exact opposite. On the other hand, the taboo against eating and drinking often concerned the underworld, as ancient as the pomegranate seeds eaten by Persephone, and as widespread as in the Chinese story – the son-in-law, accidentally buried alive in his wife's family tomb, was forbidden to eat at the banquets of the ghosts.[449] Therefore, the following element could have more meaning than the literal one: when the servant fell from mid-flight, "[h]oc facto diluculum inminebat."[450]

It has been presented that, in Chinese ghost stories, the lavish ghostly banquet would vanish suddenly when the thing they feared appeared. The same rule applied more broadly to otherworldly beings, like Chunyu Jin's fox-wife, their sons, and the luxuries she brought – all returned to their original form when the hunter's dogs approached.[451] The same ambiguity existed in the flight and its destination: similar vehicles could transport riders between the worlds of the living and of the dead, or between everyday life and the gatherings of the otherworldly.

Except for bamboo sticks, foxes also appeared as vehicles to the world of the dead. This could be an even more ancient belief, if the white fox digging Dan out from his grave is considered. In the Eastern Han dictionary, *Shuowen Jiezi*, the character 狐 (fox) was explained as "A *yao* (aberrantly supernatural) beast, ridden by ghosts" (狐，妖獸也，鬼所乘之). Accompanied with such descriptions were stories of ghosts riding foxes causing trouble.[452] In *Guangyi Ji*, Wang Xian (王僊) was summoned by the god of Hua Mountain to be an underworld official. However, he discovered that his wife was in the courtyard being tortured. He begged to have his wife released. The underworld messenger agreed that he could return home to open his wife's casket in time such that she could be revived, and told the servants to "bring

[449] See supra.
[450] This is in accordance with the long-recognized relationship between the dead and the Witches' Sabbath.
[451] See supra.
[452] For example, in *Guangyi Ji*, the story of Song Pu (宋溥): "a ghost wore a *li* (conical bamboo hat) and rode a fox" (见一鬼戴笠骑狐) and prevented the fox from entering traps. 广异记.

the postal horse" for him (取驛馬送王舍人). "Soon [he] saw a fox come. Xian had no choice, rode the fox and sprinted. It was fast as the wind, [and in] two days he arrived home. It was his soul riding the fox. Xian himself after his soul had left, lost [his] voice [and] could not speak."[453] His soul told his family to open his wife's casket, just in time for her to be revived. After ten days, his body returned from the capital. Then his soul reconciled with his body and he returned to normal.

Nevertheless, in these and other types of stories in which the protagonist passed to and from the underworld, horses were more common vehicles, perhaps because horses were commonly used in everyday life – in the story of Wang Xian above, the fox was in fact called a horse.[454] For example, in the story of Bei Xi (貝禧), reportedly in the first year of Qianning (乾寧甲寅歲, 894 CE), he was summoned to become an underworld bureaucrat. He and the messenger who came to summon him "each rode a horse, [which] was fast as the wind [and] did not sink in water" (各乘一馬，其疾如風，涉水不溺). That night they stayed in an inn at a village. There was food and wine but no servants were seen. Though there were lamps and candles, their lights seemed veiled. It was said that they had already travelled more than two thousand *li*. On the next day he came to the city of the King of the underworld, where he was introduced to his new post and given a golden key of the records that he was supposed to take care of. He opened them, and saw that it was the records of lives by region. First he saw the records of Shanzhou (陝州, in the northwest of China). Then he searched and found the records of his home province Changzhou (常州, in the southeast). In the records of his family, he saw that every person's name was meticulously recorded, and the names of those who had died were crossed over with ink. However, the messenger returned and told him that the King discovered that his time of living had not ended yet; after his time ended, he should resume his duties in the underworld. He returned the golden key, and realized he could no longer clearly remember what he had read. Then he was sent back by the same

[453] "俄見一狐來，僩不得已，騎狐而騁。其疾如風，兩日至舍，騎狐乃其魂也。僩本身自魂出之後，失音不言。" 廣異記, pp. 61-62.

[454] For a similar story in which the returning soul rode a horse, see the story of Pei Gong (裴珙) from *Jiyi Ji* (集異記, by 薛用弱, c. 9th century) in *Taiping Guangji* (太平廣記・卷三百五十八). He was pranked upon by a god on his way home. The god lent him a horse to ride on, but only his soul rode it. He returned home and realized nobody could see or hear him, and was greatly scared. Fortunately another god passed by, and sent his soul back to his body. It was described by his servants that when they came to the stone bridge, where Pei Gong met the god who pranked him, Pei Gong suddenly started to speak strangely as if mad. They were very afraid and quickly found a place nearby to stay. Just when they settled down, Pei Gong died until his soul came back.

messengers, and returned to life.[455]

Similarly, in the aforementioned stories of Sun Huipu and Zhang Zhi, they were also taken to the underworld by horse, and some underworld records were supposed to have been checked. However, the combination of horse and records might appear in other contexts. In *Xuanshi Zhi* (宣室志, mid-9th century), there was the following story:

> "In the Zhenyuan years of Tang, there was a Dali-*pingshi* (大理評事, an official in Tang's judiciary department) Han-*sheng* (韓生), staying in the south of Xihe-*jun* (西河郡). [He] had a grand and handsome horse. One morning, it suddenly bowed its head in the stable, sweating and panting, as if it had completed a long journey and was very tired. The stableman thought it strange and reported this to Han-*sheng*. Han-*sheng* was angered: 'If [someone] stole the horse out at night, making my horse exhausted, whose fault is it?' and ordered him beaten. The stableman could not excuse himself, and thus suffered a beating. The next day, the horse was sweating and panting again. The stableman thought the matter strange [and] did not know the reason. That night, he lay in the stable room, closed the door, and peaked through the crevice. Suddenly [he] saw Han-*sheng*'s black dog come into the stable. [The dog] barked and jumped, soon turned into a man, [whose] clothes and headdress were all black. [The man] put the saddle on the horse and rode it away. Coming to the gate, the gated wall was very high, the man in black hit the horse with a whip. The horse surprisingly leapt over [the wall]. [Thus] the man in black departed on the horse. [He] returned, got off the horse and untied the saddle. This man in black leapt and jumped again, [and] turned back into a dog. The stableman was greatly astonished, [and] did not dare to tell anyone.
>
> "The next evening, the black dog took the horse away again, returning only at dawn. The stableman tracked the horse's hoofprints, because it had just stopped raining, the tracks were clearly visible, stretching to an ancient grave more than ten *li* south [of their house], its trace only ended [there]. The stableman then made a straw hut beside the grave. The evening after, [he] first came to the hut to wait. Almost halfway through the night, the man in black indeed came

[455] 太平廣記・卷三百七十八.

riding. [He] got off the horse, tied [it] on a tree in the wilderness. His person entered the grave, with several others laughed and spoke merrily. The stableman lay in his straw hut and listened, daring not to move. After the time of several meals, the man in black departed, [and] several others accompanied him outside the grave. Among them a man in brown looked around and said to the man in black: 'Where is the name records of the Han family now?' The man in black answered: 'I have kept it beneath the *daolian* stone (搗練石, a large stone used to prepare newly woven silk). We need not worry.' The man in brown said: 'Take care not to divulge [this matter]. If it were divulged then our kind will not be preserved.' The man in black said: '[I] respectfully receive [your] advice.' The man in brown said: 'Does the young child of the Han family have a name yet?' [The man in black] said: 'Not yet. Once he has a name, I shall immediately add it to the name records. [I] shall not be delinquent.' The man in brown said: 'Come again tomorrow evening. [We] shall make merry.' The man in black agreed and left.

"At dawn, the stableman returned, and told the matter in secret to Han-*sheng*. The *sheng* then ordered to lure the dog with meat. When the dog came, it was tied with rope. Then in accordance with what was heard, [they] searched beneath the *daolian*-stone exhaustively, [and] indeed found a scroll of writing, [which] recorded all the names of the brothers, wives and servants of the Han family. No one was left out. This was the so-called name records of the Han family. There was a son born a month ago, only this son was not recorded, as was said 'the young child did not yet have a name'. Han-*sheng* was greatly astonished, ordered the dog taken to the courtyard and whipped to death. Its meat was cooked and fed to the servants. Then [he] led more than a thousand neighbours and other *shi*, with bows, arrows and weapons, to the ancient grave south of the *jun*. [They] opened the grave. Inside the grave were several dogs, [whose] hair and appearance were very abhorrent. [They] killed all [the dogs] and returned."[456]

While people were not afraid to discover that the underground bureaucracy kept records of their names, when their name-records were in

[456] 張讀, 宣室志・卷三.

the keeping of such aberrant supernatural beings, this seemed to be an inimical threat that needed to be dealt with immediately. From the perspective of being viewed as threatening to human society, such gatherings were probably similar to beliefs about nightly gatherings in Europe. These animal shapeshifters, like shapeshifting witches, also hid within human society – with the difference that they lived as animals by day and took on human forms by night, while witches lived as humans by day and transformed into animals by night. In Western Europe, it was rarely believed that animals could acquire magical powers and even transform into human form.[457] Abnormal phenomena relating to animals were mostly explained as them being demons or being possessed by demons, besides the possibility that they were so transformed by witches.[458] The Chinese conception of animals as shapeshifters and evil-doers probably partly resembled the plague-demon of Ephesus in *Life of Apollonius*: When there was a great plague in Ephesus, Apollonius ordered an old and miserable mendicant to be stoned to death. The inhabitants of the city were initially shocked at the suggestion of killing such a stranger, but Apollonius insisted, and when they began to stone him, his eyes, formerly blinking like blind, were shown to be "full of fire". After this man was killed, beneath the pile of stones "they found that he had disappeared and instead of him there was a hound who resembled in form and look a Molossian dog, but was in size the qual of the largest lion; there he lay before their eyes, pounded to a pulp by their stones and vomiting foam as mad dogs do".[459] But the text detailedly described the old man's disappearance and the dog suffering the same stones as had been thrown at the old man, taking pains to equate the dog with the old man. This indicated that the idea of such metamorphosis – a human-formed being causing misfortune, but after being killed returning to its original animal form – was foreign to the audience. Nor did it become commonly received in Western Europe later.[460]

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[457] This is quite different from, for example, the worship of St. Guinefort, whose story was that of a loyal dog wrongfully killed, who did not acquire any supernatural power before its death. But notably, the Lady of Rousset (and later Melusine), in the sense that she was seen in her snake-form, was probably similar – although in the European context her nature is ambiguous – more probably a fey or demon that had both human and snake form, rather than a snake as an animal. The concept of werewolf was also rather different – the werewolf was not a real wolf, but a dog (or fox, bird, etc.) *yao* was basically a real animal, albeit one that had often lived for an extraordinary period of time and gained magical abilities.

[458] For example, the seven dogs who killed a man in the Acts of Andrew, 6-7, in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, ed. J. K. Elliott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 274. They formerly lived in a tomb by the roadside and stoned many passers-by to death, and were then expelled by Andrew. After that they ran into a house and killed the man.

[459] *Life of Apollonius*, Book IV, X, pp. 362-67. This dog-shaped plague-demon was also called a *phasma*.

[460] Regarding the concept of an otherworldly congregation that conspired against human society, the difference in the nature of the otherworldly being also led to differences in its consequences. In Chinese narratives, because the original form of the shapechangers were animals, when they were discovered and killed, they would return to their

In China, the conspiratorial otherworldly gathering like that of the dogs in the ancient tomb was in fact relatively scarce.[461] When it took place, it was more often within a context in which it lured human women to the gathering, with sexual innuendo. The mid-8th century collection *Guangyi Ji* (廣異記) recounted such a story:

> "In the Kai-yuan years of Tang (713-741), the wife of a *hu-bu lingshi* (戶部令史, an official of the demographic department) was very beautiful, [and] was ill with *mei* (有魅疾, she was possessed[462]), but could not know it. In their house there was a handsome horse. Though it was fed with fodder in a doubled quantity, [it] became increasingly thinner and weaker. The *lingshi* asked a *hu* (胡人, foreigner from the west) living next door [why the horse was so weak]. The *hu* was also an enchanter, laughingly said: 'A horse would feel tired after travelling for a hundred *li* (50 kilometers). Now it had travelled for more than one thousand *li* (500 kilometers), how could it not be thin?' The *lingshi* said: '[The horse] never travelled [much], and [my] house has no [other] person [who would have ridden it], how could it become thus?' The *hu* said: 'Every time when you are on duty [and have to stay in your office], your wife goes out at night, of course you would not know that. If you do not believe [me], next time when [you are] on duty, try to come back and see. [Then] you shall know.' The *lingshi* did as told, returned at night, [and] hid in some other place [outside the bedroom]. At one *geng* (一更, seven o'clock in the evening), the wife rose [and] dressed beautifully, [and] ordered the maid put the saddle on the horse. [She] mounted it in front of the stairs. The maid rode a broom and followed. [The two women] rose gradually into the air, and was seen no longer. The *lingshi* was greatly astonished. The next day [he] went to visit the *hu*, and said anxiously: 'I believe there is *mei*, what can be done?" The *hu* told [him] to wait

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original forms. The action of exorcism was thus certified and legitimated in such an unambiguous manner. The animal shapeshifter might be like Chunyu Jin's wife or the Lady of Rousset – a stranger met on the road – or something like Han-*sheng*'s dog – an animal kept in the house. But such suspicion rarely extended to social relationships that were already existing over long periods of time. They were not like witches who lived within human society.

[461] In the sense of secret societies, the otherworldly congregation was not very prominent in the Chinese imagination. It was probably because secret societies were usually associated with actual political issues in the popular understanding. Religious and secular congregations alike were usually only suppressed by the state when it was seen to cause political disturbance or contest political legitimacy. From Bailian Jiao (白蓮教, lit. teaching of the white lotus) to the more recent Falun Gong (法輪功, lit. practice of the law wheel), they were suppressed by the political authority for this reason, rather than suppressed due to religious beliefs by any other religious organization.

[462] When *yao* (妖) possesses humans in this manner, it is called *mei* (魅).

for another [such] evening. That evening, the *lingshi* returned to the hall of their house [and hid] behind a curtain. A moment later the wife came back, asked the maid why there was the smell of *shengren* (生人, living person or stranger). [She] ordered the maid to ignite the broom and search the hall thoroughly. The *lingshi* hastily entered a big vat in the hall. Soon [the wife] mounted the horse [and was going to] leave again. But the broom had been burnt, [so the maid] had nothing to ride. The wife said: 'Ride something at hand! Why necessarily a broom?' Hurriedly, the maid rode the vat and followed. The *lingshi* was in the vat, frightened and daring not to move. A moment later, [they] came to a place in the woods atop a hill. There were tents with curtains, and the banquet was much sumptuous. Seven or eight people gathered and drank, each with a consort. In the seats [they] feasted and drank, [and] were intimately coupled in every possible way. After several *geng* (更, a *geng* is two hours) [they] dispersed. The lady mounted the horse, ordered the maid to mount the vat. The maid cried: 'There is someone in the vat!' The lady, drunk, ordered him pushed down the hill. The maid was drunk as well, [and] pushed the *lingshi* out [and down the hill]. The *lingshi* dared not speak [and the maid] rode the vat away. Until the morning the *lingshi* saw no one, only smoke and ashes left behind. Then [he] tried to find the way. Only after trekking tens of *li* did he reach the mountain pass. [He] asked where the place was, and was answered that it was Langzhou (閬州), over a thousand *li* away from the capital [where he lived]. He begged toilsomely [on his way back]. [After] over a month, [he] finally returned home. [His] wife saw [him] and asked surprisedly: 'For so long where had you been?' The *lingshi* answered with some other [excuse]. [He] went to visit the *hu* again, [and] requested him to deal with [the matter]. The *hu* said: 'The *mei* has matured. Wait until it goes [to your house] again, tie it up quickly [and] burn it in the fire.' [Later he did so and] heard [a voice] in the sky begging for its life. A moment later, a dark blue-green crane fell down into the fire and was burnt to death. Then the wife recovered from the illness."[463]

[463] 廣異記. In *Boyi Zhi* (博異誌), there was another story that resembled the *hu-bu lingshi* in terms of the protagonist's return home. It told of a man named Zhao Qisong (趙齊嵩) who accidentally fell into a deep valley, and was taken up by a giant serpent which turned out to be a dragon. He rode the dragon to the seaside and jumped down. He also took more than a month of difficult journey to return to the capital. His family thought he had died, taking him to be a ghost, and asked him to stand in the sun. Zhao was very angry and refused, and his family was

This story resembled Han-*sheng*'s in several aspects: the weakness of the handsome horse, the repeated observations of the strange scene to obtain the clues, the nightly gathering of animal shapeshifters,[464] and the flight-like characteristics of the vehicle – the horse ridden by the black dog leapt over the tall gated walls, which normally would have been impossible. However, in this story, it was a beautiful woman who was possessed and summoned to an otherworldly feast with sexual connotations, rather than an unspecific plot against the protagonist's family. The inanimate objects ridden in this story were also quite worth noting. Another story about a beautiful woman summoned by riding an inanimate object to a nightly gathering of otherworldly beings for sexual pleasure was found in *Jiyi Ji* (集異記, 9th century):

> "Xu An (徐安) was a man from Xiapi (下邳) [who] enjoyed fishing and hunting. An's wife, Wang-*shi* (王氏, surnamed Wang), was quite beautiful of appearance. This was well-known to others. In the autumn of the fifth year of Kaiyuan (開元五年,), An toured Haizhou (海州), and Wang stayed in Xiapi alone. Suddenly a day there was a youth [whose] appearance was quite grand, looked at Wang-*shi* and said: 'What a pity [you are] so beautiful, [yet] would spend your life in vain.' Wang-*shi* heard this and was delighted, and thus became his lover, [and he] came and went boldly. When An returned, [his] wife met him [but] with much distance and little love. An was rather surprised. When the day was near dusk, his wife dressed up at a quiet place, at two-*geng* (about 9 o'clock in the evening), [he] lost her whereabouts. [She] only returned at dawn, and [he] could not see where [she] left and entered. Another day, An hid and waited. His wife rode an old cage [and] departed from the window, [and] only returned at dawn. That evening, An shut his wife in another room, and disguised [himself] in the dress and make-up of a woman, hid a shortsword in [his] sleeve, rode on the old cage and waited. At two-*geng*, [it] suddenly departed from the window. [It flew] straight into a mountain, and came to the meeting place. [There were] curtains and brilliant lamps, wine and delicious food were set out. On the seats

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more convinced that he was a ghost. After a long time they finally believed that he was alive. The moral of the story was "journeying was dangerous, those riding should learn from this story". 太平廣記 • 卷四百二十一. This story shared some similarities with otherworldly journeys, such as the riding of a mythical creature to a faraway place, his fall, and his family's belief that he was a ghost.

[464] When the *mei* was killed, it revealed its form as a dark blue-green crane, which implied that other participants (except the summoned women) were similar beings.

were three youths. An had not yet dismounted, the three youths said: 'Why did Wang-*shi* come so early?' An then struck them with the sword. The three youths died on the seats. An then rode the cage, but [it] no longer flew. At dawn he [was about to] return, [and] looked at the youths killed last night, [they] were all old foxes. An returned home. That dusk his wife no longer dressed."[465]

These stories all contained supernatural vehicles of transportation. The use of horses and foxes as vehicles of flight-like travel were relatively comprehensible, because they were seen in differences senses as mounts – horses for humans, and foxes for ghosts. Green bamboo sticks and shoes, in their respective resemblance to dragons and birds, and with their actual usage in real-life travelling, were also relatively comprehensible – bamboo sticks were widely used as walking staffs in China.[466] Broomsticks ridden by the maid, because such broomsticks were made from bamboo, thus could have belonged to the same category as bamboo sticks – this connection even showed in the reverse manner, in which a broomstick was used as the substitution for a body in an empty casket.[467] However, the vat and the cage seemed less comprehensible. It might be simply deduced from the general belief that inanimate objects could fly, like the *lingshi*'s wife's statement: "Ride something at hand! Why necessarily a broom?"[468] But there probably was also a latent connection between such objects' nature and the belief of their transporting ability. In the biography of the monk Bei Du (杯渡), it was said that he could cross the river in a wooden cup.[469] The anecdotes of Dongfang Shuo (東方朔) also included one in which he was given a shoe on which he crossed the "red spring" (紅泉) to find *zhicao* (芝草), a kind of plant that

[465] 集異記. In 太平廣記・卷第四百五十. Although the initial tone suggested that Wang-*shi* was seduced, but from the sequence of events – the husband killed the foxes, and the wife immediately lost the desire to go out – it seemed clear that the story implied she was under *mei*, or an enchantment. When the *mei* died, the enchantment ended.

[466] This characteristic even allowed Zhang Qian (張騫) to recognize the bamboo staffs of Shu in the country of Bactria (大夏). This let him discover a previously unknown but apparently widely used route from Sichuan (Shu) to India and then to Bactria. See 史記・卷一百二十三・大宛列傳第六十三. When these *biji xiaoshuo* were written, there were also already records of bamboos being used to make playhorses. Therefore, in this metaphorical sense, it could also be related to horses.

[467] "發沙彌棺中，乃一笣帚也。" See the story of 鄭餘慶 in 酉陽雜俎.

[468] Other Chinese cases of riding inanimate objects that flew include a stone (associated with tiger, see the story of 馮俊 from 原仙記 in 太平廣記・卷二十三), two straw dogs (associated with dragons, "持二茅狗……俱令騎之，乃龍也", see the story of 酒母 from 女仙傳 in 太平廣記・卷五十九), a wooden swan (see the story of 魏安釐王 and 吳客 (the guest from Wu) in 異苑 •卷十), and a broken wall (see the story of 阿專師 from 廣古今五行記 in 太平廣記・卷九十一). There were also plenty of other cases in which people flew without external assistance. See, for example, the story of 王可交 in 續神仙傳, found in 太平廣記 •卷二十; the story of 青城民 (the commoner of Qingcheng) in 原仙記, found in 太平廣記・卷二十五.

[469] 高僧傳.

allowed its eater to stay young.[470] Therefore, though only highly hypothetically, one might speculate that floatable objects could be regarded as miraculous vehicles comparable to boats, especially if death was related to the idea of a ferry.

In the story of the monastery servant, the vase and the saddle were anointed along with incantations, and then ridden to the night gathering. However, if the flying ability attributed to the vase and the saddle, and to subsequent broomsticks, was derived from traditional European belief in the magical ointment, one may question why the ointment would be applied to these inanimate objects rather than the witches themselves, which would be more convenient and also more ancient. Thus, it seemed more probable that there was first a preexisting belief in flying inanimate objects, and the element of ointment was attached to explain it in a way that was understandable by its audience. The earlier story of the flying timber, in fact, did not explicitly contain the element of ointment and enchantment. But the source of the belief could not be definitely reconstructed at this stage: it could have been completely foreign and due to transmission, or it could have been a belief of the common people, but received an explanation when it was recorded and retold under the pens of clerics.

Flying on an inanimate object, like the grand illusion of feasts and mansions, might not be natural for the common psychology to imagine. The latent connections between these flying inanimate objects in China were indeed preserved in a less fragmented fashion, and thus could be understood by us. This could not demonstrate that China was the source of these beliefs, only that such records were more available, thanks to the popularity of *biji xiaoshuo* and the continuously flourishing class of literati. However, besides the riding to the banquet, the luxurious food and drink, and the merry-making, the Sabbath could share other peculiar elements with the Chinese nightly feasts.

In Decameron VIII. 9, Lauretta told the story of a wealthy doctor, Simone da Villa. Among his neighbours were two poor painters, Bruno and Buffalmaco, but the doctor thought that "non dover potere essere che essi dovessero così lietamente vivere della lor povertà . . . che d'alcuna altra parte non saputa dagli uomini dovesser trarre profetti [sic] grandissimi". He thus

[470] 太平廣記 • 卷六. The characteristic of the original tale indicated that it was probably much earlier, likely in the Jin Dynasty.

befriended the pair and tried to learn their secret. After making the doctor swear that he will not tell anyone, Bruno then told him that they were part of a group with the disciples of Michele Scotto, "senza guardare chi essi fossero, più gentili che non gentili o più ricchi che poveri, solamente che uomini fossero conformi a'lor costumi." Their group gathered in a luxurious dining room with beautiful servants and sumptuous dishes, but what was most marvelous were the female companions, according to Bruno: "Ma sopra tutti gli altri piaceri che vi sono si è quello delle belle donne, le quali subitamente, pur che l'uom voglia, di tutto il mondo vi son recate. Voi vedreste quivi la donna de' barbanicchi, la reina de' baschi, la moglie del soldano, la'mperadrice d'Osbech, la ciancianfera di Norrueca, la semistante di Berlinzone e la scalpedera di Narsia. Che vi vo io annoverando? E'vi sono tutte le reine del mondo, io dico infino alla schinchimurra del Presto Giovanni..." Then he continued to described what women could be called: "Ma tra gli altri che meglio stanno, secondo il parer mio, siam Buffalmacco e io, per ciò che Buffalmacco le più delle volte vi fa venir per sé la reina di Francia e io per me quella d'Inghilterra, le quali son due pur le più belle donne del mondo."

Of course there was no such gathering, and Bruno and Buffalmacco threw the doctor into a ditch, allegedly because he uttered the forbidden phrase "Dio m'aiuti!" when riding the beast.[471] However, Boccaccio's story was clearly characteristic of the Sabbath, and it could be recognized as one of the few earlier descriptions of the Sabbath that evaded the pens of clerics. Surely much of the story must have been constructed for literary effect; nevertheless, it could still reveal some beliefs about what might have been thought to be possible at such a gathering, to the extent of what the stupid doctor could probably find credible. The society that these painters described seemed to disregard social class and wealth. The doctor Simon much surpassed Bruno and Buffalmacco in his wealth and social status, but he believed these two poor men had secret lives and abilities that he did not know about. The sense of the displacement of social hierarchies was a recurrent theme in Chinese stories about *fangshushi* and later Daoist practitioners. Fei Changfang was a market manager, and the old man only appeared to be a poor vendor of medicine. But he saw the old man's marvelous ability and began to serve the old man meticulously in an attempt to learn the latter's secret.[472] In the story of Wang Yuan, he had two hosts,

[471] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron* (Milan: BUR, 2013).
[472] See supra. The old man's medicine was said to be very efficacious and he gave almost all of his income to the

one was an illustrious bureaucrat, the other a commoner. Yet it was the latter whose "bone form [showed that he] should become *xian*" (骨相當仙). Thus, he simply left the former, and taught the latter the way to become *xian* through *shijie*.[473] It could also be remembered that emperors and other aristocrats often sought out these marvelous people, but they almost always leave these rulers, whilst those who in fact become *xian* were often people of lower classes. The process of selection for becoming *xian* was absolutely not determined by social status and wealth. On the other hand, by serving these people who appeared ordinary or even very poor, it was often possible to gain some benefits like Fei Changfang or Wang Yuan's hosts.

The idea that some people with miraculous abilities could hide among poor commoners and, by identifying and serving them, one could gain unimaginable benefits, did not seem particularly common in Western Europe. Indeed, in earlier times there were stories about poor guests who turned out to be gods, but the morality of such stories was one of generosity towards guests.[474] Other poor but holy men, like Apollonius or Jesus Christ, had marvelous powers but also widespread reputations.[475] Likewise, the powers of people like the *benandanti* were known to their neighbours, who sometimes sought their aid and gave them gifts.[476] By contrast, the setting of many *fangshushi* stories and Boccaccio's story was an urban one, in which there was greater fluctuation of the population and personal relationships were not as close as those in a small village, enabling these marvelous men to hide. The belief about such practitioners (in Boccaccio's story and Chinese stories about *fangshushi*/Daoist practitioners respectively), in short, had two characteristics. The first was that there was an esoteric magical art. The second was that the benefits of such art would be circulated in a selective, secretive circle that was

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poor. These could both simply have been qualities of a benevolent doctor, and he showed no other marvelous ability, except for the time when he was seen to jump into the urn by Fei Changfang.

[473] See supra. In Wang Yuan's story it was reported that some said Wang Yuan's *shijie* was because he knew his former host's life was about to end, and thus left him. But others said that perhaps the host became *xian* too.

[474] See, e.g., Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, VIII. 611-724, in which Zeus and Hermes, in the disguise of travellers, were received by a poor old couple. In stories like these, it was usually the poor who used all their belongings to serve their guests and were rewarded.

[475] See, e.g., Philostratus, *Live of Apollonius*. Another example could be seen in Carol Lansing's study of Cathar heresy in Orvieto, where the poor Cathars were regarded and revered as holy people because of their ascetic lifestyle. Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). They acquired such reputations in their circles but were respected not out of a desire to gain magical power or benefits, but rather as followers to holy persons.

[476] The first case of Benandante was discovered because a villager said to a priest that in a nearby village, "vive un certo Paolo Gasparuto, il quale cura gli stregati e afferma di 'andar vagabondo la notte con strigoni et sbilfoni'." Carlo Ginzburg, *I Benandanti: Stregoneria e culti agrari tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), p. 4. People like these were known not only in their own villages but also nearby villages. A women called Florida had four or five visitors a day who asked her about the dead: "[O]gni giorno venivano da Florida quattro o cinque persone a domandarle 'varie cose de morti'." p. 96.

regardless of social status or wealth.[477] If the first corresponded to the tradition of learned magic in Europe (as evidenced by the feast prepared by the disciples of Michele Scotto), the second did not seem to be characteristic of such learning itself.[478]This singular similarity could very well have been coincidental. However, from another aspect, namely the summoning of women, from faraway and freely of the summoners' choice, Boccaccio's story coincided with Chinese stories about nightly gatherings, either held by *yao* (animal shapeshifters), or by *fangshushi* and Daoist practitioners. We have seen, in the stories of the *hu-bu lingshi*'s wife and of Xu An's wife, how they were summoned by otherworldly beings for sexual gratification in nightly gatherings by flying, either on a horse or on inanimate objects. In stories of *fangshushi*, summoning women to such gatherings was often used to demonstrate their abilities. In *Guangyi Ji*, there was such a story: There was a Zhang and a Li, both of which studied Dao together at the Tai Mountain. However, as a descendant of the imperial family, Li desired to become a bureaucrat and left. Later he became Dali-*cheng* (大理丞, the assistant of the head of the judiciary department). When he was on the way to Yangzhou (揚州) as an imperial messenger, he encountered Zhang, who seemed impoverished. Li pitied him, but Zhang invited him to a great palace with a lavish banquet. After they had dined, Zhang called for five female musicians, one of them resembled Li's wife. When the musicians were dismissed, Zhang tied an apple on the woman's belt. Before Li left, Zhang also gifted him three hundred thousand strings of coins (an enormous amount).[479] The next day he went to the place of the banquet last night, and saw it was a dilapidated house abandoned for over a decade. Li returned home to Xiangyang (襄陽), and found the apple on his wife's belt. His wife told him that she dreamt Zhang-*xian* called for her to be a musician, and tied the apple to her belt.[480]

There were similar stories of two Daoist practitioners, one of whom abandoned the pursuit and later became a high-level official and saw his erstwhile companion in apparent poverty but was soon invited to a splendid palace with feast and beautiful women who were summoned from far away.

[477] In the stories the *fangshushi*/Daoist practitioners such as Fei Changfang often needed to conceal their participation even to their families. See supra.

[478] For the tradition of learned magic and Michael Scotus, see David Pingree, "Learned Magic in the Time of Frederick II", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 104.3 (2014), pp. 477-94. In Boccaccio's story it seemed to be hinted that such magic could be learnt, as the magicians were said to be the disciples of Michael Scot, and the doctor repeatedly emphasized his learning and intelligence when requesting admission to the gatherings. However the doctor himself did not seem to intend to learn such magical art.

[479] In Boccaccio's story, Bruno also told the doctor that they could receive tremendous amounts of money at the gatherings, though from their lady partners.

[480] 廣異記・張李二公, pp. 4-5.

In one such story, the women that could be summoned were clearly described: "*Ling* women (伶家女, professional entertainers) were not worthy to be summoned. [You] shall summon the married daughters of *shi dafu* (士大夫之女已適人者). If there are no beauties close by, all within five thousand *li* could be chosen."[481] Even the emperor's favoured concubine could be summoned: In a story concerning Emperor Xuanzong of Tang (唐玄宗), it was said that a beautiful woman in his harem "suddenly dreamt that she was invited by someone, drank freely [at a] secret gathering, [and] returned after uttermost exuberance. After [she] returned, [she] sweated and was tired." Thus the Emperor ordered her to leave a mark at the place of the gathering. She left an inky handprint on the screen, and the Emperor had such a screen secretly searched. They indeed found one such screen in Dongming *guan* (東明觀, a Daoist temple in Chang'an), and the Daoist practitioner had already fled.[482] In all the above stories and more, these women were married, possibly to enable their husbands to take certain responses within the stories' plots. But this also corresponded to Boccaccio's description that "vi sono tutte le reine del mondo", rather than unmarried princesses.[483]

There existed, both in China and in Western Europe, beliefs of lavish banquets at night. These banquets were not held in locations befitting their magnificence – the luxurious surroundings, sumptuous food and attending guests all vanished when the banquet ended, and it was often revealed that it had been held in the wilderness or in empty and dilapidated places. Such revealing sometimes took place at the time of dawn, and other times at the appearance of a feared thing. What this feared thing was depended on the context of the story. In Western Europe, it was almost always the sacred – the sign of the cross, or the name of Christ. In China, swords exorcised the feast of ghosts, dogs dispelled the luxuries of fox *yao*, and magical practitioners could make vanish their own and others' arts.

In both China and Western Europe, these gatherings were sometimes believed to be the gatherings of the otherworldly, other times the gatherings of people with magical power. The distinction, in fact, was a thin one. Where the story was a man chancing upon a banquet or dance of the dead, in which the logic of the story was somewhat different and took on more characteristics of otherworldly travel. Other times such banquets were the merry-making of

[481] 續玄怪錄.
[482] 太平廣記・卷二百八十五.
[483] Boccaccio did not explain the choice, though he might think queens have more money to give away than unmarried princesses, even if the latter must be equally very rich by the poor painters' standards.

fey (in Europe) or of *yao* (in China), or of magicians or witches (in Europe) or of Daoist practitioners (in China).

These were not isolated characteristics. The places of such gatherings often involved travel, sometimes to a very distant place. Flight was a common theme, sometimes as metaphor (in terms of the speed of travel), other times as the actual means of travel. Sometimes the travel was by more conventional means (e.g. riding a horse), other times, participants ride a variety of inanimate objects that can lift into the air and carry their passengers to the gatherings. In Europe we find flying barrels, timber, a vase, a saddle, and later broomsticks, forks, and other stick-like objects, often anointed. In China we find flying bamboo sticks (and broomsticks made out of bamboo), a vat, a stone, and a cage. These objects were bestowed with the power of travelling over marvelously long distances in a short period of time. Finally, the veracity of such stories could be verified by an unfortunate observer who found himself stranded a considerable distance from home.[484]

It is in this context that we should consider, too, the last element, which was that the holders of such banquets sometimes had the power of summoning women into their service, often with sexual connotations. Such women were usually married and of high social standing.

It is certain possible that every characteristic above was coincidental. However, so many coincidences within two bodies of stories that contained related internal reasonings within somewhat similar settings – rather than fragmented similarities across isolated contexts – make one question if all similarities were due to coincidences, or if there had been some common influence. It is worth noting that many of these characteristics were not very intuitive, and sometimes could even be counter-intuitive (why anoint a broomstick when you can anoint yourself?). It is also worth noting that this was also not the comparison of singular stories, but of bodies of stories that exhibited similar characteristics. Even if the connection itself could not be fully reconstructed at this stage, examining these two bodies of stories from a parallel perspectives could provide new insights on where and what possible links might be found, and shed light on the different characteristics of

[484] An interesting case, which contained a number of elements already discussed, was found in a 1427 sermon of Bernandino da Siena. He told that a page of a cardinal found a group of dancers near Benevento. At dawn, everyone disappeared except for him and a girl. He took her home, and she only spoke after three years. She was apparently taken there from "Schiavonia". The distance would have been considerable. The girl was unmarried possibly because its overall context was quite unlike Boccaccio's, and, as Bailey pointed out, closer to Walter Map's story. See Montesano, *Classical Culture and Witchcraft in Medieval Renaissance Italy*, p. 145.

respective cultures, reflected within the similarities and divergences.

In the European context of the Sabbath, whether the participants attended in flesh or in spirit – or indeed in imagination – was of the utmost importance. However, on examining the context in which they grew and propagated, it might be sensed that among the storytellers and their listeners, the division between body and soul was less important, if important at all – even in the early stories recorded by men of the church, the issue of materiality did not seem to have troubled them too much. What was most important, probably, was the strong impression the story left its audience with when its veracity was verified through the material proof – like the handprint on the screen, the clothes in the empty casket, the decreased wine in a sealed barrel, the fall from mid-flight, the appearance in a faraway cellar in Lombardy, etc. When the veracity of such stories, as evidence of crime, came to be investigated and interrogated, the separation of materiality and spirituality became the paramount issue. But that is another story.

Conclusion: *Il Ponte*

Marco Polo descrive un ponte, pietra per pietra.

– Ma qual è la pietra che sostienne il ponte? – chiede Kublai Kan.

– Il ponte non è sostenuto da questa o quella pietra, – risponde Marco, – ma dalla linea dell'arco che esse formano.

Kublai Kan rimane silenzioso, riflettendo. Poi soggiunge: – Perché mi parli delle pietre? È solo dell'arco che m'importa.

Polo risponde: – Senza pietre non c'è arco.[485]

Different cultures have different codes to decipher similar appearances. Even when the exact same story was told to audiences within two different cultures, the meanings ascribed to these stories might have been very different. Thus the attribution of metaphors in comparative study carried the danger of misattribution. For example, although the appearances of beliefs in incorruptible corpses were similar in China and in Western Europe, such similarity was coincidental, and might likely be attributable to what actually could happen in reality. However, they were received into different cultural codes. The discovery that Saint Aethlthryth's body had healed its tumour was rooted in the Christian belief of perfect bodies at resurrection – such characteristics did not exist in the Chinese body of beliefs, and would have been impossible without that specific Christian understanding. The empty tomb could be another such case, not out of coincidence at the material level but out of the coincidence in the narrative need to demonstrate the veracity of resurrection and the divinity of the resurrected under severe pressure – it is nevertheless an interesting coincidence, especially considering the three-day element.

Therefore, the codes of each culture could only be safely reconstructed from materials it had produced itself. However, if we can only reconstruct the codes of a culture from its own materials, what could be gained from comparing it to a different culture?[486] The answer to this question is threefold.

[485] Italo Calvino, *Le città invisibili* (Torino: Einaudi, 1972), p. 89.

[486] Hence the question of Caroline W. Bynum's colleague: "What do you get out of this [going to India]? I don't understand what you're learning about the Western Middle Ages that you didn't already know." Caroline W. Bynum, "Avoiding the Tyranny of Morphology; Or, Why Compare?" *History of Religions* 53(4) (2014), pp. 341-68.

First, due to the limitations in materials, very rarely could anything be perfectly reconstructed in history. There were too many lost and unrecorded beliefs, and what come down to us were very often only preserved by chance. Consider two tapestries found by archeologists in an ancient grave. Both tapestries only survived in fragments, but one perhaps more completely than the other. They were similar in important aspects, but the pictures woven into them were different. By examining one tapestry upon the background of the other, it might become possible to see how these surviving fragments could have connected initially in some certain parts. In other words, the more complete tapestry allowed the links between surviving fragments of the less complete tapestry to emerge. But the comparison only suggests places where we could look for connections; all the necessary evidences, the fragments, needed to come from the culture itself. This could be shown in the process of searching for Western materials related to Jesus's three-day (or third-day) resurrection. Plutarch's story of Thespesius and Phlegon's story of Philinnion both appeared to have been very different in form with the resurrection of Christ. However, in the Chinese body of resurrection stories, all these three types of stories – respectively, temporary death and resurrected with an underworld journey, female resurrection after copulation with a man, resurrection with the disappearance of the body – were intimately related with three days in large numbers. Without the Chinese body of materials, it might be possible to come across the connection just by examining these texts, but it would be much more obscure. On the other hand, even without the comparison to the Chinese body, the connection between these three cases in their original cultural context appeared concrete and reasonable.

Such comparisons not only could identify connections between disparate materials, it could also help to reveal differences. Even within the Western tradition itself, there could exist cases of specious similarities, because traditions themselves were not homogenous and were often subject to change. Philostratus's Lamia, because she had been called a snake, was often identified with later snake-woman like the Lady of Rousset. However, this identification erased more important differences. However, in the Chinese body of stories many similar cases of both types were preserved. When keeping these Chinese stories in mind, the divergence between Lamia and the Lady of Rousset clearly emerged. Such difference could be supported by evidence within Lady of Rousset's own body of stories, independently of the Chinese ones.

Another type of insights we may gain from comparative study concern the materials that could only fit uneasily into the culture in which they were found, because they were newly imported and had not yet been internalized. In such cases, the "strange" element could sometimes be explained by another culture. However, one must be careful not to conclude prematurely in favour of transmission, and in fact the presumption of evidence should weigh the other way. In any case, in order to come to such a conclusion, it is necessary first to know very well the codes of the receiving culture. When those existing codes did not contain the clues to understanding, the hypothesis of transmission could perhaps be raised. Philinnion's was a story that could not be reasonably explained within the Western tradition. However, once it was placed within a context of the Chinese body of stories under a hypothesis of transmission, not only could it be explained, but it could provide other Western stories with background and contextual support on the questions of popular beliefs of three-day resurrections. However, when an element appeared strange to its audience, it might not necessarily denote foreignness as from another part of the world. It could similarly arise from the distance between high culture and popular beliefs. For example, Augustine found the story of Curma strange, but this did not necessarily indicate the story of Curma was a cultural import, since there seemed to be sufficient conditions in the Roman context to explain its existence.

Finally, sometimes after the codes were reconstructed on both sides, we realize that both the codes and the details were very similar. Such similarity was not an abstract similarity of isolated elements, but the concrete resemblance of full narratives and their inner logics. The Chinese body of tales regarding mistaken summons to the underworld and the Roman body might be such an example. The logics of their narratives – a man died because of a mistake in the underworld bureaucracy, and returned to life when the mistake was discovered; the mistake was corrected by the death of the man who was supposed to die – showed significant similarities. However, as just touched upon, the material similarities in ancient China and the Roman Empire might provide sufficient basis to support the independent generation of these beliefs. At this stage, the available evidence might not be sufficient to support a hypothesis of common influence. However, when the logics and the meanings of the stories were similar, and there existed also multiple similarities in the details of the stories, the possibility of common influence increases. Both Chinese and European accounts of nightly banquets concerned the conjuration of marvelous surroundings by beings of

supernatural power, sometimes with associations of the dead. Such banquets could be dispelled at a singular word or sign or object, of which the banquets' participants were afraid. After the banquet ended or vanished, it could be discovered that it had taken place in the wilderness or an abandoned surrounding. The vehicles to such gatherings included the more common ones, such as horses, but also the strange flying inanimate objects, such as sticks and brooms, vats and vases. The distance flown was frequently marvelous and the speed very fast, such distance was sometimes verified by a participant who was stranded at the place of gathering far from home. Finally, when it had a sexual connotation, the hosts of the banquets were often able to forcibly summon women, sometimes in body and sometimes in spirit, to entertain them. All these interrelated elements, found respectively within their own bodies of stories, could probably suggest a historical relation, although the exact link was not clear: Because of linguistic and temporal limitations, I have largely skipped over Indian, Arabic and Byzantine texts. Due to geographical and historical reasons, these texts could contain crucial clues to the missing links to similarities between the western and eastern extremities of Eurasia. However, the existing similarity of these two bodies would hopefully give directions to future investigations: When new fragments are discovered in other places, their significance could be better recognized.

More broadly speaking, this work is an attempt to probe into the relationship between what is strange and what is familiar. It does not seek to familiarize strangeness: because familiarization usually implies using the interpreter`s own cultural code to understand the strange. However, such strangeness, especially when they appeared in important texts, often had many layers of explanations attributed to them through time, which usually familiarized it and sometimes concealed the meanings it might have had at the beginning. Farinata's prophecy, *shijie xian* and the linens of Jesus Christ might all have been cases of such attributed explanations. This is why the chapter centered on Farinata's prophecy was placed at the beginning of this thesis. When I first read the *Divina Commedia*, I did not find Ciacco's or Farinata's prophecies problematic at all: I was raised in a cultural environment in which any ghost could foretell the future. Only when I read later explanations, being reminded of Christian theology, the contradictions between the text and its apparent cultural environment suddenly dawned on

me. Thus, I started searching for an answer within European texts, and found those stories in which ghosts were believed to be able to know the future without reflection, just like when Dante *personaggio* first asked Ciacco about the future. Although the starting point was personal, but I believe that in the first chapter, I did not rely on any Chinese materials and reconstructed its logic solely with European materials. Correspondingly, in the second chapter I did not use any Western materials, but the problem of the narrative of resurrection only came to my mind when I was conducting research on resurrection in Europe. In the Chinese literary tradition, with which I am familiar, resurrection was not extraordinary at all. The extraordinariness of Western resurrections from Plato's Er to the Christian tradition made me question whether it had always been thus in China. Therefore, looking within the Chinese texts themselves, I found that Chinese conceptions of resurrection had undergone the process of accustomization: it went from being aberrant to being normal, changed and was changed by literary dissemination, which was synchronously reflected in the Histories. In the writing of the Chinese Histories, this might be a singular case. Comparison, whether it is used explicitly as a method, or just kept in mind, when it only indicates a possibility and does not influence the judgment of materials, might generate new perspectives.

Appendices

Appendix A: Resurrection Records in the Histories

作品	死復生	讖緯
春秋左傳 4th century BCE	（宣公八年）夏，會晉伐秦，晉人獲秦諜，殺諸絳市，六日而蘇。	
史記 2nd – 1st century BCE	＊*其後十四年，秦繆公立，病卧五日不寤；寤，乃言梦见上帝，上帝命繆公平晋乱。史书而记藏之府。而後世皆曰秦繆公上天。*（卷二十八，封禪書）	
	＊*趙簡子疾，五日不知人，大夫皆懼。醫扁鵲視之，出，董安于問。扁鵲曰：「血脈治也，而何怪！在昔秦繆公嘗如此，七日而寤。寤之日，告公孫支與子輿曰：『我之帝所甚樂。吾所以久者，適有學也。帝告我：「晉國將大亂，五世不安：其後將霸，未老而死；霸者之子且令而國男女無別。」』公孫支書而藏之，秦讖於是出矣。獻公之亂，文公之霸，而襄公敗秦師於殽而歸縱淫，此子之所聞。今主君之疾與之同，不出三日疾必閒，閒必有言也。」* *居二日半，簡子寤。語大夫曰：「我之帝所甚樂，與百神游於鈞天，廣樂九奏萬舞，不類三代之樂，其聲動人心。有一熊欲來援我，帝命我射之，中熊，熊死。又有一羆來，我又射之，中羆，羆死。帝甚喜，賜我二笥，皆有副。吾見兒在帝側，帝屬我一翟犬，曰：『及而子之壯也，以賜之。』帝告我：『晉國且世衰，七世而亡，嬴姓將大敗周人於范魁之西，而亦不能有也。今余思虞舜之勳，適余將以其胄女孟姚配而七世之孫。』」董安于受言而書藏之。以扁鵲言告簡子，簡子賜扁鵲田四萬畝。* *他日，簡子出，有人當道，辟之不去，從者怒，將刃之。當道者曰：「吾欲有謁於主君。」從者以聞。簡子召之，曰：「譆，吾有所見子晰也。」當道者曰：「屏左右，願有謁。」*	

	簡子屏人。當道者曰：「主君之疾，臣在帝側。」簡子曰：「然，有之。子之見我，我何為？」當道者曰：「帝令主君射熊與羆，皆死。」簡子曰：「是，且何也？」當道者曰：「晉國且有大難，主君首之。帝令主君滅二卿，夫熊與羆皆其祖也。」簡子曰：「帝賜我二笥皆有副，何也？」當道者曰：「主君之子將克二國於翟，皆子姓也。」簡子曰：「吾見兒在帝側，帝屬我一翟犬，曰『及而子之長以賜之』。夫兒何謂以賜翟犬？」當道者曰：「兒，主君之子也。翟犬者，代之先也。主君之子且必有代。及主君之後嗣，且有革政而胡服，并二國於翟。」簡子問其姓而延之以官。當道者曰：「臣野人，致帝命耳。」遂不見。簡子書藏之府。（卷四十三，赵世家）	
	＊當晉昭公時，諸大夫彊而公族弱，趙簡子為大夫，專國事。簡子疾，五日不知人，大夫皆懼，於是召扁鵲。扁鵲入視病，出，董安于問扁鵲，扁鵲曰：「血脈治也，而何怪！昔秦穆公嘗如此，七日而寤。寤之日，告公孫支與子輿曰：『我之帝所甚樂。吾所以久者，適有所學也。帝告我：「晉國且大亂，五世不安。其後將霸，未老而死。霸者之子且令而國男女無別。」』公孫支書而藏之，秦策於是出。夫獻公之亂，文公之霸，而襄公敗秦師於殽而歸縱淫，此子之所聞。今主君之病與之同，不出三日必間，間必有言也。」居二日半，簡子寤，語諸大夫曰：「我之帝所甚樂，與百神游於鈞天，廣樂九奏萬舞，不類三代之樂，其聲動心。有一熊欲援我，帝命我射之，中熊，熊死。有羆來，我又射之，中羆，羆死。帝甚喜，賜我二笥，皆有副。吾見兒在帝側，帝屬我一翟犬，曰：『及而子之壯也以賜之。』帝告我：『晉國且世衰，七世而亡。嬴姓將大敗周人於范魁之西，（而亦不能有也。』」董安于受言，書而藏之。以扁鵲言告簡子，簡子賜扁鵲田四萬畝。	

	（卷一百五，扁鵲倉公列傳）	
漢書 1st century CE	哀帝建平四年四月，山陽方與女子田無嗇生子。先未生二月，兒啼腹中，及生，不舉，葬之陌上，三日，人過聞啼聲，母掘收養。（五行志）	
	平帝元始元年二月，朔方廣牧女子趙春病死，斂棺積六日，出在棺外，自言見夫死父，曰：「年二十七，不當死。」太守譚以聞。（五行志）	京房易傳曰：「『幹父之蠱，有子，考亡咎』。子三年不改父道，思慕不皇，亦重見先人之非，不則為私，厥妖人死復生。」一曰，至陰為陽，下人為上。
三國志 3rd century	是歲，安吳民陳焦死，埋之，六日更生，穿土中出。（吳書三嗣主傳）	
後漢書 5th century	獻帝初平中，長沙有人姓桓氏，死，棺斂月餘，其母聞棺中聲，發之，遂生。（五行志）	占曰：「至陰爲陽，下人爲上。」其後曹公由庶士起。
	建安四年二月，武陵充縣女子李娥，年六十餘，物故，以其家杉木槥斂，瘞於城外數里上，已十四日，有行聞其冢中有聲，便語其家。家往視聞聲，便發出，遂活。（五行志）	
宋書 5th – 6th century	魏明帝太和三年，曹休部曲兵奚農女死復生。（五行志）	
	時人有開周世塚，得殉葬女子，數日而有氣，數月而能語。郭太后愛養之。（五行志）	
	又太原民發塚破棺，棺中有一生婦人，問其本事，不知也。視其墓木，可三十歲。（五行志）	案京房《易傳》，至陰為陽，下人為上，晉宣王起之象也。漢平帝、獻帝並有此異，占以為王莽、曹操之征。
	吳孫休永安四年，安吳民陳焦死七日，復穿塚出。（五行志）	干寶曰：「此與漢宣帝同事。烏程侯皓承廢故之家，得位之祥也。」
	晉武帝咸寧二年二月，琅邪人顏畿病死，棺斂已久，家人咸夢畿謂己曰：「我當復生，可急開棺。」遂出之。漸能飲食屈申視瞻，不能行語也。二年復死。（五行志）	其後劉淵、石勒遂亡晉室。
	＊*晉惠帝世，梁國女子許嫁，已受禮娉，尋*	

	而其夫戍長安，經年不歸。女家更以適人，女不樂行，其父母逼強，不得已而去，尋得病亡。後其夫還，問女所在，其傢俱說之。其夫徑至女墓，不勝哀情，便發塚開棺，女遂活，因與俱歸。後婿聞之，詣官爭之，所在不能決。秘書郎王導議曰：「此是非常事，不得以常理斷之，宜還前夫。」朝廷從其議。（五行志）	
	晉惠帝世，杜錫家葬，而婢誤不得出。後十餘年，開塚祔葬，而婢尚生。其始如瞑，有頃漸覺。問之，自謂當一再宿耳。初婢之埋，年十五六，及開塚更生，猶十五六也。嫁之有子。（五行志）	
	晉明帝太寧二年七月，丹陽江甯侯紀妻死，三日復生。（五行志）	
	義熙中，東陽人黃氏生女不養，埋之。數日於土中啼，取養遂活。（五行志）	
晉書 7th century （前九例出五行志者與宋書基本相同）	明帝太和三年，曹休部曲丘奚農女死復生。（五行志）	
	時又有開周世塚，得殉葬女子，數日而有氣，數月而不能言，郭太后愛養之。（五行志）	
	又，太原人發塚破棺，棺中有一生婦人，問其本事，不知也，視其墓木，可三十歲。（五行志）	案京房《易傳》曰：「至陰為陽，下人為上。」宣帝起之象也。漢平帝、獻帝並有此異，占以為王莽、曹操之征。
	孫休永安四年，安吳民陳焦死七日復生，穿塚出。（五行志）	干寶曰：「此與漢宣帝同事，烏程侯皓承廢故之家，得位之祥也。」
	咸寧二年十二月，琅邪人顏畿病死，棺斂已久，家人咸夢畿謂己曰；「我當復生，可急開棺。」遂出之，漸能飲食屈伸視瞻，不能行語，二年復死。（五行志）	京房《易傳》曰：「至陰為陽，下人為上，厥妖人死復生。」其後劉元海、石勒僭逆，遂亡晉室，下為上之應也。
	＊*元康中，梁國女子許嫁，已受禮娉，尋而其夫戍長安，經年不歸，女家更以適人。女不樂行，其父母逼強，不得已而去，尋得病亡。後其夫還，問其女所在，其傢俱說之。*	

	其夫逕至女墓，不勝哀情，便發塚開棺，女遂活，因與俱歸。後婿聞知，詣官爭之，所在不能決。秘書郎王導議曰：「此是非常事，不得以常理斷之，宜還前夫。」朝廷從其議。（五行志）	
	惠帝世，杜錫家葬而婢誤不得出，後十年開塚祔葬而婢尚生。始如瞑，有頃漸覺，問之，自謂再宿耳。初，婢之埋年十五六，及開塚更生，猶十五六也，嫁之有子。（五行志）	
	明帝太寧二年七月，丹陽江甯侯紀妻死，經三日復生。（五行志）	
	義熙中，東陽人莫氏生女不養，埋之數日，於土中啼，取養遂活。（五行志）	
	＊時聰子約死，一指猶暖，遂不殯殮。及蘇，言見元海於不周山，經五日，遂復從至崑崙山，三日而復返於不周，見諸王公卿將相死者悉在，宮室甚壯麗，號曰蒙珠離國。（載記第二，劉聰傳）	
隋書 7th century	至德三年八月，建康人家婢死，埋之九日而更生。有牧牛人聞而出之。（五行志）	
南史 7th century	*＊其後，有西河離石縣胡人劉薩何遇疾暴亡，而心猶暖，其家未敢便殯，經七日更蘇。說云：「有兩吏見錄，向西北行，不測遠近。至十八地獄，隨報重輕，受諸楚毒。觀世音語云：'汝緣未盡，若得活可作沙門。洛下、齊城、丹陽、會稽並有阿育王塔，可往禮拜。若壽終則不墮地獄。'」語竟如墜高岩，忽然醒寤。因此出家名慧達。*（夷貊傳，扶南国）	
新唐書 11th century	武德四年，太原尼志覺死，十日而蘇。（五行志）	
	（貞元）十七年十一月，翰林待詔戴少平死十有六日而蘇。（五行志）	
	是歲，宣州南陵縣丞李嶷死，已殯三十日而蘇。（五行志）	
	光啟元年，隰州溫泉民家有死者，既葬且半月，行人聞聲呼地下，其家發之，則復生，歲餘乃死。（五行志）	
宋史	（淳熙）十三年，行都有人死十有四日復生。	

14th century	（五行志）	
金史 14th century	＊*十三年正月，尚書省奏：「宛平張孝善有子曰合得，大定十二年三月旦以疾死，至暮復活，雲是本良鄉人王建子喜兒。而喜兒前三年已死，建驗以家事，能具道之。此蓋假屍還魂，擬付王建為子。」上曰：「若是則奸幸小人競生詐偽，瀆亂人倫。」止付孝善。*（五行志）	
明史 17th – 18th century	＊*洪武二十四年八月，河南龍門婦司牡丹死三年，借袁馬頭之屍復生。*（五行志）	

＊denotes stories of different archetypes but containing the element of resurrection.

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