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## **Physiognomy of Rulers in Italian and Chinese History and Biography**

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**Ai Miei Genitori**  
**Alla Memoria Della Mia Nonna**



# Physiognomy of Rulers in Italian and Chinese History and Biography

## Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to analyze the representations of rulers, in Italian and Chinese history and biography, in the light of antique physiognomic theories. The description of rulers, with the reference of physiognomy, is used as one of the methods of propaganda or persuasion of the legitimacy or power of the ruler.

The physiognomy of ruler may be considered from two perspectives. One is the ruler's body, that is, what physical appearances of the rulers are described, sometimes at the expense of likeness, both in Italian and Chinese history and biography, and how these features are similar and thus might make the rulers in one type. The other is the body of ruler, that is, what kind of physical features makes the particular person ruler and how these features are exclusively established as templates and help to legitimate the heaven-given or god-given power. In the same framework, through the comparison of the Chinese and Italian physiognomy of rulers, figuring out their similarities and differences, analyzing possible causes of such description, we demonstrated the cultural and political diversities as well.



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# Introduction

The idea that physical appearance signified certain aspects of nature and character suffused ancient culture, in various ways and with varying degrees of sophisticated reflection.<sup>1</sup> The notion that inner excellence is reflected in superficial appearance—as well as the reverse of that notion—was unquestionably deeply rooted of Greek and Chinese thought. As a mechanism to link body and the inner qualities or fortune, physiognomy is one of the most vivid perspectives to examine the relationship between the individual and the world. The aim of this dissertation is to analyze the representations of rulers, in Chinese and Italian history and biography, in the light of antique physiognomic theories. In the image of ruler there are both the deliberate construction and promotion by central governmental authority and the creation by a public projecting their own desires and anxieties onto a prominent figure.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, especially for portraits of ruler in biography and historical writing, one can see the iconographic tradition. It was the result of “reconstructions” or “inventions”.<sup>3</sup>

In the following discussion, I will use an expanded definition of the word “physiognomy” to encompass not just inspection and judgment but also description of a person’s physical appearance. I used this term to refer to all techniques employed to read the face for political and social purposes. The word “physiognomics”, on the other hand, would be used as the term for the related theory or knowledge, which is the reference of physiognomy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Jouanna, “Les causes de la défaite des barbares chez Eschyle, Hérodote et Hippocrate,” *Ktèma* 6 (1981): 3-15.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Hackett, “Dreams or designs, cults or constructions? The study of images of monarchs,” *The Historical Journal* 44 (2001): 814.

<sup>3</sup> Tommaso Casini, “La ricerca della verosimiglianza fisionomica nelle biografie illustrate tra cinque e seicento: ritratti dal vero, immaginari e contraffatti,” in *Percorsi tra parole e immagini (1400-1600)*, ed. Angela Guidotti and Massimiliano Rossi (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2000), 75-88.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Porter presented four closely related English words on which there are asked to focus and between which they are asked to distinguish.

*Physiognomie*, invented by Thomas Hill, refers to some form of systematized physiognomy in action.

Many studies have made important contributions to the western classic and Italian physiognomics. Among them, E. C. Evans is a representative. Her *Physiognomics in the ancient world* published in 1969, based on her previous study such as *The study of physiognomics in the second century AD*,<sup>5</sup> traced the origin and history of ancient physiognomics, undertook a wide consideration of a connection between a man's appearance and his inner character as it is revealed in Greek and Latin literature from the time of Homer to the end of the fourth century AD. She presented also the influential treatises and the impact of physiognomics in various forms. Earlier than Evans, G. Misener has made a presentation of Loxus and his physiognomic study.<sup>6</sup> The other study on the specific author of physiognomy or the physiognomist, includes Evans' *Galen the physicians as physiognomist*;<sup>7</sup> F. Opeku's *Physiognomy in Apuleius Metamorphoses 2.2*<sup>8</sup>. The Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise is the source for many other physiognomic works. This work is unusual because of the large number of examples taken from personal experience and its greater concern with ethnological questions. It survives in a Greek periphrastic epitome (by Admantius, fourth century BC), a translation into Arabic, and an epitome also in Arabic. More recently a further epitome and another paraphrase, both in Arabic, as well as fragments

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*Physiognomy*, derives from the Greek *physis*, meaning nature, and *gnomon*, meaning indication, knowledge, judgment, or essence. It refers to the theory of physiognomy as it was presented to early modern readers of books on the subject, what were being called in this work "treatises on" or "books on physiognomy."

*Fisnomy*, used to refer to the face, as well as the theory of physiognomy. More significantly, it refers to a person's natural physiognomical intelligence.

*Physiognomy*, used often in the early modern period, refers to the face or the physical appearance as a whole in a purely anatomical sense. It's also used as a convenient, slightly more pronounceable, synonym for the official theory, physiognomy, as well as providing the default term of the multi-faceted subject as a whole.

See Martin Porter, preface of *Windows of the soul: the art of physiognomy in European culture 1470-1780* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), ix-xi.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth C. Evans, "The study of physiognomy in the second century A.D.," *Transactions and proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 72 (1941): 96-108.

<sup>6</sup> Geneva Misner, "Loxus, physician and physiognomist," *Classical philology*, 18 (1923): 1-22.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth C. Evans, "Galen the physician as physiognomist," *Transactions and proceedings of the American philological association* 76 (1945): 287-298.

<sup>8</sup> Fabian Opeku, "Physiognomy in Apuleius Metamorphoses 2.2," *Classical philology* 79 (1984): 307-309.

of a lost Syrian translation, reconstructed from the encyclopedia of Bar-Hebraeus<sup>9</sup> have come to light. More or less contemporary with Adamantius is an anonymous Latin treatise, long attributed to Apuleius and based not only on Polemo but also on Pseudo-Aristotle and the physiognomist Loxus, whose text was republished by André.<sup>10</sup> The text may still be consulted in the anthology edited by Foerster<sup>11</sup> in 1893, with its helpful introduction, and the broadest overall study of the subject by Evans. But many other scholars have studied on this topic such as R. Asmus<sup>12</sup>, A.M. Armstrong<sup>13</sup>, R. Megow<sup>14</sup>, M. Bambeck<sup>15</sup>, G. Dagron<sup>16</sup>, and M. H. Marganne<sup>17</sup>. Regarding the methodological approach there are the remarks in G. E. R. Lloyd's *Science, folklore and ideology: studies in the life science in ancient Greece*<sup>18</sup> and T. S. Barton's *Power and knowledge: studies in astrology, physiognomics, and medicine under the Roman Empire*.<sup>19</sup> Besides, M. M. Sassi's *The science of man in ancient Greece* explored the physiognomic reasoning with the theory of Aristotle. On the development of Italian physiognomics, much attention was paid in the Renaissance time. L. Rolder in her *I silenzi mimici del volto*<sup>20</sup>, for example, is a philosophic consideration on the tradition of physiognomy in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. G. B. Della Porta as a celebrated physiognomist in the sixteenth century was studied much more than the other contemporary physiognomists. G.

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<sup>9</sup> Mauro Zonta, *Fonti greche e orientali dell' Economia di Bar-Hebraeus nell'opera la crema della scienza*, (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, 1992)

<sup>10</sup> Jacques André, *Traité de physiognomonie par un anonyme Latin* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981)

<sup>11</sup> Marc R. Foerster, *Scriptores Physiognomonici Graeci et Latini* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893)

<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Asmus "Vergessene Physiognomonika," *Philologes* 65 (1906): 410-424.

<sup>13</sup> A. Macc Armstrong, "The methods of the Greek Physiognomist," *Greece and Rome* 5 (1958): 52-56.

<sup>14</sup> Rolf Megow, "Antike Physiognomielehre" *Das Altertum* 9 (1963): 213-21.

<sup>15</sup> Manfred Bambeck, "Malin comme un singe oder physiognomic und sprache," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 61 (1979): 292-316.

<sup>16</sup> Gilbert Dagron, "Image de bête ou image de dieu: la physiognomonie animale dans la tradition grecque et ses avatars byzantin," in *Plikilia: études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1987), 69-80.

<sup>17</sup> Marie-Hélène Marganne, "De la physiognomonie dans l' antiquité gréco-romane," in *Rhétorique du corps*, ed. Philippe Dubois and Yves Winkin (Brussels: De Boeck & Larcier, 1988), 13-24.

<sup>18</sup> Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd, *Science, folklore and ideology: studies in the life science in ancient Greece*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

<sup>19</sup> Tamsyn S. Barton, *Power and knowledge: studies in astrology, physiognomics, and medicine under the Roman Empire*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994)

<sup>20</sup> Lucia Rodler, *I silenzi mimici del volto: studi sulla tradizione fisiognomica italiana tra cinque e seicento*, (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1991)

Caputo's *la struttura del segno fisiognomico, G. B. Della Porta e l'universo culturale del cinquecento*<sup>21</sup> pointed out the importance of the aristotelian derivation of the signs of Della Porta. The other works remarkable include *Giambattista Delle Porta, Mago e Scienziato*<sup>22</sup> by L. Muraro, *Giovan Battista Della Porta, il filosofo, il retore, lo scienziato*<sup>23</sup> by P. Piccari, *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del suo tempo*<sup>24</sup> edited by M. Torrini.

Although populated in the ancient China and well known among the populace, the Chinese physiognomics attracted less academic interest. It was studied rather in the field of archeology. For example, in Li Ling's *Zhong Guo Fang Shu Kao*<sup>25</sup> (research on the Chinese necromancy) and *Zhong Guo Fang Shu Xu Kao*<sup>26</sup> (a sequel to the research on the Chinese necromancy), the physiognomics and the physiognomy were presented as branch of magic arts. Wang Jingbo's study on the physiognomy in Tang (618-907) and Five Dynasties period (907-979) are based on the manuscripts of physiognomy in Dunhuang, such as *Recordation and categories of the anthroposcopic book during Tang and Song dynasties*<sup>27</sup>; *Collation of the Manuscript CH. 00209, S.5976*;<sup>28</sup> *A study of two incomplete Dunhuang Books on divination*;<sup>29</sup> *On the fortune-tellers in Sui and Tang dynasties and Five Dynasties*;<sup>30</sup> *Study on*

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<sup>21</sup> Cosimo Caputo, "La struttura del segno fisiognomico, G. B. Della Porta e l'universo culturale del cinquecento." *Protagora* 22 (1982): 63-102.

<sup>22</sup> Luisa Muraro, *Giambattista Delle Porta, Mago e Scienziato* (Milano: Giangiaco Feltrinelli Editore, 1978)

<sup>23</sup> Paolo Piccari, *Giovan Battista Della Porta, il filosofo, il retore, lo scienziato* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2007)

<sup>24</sup> Maurizio Torrini ed., *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del suo tempo, Atti del convegno Giovan Battista Della Porta* (Napoli: Guida Editori, 1990)

<sup>25</sup> Ling Li 李零, *Zhong Guo Fang Shu Kao 中国方术考* (Beijing: Dong Fang Press, 2000)

<sup>26</sup> Ling Li 李零, *Zhong Guo Fang Shu Xu Kao 中国方术续考* (Beijing: Dong Fang Press, 2001)

<sup>27</sup> Jingbo Wang 王晶波, "Recordation and categories of the anthroposcopic book in Tang and Song dynasties 唐宋相书的著述与种类," *Library and Information* 6 (2006): 103-107.

<sup>28</sup> Jingbo Wang 王晶波, "Collation of the Manuscript CH. 00209, S.5976 敦煌所出相术图 CH. 00209, S.5976 校理释录," *Journal of Dunhuang Studies* 45 (2004): 39-48.

<sup>29</sup> Jingbo Wang, "A study of two incomplete Dunhuang Books on divination 敦煌相书残卷 S. 3395, S. 9987B1V 考论," *Journal of Lanzhou University* 32 (2004): 29-34.

<sup>30</sup> Jingbo Wang, "On the fortune-tellers in Sui and Tang dynasties and Five Dynasties 隋唐五代的相工群体," *Journal of Northwest Normal University*, 42 (2005): 68-73.

the incompleted physiognomic Manuscript P. 2752 (B);<sup>31</sup> *Dunhuang Physiognomy and Buddhist body divination: similarities and dissimilarities.*<sup>32</sup> *Physiognomics in Dunhuang manuscripts and physiognomic practice in Tang dynasty*<sup>33</sup> by Huang Zhengjian is a summary of the physiognomy in Tang dynasty.

Despite abundant accounts concerning physiognomy in ancient Chinese historical and philosophical texts, the physiognomics has not yet drawn much scholarly interest in the West either. There is little research into Chinese physiognomy in English scholarship on ancient China. For example, in J. Needham's multi-volume *Science and civilization in China*, only a scant four pages are allotted to a general introduction of Chinese physiognomy.<sup>34</sup> There are scatted comments on physiognomy in K. DeWoskin's *Doctors, diviners, and magicians of ancient China*,<sup>35</sup> J. Dull's *A historical introduction to the apocryphal (Ch'an Wei) texts of the Han dynasty*,<sup>36</sup> and B. Karlgren's *Legends and cults in ancient China*.<sup>37</sup> Two western scholars have produced studies on Chinese physiognomy. One is L. Kohn, an expert on Chinese religion. In *A textbook of physiognomy*,<sup>38</sup> she introduced to the encyclopedic physiognomic book *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* 神相全编 (complete guide to spirit physiognomy) of Ming dynasty (1368-1644), providing a clear picture of the textual development of physiognomic texts from the Tang dynasty to late imperial period. However, Kohn's attention was on medieval and later texts. In fact, in the *Chen Wei* 讖纬 texts of Han dynasty (202BC-220AD) there are

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<sup>31</sup> Binglin Zheng 郑炳林 and Jingbo Wang, "Study on the physiognomic Manuscript P. 2752 (B) 敦煌写本 P. 2752 (B) 相法残卷研究," *Journal of Dunhuang Studies* 50 (2005): 24-30.

<sup>32</sup> Jingbo Wang, "Dunhuang Physiognomy and Buddhist body divination: similarities and dissimilarities 敦煌相术与佛教占相内容异同论," *Journal of Dunhuang Studies* 43 (2003): 69-76.

<sup>33</sup> Zhengjian Huang 黄正建, "Dunhuang manuscripts and physiognomic practice in Tang dynasty 敦煌文书中相书残卷与唐代的相面," *Journal of Dunhuang Studie* 1/2 (1988): 114-118.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 363-364, 385-386.

<sup>35</sup> Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *Doctors, diviners, and magicians of ancient China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)

<sup>36</sup> Jack L. Dull, "A historical introduction to the apocryphal (Ch'an Wei) texts of the Han dynasty" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1966).

<sup>37</sup> Bernhard Karlgren, "Legends and cults in ancient China," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 18 (1946): 199-365;

<sup>38</sup> Livia Kohn, "A text book of physiognomy: the tradition of the *Shenxiang quanbian*," *Asian folklore studies* 45 (1986): 227-258.

rich vocabulary of physiognomic practice as well as a number of theories that were inherited by later physiognomists.

Physiognomics may be first sight seemed a mere hodgepodge of impromptu comments and broad ordering principles, folk beliefs and rational arguments, detailed observation and generalization. What immediately strikes the reader is a kind of *horror vacui* whereby the most heterogeneous forms of data concerning the individual's physical appearance are almost obsessively accumulated.<sup>39</sup> Aristotle raises the point in his argument that man learns first by representing things. "The reason why we enjoy seeing likenesses is that, as we look, we learn and infer what is, for each instance, 'that is so and so.' If we have never happened to see the original, our pleasure is not due to the representation as such but to the technique or the color or some other cause."<sup>40</sup> In the image representation, the physiognomy which connects the inside with the outside of body is undoubtedly a useful tool in both the visual and the textual creation.

The physiognomy in the representation of arts was interpreted much by scholars as M. Barasch's *Character and physiognomy: bocchi on Donatello's St. George*,<sup>41</sup> P. Britton's *The signs of faces: Leonardo on physiognomic science and the: "four universal states of man"*,<sup>42</sup> and A. W. G. Posèq's *On physiognomic communication in Bernini*.<sup>43</sup> In terms of the image of rulers, G. Dickins, in the *Some Hellenistic portraits*,<sup>44</sup> introduced some typical portrait of Hellenistic monarchs in coins and busts, with the theory of idealism in the case. He argued that in the representation of monarch the type is more important than the individual features. In B. R. Brown's *Royal portraits in sculpture and coins: Pyrrhos and the successors of Alexander the Great*,<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Maria Michela Sassi, *The science of man in ancient Greece*, trans. Paul Tucker (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2001), 47.

<sup>40</sup> *Poetics*. IV. 5-6.

<sup>41</sup> Moshe Barasch, "Character and physiognomy: bocchi on Donatello's St. George," *Journal of the History of Iden* 36 (1975): 413-430.

<sup>42</sup> Piers D. G. Britton, "The signs of faces: Leonardo on physiognomic science and the four universal states of man," *Renaissance studies* 16 (2002): 143-162.

<sup>43</sup> A. W. G. Posèq, "On physiognomic communication in Bernini," *Artibus et Historiae* 27 (2006): 161-190

<sup>44</sup> Guy Dickins, "Some Hellenistic portraits," *The Journal of Hellenic studies* 34 (1914): 293-311.

<sup>45</sup> Blanche R. Brown, *Royal portraits in sculpture and coins: Pyrrhos and the successors of Alexander the*



after grouping the production of portraits around the original Pyrrhos, the functions of portraits of monarchs in indicating the royalty and its concomitant power, projecting an image suggesting the superior courage, vision and qualities of leadership associated with office were demonstrated. D. R. E. Wright's *Benedetto Pagni's 'Medici Madonna' in Sarasota: a study in Medici Patronage and iconography*<sup>46</sup> described the context of Pagni's attempted career at the court of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. On the influence of physiognomy in the portrait of great man, there is P. Meller's *Physgionomical theory in Renaissance heroic portraits*.<sup>47</sup> Michael Kwakkelstein, *Leonardo Da Vinci As a Physiognomist: Theory and Drawing Practice*<sup>48</sup> demonstrated the influence of physiognomy on Leonardo.

The physiognomy was an important principle in Chinese classical portraits, as Yu Jianhua argued in *Zhong Guo Hua Lun Lei Bian* (a classification of theory of Chinese painting)<sup>49</sup> and Zeng Jia held in *The appearance in the portrait and the portraiture in appearance*,<sup>50</sup> Yoichi Ogawa's *The relationship between portraiture and physgionomy in Ming dynasty*,<sup>51</sup> Huo Hongyan and Wang Fei's *Physiognomy and research on the theory of traditional Chinese figure painting and its application*,<sup>52</sup> Yang Xin's *Portraiture and physiognomy*.<sup>53</sup> As for the representation of kings and emperors in art, a notable remark was in the *Imperial portraiture in the Song, Yuan and Ming periods* by Wen C. Fong.<sup>54</sup>

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*Great* (Peter Lang, New York, 1995)

<sup>46</sup> Edward Wright, "Benedetto Pagni's *Medici Madonna* in Sarasota: a study in Medici Patronage and iconography," *The Burlington Magazine* 128 (1986): 90 + 92-99.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Meller, "Physgionomical theory in Renaissance heroic portraits," in *The Renaissance and Mannerism: studies in western art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 53-69.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Kwakkelstein, *Leonardo Da Vinci As a Physiognomist: Theory and Drawing Practice* (Leiden : Primavera Pers, 1994)

<sup>49</sup> Jianhua Yu 于建华, *Zhong Guo Hua Lun Lei Bian 中国画论萃编*. (Beijing: People's Fine Art Publishing House, 1968)

<sup>50</sup> Jia Zeng 曾佳, "The appearance in the portrait and the portraiture in appearance 画中现相, 相中评画," *Guo Hua Jia* 1 (2006): 70-72.

<sup>51</sup> Yoichi Ogawa 小川阳一, "The relationship between portraiture and physgionomy in Ming dynasty 明清肖像画与相术的关系," *Meiyuan* 3 (2002): 63-67.

<sup>52</sup> Hongyan Huo 霍弘彦 and Fei Wang 王飞, "Physiognomy and research on the theory of traditional Chinese figure painting and its application 相学与中国传统人物画理论研究及其应用," *Journal of Guanxi arts college* 23 (2009): 43-46.

<sup>53</sup> Xin Yang 杨新, "Portraits and physiognmy 肖像画与相术", *Palace Museum Journal* 6 (2005): 92-98.

<sup>54</sup> Wen C. Fong, "Imperial portraiture in the Song, Yuan and Ming periods," *Ars Orientalis*, 25 (1995):

The texts most likely represent the intersection of social habit and humanist pronouncement, the reframing of what was known in practice through invocation of the ancient world. To stress the stereotypical character of a representation does not mean to undervalue its cognitive import. In literature and history, personal descriptions were influenced more or less by physiognomy. Physiognomic description ensures the immediate familiarity on the part of the readers. L. Bolzoni's *Teatro, pittura e fisiognomica nell'arte della memoria di Giovan Battista Della Porta*,<sup>55</sup> demonstrated the influence of physiognomy in rhetoric. The physical description presents commonly experienced and publicly observable phenomena rather than the idiosyncratic and private ones. In order to give the full sense of the man, his moral and physical portrait, earlier writers tended to use the evidence of physiognomy or general appearance to "flesh out," or infer general precepts of character. There are many studies on the role of physiognomy in classical literary representation. An intensive study of the prosopographical material in the Egyptian papyri and in Greek and Roman literature down to the late Christian period has been made by Fürst<sup>56</sup>, who traced the occurrence of these descriptions in the papyri. He discovered evidence also of a native literary tradition in the portraits of the Christian apocryphal writings. He held that the photographic description was a native Egyptian official's mode of identification which was adopted at first by the Greek conquerors. G. Misener seemed to disagree with him. Her *Iconistic Portraits*<sup>57</sup> traced the origin of the iconistic descriptions as a means of identification in the papyri and insisted on its Greek origin, denying the Egyptian origin held by Fürst. The literary tradition of it begins with Homer and later physiognomical literature bears witness the truth of Homer's sketch of characters. Misener's demonstration of the development of iconistic portraits in Greek and Roman

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47-60.

<sup>55</sup> Lina Bolzoni, "Teatro, pittura e fisiognomica nell'arte della memoria di Giovan Battista Della Porta," *Intersezioni* 3 (1988): 477-509.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Fürst, "Untersuchungen zur Ephemeris des Diktys von Kreta," *Philologus* 61 (1902): 374-440.

<sup>57</sup> Geneva Misener, "Iconistic portraits," *Classical Philology* 19 (1924): 97-123.

literature and historic writing such as biography bounds up with a demonstration of the history of physiognomic theory.

E. C. Evans has done much honorable study on the personal description in the Greek and Roman literature, such as *A stoic aspect of Senecan Drama: portraiture*<sup>58</sup>, *Description of personal appearance in Plutarch and Suetonius: the use of statues as evidence*<sup>59</sup>, *Literary portraiture in ancient Epic: a study of the descriptions of physical appearance in classical epic*.<sup>60</sup> K. MacDonald's *Humanistic self-representation in Giovan Battista Della Porta's Della fisonomia dell'uomo: Antecedents and innovations*<sup>61</sup> held that the art of physiognomy of Della Porta was not an archaic vestige of medieval and ancient learning, but clever means for him and a select group of notable contemporaries to occupy center stage, using humanistic methods of self-promotion. The social functions of physiognomic representation are thus demonstrated.

In the descriptions of characters some principles are established and therefore the type characters were shaped with the correspondent principles. To a later phase these types were preserved in the forms of *topoi*. Their survival was guaranteed by a notoriously robust system of cultural values, which stayed in place even after the disintegration of the political structure that created the conditions for its development. In other words, literary *topoi* generated a reality. In Wan Qingchuan's *Zhong Guo Gu Dai Xiao Shuo Yu Fang Shu Wen Hua* (Chinese classical novel and magic arts),<sup>62</sup> the power of traditional magic arts were demonstrated in the various aspects of Chinese classical novels. Physiognomy as one of the magic arts was also

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<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth C. Evans, "A stoic aspect of senecan drama: portraiture," *Transactions and proceedings of the American philological association* 81 (1950): 169-184.

<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth C. Evans, "Description of personal appearance in Plutarch and Suetonius: the use of statues as evidence," *Classical quarterly* 17 (1967): 414-420.

<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth C. Evans, "Literary portraiture in ancient Epic: a study of the descriptions of physical appearance in classical epic," *Harvard studies in classical philology* 58/59 (1948): 189-217.

<sup>61</sup> Katherine MacDonald "Humanistic self-representation in Giovan Battista Della Porta's *Della fisonomia dell'uomo*: Antecedents and innovations," *The sixteenth century Journal* 36 (2005): 397-414.

<sup>62</sup> Qingchuan Wan 万晴川, *Zhong Guo Gu Dai Xiao Shuo Yu Fang Shu Wen Hua* 中国古代小说与方术文化 (Beijing: China social sciences press, 2005).

included. According to Wan, physiognomy was the main effect in the shaping of character types. Coincidentally, G. Tytler in his *Physiognomy in the European novel: Face and fortunes*<sup>63</sup> examined the novels from the similar perspective of view.

The image representation with physiognomy in recognizing and accepting of characters by novel readers are later than in history and biographies. Especially considering the fact that much concern was taken with the rulers in history, their physical descriptions with physiognomic theory were studied by the scholars. Canter,<sup>64</sup> Couissin,<sup>65</sup> and Wardman<sup>66</sup>, Misener<sup>67</sup> and in particular Fürst<sup>68</sup> produced a considerable amount of physiognomical material taken from fragments of Greek biography, by Plutarch, Suetonius, and Ammianus, as well as from the *Historia Augusta* and literary portraits scattered throughout apocalyptic and Christian texts. In addition, W. Jeffrey Tatum's *The regal image in Plutarch's Lives*<sup>69</sup> presented the image of rulers made by Plutarch and analyzed the intention of the writer with a consideration of royal ideology. K. Langedijk suggests that the new interest in "appearance" in portraiture was stimulated by the works of Plutarch and Suetonius: "[With Giovio] the accent now came to lie on the recognizability of facial features as those of a given person, in contrast to the medieval series which depicted types, but not individuals. There had gradually grown up a desire to have those moral *exempla* which were contained in the biography, the literary portrait, before one's eyes in the literal sense, too."<sup>70</sup> In his exploration, the power of classical authority or the

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<sup>63</sup> Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European novel: face and fortunes*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

<sup>64</sup> Howard V. Canter, "Personal appearance in the biography of the Roman emperors," *Studies in Philology* 25 (1928): 385-399.

<sup>65</sup> J. Couissin, "Suétone physionomiste dans les vies des XII Césars," *Revue des Etudes Latines* 31 (1953): 234-256.

<sup>66</sup> Alan E. Wardman, "Description of personal appearance in Plutarch and Suetonius: the use of statues as evidence," *Classical Quarterly* 59 (1967): 414-420.

<sup>67</sup> Misener, "Iconistic portraits," 97-123.

<sup>68</sup> Fürst, "Ephemeris des Diktys von Kreta," 374-440.

<sup>69</sup> Jeffrey Tatum, "The regal image in Plutarch's Lives," *The journal of Hellenic studies* 116 (1996): 135-151.

<sup>70</sup> Karla Langedijk, *The portraits of the Medici: fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries* (Florence: Studio per edizioni scelte, 1981), 65.

written word was demonstrated again. T. Casini<sup>71</sup> had a brief study on the physiognomy in the portrait and biography of celebrated people in the sixteenth century, in which he argued the reconstruction and invention of the personality of the notable, is influenced by the physiognomic consciousness. His interest lies on the relationship between text and image.

*The physiognomy in Han dynasty*<sup>72</sup> by Zhu Pingyi offers a comprehensive survey of how physiognomy is used by the Han ruling class and emperors, in a political context and analyzes the social status of physiognomists and the general Han attitude towards physiognomy. *Chinese body divination*<sup>73</sup> by W. Lessa is one of the rare books on Chinese physiognomy in western language. Lessa is a physical anthropologist and therefore takes an exclusively anthropological approach to Chinese physiognomy. It is a pity that no primary early Chinese historical documents are used. The major portions of his book are categorizations and translations of the physiognomic canon *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* compiled in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, followed by a survey of generic connections between Chinese and Indo-European physiognomic traditions. Lessa's emphasis on the social function of physiognomy is aspiring. He points out that physiognomy helped to relieve anxiety felt by intellectuals in the face of increasing mobility, a theory fully developed by Zhu Pingyi's study of Han physiognomy.

The use of political image exists with time passing by and has brought out always new topics in the social life.<sup>74</sup> In the late Renaissance, for example, a whole generation of artists, architects, and writers worked in rulers' service to create an extensive and sophisticated group of works all directed towards the establishment of a permanent propagandistic discourse of their accomplishments, actual and historical, programmatic and thus symbolical. Their image of power therefore attracted the interest of students. Taking the

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<sup>71</sup> Tommaso Casini, "La questione fisiognomica nei libri di ritratti e biografie di uomini illustri del secolo XVI," in *Il volto e gli affetti, fisiognomica ed espressione nelle arti del rinascimento, Atti del convegno di studi. Tornino 28-29 novembre 2001*, ed. Alessandro Pontremoli (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2003), 103-117.

<sup>72</sup> Pingyi Zhu, *The physiognomy in Han dynasty* (Taipei: Xue Sheng Shu Ju, 1990).

<sup>73</sup> William Lessa, *Chinese body divination* (Los Angeles: United World, 1968)

<sup>74</sup> Paul Zanker, *Augusto e il potere delle immagini*, trans. Flavio Cuniberto (Collana: Universale Bollati Boringhieri, 2006), 355.

image of Cosimo I as an example, P. W. Richelson's *Studies in the personal imagery of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence*<sup>75</sup> explored in three aspects of Cosimo's personal imagery: historical, pagan and religious. K. W. Forester's *Metaphor of rule: political ideology and history in the portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici*<sup>76</sup> demonstrated how the image of Cosimo I de' Medici was created in the portraits under the political purpose and how the arts were placed under the service of politics. In fact there are many researchers noticing it, such as J. Cox-Rearick and M. W. Bulgarella's *Public and private portraits of Cosimo de' Medici and Elenora di Toledo: Bronzino's paintings of his ducal patrons in Ottava and Turin*;<sup>77</sup> S. B. McHam's *Donatello's Bronze David and Judith as metaphors of Medici rule in Florence*.<sup>78</sup>

It is a pity that the representation of rulers in Italy, a particular group in the society, with physiognomic descriptions in history and biography was not observed as adequately as it deserved to be. It is the same in Chinese case. The personal appearance of notable people were studied in its entirety, such as *On the physical description in historical writing* by Yang Ming<sup>79</sup>, or the personal appearance in a particular history text was studied, such as *Physiognomic conception in Shi Ji* by Zheng Jiangming<sup>80</sup>. And the appearances of Chinese emperors were usually examined from the aesthetic or cultural perspective.

In a word, the physiognomic descriptions of rulers in both Italian and Chinese history and biography is worthy of a deeper observation.

As the physiognomy has a long-lasting influence in both western and Chinese culture, some Italian scholars have noticed it and tried to make a

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<sup>75</sup> Paul W. Richelson, "Studies in the personal imagery of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1973)

<sup>76</sup> Kurt W. Forester, "Metaphor of rule: political ideology and history in the portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 15 (1971): 65-104.

<sup>77</sup> Janet Cox-Rearick and Mary W. Bulgarella, "Public and private portraits of Cosimo de' Medici and Elenora di Toledo: Bronzino's paintings of his ducal patrons in Ottava and Turin," *Artibus et Historiae* 25 (2004): 101-159.

<sup>78</sup> Sarah. B. McHam "Donatello's Bronze David and Judith as metaphors of Medici rule in Florence," *The art bulletin* 83 (2001): 32-47.

<sup>79</sup> Ming Yang 杨明, "Personal description in historical writing 史书人物相貌描写探微," *Journal of Sichuan Normal Univeristy* 3 (1991): 79-83.

<sup>80</sup> Jianming Zhen 郑建明, "Physiognomic consciousness in *Shi Ji* 史记相术思想述评," *Journal of Yichun Normal Institute* 1 (1995): 50-53.

comparison between them, which unfortunately did not get further examination. M. M. Sassi pointed out that in China physiognomics was oriented toward predicting the future (the situation only changed only around the first century AD), in Greece (from the time of its first systematization in writing in the third century BC) it directed the study of individual character and psychophysical constitution.<sup>81</sup> If we compare Aristotle's zoological treatises with the *Huai Nan Zi* 淮南子 (ca. 139BC), we see how a common body of traditional beliefs concerning animals is overlaid by differing forms of conscious reflection.<sup>82</sup> In the Chinese work this makes room for metamorphosis and a sense of the exceptional, whereas in Aristotle it is the sense of the ordered and fixed form of the species and the wish to eliminate the fabulous that prevail. In other words, what we are dealing with in Greece is "the invention of nature."<sup>83</sup> The Italian physiognomy followed the Greek tradition and the physiognomists had never giving up in legitimate its identity of science.<sup>84</sup> The Chinese physiognomy, on the contrary, held its original idea and had never been out of a magic art.

Despite this diversity, both Chinese and Italian physiognomy had great impact on the physical description of rulers in history and biography. The image-shaping in the process of description, involving the literary tradition, obviously contained political intention. It is used usually as one of the methods of propaganda or persuasion of the legitimacy or power of the ruler. In a word, the body of rules was read for the political purpose either in the physiognomic divination in China or in the physiognomic observation in Italy. The fundamentally inspirational role given to the physical description of rulers in fact made the issue of truthful likeness less important than one might imagine. Physiognomy thus occupied a spot in the center of the

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<sup>81</sup> Sassi, preface, xviii

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, xix

<sup>83</sup> Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd, "The invention of nature," in *Methods and problems in Greek science: selected papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 417-434.

<sup>84</sup> See Luisa Muraro, *Giambattista Delle Porta, Mago e Scienziato* (Milano: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore, 1978)

political world. The imperial bodies from different generations were duplicated and reproduced by physiognomic description, testifying to an unchallengeable continuation of authority from the founder of the dynasty to his legal descendants.

One important point should be clear: the efficacy of physiognomic rules derives not from an exhaustive amassing of empirical data, but rather from a classification of the world oriented and guaranteed by ideological values.<sup>85</sup> Although characterized by increasing weight and complexity, the various cognitive levels all share a common denominator, “ideology.” This helps to explain the enduring appeal of physiognomics, from the ancient treaties to the sixteenth-century writings, despite accusations of a lack of scientific rigor and warnings of the risk of determinism. It also helps to explain the great interest of the history writers in the propaganda of rulers with physiognomic descriptions.

In this dissertation, the physical description of ruler in both Italian and Chinese biographic literature is explored, with particular attention to the physiognomic consciousness, and the trace of the specific phenomenon in classics is provided as a reference. I intend to compare the characteristic traits of ruler’s descriptions of both countries with physiognomic doctrines, and to demonstrate that such theories could have indeed influenced the representations, taking into consideration of the ruler’s probable political intentions and mode of self-representation as well. It shows that the authors synthesized the physiognomic expressions in the popular tradition to conjure up a portrait of the ruler. The physiognomy of ruler in Chinese and Italian description may be considered from two aspects. One is the ruler’s body, that is, what physical appearances of the rulers are described, sometimes at the expense of likeness, both in Chinese and Italian literature and how these features are similar and thus might make the rulers in one type. The other is the body of ruler, that is, what kind of physical features makes the particular

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<sup>85</sup> Sassi, *Science of man*, 76.



persons rulers and how these features are exclusively stabilized and helps to legitimate the heaven-given or god-given power. The investigation was limited to rulers in China and Italy mainly from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the physiognomy was prevalent in both countries, including a tracing back to the tradition in Roman Empire and ancient China as a reference of the phenomenon, since one of the more significant conditions that defined the venerability of a portrait was still the strength of tradition that surrounded the image, often testified to by repetition through countless copies or similar types, by whatever authority including the governors or emperors, as in Italy, the emperorship was not raised as stably as in China.

Physiognomy, in my interpretation, provides the theoretical background in the analysis and contributes to a more appropriate understanding of the image-shaping processes and enables us to decode the ruler's intentions. The study also conveys through the image of rulers how physiognomy contributed to the making and applying of the patterns of ruler's image. In the same framework, through the comparison of the Chinese and Italian physiognomy of rulers, figuring out their common points and differences, the cultural and political diversities were demonstrated as well.

Descriptions of personal appearance constitute a typical feature of ancient history and biography both in Italy and China. E. C. Evans revealed three principal methods of description of personal appearance, based on the material collected. First, there is the method where the body is described in general terms in such expressions as *forma eximia*, *corpus ingens*, a type which is a commonplace in literature and in general consists of descriptions, laudatory or otherwise, of the permanent appearance of a man. Secondly, there is the type where the emotion of the individual registered on the body or countenance is indicated by such phrases as *laeto voltu*, *truci voltu*. The second type is to be found especially in panegyrics in which the dignity of the appearance, the tranquility of the countenance, and the nobility of the eyes are lauded, or in vituperative attacks on enemies and in expressions in which the momentary appearance of a man is depicted, that is to say, in phrases

which suggest the reaction of a person to some event or speech as it is reflected for a brief space upon the countenance. This device of characterization reaches its highest development in Tacitus, as Evans argued. Thirdly, there is the type where the whole body is photographically described, as in the *Lives* of Suetonius.<sup>86</sup> Our discussion will include the first and the third methods of description.

The dissertation consists of five chapters. In Chapter I and II, the history of Chinese and Italian (Greek and Roman) physiognomics and the philosophical basis of the theory are presented, along with an observation of the impact of physiognomy on literary in both cultures, focusing on its symbolic and paradigmatic functions. This offers a necessary background of the physiognomic impact in the image shaping of rulers in history and biography, as the situation and theoretic basis are helpful in understanding Chinese and Italian physiognomy and the genre of history and biography was related closely with the literature writing despecially in a relatively autocratic period.

In Chapter III the physical appearance of rulers in the Chinese and Italian history and biography were analyzed with respective physiognomic doctrine, and the significance conveyed by the physical signs were decoded. The two methods of description, the photographic description and the general description, which Evans defined, were used here. The differences in particularities of physique and in the physiognomic significance were pointed out. The relative Roman tradition was traced as the classical source, in order to compare with the Chinese ancient tradition. Related to the different concerns of the two physiognomy, that is, the Chinese physiognomic concerns focus on three issues: life span 寿夭, wealth 贫富, rank 贵贱, among which the nobility was the most important for rulers; the Italian concerns focus on the moral qualities, the virtue, as Zanker mentioned “Le virtù della’imperatore e dalla sua casa erano il presupposto della sua elezione e dei suoi successi: il

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<sup>86</sup> Elizabeth C. Evans, “Roman descriptions of personal appearance in history and biography,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 46 (1935): 45.

potere aveva così un preciso fondamento politico e morale.”<sup>87</sup> And the physical description revealed accordingly the nobility of Chinese and the virtue of Italian.

On examination, it can be found that the physiognomy of rulers revealed a curious uniformity. This point, which is of fundamental importance in the dissertation, emerges especially in the Chapter IV, where I shed light on the significance of the standard description of Chinese emperor and of Italian ruler. Powerful rulers, for example, were generally represented as handsome and lion-like in Italian history and biography, while were represented being extraordinary and dragon-like in Chinese history and biography. Furthermore, the appearances of Augustus and other great kings were used by Italian writers as the templates in describing rulers and the appearance of San Huang Wu Di and Liu Bang etc., were used by Chinese historians as templates. In this chapter, the process of the image producing of a ruler was clearly presented. With the physiognomic doctrine, different types of templates, animals, great previous emperors, ancestors, and mythological god, made the image of rulers so identified and idealized regardless the likeness.

Chapter V is an analysis on the question why these particular descriptive activities happened in history and biography. It can be said that the physiognomic description was more or less a type of fabrication in history writing for the producing of an ideal ruler, which diminished the objectivity and reality of history and biography. The theoretic circumstance of rulers' physiognomic description can be found in the different concept of nobility in the theory of legitimacy of rulers. Chinese nobility is out of the notion of *Tian Ming* 天命 (Mandate of Heaven), which is resonant with the fate of physiognomics; Italian nobility, although emphasized the lineage earlier, changed a lot by humanism in the Renaissance<sup>88</sup>. The Renaissance, since it is a revival of the classics, met with the Roman ideology in many points, which can explain why the Italian rulers have the similar idea of ideal and powerful

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<sup>87</sup> Zanker, *Augusto e il potere delle immagini*, 251.

<sup>88</sup> On the historiography in Renaissance Florence, see Donald J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the fifteen century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

image with Roman emperors. As for the exterior circumstance, the reality, of the ruler's physiognomic description, the situation of historians and intellectuals then was taken into account. The relationship with the rulers and the writers, and atmosphere due to cultural policy can influenced various aspects of historic writing. It is, to some extent, out of the obeying and the flattery to the rulers, that the historians described the rulers in this way, and therefore can be regarded as both the cause of their writing, and the result of it.

In addition, although my discussion focuses on the propaganda aspect of the physiognomy of rulers, it does not mean that the critic description of rulers under physiognomic impact did not exist or, was of no interest. Ugliness and physical deformities are stigmatized. Just as physical beauty is believed to symbolize inner moral or spiritual beauty or goodness, so too is physical ugliness believed to symbolize an inner ugliness or evil. The tyrants had also their particular physiognomy, which was mentioned in addition in the Chapter III and Chapter IV.

The physiognomy that was all practiced instinctively and more or less expertly, the direct and spontaneous recording of individual appearance in art and literature, and the detailed list and case histories of manuals show different degrees of a common tendency toward unification under broader principles.<sup>89</sup> We should be aware, however, that there existed a persistent "anti-physiognomy" tradition, which was aspired by the platonic/ Socratic theme of inner beauty and was subsequently fed by important philosophical reflections on the rational control of the passions, such that the physical features lose their relevance.<sup>90</sup> It is the same in China. In the western culture, the misreading of Socrates's face by Zopyrus is surprisingly similar with the misreading of Confucius by Gubu Ziqing 姑布子卿. The Confucian philosopher Xun Zi 荀子 (313-238BC) in his *Fei Xiang Pian* 非相篇 (Against physiognomy) argued the false of physiognomy and held the activity

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<sup>89</sup> Sassi, *Science of man*, 63.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

rather than the appearance of a person reflected his virtue or fortune. The topic of anti-physiognomy is not the concern in my dissertation however.

## Chapter I

# Italian Physiognomy: History, philosophical basis and Functions in Physical Description in Literature

## 1. The history of physiognomy and its development in Renaissance Italy

Physiognomy derives from the Greek word “physis” (nature), “nomos” (law) and “gnomon” (judge or interpreter).<sup>91</sup> According to physiognomic doctrine, body and soul are mutually linked to each other, and the inner human character can be judged by the outward appearance, especially by the facial features. Judging from the considerable number of handbooks in which the practice was described and regulated, the ancient Greeks and Romans seem to have pursued it with considerable zeal.<sup>92</sup> Physiognomy, however, was not elaborated first in Greece; there are testimonies demonstrating that the theories existed earlier in ancient Mesopotamia, although there physiognomy had a stricter relationship with astrology.<sup>93</sup>

The western antique tradition considered the philosopher Pythagoras and physician Hippocrates to be the inventor of physiognomy.<sup>94</sup> Geneva Misener held that the first scientific treatise on this subject is Hippocrates’ *De Aere Aquis Locis*. Another work of Hippocrates marks a further advance in physiognomic observation, namely, his *Epidemics*,<sup>95</sup> in which he has collected several combinations of physical features that constitute the various types of character.<sup>96</sup> Hippocrates describes the influence of geographical conditions and climate on the nature, appearance, and health of entire people.

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<sup>91</sup> On the etimologic origin of physiognomy, see Patrizia Magli, *Il volto e l’anima, fisiognomica e passioni* (Milan: Bompiani, 1995), 21-22.

<sup>92</sup> Sassi, *science of man*, 35.

<sup>93</sup> Barton, *Power and knowledge*, 100.

<sup>94</sup> A. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 1, 9; Galen, *Anim. Mor. Corp. Temp*, 4, 797-798.

<sup>95</sup> Misener, “Iconistic portraits,” 104.

<sup>96</sup> *Epidem.* ii. 5.1; ii.6.1; ii.6.16.

As Galen reports, Hippocrates claimed that without the knowledge of this science physicians cannot diagnosticate properly, and the theories of the Hippocratic works have other similarities with that of physiognomy, since the examination of human characters lay at the centre of Hippocrates's interest as well.<sup>97</sup>

Reliable references did not survive concerning the appearance of the first physiognomist, but due to the legend about Zopyrus, recorded by several authors, we can assume that the theories were practiced in Athens at the time of Socrates. Zopyrus may have been a practicing physiognomist, who observed Socrates and judged him stupid, sensual, and dull.<sup>98</sup>

According to Evans, the interest in the "science" was especially widespread at certain periods: 1. the period lasting from the third through the first centuries B.C. (commonly known as the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman era); 2. the second century A.D. (when the popularity of the subject was at its height); 3. the fourth century A.D. (a time of marked revival of interest). But the "physiognomic consciousness" of classical authors begins far earlier, i.e. with Homer, and from there on, both in poetry and prose of classical literature, whenever personal characterization is involved, plays a definite and significant role, varying in importance according to the interests and purposes of authors.<sup>99</sup>

Aristotle had a crucial role in disseminating the ideas, being in his *Analytica priora* the first author to declare, that one may judge the inner personality by the bodily signs.<sup>100</sup> His *Historia animalium*, a vast collection of data pertaining to animal life and rife with remarks on the character of individual species, provides ample confirmation of one of its opening statements, whereby difference in *ethos* is a significant factor in

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<sup>97</sup> Evans, "Physiognomy in the ancient world," 19 and "Galen the physiognomist," *Transactions and proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 76 (1945): 287-298.

<sup>98</sup> Cicero, *De fato* 5, 10. "[...] stupidum esse Socratem dixit et bardum, quod iugula concava non haberet, obstructas eas partes et obturatas esse dicebat, addidit etiam mulierosum in quo Alcibiades cachinnum dicitur sustulisse [...]"; see also Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* iv, 37, 80.

<sup>99</sup> Evans. "Physiognomy in the ancient world," 5.

<sup>100</sup> Aristotle, *Gli analitici primi*, (Trans. it. Mario Mignucci ), II, 27, 70b,7.

distinguishing one species from another.<sup>101</sup> In his *De partibus animalium* he also compared animals to human appearance.<sup>102</sup>

The “science” of physiognomy becomes established in the period of Aristotle and his immediate successors, and assumes thereafter a vigorous role in the study of personality and the art of characterization in ancient literature.

The author of the first extant physiognomic treatise, the *Physiognomonica*, is unknown, but since the work had been attributed for a long time to Aristotle, the writer received the name of Pseudo-Aristotle, as in the case of his other, not authentic works. The *Physiognomonica* was written probably in the third century BC, and it has been supposed that its writer belonged to the peripatetic school.<sup>103</sup> The Pseudo-Aristotelian work *Physiognomonica* is the first systematic treatment in the Greek world devoted to physiognomics.<sup>104</sup> The work clearly stands in the Aristotelian tradition with regard to the relationship between body, psyche, and characteristics of both.<sup>105</sup> He used the three main methods of the science, namely the anatomical, the ethnological and the zoological physiognomy. Concerning the anatomical analysis, he regarded as the most important criteria for the physiognomic examination the parts and size of the body, the quality and quantity of the flesh, the color of hair and skin, gesture, voice, hairstyle and stature. According to his statement, the most determining sign is our face, and especially the eyes, which clearly reveal the inner character. In comparing the human personalities to animals he applied the zoological method, discussed by Aristotle as well. According to this theory the most excellent and courageous men resemble the lion, while the treacherous bear the likeness of a panther. Pseudo-Aristotle treated the common external

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<sup>101</sup> Sassi, *Science of man*, 43.

<sup>102</sup> Evans, “Physiognomy in the ancient world,” 5-6, 22-23.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>104</sup> See now the recent and thorough study by Sabine Vogt, *Aristoteles: Physiognomonica*. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999), 197-227.

<sup>105</sup> Evans, “Physiognomy in the ancient world,” 6-10, 22-24; Barton, *Power and knowledge*, 101; Sabine Vogt, *Physiognomonica*, 133-145.



features of a nation by means of ethnological physiognomy: for example, he drew a parallel between men with thick or curly hair and the Ethiopians, stating that if a person resembles the cowardly Ethiopians it indicates that he has the very similar nature.

The peripatetic *Physiognomonica* influenced in one way or another all further physiognomic writing in the Greco-Roman, and later Western, tradition. Mention should be made of Loxus, an otherwise unknown physician probably from the third century BC. The Anonymous Latin author says that he used his physiognomic work as a source, but the text of Loxus has not survived. It was surely a period rich and diverse in literary activity, and the science of physiognomy began to come into its own.

After the Hellenistic diffusion, physiognomic literature revived in the second century AD and we come to a climax of demonstrable popularity of the subject of physiognomics. Orators and particularly the sophists showed interest towards the science, since they laid a special stress on the outward appearance of the rhetors.<sup>106</sup> In this century Polemo (ca. 88-145), the orator of Laodicea, representative of the city of Smyrna and beneficiary of Emperor Hadrian, composed his treatise about physiognomy.<sup>107</sup> Polemo especially followed the lead of Aristotle in showing close parallelisms between men and animals. He discusses the likenesses which exist between man and other animals, four-footed animals, birds, and creeping animals, and in what respect there is distinction between the male and female. He deals with some ninety-two animals, including horse, ass, ox, deer, lion, dog, monkey, goose, wolf, tortoise, snake, owl, peacock, cock and their characteristics. The significance of each part of the body he treated with rather greater elaborateness than did the author of the Pseudo-Aristotelian manual.

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<sup>106</sup> E. C. Evans, "Physiognomy in the ancient world," 13.

<sup>107</sup> E. C. Evans, "The study of physiognomy in the second century AD," *Transactions and proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 72 (1941): 96-109; Simon Swain ed., *Seeing the face, seeing the soul. Polemo's physiognomy from classical antiquity to Medieval Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007

According to Misener,<sup>108</sup> Loxus's approach to the subject involving the consideration of physiology as well as from the observation of animals precedes Aristotle. His influence on later physiognomical writers can be discerned in the study of hair in the Late Latin handbook, and in the description of certain typical characters. And Loxus is committed to Empedocles' earlier idea that the blood is the seat of the soul.<sup>109</sup>

In Galen (129-200), we find a significant effort to study the relation of the physique of a man to his character, an effort to relate the humors of the body to the temperament, claiming that our physical condition influences the state of mind. And he accepted the parallelisms in the nature and physique of men and animals. It is him the first of all skillfully combined the Aristotelian parallelisms of men and animals in the study of physiognomy with the theory of the humors circulating in the body, and thus laid the foundations for what have become commonplaces through the centuries in the interpretation of the character of a man from his physique. According to the milieu theory climate and environment have an impact on outward appearance and on personality; the same thought appears in the ethnological physiognomy. Pseudo-Aristotle, argued with similar examples, mentioning illness, love and fear, that bodily and mental conditions affect each other. He said:

Il temperamento è connesso con le caratteristiche fisiche e non è indipendente, ma soggetto agli impulsi del corpo. Questo si evidenzia soprattutto nel caso di ubriachezza e di malattia, giacché il temperamento appare considerevolmente alterato dalle affezioni fisiche. E per contro che il corpo soffre simpateticamente delle affezioni dell'animo risulta evidente nel caso di amori, paure, dolori e piaceri. Ma soprattutto nelle creazioni della natura si può vedere che corpo e animo sono così reciprocamente e naturalmente connessi che l'uno risulta responsabile della maggior parte delle affezioni dell'altro e viceversa. Non è mai esistito infatti nessun animale che avesse l'aspetto di un animale e il temperamento di un altro, ma al contrario sempre il corpo e l'animo del

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<sup>108</sup> Geneva Misener, "Loxus, Physician and Physiognomist," *Classical Philology* 18 (1923): 1-22.

<sup>109</sup> Richard Förster, "De Loxi Physiognomoniam," *Rheinisches Museum* 43 (1888): 505-511.

medesimo, sicché ne consegue inevitabilmente che a un determinato corpo sia connesso un determinato temperamento.<sup>110</sup>

In the fourth century, Adamantius' treatise, *Physiognomonica*, although the characteristic Aristotelian use of comparison between men and animals in the matter of physique and nature is not the main part, it is mentioned continuously. And another formal treatise of this period is an anonymous *Physiognomonica Latina*, attributed for many years to Apuleius. It has three sections for the study of physiognomy: the first is concerned with an analysis of masculine and feminine types; the second deals with ethnological physiognomy and the third takes up the Aristotelian parallelisms of men and animals.

Apart from these writings that deal entirely with physiognomics, there are many scattered references to physiognomics throughout Greek and Roman literature.<sup>111</sup> Together with the use of physiognomic notions in other forms of literature, these demonstrate how widespread and influential physiognomic ideas may have been.

The conception of physiognomy developed little from the antique till to the end of the Middle Ages. The majority part of the Greek, Arabian and Latin writings were quite similar. In most cases, it happened that the authors of physiognomic treatises cited the text of the others without declaration.<sup>112</sup> The *Physiognomonica* was very influential from antiquity onwards; both European and Arabian authors mediated the Pseudo-Aristotelian teachings during the Middle Ages. It was translated by Bartholomeus de Messana in the thirteenth century for Manfred, king of Sicily. In the Middle Ages many new physiognomic treatises were composed under the name of Pseudo-Aristotle; the most influential of them was the *Secretum Secretorum*, an encyclopedic work, dealing also with physiognomy in one chapter.<sup>113</sup> The

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<sup>110</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomonica*, 805a.

<sup>111</sup> Forester, *Scriptores Physiognomonici*, I: 237-352.

<sup>112</sup> Patrizia Magli, *Il volto e l'anima, fisiognomica e passioni*, Milan: Bompiani, 1995, 157.

<sup>113</sup> Charles B. Schmitt and Dilwyn Knox ed., *Pseudo-Aristotles Latinus: a guide to Latin works falsely*

work has been derived from an Arabic speculum and its existence can be demonstrated from the tenth century. It was used until the seventeenth century in Europe, North Africa, and Near East.<sup>114</sup> Other physiognomic treatises were also read continuously from Antiquity, across the Middle Ages, and until the nineteenth century. Max Manitius pointed out that from ninth century onwards physiognomic literature was collected in medieval libraries.<sup>115</sup> There are references demonstrating that in the twelfth century in the monastery of Cluny, or in the fourteenth century in the Sorbonne, there were kept books entitled *Liber physiognomiae*. A special interest can be traced in the science during the twelfth-century, caused by the rediscovery of Aristotle's works and the changing concept of nature. From the fourteenth century onwards physiognomy was integrated into the studies in universities, and became an important part of the theories regarding human nature and microcosm.<sup>116</sup> Under the influence of the Antique writings new treatises were composed; here must be mentioned, inter alia, as the first original medieval physiognomic works, the *Liber de Physiognomia* of Michael Scot (1228-1235), the *Liber compilationis physiognomiae* of Pietro d'Abano (1295).<sup>117</sup> The latter by Abano, is said to be the first printed physiognomical treatise, which was published in around 1471 in Padua under the title *Dicisiones physiognomiae*.<sup>118</sup> And according to M. Porter, medieval Christian "physiognomy" is often assumed to have begun with the wave of Latin translations of Arabic works which taking place in the twelfth and thirteenth

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attributed to Aristotle before 1500 (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1985), 45-50.

<sup>114</sup> William F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt ed., *Pseudo-Aristotle, The secret of secrets: source and influences*, (London: Warburg institute, University of London, 1982), 1-2.

<sup>115</sup> Max Manitius, "Bemerkungen zur römischen Literaturgeschichte," *Philologische wochenschrift*, 52 (1932): 155.

<sup>116</sup> Jole Agrimi, "Fisiognomica: nature allo specchio overro luce e ombre," *Teatro della natura. Micrologues*, 4 (1996): 134, and "La ricezione della Fisiognomica pseudoaristotelica nella facoltà delle arti," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire d'Moyen Societies* 64 (1997): 127-188; "Fisiognomica e 'scolastica'," *Micrologues: natura, scienze e società medievali. Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies* 1 (1993): 235-271; Joseph Ziegler, "Text and context: on the rise of physiognomic thought in the later Middle Ages," in *De Sion exhibit lex et verbum domini de Hierusalem. Essays on Medieval Law, liturgy and literature in Honour of Amnon Linder*, ed. Yitzhak Hen (Trunhout: Brepols, 2001), 159-182.

<sup>117</sup> Enikő Békés, *The physiognomy of a Renaissance ruler, portraits and descriptions of Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary (1458-1490)* (Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr Müller, 2009), 13.

<sup>118</sup> Porter, *Windows of the soul*, 83.

centuries. He argued that it is around this time that the term *physiognomia* entered the written Latin language.<sup>119</sup>

Besides, a book by Girolamo Manfredi explaining “the why of everything”, with its numerous passages explaining the elemental physiological reasons of various physiognomical signs, such as the small wisdom of the large fat nose, the luxuriousness and irascibility of the broad nose, was published in Italian in Bologna in 1474 under the title *Liber de homine*.

As physiognomics had much prestige in ancient Greece and Rome, so did it in the Renaissance. The main surviving classical treatises on the subject are Greek: the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomics*, and several versions or paraphrases of the ancient rhetorician Polemo’s exposition, such as those of Adamantius and pseudo-Apuleius, who also preserves parts of another treatise by Loxus. In a census sampling seven editions of Aristotle’s complete works published between 1483 and 1619 (four Latin, one Greek, two bilingual), all but the Latin edition of 1483 include the *Physiognomics*, and 49 sixteenth century editions of this text have been tallied (Greek, Latin, Italian).<sup>120</sup>

The age of humanism was a period of revival for the physiognomy as well. The Renaissance theory of art borrowed from Antiquity also the ideas of physiognomy; thus it became one of the most important theoretical bases of Renaissance art, which emphasized the individual; but physiognomy, along with astrology, metoposcopy and chiromancy, played an important role in the occult science of the age as well.<sup>121</sup> The *Physiognomonica* of Pseudo-Aristotle was reedited with commentaries in the fifteenth century, and modeled on it new treatises were written, such as the *Speculum Physiognomiae* of Michael Savonarola (c.1450). Bartolomeo Cocles (1467-1504), killed by Hermes

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 65

<sup>120</sup> See Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927-58); Carroll Camden, “The mind’s construction in the face” in *Renaissance Studies in honor of Hardin Craig*, ed. Baldwin Maxwell et al., (Stanford: Stanford university Press, 1941), 208-220.

<sup>121</sup> Kurt Seligmann, *Magic, supernaturalism and religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), 249-254.

Bentivoglio because of his prediction that Hermes would die in battle,<sup>122</sup> wrote *la Chyromantie ac physonomie Anastasis* published in 1504 with the approval of the philosopher and physician Alessandro Achillini. His main work, the *Compendio of Fisiognomica*, was published in 1553 in Strasbourg. Pomponio Gaurico published the *De scultura* in Florence in 1504.<sup>123</sup> His brother, Luca Gaurico edited a collection of tracts on physiognomy and chiromancy and published entitled *Aristotelis physiognomia adamantio interprete* in Bologna in 1551, including the writing of his brother Pomponio, as well as two others entitled *Alia hominis physiognomia, and Chyromantiae axiomata*. The *De Cognitione Huminis per Aspectum* of Michelangelo Biondo was published in Rome in 1544; in 1548 he also edited the work *Decisiones physionomiae* of Pietro d'Abano. In the same year it reported the preparation of a manuscript of Giutini (1523-1590), whose theme was still the physiognomy and palmistry. In 1549 it was published in Latin *De Fiversa Hominium Natura* in Lyon.<sup>124</sup> At the end of the century, Giovan Battista Della Porta published *Della Fisionomia dell'uomo*.<sup>125</sup> He also published some other physiognomic works such as *Phytognomonica octo libri contenta* in 1588, and *Coelestis physiognomoniae libri sex* in 1603.<sup>126</sup> Yet as argued by M. Porter, it is dangerous of understanding the historical significance of books on physiognomy as presented by the arithmetical calculation of their stature<sup>127</sup>, because the popularity of physiognomy is much greater than presented in the

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<sup>122</sup> Giovanni N. A. Pasquali, *I dottori bolognesi di teologia, filosofia, medicina e d'arti liberali* (Bologna: Tebaldini, 1623).

<sup>123</sup> See Flavio Caroli, *Storia della fisiognomica. Arte e psicologia da Leonardo a Freud* (Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1995). Thorndike, *A history of magic and experimental science*, i-iv. According to Paolo Getrevis, the physiognomy of *De scultura* was not an original work and consisted of tradition of the work of Adamantius, which was read by Pomponio Gaurico in some manuscripts possessed by the humanist Giorgio Valla. See Paolo Getrevis, *Le scritture del volto. Fisiognomica e modelli culturali dal medioevo ad oggi* (Milan: Fanco Angeli, 1991), 37.

<sup>124</sup> Caroli, *Storia della Fisiognomica*, 9-47.

<sup>125</sup> The four volumes *De humana physiognomoniam* came out in Latin in 1586 in Vico Equense, and was translated in Italian in 1598 by Giovanni De Rosa, the pseudonym of Della Porta, and was published in Napolis in the same year. The sixth Latin edition was enriched and was included in the second Italian edition (*Della fisionomia dell'huomo*, Napolis, 1610), the third edition (Padua, 1613) and in all the following editions. From the beginning of the sixteenth century; the book was published constantly in Latin, Italian, German and French. The editions included: in Napolis (1598,1602, 1610, 1613), in Venice (1644), in Hannover (1593), in Bruxelles (1601), in Leida (1645), in Paris (1655, 1665).

<sup>126</sup> Getrevis, *Le scritture del volto*, 60.

<sup>127</sup> Porter, *Windows of the soul*, 115-133.

publication. And the anxiety of the authorities on physiognomy and its related superstitions caused of the relative low profile of the physiognomists in the historical record.

## 2. The philosophical basis

### 2.1 Correspondence and analogy

An important philosophical assumption that underpinned the theoretical process of physiognomy from ancient to early modern times is correspondence and analogy. Pythagoras and Plato directed philosophical speculation towards the theory of correspondences in which all of beings were related by analogy; the cosmic order was connected with that of the state, human fate with the course of the stars, elements with temperaments and humors. The whole world is in the totality of inter-connected correspondences that existed between the macrocosm (the universe) and the microcosm (man).

As for the physiognomy, body and soul were in correspondence to each other. According to Aristotle, mental character is not independent of and unaffected by bodily process, but is conditioned by the state of the body; and contrariwise the body is evidently influenced by the affections of the soul. In other words, soul and body are affected sympathetically by each other. This claim carried the authority of Aristotle, who, held that it is possible to infer character from physical features, if it is granted that the body and soul are changed together by the natural affections.<sup>128</sup>

The pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomonica* assumed a constant correspondence between a particular physical attribute and a particular mental or moral property. Many doctrines were made in this form such as: “Permanent bodily signs will indicate permanent mental qualities” or “soft hair indicates cowardice, and coarse hair courage.”

In these correspondences, the physiognomic signs, which used for the indication of human’s moral or mental qualities, were drawn. The Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), argued that those physiognomic

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<sup>128</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 805a, 808b; Aristotle, *Analitici primi*, 705b.

signs were to be found throughout the natural world, not just on the human body—from the size, shape, and color of an apparently lifeless stone or a person’s motionless foot, to the light, the color, and the motion of the natural bodies in the sky or the way a person walked,<sup>129</sup> which are obviously out of the logic of correspondence and analogy. And among those signs, the most notable were out of the analogy with animals.

As early as in the *Phaedo* (81C), the combination man/animal was recovered within the theme of reincarnation of soul.<sup>130</sup> Aristotle supplied them with a scientific foundation in his comparative studies of human and animal psychology in *Histoira Animalium*. So we are told that some species are “peculiarly salacious, as the partridge”, while “others are inclined to chastity, as the whole tribe of crows”; the allocation of moral qualities proceeds with such phrases as “mean and treacherous, as the snake.”<sup>131</sup> In the systematic treatise of physiognomy, the Pseudo-Aristotelian manual, which begins by discussing the methods that may be employed in treating the subject, --- the zoological method is the first used in the past.<sup>132</sup>

Besides, the correspondence of outward appearance and inner quality can be seen in the range of space. Every part of the body has a value related to the position in a certain space. In other words, the physical position of physiognomic signs was corresponded with the position in space. For the representation of the body, in the works of Aristotle, it is possible to identify the archetype of the morphological features. For example, Aristotle in his *De Partibus animalium* held that the natural parts of the human body was in the

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<sup>129</sup> Porter, *Windows of the soul*, 27.

<sup>130</sup> The patterns of the future lives, both of men and animals, are laid on the ground for spirits to choose in a new incarnation. Plato is clear that the “soul when choosing a new life must of necessity become different.” Thus the hero Ajax choose the life of a lion, the boldest and most perfect physical type among animals; Agamemnon that of an eagle, a kingly bird and proud-souled; Thersites, puts on the form of a monkey, small-souled and villainous. Those greedy and debauched would take shape of donkeys and other beasts similar, and those preferring to injustice, tyranny and robbery will shape wolves, vultures and kites. See Giampiera Raina, introduction to *Fisiognomica e anonimo Latino il trattato di fisiognomica* by Pseudo-Aristotle. (Milano: RCS Rizzoli Libri S.p.A., 1993) 18-19.

<sup>131</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 488b

<sup>132</sup> Evans, *Physiognomics in the ancient world*, 5



order of the nature in which the upper part is oriented toward the top part of the universe.<sup>133</sup> He wrote:

Ciò che è migliore e più nobile, riguardo all'alto e al basso, tende a trovarsi in alto; riguardo al davanti e al di dietro, davanti; riguardo alla destra e alla sinistra, a destra.<sup>134</sup>

It was on this topology, in a real axiology and in a paradigmatic system of value that Aristotle founded his physiology.<sup>135</sup> The location of the heart, he said, also indicate that it is placed in a certain region. It is at the center, more upward than downward and more forward than backward. In addition, Aristotle said “la natura colloca ciò che è più nobile nelle parti più nobili.”<sup>136</sup>

As we all see, this topological schematization consists in the categorization of the body in some divided areas in the space, where it was attributed a value corresponding to the extension. Every spatial value and the part of the body were assessed as location. This topology of the body allows to the identification of the morphological archetypes on which one could establish perhaps one of the most important classifications of living beings.<sup>137</sup>

In the hermeneutic thought there is a platonic ideal order that controls the body of the world. In this order, man is the image of the world. In this sense, the interrelation between the body of man and the body of the world is based on the assumption that the head corresponds to the sky, the eyes to the sun, etc. In a fragment contained in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, it says that the earth lies on his back in the middle of everything, looking at the sky as a human being. The earth is divided into as many parts as are the parts of man. He has the head placed to the south of the Universe, one shoulder to the east

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<sup>133</sup> Aristotle, *Le parti degli animali*, (trans.it Andrea L. Carbone), II, 10, 656a 10.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., III, 3-4, 665a, 20-21.

<sup>135</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 114-115.

<sup>136</sup> Aristotle, *De Particis animalium*, III, 3-4, 665a, 15-20.

<sup>137</sup> Jean Petitot-Cocorda, *Morfogenesi del senso*, trans. Marcello Castellana et al., (Milan: Bompiani, 1988), 33.

and the other to the west, the feet under the Great Bear (the right under the tail and the left under the head of the Great Bear), thighs in places that are after the Great Bear, the median parts in the median places. This is why men who live on the side of the Earth have well-developed head and a thick hair.<sup>138</sup>

Pico della Mirandola said: “in primo luogo dunque bisogna ricordare che il mondo è chiamato da Mosè uomo grande. In fatti se l’uomo è un piccolo mondo, necessariamente il mondo è uomo grande. Presa occasione di qui, raffigura molto opportunamente i tre mondi, intellettuale, celeste e corruttibile, nelle tre parti dell’uomo, non solo indicando con questa figura che nell’uomo sono contenuti tutti i mondi, ma anche spiegando brevemente quale parte dell’uomo corrisponde a ciascun mondo.”<sup>139</sup>

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was a revival of the cosmological theory, on the essential unity between man and the universe. Thus the interpretation of the appearance finds its most complete epistemological foundation in the relationship between man, his body and the world with the correspondence and analogy.<sup>140</sup>

## 2.2 Four elements

The ancient belief of classical elements is an important philosophical foundation of physiognomics.

Empedocles talked about the four elements: fire, air, water and earth, which are unchangeable and unchanged. The materials in the world are out of the combination or the separation of them. The aggregating and disaggregating of the elements are determined by two cosmic and divine forces— Love and Strife in a cyclic process forever. Love and strife tend to join or separate elements four elements, the first as an attraction of likeness, the second as separating dissimilar. According to Empedocles, each element

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<sup>138</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l’anima*, 162.

<sup>139</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *De hominis dignitate. Heptaplus. De ente et uno*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Florence: Vallecchi, 1942), 381-382.

<sup>140</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l’anima*, 162.

has a pair of attributes: fire is hot and dry, water cold and moist, earth cold and dry, and air hot and humid.

Empedocles, according to Magli, is the origin of the theory of humours and temperaments. He takes up the mix of elements, different in each case leads to the existence of all things, and determines the character of the man. The perfect combination is achieved when all the elements come into equal parts. If the combination is better in one part of the body than in another, produces individuals with a specific attitude.<sup>141</sup> Hippocrates attempted to apply this theory to human nature by defining the existence of four basic humors, or black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. These elements correspond to the four temperaments and moods, so the Hippocratic theory is connected with physiognomics. The theory of humour is found in physiognomy and is used to explain the most part of the physiognomic principles. Hippocrates said, for example “Gli individui con la testa grossa, gli occhi piccolo e i balbuzienti sono collerici. Avere denti in sovrannumero è segno di longevità. Quanti sono balbuzienti, parlano svelto e sono melanconici e biliosi, con lo sguardo fisso, sono collerici.”<sup>142</sup>

From the period of Empedocles to of Adamantius and Oribasius in the fourth century, the names of the greatest doctors in the ancient time were associated with the theory of physiognomy.<sup>143</sup> The connection with the four

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<sup>141</sup> On the humore and the temperament, see Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 67-74.

<sup>142</sup> Hippocrates, *Epidem.* II, 6, 1.

<sup>143</sup> For the relationship between medicine and physiognomy, see, in particular, Paracelso, *Prognostica*, 1536, id. *Opus paragramum*, Frankfurt a. N., 1575 (trans. it. Bari: Laterza, 1973); Camili Baldi, *In physiognomica Aristotelis commentarii. Opus multiplici doctrina refertum, physiologicis, medicis virisque politicis aequae utile ac jucundum* (Bologna: Apud Sebastianum Bononium, 1621); Robert Fludd, “Integrum morborum mysterium”, in *Catholicon medicorum catroptom*, portio III, pars II liber I, (Frankfurt: William Fitzer, 1631); Scipione Chiaromonte, *De coniectandis cuiusve moribus et latitantibus animi affectibus semeiotiché moralis, seu De signis Scipioni Claramonti Caesenatis* (Venice: ex officina Marci Ginammi, 1625); Giovanni Ingegneri, *Fisionomia naturale, nella quale con ragioni tolte dalla filosofia, dalla complessione, si possa agevolmente congetturare quale siano le inclinazioni degli huomini*, (Padova: Pietro P. Tozzi, 1623); Johann F. Helvétius, *Amphiteatrum physiognomiae medicum*, (Heidelberg: Broun, 1660) and *Microscopium physiognomiae medicum: id est, tractatus de*

elements was also explicitly stated by Filistione di Locri, according to whom, the human body is made up of four elements, each with its own quality: the fire of heat, the air cold, the wet water, the earth dry. The interpretation of

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*physiognomia*, (Amsterdam: Apud Janssonio-Waesbergios, 1676); Philipp Mey, *Chiromantica medica, mitt einem anhang von den zeichen auff den naglen der finger. nebens einem tractatelein von der physiognomica medica* (Graven Haag, Bey Levyn von Dyck, Buch-Trucker, 1667). From 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a great mix between physiognomy and medicine: see, for example, Ernst G. Struve, *De facie morborum indice*, (Halae Magdeburg: Literis Krebsii, 1700); F. Ackermann, *De prosoposcopia medica*, (Leipzig: Ex Officina Langenhemiana, 1748); Johann C. Wegelin, *De physiognomia pathologica*, (Erlangen: Typis Elrodtianis, 1782); J. H. Bourges, “Esquisse d’une mémoire sur la physiognomonie lue à la Société de médecine de Paris, le 19 fructidor, an XI,” *Journal général de médecine, de chirurgie, de pharmacie de Sédillot*, 18 (1711); François Cabuchet, *Essai sur l’expression de la face dans l’état de santé et de maladie*, (Paris: chez Brosson : Crabon et Cie, 1802); Richard Brown, *An essay on the truth of physiognomy and its application to medicine*, (Philadelphia: Thomas T. Stiles, 1807); Paul Barroilhet, *Essai sur les signes que présente la face dans les maladies*, Paris: Didot Jeune, 1809; Louis Demerson, *Est-il possible d’acquérir la connaissance de la maladie par la simple considération des signe, pris de la physionomie et de la manière d’être du malade en general?* (Paris: imp. Didot Jne, 1809); Johann B. Rainer, *Fragment der medizinischen physiognomik*, Landshut: Gedruckt Bey Joseph Thomann 1812; Charles Langet, *Sur la dégradations de la physionomie par l’effet des passions et des maladies organiques des viscères* (Paris: Didot Jeune 1813); Carol. G. Beust, *Analecta ad semioticen faciei*, (Berlin: Berolini Formis Theophili Brucshcke, 1819); Carl M. Kind, *Analecta ad semioticen physiognomicam*, (Leipzig: litt. Breitkopfio Haerteliis, 1824); August M. Baumgarten-Crusius, *Fragmenta physiognomices medicae*, (Magdeburg: Hale et officina caroli grunerti, 1833); Josephus Effenberger, *De physiognomia ut signo in morbis*, (Wien, 1833); Otto de Hartleib, *De physiognomoniam medica, ethica atque intellectuali*, (München: Typis Matthaei Poessenbacher 1834); Michael Plessner, *De physiognomica pathologica*, (Berlin: Berolini Typis Natorffianis, 1837); George Corfe, *The physiognomy of diseases*, (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1849); Luigi Boneschi, *Fisionomia umana e sua utilità nella medicina*, (Padova: Prosperini, 1856); Fernand Lagrange, *Considérations sur la physionomie et altérations qu’elle subit dans les maladies*, (Paris: Le Francois, Librairie-Editeur, 1869); Adolphe Lautier, “*Considérations sur la face au point de vue du diagnostic*” (PhD diss., Université Montpellier I, 1877); Luise Kuhne, *Lehrbuch der Gesichtsdruckskunde, oder die neue Untersuchungsart zur Erkennung der Krankheitszustände, Avf Grund eigener Forschungen und Entdeckungen bearbeitet*, (Leipzig, 1898); James Shaw, *The physiognomy of mental diseases and degeneracy*, (Bristol: John Wright 1903); Paul Hartenberg, *Physionomie et caractère. Essai de physiognoie scientifique*, (Paris: Librairies Felix Alcan et Guillaumin Reunies, 1908); Pierre Robert, *Abrégé de physiognomonie (essai de morphologie médicale)* (Marseille: Librairies P. Ferran, 1948). Quote in Magli, *Il volto e l’anima*, 53-54.

the body through the theory of the elements of quality permits a perfect general doctrine of the human body, systematic sufficiently as abstract and arbitrary, but that seemed similar and integral with the cosmological doctrine of the time.<sup>144</sup>

In Galen, it is found a significant effort to study systematically the relation of the physique of a man to his character, an effort to relate the humours of the body to the temperament. Ultimately the relationship rests on the proper blending of the humours.<sup>145</sup> The old idea of the four elements was applied the theory of mixture in the body. Thus, “the fundamental constituents of the body... are warm, cold, dry and moist, qualities, which taken as matter, build up the tissues and organs, taken as forces, condition the vital processes; the warm and cold ranks as active power, the dry and moist as passive.”<sup>146</sup> The four humours circulating in the system affect the nature of the human temperament and in turn its relation to the outward appearance of the man.

From experience, Galen assures us, he has frequently observed that the powers of the mind are closely connected with the temperaments of the body.

The theory of the four elements allowed them move to simplify and compress the diversity of experience within a structure defined and seemingly always identical to itself. In fact, thanks to the postulate that based on the immutable structure of the *physis*, it was easy to reduce the multiplicity of physiological phenomena of the individual. There was no discontinuity between man and the universe deriving from the same primary elements. The body of the human and the world, according to this view, are two organic totalities contrasting and corresponding with each other.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 54.

<sup>145</sup> Evans, “Galen the physician as physiognomist,” 291.

<sup>146</sup> Max Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, trans. Ernest Playfair (London: Oxford University Press, 1910), 1.225.

<sup>147</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 56

The four natural elements are psychologized regarding geometric shapes attributed to them in Plato. For example, earth, with cubic shape, is more difficult to move, and of all bodies is the most tenacious and heavy. Fire, however, is light and agile: its qualities match its basic construction, made of sharp and harsh. The quality, however, are not immutable; it allows the existence of deriving and changing. Between the fire and the earth there is air and water that are situated between the element lightest and heaviest, among the less stable and more stable. Fire and earth are the extremes of this relation; there is no direct passage from one extreme to the other. According to Plato, the four elements make up the human body, earth, fire, water and air, with a prevalence of land. The general application of the body responds to the priority of a balance, from the beginning, is designed as a mathematical balance, based on the law of proportion: the body is made up of a proportion of the four elements and a harmonious distribution between their different combinations.<sup>148</sup> In *Timaeus*, Plato declares: “where the acid and briny phlegm and other bitter and bilious humours wander over the body, and find no exit or escape, but are pent up within and mingle their own vapors with the motions of the soul and are blended with them, they produce all sorts of diseases, more or fewer, and in every degree of intensity and being carried to the three places of the soul, whichever they may severally assail, they create infinite varieties of ill temper and melancholy, of rashness and cowardice and also of forgetfulness and stupidity.” He cites as evidence a passage from the second book of the *De Partibus Animalium*: The thicker and hotter the blood is, the more conducive it is to strength, while in proportion to its thinness and coldness is its suitability for sensation and intelligence...noblest of all (animals) are those whose blood is hot and at the same time thin and clear. For such are suited alike to the development of courage and intelligence.

## 2.3 Dichotomous division

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 58-59

It is interesting to note that in the physiognomic classification there is always a “divisione dicotomica”.<sup>149</sup> In almost all the ancient Greek scientific descriptions, the form and the content seemed constituted on the opposition of the two sets of complementary notions. On the one hand the positive value represented in nature by hot, dry and by the incorruptible principles and the close relationship with the celestial fire; on the other hand, the negative value contained in the cold, the humid, in the corruption principles and in the distance from the solar fire.<sup>150</sup> In the treatises, in fact, the figurative universe that comprises the representation of the face, is always made up of the four elements of nature that maintain between them a relationship of mutual opposition or implication.

In the description of the physiognomy, it happens that the figurative structure was approved in an abstract structure. It resulted in an axiology of figurative terms into symbols.<sup>151</sup> The constant presence of these opposed pairs, arranged in the same order, constitutes the element axiological structure that as the semantic universe, allows undertaking the description of the face and body according to the physiognomic tradition. The values held in polarized micro-systems, in fact, build a rigorous taxonomy of poles and related spaces: high vs. low, above vs. below, left vs. right. The force of polarization that holds these antinomic relationships reveals in texts the existence of a hierarchy of values of positive and negative. This topological articulation is approved to the theory of elements and quality.<sup>152</sup> As early as in the pseudo-Aristotelian manual, there is the distinguishment of “positive a destra, negative a sinistra”. The other sets such as hard vs. soft, fast vs. slow are seen in many cases.

The positive and negative is also reflected in the distinguishing of the male and the female. These two were often placed in the contrasting situation.

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<sup>149</sup> Raina, introduction, 28

<sup>150</sup> See Marcel Detienne, *I giardini di Adone: i miti della seduzione erotica*, trans. Letizia B. Pajetta, (Torino: Einaudi, 1975).

<sup>151</sup> The real and proper symbolic concretions are the elaborative configuration. See Raymond Klibansky et al., *Saturn and melancholy. Studies in the history of natural philosophy, religion and art*, (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1964).

<sup>152</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 55

The male is in the positive and the female negative. The superiority of the male compared with the female is one of the principles of physiognomy. For example, “la femmina è meno dotata di tendini, ha articolazioni meno robuste...le carni della femmina sono più umide di quelle del maschio, le ginocchia più ravvicinate, le gambe più sottili, i piedi più delicati, la voce più sottile...”<sup>153</sup> and “tutte le femmine sono più timorose dei maschi, tranne quelle dell’orso e della pantera che sono più coraggiose...negli altri generi le femmine sono più deboli, più maligne, meno sincere, più impulsive, i maschi più audaci, feroci, sinceri, meno astuti... la femmina è più valorosa e più pronta a recare aiuto.”<sup>154</sup> In the analogy of man and human in physiognomics, there is no difference. The male have the good appearance and of all the virtues.

## 2.4 Syllogism

By placing side by side on the same plate the figure of a man and that of an animal, Della Porta allowed the reader to remark with ease the resemblance of the two physiognomies on the whole and to check at a glance the validity of the so called physiognomic syllogism, drawing conclusions on the moral qualities of a character from its proximity to an animal type.<sup>155</sup> Della Porta, however, is not the first who utilized the syllogism in physiognomic process. The syllogism is the basic methodology at the very beginning of the development of physiognomy.

Aristotle supplies an interesting analysis of the notion of sign and of a commonly practice kind of inference based on signs, which he calls enthymeme. He defines this, at the beginning of the *Analytici Primi*, as a rhetorical syllogism, that is, one that results in persuasion rather than knowledge, for instance, because it is based on premises that are merely

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<sup>153</sup> Aristotle, *Hist. an.* (tran. It. Francesca Scrivani) iv, 538b 7.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 608a 21.

<sup>155</sup> Davide Stimilli, “The strategy of immortality: a study in the physiognomical tradition” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1995), 60. On the physiognomical syllogism and Della Porta’s physiognomy cf. Patrizia Magli, “The face and the soul, “ in *Fragments for a history of the human body*, ed. Michael Feher (New York: Zone, 1989), 2: 87-127, esp. 100-105; Maurizio Torrini ed. *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell’Europa del suo tempo* (Napoli: Guida, 1990).



probable. The discussion on the physiognomy is used by Aristotle as the illustration of enthymeme. From Aristotle onward, the theory of physiognomic syllogism has been of important affect, especially in the Cinquecento as a sort of science foundation.

The enthymeme, in general, is used in the rhetoric persuasion and is characterized by the fact that its implications were closely related with the common knowledge of the people, based on ordinary life.<sup>156</sup> The premises of enthymeme are of two types; they can be probable or likely; or the intended signs non-verbal. The premise that expresses something probable is founded on the opinion that it is probable to occur with great frequency. In terms of the signs, this type of premise can be: signs or indicia, namely uncertain signs, or real, certain and irrefutable signs.

For Aristotle, the physiognomic conscience is based on three assumptions: the natural affection stimulatingly transforming between the body and soul; the existence of a solo sign for every single affection of soul; every kind of animal has a proper affection and a proper sign that it manifests.<sup>157</sup> With these three assumptions, it is possible to establish the physiognomic principles in the syllogism. For example, as for the lion, the large limbs are sign of courage. The man with large arms and legs will be courageous.

In *Analitici Primi* II.27 Aristotle explains a standard example of animal comparison as first form syllogism:

Minor premise: the lion has large extremities (among other body traits)

Major premise: large extremities are a convertible sign of bravery

Conclusion: therefore the lion is brave

This formal syllogism is, beware, not a physiognomical inference proper, because the human individual as object of the physiognomical assessment is

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<sup>156</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 119.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

not even mentioned. A truly physiognomical syllogism would read, on the basis of the syllogism stated by Aristotle:

Minor premise: this particular man has large extremities

Major premise: large extremities are a convertible sign of bravery

—as can be concluded from the analogy to lions—

Conclusion: therefore this particular man is brave

M. Sassi argued that the standard form of reasoning used in physiognomics is essentially the procedure of abduction.<sup>158</sup> In the adductive process the identification of the rule, given that it is conjectural, is normally a creative act, unlike what happens in induction, where the rule is the necessary and mechanically obtained product of the sum of the results. And once the rule that explains a given result has been inferred, this can be used as the starting point for an inverse procedure to verify the rule. It makes a significant remark on physiognomic theory. For instance, if a characteristic such as courage is accompanied by a sign such as largeness of limb in all individuals belonging to a homogeneous class such as lion, then the presence of the sign in a member of another class allows the inference that the courage is an inherent property of that individual also. It would be necessary to gather together all the possible cases of correlation between sign and affection, so as to ascertain their biunique relation, which will form the basis for the valuation of other individuals. In other words, if it is possible to affirm, by a process of induction that all animals with large limbs are courageous, then it will finally be possible to construct a first-figure syllogism.<sup>159</sup>

## 2.5 Balance and harmony

Physiognomy had long been linked to mathematics via Pythagorean number mysticism and Kabbalistic numerology. But it is very different from the concept of mathematics developed in the early modern Europe of

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 71-73.

Galileo.<sup>160</sup> Pythagoras and other philosophers of the time believed that because mathematical concepts were more “practical” (easier to regulate and classify) than physical ones, and had greater actuality. St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) wrote "Numbers are the Universal language offered by the deity to humans as confirmation of the truth." Similar to Pythagoras, he too believed that everything had numerical relationships and it was up to the mind to seek and investigate the secrets of these relationships or have them revealed by divine grace. In physiognomy, it can be reflected by the notion of proportion.

The *Timeo* of Plato is a fundamental work in the formation of classical and medieval aesthetics. It fed to the threshold of the modern age, with its ideal of cosmic harmony, views of the great and charming world. One example is the *Corpus Hermeticum* in which the aesthetic ideal of order and harmony controlling the body of world were presented. God, in building up the body of the world, put everything in order, with the same and the others, according to a right proportion. “in tal grado e maniera che esse potessero essere simmetriche e proporzionate.”<sup>161</sup>

In the *Timeo*, the question of body takes place within the framework of a cosmology, a cosmology more effective because it presents itself as a science based on the principles of mathematics and certain indisputable.<sup>162</sup> The mathematication of reality guarantees not only the extreme simplicity of its constitution, but above all ensures the soul of the world and the man to be in the same harmony and be tuned to the same range. The harmony of the body corresponds to the celestial harmony. The human souls are in fact combined with a particular star to which they return after the death of the body.

The idea of balance and proportion is a central idea in Greek culture since the archaic age. We find it in the ethical-political field, where they called for the moderation, the ancestry Delphic switch to substantiate the

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<sup>160</sup> Porter, *Windows of the soul*, 31-32.

<sup>161</sup> *Timeo*, xxxi, 69b.

<sup>162</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 57-60.

program of social conciliation developed by Solon. We find it in the field of medical science, especially in the theory of Alcmena, and then in the Hippocratic school, in the conception of the health as a balance between the opposing qualities. We find it in the general philosophical presumption of a cosmic order. And we find it also in the field of aesthetics, in the research of a perfect body proportion.

Aristotle placed the *mesotes* or, balance and proportion, in the heart of his biologic doctrine and his moral value system. In his ethic works, the virtue is the *medietà* between two extremes, one of excess and the other of defect. Similarly, it is understood as the good in the *Retorica*, as *mezzo* between two extremes that are negative. The *mesotes* is an evaluative principle that is used a lot not only in ethics but also in aesthetics. In the treatise *De Physiognomonìa*, the evaluative principles which are used to guide the physiognomic observation are in according with the *mesotes* principle. The *mesotes* in perfect physical and moral principle, although not always explicitly stated, however, is found function in the evaluation of each data.<sup>163</sup> In physiognomy, for example, the perfect physiognomy of a male is analogized by lion, all parts of whose body are of good proportion and in a harmonious situation.<sup>164</sup> Another example is on the elements. The situation of the balance between two antinomic elements is regarded the best in terms of health, intelligence and even memory. If the water is a bit superior over the fire, the man will be slow in perception; if the water is much superior over the fire, because of the slowness of the fluid, it decides a incapability of perception compared to his fast sensibility; if the water is even more superior, the man will be mad. On the contrary, if the water is a bit inferior to the fire, the body will be healthy and the man will be intelligent.

### 3. Functions in physical description in literature

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<sup>163</sup> Magli, *Il volto e l'anima*, 107-109.

<sup>164</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 809b.

In the Greco-Roman world physiognomics was the domain of philosophers, physicians and rhetoricians.<sup>165</sup> In their writings they dealt with the theoretical as well as the applied side of this art or science, while a physiognomic consciousness appears in literary works of history and biography, drama and satire etc. The physiognomy studies the relationship between exterior and interior, between the appearance and character. Therefore it makes an interaction between the value aesthetic and value ethnic. Just as Della Porta said, since the ancient world, the body is under the judgment: for instance, some parts are judged as better than others—particularly, through the analysis of symbolic types—what is at the top would be nobler than that which is at the bottom. Thus the human body expresses the soul.<sup>166</sup>

That physiognomics has always been practiced can be seen in all kind of evidence in literature. Cicero (106-43BC), for example, tells of a physiognomist named Zopyrus who observed the physiognomy of Socrates and judged him as stupid, slow of wit and a womanizer.<sup>167</sup> The anecdote is perhaps related to another one. Diogenes Laertius says that Aristotle tells of an unnamed *magus* who came from Syria and foretold Socrates a violent death.<sup>168</sup> Plutarch (46-120) tells of a Chaldean who predicted a great future for Sulla on the basis of his face.<sup>169</sup>

More often, the physiognomy acts in the physical description. Categorisation and classifying according to some types are common features of our mentality, and they are similar to physiognomy in creating stereotypes. Imagining the external and the internal in harmony is also a typical attitude; this is probably the reason in some cases for the parallels between the

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<sup>165</sup> Mladen Popović, *Reading the Human Body: Physiognomics and Astrology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenistic-Early Roman Period Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 85.

<sup>166</sup> Lucia Rollers, *Le funzioni della fisiognomica da Della Porta a Lombroso*, <http://www.parodos.it/news/fisiognomica.htm> Accessed september 13, 2012.

<sup>167</sup> Cicero, *On Fate* 10; *Tus. Disp.* 4. 80.

<sup>168</sup> Diog. Laet., *Lives of philosophers* 2, 45.

<sup>169</sup> Plutarch, *Sulla*, 5.5-6.

descriptions and physiognomy.<sup>170</sup> The focus on character links Greek physiognomics with writers' interest in stereotype character types.

From Aristotle onwards there is a connection between rhetoric and the study of characters and passions.<sup>171</sup> For example, Theophrastus (370-285BC), who was successor as head of his school in Athens, wrote a small book with thirty characters. Seneca (4BC-65AD) not only discussed the principles of physiognomy, but applies them effectively in his own writings in which he describes certain types of men. In *De Ira* the angry man is elaborately described.<sup>172</sup> It is important to notice that the physical appearance of such a man is combined with a discussion of similar characteristics in animals. He analyzes in some detail the rhetorical terms used for physiognomical descriptions. He cites as an example Virgil's iconistic description of a highbred horse: "*ardua cervix, argutum caput, brevis alvus, obesa terga, toris animosum pectus* (his neck, graceful head, short belly, plump back, and a proud chest bristling with muscles)," and makes this comment that Virgil's description, though referring to something else, might perfectly well be the portrayal of a brave man; at any.<sup>173</sup> Although the physiognomic type of description can be read in the works of several Antique historiographers and writers, it was Suetonius (69-122) who first consciously incorporated iconistic portraits into his biographies. His descriptions can be interpreted according to the pseudo-Aristotelian definitions, and they are perfectly harmonized with the personality of the emperor under discussion. Suetonius considered the outward appearance to be symbolic of the character, and he applied the methods of physiognomy in providing an elaborated image.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Békès, *Physiognomy of a renaissance ruler*, 14.

<sup>171</sup> Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 92.

<sup>172</sup> For a recent study of *anger in Juvenal and Seneca* see William S. Anderson, "Anger in Juvenal and Seneca," *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 19 (1964): 127-196.

<sup>173</sup> See Misener, "Iconistic Portraits," 77-79.

<sup>174</sup> Evans, *Physiognomy in the ancient world*, 50, 94-96.

Certain character types are cross-cultural and over the centuries surprisingly stable, like, for instance, the brave good man with a lion's mane and bodily strength, in whom good looks and good character, outer beauty and inner excellence are combined. In Archaic Greece, this human ideal is personified in the statue-type of the naked male youth or in Homeric heroes like Achilles, Hector and Odysseus, and he is still alive in the heroes of sports and movies of our time. His counterpart is the ugly base villain like the vile Thersites in Homer's *Iliad* (2,211–224) who dares to argue with his leaders and to abuse them – a befitting behavior indeed for “the ugliest man who ever came to Troy. Bandy-legged he was, with one foot clubbed, both shoulders humped together, curving over his carved-in chest, and bobbing above them his skull warped to a point, sprouting clumps of scraggly, woolly hair.” But already in Homer it is clear that there is not always a physiognomical equivalence between good looks and good character, and Odysseus points this out quite clearly several times. Euripides' *Medea* phrases this thought quite distinctly in her despair about Jason's treason: “O Zeus, why have you given to men conclusive signs whether a coin is false, but in a man there is no mark by nature on his body by which to recognize the base one?”<sup>175</sup>

The symbolic or paradigmatic function of physiognomy, with its conjecture on the body-character, became a sort of value judgment according to some types which characterized the western culture somewhat. This function is very important particularly from the point of view of literature and is the most interest that this dissertation focuses on.

The physiognomy exercised a great influence in the field of theatre. It is not difficult to imagine a relationship between the theories in which the treatises are the mouthpiece and the mask of the comedy. The catalogue of the masks, handed down by Polluce in the second century, and confirmed by

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<sup>175</sup> Eur. *Med.* 516–519. Quoted in Sabine Vogt, “Semiotics of Human Body and Character: Aristotle's Logical Foundation of Physiognomics” <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Anci/AnciVogt.htm> Accessed July 24, 2012

the recent archeological discovery in Larpi, which reproduced the masks attributable to the theatre of Menandro,<sup>176</sup> are evidences of the research on the similarity of the masks with physiognomic treatises. For example, the red color is related in the Physiognomy with a marked cleverness, because it recalls the cunning of fox.<sup>177</sup> The red is also the typical colore of hair of slaves.<sup>178</sup> The description of the pale and delicate young person that recurs in *Sicionio* of Medandro has points of contact with that of the young person of Polluce and with the *Phisiognomica* where white associated with pusillanimity.<sup>179</sup>

In novel, the physiognomic characterization often functions as a diagnosis or prediction, to forecast the plot in its particular way. The presentation of the heroes, with the somatic or *pathognomic* details which are in according with the physiognomic signification, broadcasted in the narration. Thus, the writers gave rise to an intensive dialogue with the physiognomists, not only referring to their precepts, but also enriching the physiognomy theoretically. Above all, the application is based on the popularity of physiognomy among the populace, which gains the interest among the popular and historical writers as well as critics. The description of Lucius in Apuleius' novel, *The Golden Ass*,<sup>180</sup> is an excellent iconistic portrait, which lends itself to physiognomical interpretation. When Byrrena, his mother's kinswoman, meets him in the market place, she observes that he is tall, but nicely proportioned, slender without being thin, his complexion is rosy but not too red, his yellow hair is simply arranged, his gray eyes are watchful and endowed with a flashing glance just like an eagle's, his face is handsome in all its features, and he has a graceful and unaffected gait. The physiognomists emphasized good proportions<sup>181</sup> as one of the first essentials

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<sup>176</sup> Bernabò Brea, *Menandro e il teatro greco nelle terracotte liparesi*, (Genova: Sagep, 1981).

<sup>177</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 812a

<sup>178</sup> Polluce, *Onom.* IV, 148-150.

<sup>179</sup> Raina, introduction, 36-37.

<sup>180</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* 2, 102

<sup>181</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 814a.



of upright character, while yellow hair<sup>182</sup> and a flashing glance<sup>183</sup> constitute the marks of intelligence and stoutness of heart. A rosy complexion is auspicious and gray eyes belong to a bold spirit, as lions and eagles.<sup>184</sup>

The Italian culture is appealing alternative of noble silence, in which Bonifacio had already theorized the body as a source of regenerative speech:

Ma del parlar in silenzio, ch'è il più nobil modo di lasciarsi intendere, non vediamo che alcuno abbia trattato, benché gli antichi avessero più maniere di manifestare occultamente, e furtivamente i loro pensieri... Io adunque principalmente tratterò del modo di farsi intendere con atti, con gesti, e con cenni, e così d'una muta eloquenza, e d'una tacita facondia.<sup>185</sup>

In literature, the description of body or face is found to be connected often with the physiognomic consciousness as the ancient time. On the role of physiognomy in the European and Italian literature, since more had studied in the field of rhetoric, drama and novel, we choose to do a case study for a supplement. In this regard, an interpretation of the physical description in the *Vita* of Benvenuto Cellini is made in order to demonstrate the influence of physiognomy in Italian literature, in particular, its typological function of physiognomy in the physical description of characters. As a well-known autobiography in the Renaissance Italy, the *Vita* has been studied much from various perspectives. The autobiography as a literature genre is the most similar with historical writing, in the sense that there is still doubt on the objectivity of it. Here we can regard it as partly narration and partly history and biography so that it can be made as example of literature and at the same time closely related with the main topic, the case of history and biography. The more important reason for choosing it is that there includes many kinds of character descriptions with physiognomic consciousness, both

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 809b.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 812b.

<sup>184</sup> Evans, *Physiognomy in the ancient world*, 73.

<sup>185</sup> Giovanni Bonifacio, *L'arte de' cenni con la quale formandosi favella visibile, si tratta della muta eloquenza, che non è altro che un facondo silentio: divisa in due parti*, (Vicenza: Francesco Grossi, 1616), 4.

in general description and in photographic description. We can also find the typical analogy of man and animal, the paradigm of virtue and vice of physiognomy.

If we abstract all the physical description from his *Vita*, we will see that his use of portraiture seems to stem specifically from a strong interest in the relation of the feature of a man to his inner nature, an interest which directly connected with the study of the principles of physiognomy. The “science” of physiognomy, which becomes established during the period of Aristotle and his immediate successors, assumes thereafter a vigorous role in the study of personality and the art of characterization in Italian literature. So is in the autobiography of Cellini: much of the portraiture contains the suggestion of a physiognomical approach or awareness of physiognomical principles. And with the help of physiognomy, the vice and virtue concealed by the correspondent physique are classified.

Let’s begin with the appearance of the paymaster Lattanzio Gorini:

“Subito questo uomo dette la commessione a un cerete pagatore secco e sottile, il qual si chiamava Lattanzio Gorini. Questo omicittolo con certe sue manine di ragniatelo e con una vociolina di zanzara, presto come una lumaccuzza, pure in malora mi fe’ condurre a casa sassi, rena e calccina tanta, che arebbe servito per fare un chiusino da colombi malvolentieri...”<sup>186</sup>

The physique of Gorini, by an analogy with spider, gnat and snail, is quite vivid. Although we can not find such analogy items as spider, gnat and snail in the physiognomic treatises, there are some corresponding description in the Pseudo-Aristotelian manual:

“I segni del codardo sono: capelli morbidi, rilassatezza, non evergia nel fisico, polpacci larghi in alto. Un certo pallore sul volto, occhi spenti e che spesso si chiudono, estremità del corpo deboli, gambe piccole, mani lunghe e

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<sup>186</sup> Benvenuto Cellini, *La Vita*, ed. Ettore Camesasca. (Milan: BUR Rizzoli, 2009), 524.

sottili, fianchi piccoli e deboli; è teso nei movimenti, non è attivo, ma indolente e spaventato. ”<sup>187</sup>

And in *Trattato di fisiognomica* it said:

“Le mani troppo sottili e piccole sono fatte per i furti e sono leste.”<sup>188</sup>

“Se (le dita sono) piccole ed esili, connotato lo stolto...se eccessivamente distanziate sono segno di leggerezza e loquacità...un’andatura lenta, se è naturale, indica anche una certa pigrizia, a meno che dei segni più importanti non siano in contrasto. Se però la lentezza è voluta e la persona di tanto in tanto si ferma, guarda intorno, raddrizza il collo, sicuramente sarà segno di superbia e si potrà anche definire quell’uomo dissoluto e adultero.”<sup>189</sup>

“Invece passi piccoli e corti indicano incapacità di portare a termine un’impresa, parsimonia, meschinità, macchinazione di inganni e mente tortuoso.”<sup>190</sup>

The same declaration appears also in Chapter LXVI of the *Vita*:

At work Cellini asked Lattanzi Gorini why he did not pay him as usual: “E’mi rispose, menando certe sue manuzze di ragnatelo, con una voccerellina di zanzara [...]”<sup>191</sup>

There are many analogical descriptions whose animal are in the catalogue of physiognomic treatises. We can find many “donkeys” in the autobiography:

(1) When the Pope took his journey to Bologna, he left Cardinal Salviati as Legate of Rome, and gave him commission to push the work that Cellini was doing forward (the chalice):

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<sup>187</sup> Pseudo Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 807b.

<sup>188</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 59.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>191</sup> Cellini, *La Vita*, 549.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 549.

“a questo parole il ditto Cardinale, che aveva più viso di asino che di uomo, divenne più brutto la metà; e venuto al primo a mezza spada, disse[...].”<sup>192</sup>

(2) Pompeo, the jewler of the Pope Clemente VII:

“Venuto Pompeo a me, mi chiamò fuor di bottega, e mi fece le più isvenevoles carezze d’asino, dicendomi tutto quel che gli aveva commesso il Papa.”<sup>193</sup>

(3) Bernardone

“Qui giace Bernardone, asin, porcaccio...”<sup>194</sup>

According to the Pseudo-Aristotelian manual, the personality that is donkey-like possessed:

(1)le labbra grosse e il lavvro superiore che si protende su quello inferore<sup>195</sup>

(2)(la faccia) scarna sono zelanti, in carne codardi<sup>196</sup>

(3) (gli occhi) sporgenti<sup>197</sup>

(4) (la fronte) ricurva<sup>198</sup>

(5)(la testa) piccola<sup>199</sup>

(6) (le orecchie) grandi<sup>200</sup>

Also in *Trattato di Fisiognomica*, it wrote:

“Le labbra che pendono molli indicano inerzia(inactivity, passivity). Questo segno si riscontra negli asini e nei cavalli vecchi.”<sup>201</sup>

“Sempre secondo Aristotele quanti hanno gli occhi troppo sporgenti, sono stupisi: si rimanda agli asini.”<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. 238.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. 598.

<sup>195</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 811 b.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 812 a

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 812 a

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 812 a

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 812 a

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 812 b

<sup>201</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 48.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 83.

So their personality would be:

- (1) stupid
- (2) zealous
- (3) slow
- (4) have limited perceptual capacity

There are more in the *Trattato di Fisiognomica* of the Latin anonym:  
“The donkey is an animal lazy, inept, intractable, slow, and insolent, with voice unpleasant. It is clear that men who correspond to this type of animal have large legs, long head, large ears, long, hanging lips, a voice awkward. They are slow, inept, and contemptuous of hardships and insults.”<sup>203</sup>

Cellini mentioned also Bastiano Cennini:

“Ondo io subito andai; e mostratogli la ingiuria che era fatto alle mie belle monete, lui mi disse asinescamente.....”<sup>204</sup>

This is on the voice. According to the Pseudo-Aristotelian manual,

“Quelli che hanno una voce molto grave sono insolenti: si vedano gli asini.”<sup>205</sup>

Obviously, the image of donkey in the physiognomy assumes a derogatory connotation. Regarding the offensive attitude of Cardinal Salviati, Legate of Rome and the unfair competition of Pompey, the jeweler of the Pope, Cellini described them in a satirical manner. No less effective is the description of the broker Bernardone, which recalls the “uncouth wailing that sounded like donkey.” As in the depiction of rival Bandinelli, the pejorative is used here intentionally, and the sentence receives a grotesque caricature and crippled relief.

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>204</sup> Cellini, *La Vita*, 281.

<sup>205</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 813b.

There is no doubt that physiognomy and literature have a common fault in the suppression of the body, having fetishized in some respects a kind of polished, programmed ritual of mummification. After Cellini had described the characters as donkey respectively, those characters disappeared indeed, without specific somatic confines, rather, they became “a type”, something unimportant, and something serves as a background.

As for the blame of Cellini to Bernardone, calling him pig, we can find more evidences.

In the Pseudo-Aristotelian manual:

“Quelli che invece hanno il naso grosso a partire dalla punta hanno scarse capacità percettive: si vedano i maiali.”<sup>206</sup>

“Quelli che hanno la fronte piccola sono ignoranti: si vedano i maiali.”<sup>207</sup>

“Quelli con le sopracciglia che si abbassano verso il naso e si alzano verso le tempie sono stupidi: si vedano i maiali.”<sup>208</sup>

Thus the person simile to pig would have:

- (1) big nose from the tip
- (2) small and narrow forehead
- (3) the eyebrows that drop towards the nose and rise towards the temples
- (4) the mouth that is very prominent, round with thick and twisted lips
- (5) straight and black hair or dull red, watery and thick hair

The correspondent personality is:

- (1) having little perceptual capacity, stupid and foolish
- (2) ignorant
- (3) petty, dirty

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 811b.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 812a.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 813a.

(4) vulgar, greedy and insatiable

It seems that Cellini wanted to belittle Bernardone with all possible means, but a simple comparison with the animal allowed him to achieve his goal. We could say that it is a process consisting of physiognomic induction from animals to humans. If the body characteristics of men are physiognomic signs, description of Cellini made sense to the reader the physical feature and then the personality of characters.

Besides the paragon between the man and the animal, his physiognomical consciousness can also be seen in the other “vice” characters. Giorgio Vasari, for example, is described as the following:

Questo cattivo uffizio l’aveva fatto Giorgetto Vassellario aretino, dipintore, forse per remunerazione di tanti benefizzi fatti a lui: ché avendolo trattenuto in Roma e datogli le spese, e lui messomi a soquadro la casa: perché gli aveva una sua lebbrolina secca, la quale gli aveva usato le mane a grattar sempre, e formendo con un buon garzone che io avevo, che si domandava Manno, pensando di grattar sé, gli aveva scorticato una gamba al detto Manno con certe sue sporche manine, le quale non si tagliava mai l’ugna.<sup>209</sup>

Perhaps in this example we see more clearly the physiognomic consciousness.

It is the description of a Parisian model:

“Questa era molto bella di forma di corpo, ed era alquanto brunetta; e per essere salvaticella e di pochissime parole, veloce nel suo andare, accigliata negli occhi, queste tale cose causorno ch’io le posi nome Scorzone: il nome suo proprio si era Gianna.”<sup>210</sup>

It is absolutely the physiognomic syntax.

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<sup>209</sup> Cellini, *La Vita*, 298.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

This is however a rare example of the virtue of “other”. Cellini does not praise the others very often because of his personality. Contrary to the depreciating description of many others, Cellini boasts his own beauty directly, showing very confident of his virtues based on his appearance. He didn’t describe his appearance in detail; instead, he narrated how the others praised his good looking. The character is reflected from the appearance—it is indeed a common sense of physiognomy in the Renaissance. And Cellini seems to accept the idea naturally.

Examples are easily found:

When he fled to Pisa, Cellini met the goldsmith Ulivieri della Chiostra. Cellini wrote:

Questo uomo da bene mi disse che io entrassi nella bottega sua, e subito mi dette inanzi da lavorare, e disse queste parole: “il tuo buono aspetto mi fa credere che tu sia da bene e buono.”<sup>211</sup>

And in Cap. XIX:

Madonna Porzia mi daglio domandò se mi bastava l’anima di legar il giglio di diamanti. La sua amica, la gentildonna romana allora disse: “se io fussi in quel giovane, volentieri io m’andrei con Dio.” Madonna Porzia aggiunse che le virtù rare volte stanno con i vizii e che, se tal cosa io facessi, forte ingannerei quel bello aspetto che io dimostravo di uomo da bene.<sup>212</sup>

Pope Clement VII appointed Cellini grandmaster responsible for the production of “a button for priest’s cope” that attracted the endive colleagues. Cellini won the competition with his wax model. He claimed that he would work it out ten times better than the model. All the gentlemen thought that he was boasting except for a philosopher:

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 121.



“V’era un di questi signori, grandissimo filosofo, il quale disse in mio favore: “di quella bella finnusumia e simitria di corpo, che io veggo in questo giovane, mi prometto tutto quello che dice, e da vantaggio.”<sup>213</sup>

The physiognomic typology in character type is applied constantly in physical descriptions. As for the vice and virtue out of the outward features, its can be traced even in the ancient Greek. The choice of Heracles at the crossroads, as described by Xenophon, reflects the physiognomic conception:

And there appeared two women of great stature making towards him. The one was fair to see and of high bearing; and her limbs were adorned with purity, her eyes with modesty; sober was her figure, and her robe was white. The other was plump and soft with high feeding. Her face was made up to heighten its natural white and pink, her figure to exaggerate her height. Open-eyed was she, and dressed so as to disclose her charms. Now she eyed herself; anon looked to see whether any noticed her; and often she stole a glance at her own shadow.<sup>214</sup>

The first description of Virtue is entirely that of static appearance, interpreted in ethical terms; the second of Vice is iconistic description, of which two features have physiognomical significance. Plumpness is a sign of the senseless and open eyes of the shameless. The classification is thus clear; the beauty is the virtue, the ugly, the vice.

The case of the *Vita* of Benvenuto Cellini in the sixteenth century, demonstrates the influence of physiognomy in the literature. It facilitates the forming of character types, in terms of their ethic or aesthetic features. The functions of physiognomy in the typological character are more than these sorts. The identity of characters, for example, is another value that can be reflected and emphasized by the physical description with the reference of physiognomy, which is what we seek to interpret in the following chapters,

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>214</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia and oeconomicus*, trans. Edgar C. Marchant (London: Heinemann, 1923), 2, 1, 22.

considering this value is demonstrated typically in the description of rulers in history and biography, along with ethic and aesthetic values. From the presentation in Italian and Chinese history and biography, similarities and differences in their culture are shown as well.

## Chapter II

# Chinese Physiognomy: History, Philosophical Basis and functions in Physical Description in Literature

In ancient China, physiognomy is one of the main branches of *Xing Fa* 形法 (form method) in the field of *Fang Shu* 方术 (Chinese magic arts). *Fang Shu* is deeply rooted in the history of philosophy, science and technology, religion as well as in the political tradition, representing the ancient understanding of universe, nature and social relations. The earliest record of *Fang Shu* were in *Bie Lu* 别录 and *Qi Lue* 奇略 by Liu Xiang 刘向 (77-6BC) and his son Liu Xin 刘歆 (50BC-23AD) in Western Han Dynasty (206BC-9AD). The books are scattered but their bibliography is still in the *Yi Wen Zhi* 艺文志 of *Han Shu* 汉书 (History of the Western Han Dynasty) by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) in Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). In general *Fang Shu* is classified into *Shu Shu* 术数 and *Fang Ji* 方技. In the volume *Shu Shu* of *Han Zhi* 汉志 (History of Han dynasty) included six types of *Shu Shu*: astronomy, calendar, five elements, and divination with tortoise-shell, extra-divination and shape method. And physiognomy was the main part of the shape method.

*Fang Shu*, including physiognomy, was popular not only among the mass, but also among aristocracy: it was accepted even officially. The official system of *Fang Shu* was categorized into heaven official and earth official, which could be traced back to Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771BC). In the inscriptions on ancient bronze artifacts there were two recorded titles of officials: *Tai Shi Liao* 太史寮 and *Qing Shi Liao* 卿事寮, the former of which is the heaven official and the latter the earth official. The heaven officials include *Zhu* 祝, *Zong* 宗, *Bu* 卜, *Shi* 史, responsible of communicating with the heaven and conjuring the gods. The earth officials include *Si Tu* 司土 (managing agriculture), *Si Ma* 司马 (managing war) and *Si Gong* 司工

(managing engineering and handicraft industry), in charge of the earth and the people. Both are appointed by the emperor. In the heaven officials, the function of *Zhu* is supervising sacrifices, of *Zong* ancestry, of *Bu* divination and of *Shi* history. And *Fang Shu* is in the charge of the heaven officials. For example, it is recorded that in Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-619, 618-907) there was a particular subdivision in charge of divination in *Tai Chang Si* 太常寺 (a department that controls ritual, god of land and god of grains) called *Tai Bu Shu* 太卜署. “[In Sui Dynasty] it begun to set up the *Tai Bu Shu* in *Tai Chang Si*, where there were one *Tai Bu Ling* 太卜令 (the minister of *Tai Bu Shu*), one assistant, twenty augurs, ten physiognomists, sixteen wizards, eight witches, two academicians of divination and two assistants, one academician of physiognomy with one assistant.”<sup>215</sup>

The trace of the development of physiognomy can also be seen in some clues of the trace of publishing of the works related to it. There is a feature on the physiognomic books. That is, all of them have been always something of a practical manual. Seldom has there been the interpretation of its theory and principium.

## 1. The history of Chinese physiognomy

There are three periods in Chinese ancient history in which physiognomy was thriving, with remarkable treatises and physiognomists. The first was the Qin and Han dynasties (from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD); the second was the Tang and Song dynasties (from the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the 13<sup>th</sup> century); the third was Ming and Qing dynasties (from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onward).

The earliest record of works of physiognomy was dated back to Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD). There were 24 items of *Physiognomy* in the section of *Xing Fa* (form method) of the volume *Shu Shu* in *Yi Wen Zhi* of *Han Shu* (history of Han dynasty), which should be a sum-up of the

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<sup>215</sup> Zhengjian Huang 黄正建, *A study on the manuscripts of divination in Duhuang and divination in Tang dynasty (618-907) and the Five Dynasties(907–960)* 敦煌占卜文书与唐五代占卜研究 (Beijing: Xue Yuan Press, 2001), 221.

knowledge in and before Han Dynasty. Henceforth, almost all the *Yi Wen Zhi* or *Jing Ji Zhi* 经籍志(record of the classics) in official history included a volume of physiognomy in the category of Wu Xing 五行 or Shu Shu in the Zi 子(philosophers) radical.

The five volumes of manuscripts in Dunhuang 敦煌<sup>216</sup> Museum were the extantly earliest physiognomic manuscripts in history.<sup>217</sup> The manuscripts in Dunhuang can be divided into three groups, dealing with complexion, the bodily features and the black moles. *Yue Bo Dong Zhong Ji* 月波洞中记(records in the Yu Bo Cave) is of unclear origin. The text was first recorded in Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) and is a complete guide to physiognomic analysis. In several instances the information it provides resembles the methods of the *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* 玉管照神局 in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* ascribed to Chen Tuan 陈抟(871-989), for example, the doctrine on the facial features of *Wu Yue Si Du* 五岳四渎; in most cases, the system of it differs considerably from the kind of body analysis practices since the tenth century.

In the history of physiognomy, Xu Fu 许负 (?-?) is a landmark. She lived in the late Qin Dynasty (221-207BC) and the beginning of Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD). Most of her stories on physiognomic activities were recorded in *Shi Ji*<sup>218</sup> (Records of the Grand Historian). From *Han Shu* (History of the Western Han Dynasty) to the following encyclopedias or

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<sup>216</sup> Dunhuang is an ancient city in Jiuquan, Gansu province, China. It is sited in an oasis. Dunhuang was made a prefecture in 117 BC by Emperor Han Wudi, and was a major point of interchange between ancient China and Central Asia during the Han and Tang dynasties. It is located in western end of Hexi Corridor near the historic junction of the Northern and Southern Silk Roads. For centuries Buddhist monks at Dunhuang collected scriptures from the west, and many pilgrims passed through the area, painting murals inside the Mogao Caves or "Caves of a Thousand Buddhas." A small number of Christian artifacts have also been found in the caves, testimony to the wide variety of people who made their way along the Silk Road.

<sup>217</sup> The five volumes are CH.87, P3589V, S. 5969, P.2572 (A), P.2797. Wang Jingbo 王晶波, "Xu Fu's Physiognomics: author and resource. 许负《相书》的作者与源流," *Journal of Dunhuang Studies* 54 (2006): 73.

<sup>218</sup> Written from 109 BC to 91 BC, *Shi Ji* 史记 was the magnum opus of Sima Qian 司马迁 (145?135?-86BC), in which he recounted Chinese history from the time of the Yellow Emperor until his own time. (The Yellow Emperor, traditionally dated ca. 2600 BC, is the first ruler whom Sima Qian considers sufficiently established as historical to appear in the Records.) As the first systematic Chinese historical text, the Records profoundly influenced Chinese historiography and prose. In its effect, the work is comparable to Herodotus and his Histories. See Burton Watson, *Ssu Ma Ch'ien Grand Historian of China* (New York: Columbia University Press. 1958).

reference books with material taken from various sources and arranged according to physiognomy, when some outstanding physiognomists were mentioned, often were the *Shi Ji* copied and some of the stories of other physiognomists were added into those of Xu Fu. It was also because Xu Fu, an old humble woman, was made marquis by Emperor Gaozu of Han dynasty, people believed that she was mighty. In Wei and Jin Period (220-420) people mentioned Xu Fu always with another well-known physiognomist Tang Ju 唐举 (?-? ca. 2th century BC) in pre Qin Period; after Tang Dynasty (618-907), she was mentioned with Yuan Tiangang 袁天罡 (?-?, ca. in the 7<sup>th</sup> century). Some of the people even call physiognomy “art of Yuan and Xu 袁许之术”.

Guan Lu 管辂 (209-256) was one of the most famous physiognomist of his time. He performed many oracles for various high officials at the court of Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220). His methods are in two cases related to physiognomy in *San Guo Zhi* 三国志 (history of the Three Kingdoms Period). As for his works, only one text is extant, the *Guan Shi Di Li Zhi Meng* 管氏地理指蒙 (Guan's geomantic indicator). *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* attributes two works to him: *Ren Lun Yuan Ao Fu* 人伦渊奥赋 (the depth of man) and *Xiang Ying Er* 相婴儿 (analyzing children).

In the *Jing Ji Zhi* of *Sui Shu* 隋书 (history of Sui) in Sui Dynasty (581-619), there were seven volumes of physiognomy, including 46 items of *Xiang Shu* 相术, 2 items of *Xiang Jing Yao Lu* 相经要录 by Xiao Ji 萧吉 (?-?, ca. 6<sup>th</sup> century), 30 items of *Xiang Jing* 相经 and *Xiang Shu* 相术 by Zhong Wuli 钟武隶 (?-?), 1 item of *Wu Wang Xiang Shu* 武王相术, 9 items of *Za Xiang Shu* 杂相书 and 7 items of *Xiang Shu Tu* 相术图. In the *Yi Wen Zhi* of *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐书 (new book of Tang) there were 2 physiognomic works: 7 volume of *Xiang Shu* 相书 by Yuan Tiangang 袁天罡 and 3 volumes of *Yao Jue* 要诀. Song Dynasty (960-1279) is the period when physiognomy developed quickly. The *Yi Wen Zhi* of *Song Shi* 宋史 (history of Song) included sixty volumes of physiognomy, some of which were the most important physiognomic works in the whole history. There were 1 item of

*Guan Qi Se Chu Tu Xiang* 观其色出图相 by Guigu Zi 鬼谷子(?-?, ca. 700-400BC), 2 items of *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* 玉管照神局 by Song Qiqiu 宋齐丘 (887-959), 1 item of *Guan Qi Se Ge* 观气色歌, 2 items of *Xiang Shu* 相术, 1 item of *Yue Bo Dong Zhong Gui Jian* 月波洞中龟鉴, 3 items of *Rou Yan Tong Shen Lun* 肉眼通神论 by Tang Ju 唐举, 1 item of *Jin Suo Ge* 金锁歌, 2 items of *Xiang Ge* 相歌, *San Fu Xue Tang Zheng Jue* 三辅学堂正诀 by Liu Xubai 刘虚白(?-?, ca. in the 10<sup>th</sup> century), 1 item of *Xuan Zhu Nan Gu Fa* 玄珠囊骨法, *Qi Se Zhen Xiang Fa* 气色真相法, 1 item of *Ren Lun Feng Jian* 人伦风鉴 by Chen Tuan 陈抟, 1 item of *Yue Bo Dong Zhong Ji* 月波洞中记, 1 item of *Zao Jian Yuan Wei* 藻鉴渊微, 3 items of *Za Xiang Gu Ting Sheng* 杂相骨听声 and *Qi Se Wei Ying* 气色微应, 1 item of *Tong Wei Miao Jue* 通微妙诀, of *Zhong Ding Sheng Qi Gu Fa* 中定声气骨法, of *Jin Ge Qi Se Mi Lu* 金歌气色秘录, 1 item of *Xue Tang Qi Gu Xin Jing Jue* 学堂气骨心镜诀, 1 item of *Yu Ye Ge* 玉叶歌 and 1 item of *Za Xiang Fa* 杂相法 etc. and there were a record of the previous works such as *Gu Shen Guang Er Mu Fa* by Dongfang Shuo 东方朔 (154-93BC), *San Yuan Gui Jian* 三元龟鉴, *Xing Shen Xin Jian Tu* 形神心鉴图 by Xu Fu and *Gu Bu Zi Qing Xiang Fa* 姑布子卿相法 etc.<sup>219</sup>

It is notable that due to the chaotic style of Wu Xing Volume in Zi 子 radical in *Song Shi*, there was no reasonable classification among Yin Yang 阴阳, of divination, physiognomy and necromancy, and they were instead intermixed. Therefore, it was only possible to judge the category of the books from the title, which means that it was probably that the physiognomic books in *Song Shi* should be more than what had been figured out. Today, all the nine of recorded physiognomic works in official history of Sui and Tang Dynasties are scattered and it's the same to those in *Song Shi* we mentioned above, except for two: *Yue Bo Dong Zhong Ji* and *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju*.

In addition to the official history, a large number of physiognomic works in other unofficial bibliographies, which were largely accepted among the people. Some of them deserve attention, such as *Tong Zhi* 通志 (general

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<sup>219</sup> Wang, "Anthroposcopic books in Tang and Song dynasties," 103-107.

history) by Zheng Qiao 郑樵 (1104-1162) in the beginning of Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), in which there were 73 volumes, 195 items of physiognomic works in the *Yi Wen Zhi* of it. And the collection was not limited in the contemporary era. Advocating recording the lost books into the bibliography, Zheng Qiao brought into his book all the records in the previous dynasties.<sup>220</sup> Therefore there were the records already existing in *Han Zhi* 汉志 (history of Han Dynasty), *Sui Zhi* 隋志 (history of Sui Dynasty), *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐书 (new history of Tang Dynasty). More than half of the contemporary physiognomic works are not included in *Song Zhi* 宋志 (history of Song dynasty), only 29 of which were in the same. There were all less items of physiognomy in other unofficial bibliography in Song Dynasty, for example, in *Chong Wen Zong Mu* 崇文总目 (Chong Wen general bibliography) there were 14 volumes; in *Zhong Xing Guan Ge Shu Mu* 中兴馆阁书目 (Zhong Xing Guan Ge bibliography) there was 1 volume, in *Zhi Zhai Shu Lu Jie Ti* 直斋书录解题 (Zhi Zhai bibliography) there were 5, and in *Sui Chu Tang Shu Mu* 遂初堂书目 (Sui Chu Tang bibliography) there was only one. In *Jing Ji Zhi* of *Wen Xian Tong Kao* 文献通考 (Comprehensive Examination of Literature) by Ma Duanlin 马端林 (1254-1323) in Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368), in which there collected nine physiognomic works, which were indeed the works in Song Dynasty (960-1279). It is obvious that the physiognomy was very popular in Song Dynasty.

In this period there were two physiognomic works with long-lasting influence. One is *Tai Qing Shen Jian* 太清神鉴 (magic mirror of Tai Qing), allegedly compiled by Wang Pu 王朴 (?-959), a high official under Emperor Shi Zong of the Latter Zhou dynasty (951-960). The text was ranked in Zi 子 (philosophers), with the author marked “anonymous”, which is however demonstrated the status of the works and of the physiognomy. The other is *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* 玉管照神局, attributed by all sources to Song Qiqiu of the Southern Tang dynasty (937-975). It consists of three chapters, with theoretical accounts, details of body analysis and complexion analysis

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<sup>220</sup> Zhenzong Yao 姚振宗, “A textual research on the *Jing Ji Zhi* of *Sui Shu* 隋书经籍志考证,” in *Compiled edition of twenty-five history 二十五史补编* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Book Company, 1955), 1831.



respectively. The different types of bodies were made analogy with animals as a main methodology of physiognomy.

Chen Tuan was a physiognomist well known in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Between the 940s and his death in 989 he visited the imperial court twice, once in 956 under Emperor Shizong of Zhou, and another time in 984 under Emperor Taizong 宋太宗 (939-997) of Song dynasty. On the latter occasion he was honored with the title *Xi Yi Xian Sheng* 希夷先生. His methods of prognostication were mainly those from *Book of changes* 易经 and physiognomics. He passed these methods on Zhong Fang, from whom they were eventually transmitted to eminent philosophers as Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077) and Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017-1073). Chen Tuan was said being taught by the famous immortal Lv Dongbin 吕洞宾 and a rather obscure Taoist named Ma Yi 麻衣. The latter is reported to have given prognostications on the basis of energy analysis and physiognomy. A work entitled *Xin Fa* 心法 has been ascribed to him. Chen Tuan is not officially credited with a work on physiognomy, even though he is famed for his successful application.

There were some physiognomic works not included in ancient historical bibliography yet influential and accepted by the officials during Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1644, 1644-1911), which is another peak period for the physiognomy, such as the physiognomic works *Tai Qing Shen Jian*, *Ren Lun Da Tong Fu* 人伦大统赋 (prose on human and ethics) and *Tian Lun Ao Zhi* 天伦奥旨 (secrets on ethics) were still popular, with the new outcome well accepted by the people. *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* 神相全编 is the standard textbook of the Chinese traditional way of reading a person's health, character and fate from his appearance. It is regarded as "the most complete and widely available textbook of Chinese physiognomy, to earlier, still surviving materials."<sup>221</sup> It was originally compiled by Yuan Zhongche 袁忠彻

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<sup>221</sup> Kohn, "Tradition of the *Shenxiang Quangbian*," 227.

(1377-1457), a well-known physiognomist in Ming dynasty, declaring the works was esoteric and was taught by Chen Tuan.

The textbook deals with physiognomic principles, followed by physiognomic analysis of details, the whole body, and methods in which the typologies of the human body in terms of the five elements and of animal morphology were stated. It cites works of all the great masters of physiognomy such as Lv Dongbin, Guigu Zi, Tang Ju, Guan Lu, and even Bodhidharma, and uses earlier manuals, thus summarizing the experiences of ages. Yuan Zhongche, author of *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, was well known as physiognomist in the Ming dynasty, who served as government official and did numerous prognostications for prominent personages. His father, Yuan Gong 袁珙 (1335-1410) was also an expert of physiognomy. Yuan Gong even supposedly recognized Zhu Di 朱棣 (1360-1424), later Emperor Yongle at an early age and encouraged him to usurp the throne. Strong favored by this emperor, Yuan Gong also had a hand in selecting the crown prince.<sup>222</sup> Yuan Zhongche was the most influential physiognomist at the imperial court, accompanying the emperor on the expedition against the Mongols in 1422, where he made some correct predictions about battle situations and outcomes. After serving under the subsequent emperors, he retired in 1439 to write and compile the physiognomic book *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*.

There were respectively two magna opera in Ming and Qing dynasties: *Yong Le Da Dian* (Yongle Canon)<sup>223</sup> and *Si Ku Quan Shu* (Complete library

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<sup>222</sup> See Luther C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang, *Dictionary of Ming biography 1368-1644*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

<sup>223</sup> The *Yong Le Da Dian* 永乐大典 is a Chinese compilation commissioned by the Chinese Ming Dynasty emperor Yongle 永乐 in 1403 and completed by 1408. It was then the world's largest known general encyclopedia, and one of the earliest. Two thousand scholars worked on the project under the direction of the Yongle Emperor (reigned 1402-1424), incorporating eight thousand texts from ancient times up to the early Ming Dynasty. They covered an array of subjects, including agriculture, art, astronomy, drama, geology, history, literature, medicine, natural sciences, religion, and technology, as well as descriptions of unusual natural events. The Encyclopedia, which was completed in 1408 at Nanjing Guozijian (南京國子監); the ancient Nanjing University - Nanjing Imperial Central College), comprised 22,877 or 22,937 manuscript rolls, or chapters in 11,095 volumes occupying roughly 40 cubic metres (1400 ft<sup>3</sup>) and using 50 million Chinese characters. It was designed to include all that had ever been written on the Confucian canon, history, philosophy, and the arts and sciences. It was a massive collation of excerpts and works from the mass of Chinese literature and knowledge.

Fewer than 400 volumes of the three manuscript copies of the set survived into modern times. The

in the Four Branches of Literature)<sup>224</sup>, including a comprehensive collection of physiognomy. However, compared with *Yongle Canon*, *Si Ku Quan Shu* had a more systematic edition. According to *Si Ku Ti Yao* 四库提要, *Tai Qing Shen Jian* had been said to be written by Wang Pu 王朴 in Late Zhou Dynasty (951-960) but in fact was forged. The academician in Qing Dynasty (1636-1911) compiled it into *Si Ku Quan Shu* out of *Yongle Canon*. *Ren Lun Da Tong Fu* was written by Zhang Xingjian 张行简 in Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) and was annotated by Xue Yannian 薛延年(?-?) in Yuan Dynasty, which was also edited both in *Yongle Canon* and *Si Ku Quan Shu*. And in Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), the physiognomic works were arranged systematically and published on a large scale. The most typical one is *Yong Le Cannon* in Ming dynasty, though there was no discrimination of quality in the selection. However, *Si Ku Quan Shu* in Qing dynasty fulfilled this.

It is a brief survey of the physiognomic works and experts in Chinese history. It is thus clear that the compartmentalization of physiognomy

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original copy has disappeared from the historical record. The second copy was gradually dissipated and lost from the late-18th century onwards, until the roughly 800 volumes remaining were burnt in a fire started by Chinese forces attacking the neighboring British legation, or looted by the Eight-Nation Alliance forces during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The surviving volumes are in libraries and private collections around the world. The most complete of these surviving later Ming Dynasty copies of the Yongle Encyclopedia are kept at the National Library of China in Beijing. See Bogong Guo 郭柏恭, *Yongle dadian kao* 永乐大典考 (Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1937).

<sup>224</sup>The *Si ku Quan shu* 四库全书, variously translated as the Imperial Collection of Four, Emperor's Four Treasuries, Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature, or Complete Library of the Four Treasuries, is the largest collection of books in Chinese history and probably the most ambitious editorial enterprise in the history of the world.

The editorial board included 361 scholars, with Ji Yun 纪昀 and Lu Xixiong 陆锡熊 as chief editors. They began compilation in 1773 and completed it in 1782. The editors collected and annotated over 10,000 manuscripts from the imperial collections and other libraries, destroyed some 3,000 titles, or works, that were considered to be anti-Manchu, and selected 3,461 titles, or works, for inclusion into the Siku quanshu. They were bound in 36,381 volumes 册 with more than 79,000 chapters 卷, comprising about 2.3 million pages, and approximately 800 million Chinese characters.

The *Si Ku Quan Shu* collection is divided into four ku 库 (warehouse; storehouse; treasury; repository) parts, in reference to the imperial library divisions. Jing 经 (Classics) Chinese classic texts; Shi 史 (Histories) and geographies from Chinese history; Zi 子 (Masters) philosophy, arts, sciences from Chinese philosophy; Ji 集 (Collections) anthologies from Chinese literature. See R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

became more and more precise. And physiognomy itself was in process from popularity to definition.

There were many physiognomic works popular among the people and formed among the people, which were an outcome of the groups of physiognomists. There was a strange phenomenon that in history there was an inclination that the people forge the name of some celestial being or some forefathers as the authors of their works in the aim of the mystification, such as *Ma Yi Xiang Fa* 麻衣相法 (Ma Yi physiognomics) in the name of God Ma Yi, *Yue Bo Dong Zhong Ji* in the name of Host of Yue Bo Cave 月波洞主. Or some of them forge the name of some big man famous for physiognomy in the antique time such as Tang Ju, Xu Fu, Chen Tuan and Yuan Tiangang. As a consequence, there was such flux of the so-called works of them that the academic circles called “system” of one like physiognomic system of Xu Fu.

Liu Zhiji 刘知几 (661-721) in Tang Dynasty (618-907) proved it true by saying that the *Xiang Jing* 相经 of Xu Fu was attached importance in the populace. Besides *Xiang Jing* 相经, there were quite a few physiognomic books and charts flaunted in her name. For example, in the scattered *Wu Wang Xiang Shu* 武王相术 in *Jing Ji Zhi* 经籍志 of *Sui Shu* 隋书, the person with surname Xu was probably Xu Fu. In *Tong Zhi* 通志 there were *Jin Ge* 金歌 and *Xiang Shu* 相术 with the name of author Xu Fu; in *Song Shi* 宋史 there were Xu Fu's *Xing Shen Xin Jian Tu* 形神心鉴图 and *Xiang Jue* 相诀. And in other physiognomic works, besides those marked the author as Xu Fu, there were too many to mention one by one excerpting Xu Fu. In *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* there are the section of *Xu Fu Ting Sheng* 许负听声 (Xu Fu physiognomy of voice), *Xu Fu Xiang De Qi* 许负相德气 (Xu Fu physiognomy of virtue and Qi), *Xu Fu Xiang Er* 许负相耳 (Xu Fu physiognomy of ear), *Xu Fu Xiang Kou* 许负相口 (Xu Fu physiognomy of mouth), *Xu Fu Xiang Chun* 许负相唇 (Xu Fu physiognomy of lip), *Xu Fu Xiang She* 许负相舌 (Xu Fu physiognomy of tongue), *Xu Fu Xiang Chi* 许负相齿 (Xu Fu physiognomy of teeth), *Xu Fu Xiang Shou* 许负相手 (Xu Fu physiognomy of hand), *Xu Fu*

*Xiang Zu* 许负相足 (Xu Fu physiognomy of feet) etc. although most of them were forged, it is still astonishing that they had kept their influence for such a long time.

Chinese physiognomic works were rarely out of the range of “anthology”. Physiognomy, indeed, has always been the summary of previous records of thought, method and experience. During the transmission from generation to generation, people revised and enlarged the works according to their own understanding and their practical experience. In spite of the adaptation, the core of the idea and the method kept stable. In fact the physiognomy is practical knowledge. Before the people could modify it, they would have learned, understood and been conversant with it. And when they compared it with their experience, they could make induction and add or prune something. In this sense, the physiognomic works were almost collected and edited on the base of the previous works and practices of their times. In the preface of *Tai Qing Shen Jian* (magic mirror of Tai Qing), one of the most important physiognomic works, the author Wang Pu (?-959) says: “I have been involved in it (the physiognomy) since I was a child. I have checked both the past and the future and found nothing unrealized like the books had said. In aim of a deep research I left Linwu Cave and the mountain to search for all the books at all times. Then I have collected all the best and made it *Tai Qing Shen Jian*.”<sup>225</sup> In the preface of his *Ren Lun Da Tong Fu*, Xue Yannian in Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368) wrote: “The book extracts the confidential and the essential of hundreds of years among the miscellaneous, concentrating on the main points and embraces all the ideas of physiognomy with more than three thousand opinions.”<sup>226</sup> Even though both of the two books were signed with the name of the author, rather than some in the name of a certain celestial beings, they were still collected and edited. And the other books such as *Ma*

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<sup>225</sup> Pu Wang 王朴, preface of “*Tai Qing Shen Jian 太清神鉴*,” in *Si Ku Quan Shu*. (Beijing: Wen Yuan Ge, 1999), 1

<sup>226</sup> Xingjian Zhang 张行简, “*Ren Lun Da Tong Fu 人伦大统赋*,” ed., Yuannian Xue 薛延年, in *An overview of Chinese arts of necromancy 中国方术概说* ed. Ling Li 李零 (Beijing: Ren Min Zhong Guo Press, 1993), 1302.

*Yi Xiang Fa* 麻衣相法, *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* 神相全编, *Xiang Li Heng Zhen* 相理衡真, were all nothing but an induction and sum-up by cutting the superfluous and extracting the essentials. One text by Chen Tuan named *Feng Jian* 风鉴, for example, is quoted as *Feng Jian Ge* 风鉴歌 in the sixth chapter of *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, and it is also found as *Chen Tuan Xian Sheng Feng Jian* 陈抟先生风鉴 in the *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* as well as under the title *Shen Mi Lun* 神秘论 in the *Tai Qing Shen Jian*. It is frequently quoted in commentary sections of the *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* and other physiognomic manuals.<sup>227</sup>

## 2. Philosophical basis

As one of the branches of *Fang Shu*, it involves a very complex theoretical knowledge. And because of the contention of a hundred schools of philosophies, it is difficult to decide which school of thought physiognomy was influenced by. However, on the whole, *Tian Ren He Yi* 天人合一 (oneness of heaven and man), *Ying Yang Wu Xing* 阴阳五行 (positive and negative poles of nature and five elements of nature) and *Xiang Shu* 象数思维 (way of thinking that one describe and explain things by analogy) supply the theoretical basis after generalization and integration.

### 2.1 *Tian Ren He Yi* (oneness of heaven and man)

Holistic way of thinking *Tian Ren He Yi* was first seen in *Book of Changes* 易经 (the 3rd to the 2nd millennium BC). In Chinese classical philosophy, *Tian* 天 refers to different objects. It is universe, heaven or god, sky or nature. Heaven creates man; man can also become a universe. As Xu Zheng 徐整 (?-?) in Three Kingdoms Period<sup>228</sup> wrote in his *Wu Yuan Li Nian Ji* (a chronicle of Wu Yuan), at the beginning of the world Pangu 盘古 was born, when he died he incarnated as the world. His breath became wind and cloud;

<sup>227</sup> Kohn, "tradition of the *Shenxiang Quangbian*," 238-239.

<sup>228</sup> In a strict academic sense it refers to the period between the foundation of the Wei 魏 in 220 and the conquest of the Wu 吴 by the Jin Dynasty in 280. However, many Chinese historians and laymen extend the starting point of this period back to the uprising of the Yellow Turbans in 184.

his voice became thunder; his left eye became sun, right eye moon; his body limbs became mountains; his blood became rivers; his muscles and veins became field and flesh became earth; his hair was stars and his teeth and bones were metal and stones, his marrow became pearls and jades and sweat became rain. In the process, man and nature are interactive and alternative.<sup>229</sup> The ancients consider that man should be harmonious with Tian, as Guan Zhong (ca.720-645BC) in Spring and Autumn Period (770-476BC) said: “where there is a harmony between heaven and man, there is a beauty of nature 人与天调，然后天地之美生。”<sup>230</sup>

Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒(179-104BC), a Confucius philosopher in Eastern Han dynasty (25-220) set up his own theory of *Tian Ren He Yi* named *Tian Ren Gan Ying* 天人感应 (heaven-human induction) by absorbing all the relative ideas, which included three points: first, there is a oneness of heaven and man in man's body. Man has 360 condyles as 360 days of nature; Man's head is like the vault of heaven; man's hair is like sparking stars; man's eye and ear are like sun and moon and nose and mouth send out wind and air. Second, there is a harmony between nature and emotion and morality of man. Man has emotions like nature has seasons. Third, there is a correspondence between nature and man. As “Tong Lei Xiang Ying, Tong Qi Xiang Qiu 同类相应，同气相求” (like attracts like and act in unison), it means similar things can come closer to each other, resulting in induction and achieve life-level communication. Therefore, in his *Chun Qiu Fan Lu* 春秋繁露 (Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals), he said: good things attract beauty and evil ugly. And any kind of disaster is not isolated or spontaneous natural phenomenon, but is caused by improper words and deeds. And change of the words and deeds of people would be demonstrated through the person's appearance. The universal mode of oneness of the heaven and man is the conclusion out of the exploration of the relation between the nature and the human being in the ancient times when the

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<sup>229</sup> Zheng Xu, “Wu Yuan Li Nian Ji 五运历年纪,” in *A Collection of arts and literature 艺文类聚* ed. Xun Ouyang 欧阳询 (557-641) et al., (Shanghai: Shanghai Gu Ji Press, 1982), 2-3.

<sup>230</sup> Zhong Guan 管仲(?-645BC), *Guan Zi 管子*, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2004. 41.

science and technology were not developed, which to some extent reflected the basic spirit of Chinese traditional philosophy.

The era when the Chinese physiognomy was born was when philosophies on the topic that the nature and the man come into being from the same origin were prevalent. From the interpretation of origin of life in physiognomic works one can see that Chinese physiognomy was influenced from the very beginning by the thought. When the theory of *Tian Ren He Yi* was gradually established, the holographic ideology in physiognomy was improved and systematized. The theory of physiognomy assumed that the relationship between human, nature and society was of corresponding isomorphism. Man, nature and society are similarly homologous, in mutual condition and in mutually dependence.

In contrast with the interpretation of the relationship between the man and the nature in the physiognomic works such as *Ma Yi Xiang Fa*, like “the human is out of the air of *Ying Yang* 阴阳, in the form of the heaven and earth, benefit from the materials of *Wu Xing* 五行 and therefore is the most intelligent in the universe”, with the theory of *Tian Ren He Yi* in *Chun Qiu Fan Lu* of Dong Zhushu, one can see the accordance between two systems. And the specific principles in physiognomy were usually on how to judge according to how the face or the body matched with the nature. That is, in Chinese physiognomy, the judgement of one’s fate relied on how much the human, as one part of the universe as a whole, was corresponding with the form and the order of nature. Hence, any appearance similar with the nature is auspicious, otherwise, it is inauspicious. *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* thus spoke: “[...] head is like sky, feet like earth, eyes like sun and moon, voice like thunder, blood like river, joints like metal and stones, nose and forehead like mountains, hair like vegetation 故头象天，足象地，眼象日月，声音象雷霆，血脉象江河，骨节象金石，额鼻象山岳，毫发象草木。”<sup>231</sup> In physiognomy, facial organs are subdivided into *Wu Yue* 五岳 (five great mountains) and *Si Du* 四渎 (four great rivers). Forehead, nose, chin and cheekbones are compared with

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<sup>231</sup> Zhongche Yuan 袁忠彻 (1377-1459), “Shen Xiang Quan Bian 神相全编,” in *Xiang Shu 相术*, ed. Tong Zheng 郑同 (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 127.



five famous mountains in China. Forehead is Heng shan 衡山, chin is Heng shan 恒山, nose is Song shan 嵩山, left cheekbone is Tai shan 泰山 and right cheekbone is Hua shan 华山. The fluid of ears, eyes, mouth, nares and are compared with four great rivers, Yangtze River 长江, Yellow River 黄河, Huai River 淮河, Ji River 济水. *Wu Yue* should be raised and *Si Du* should be deep and clear. If not, for example, with sharp head, nose or forehead, or dull eyes, fuzzifying mouth, one would be evil or suffer misfortune.

And the judgment relies on the correspondence between human and the order of society as well. The appearance accordance with the social order is superior, otherwise it is inferior. In the system of universe, or nature, people worshiped the sky and the sun and honored the dragon and phoenix. In the social system, the emperor was worshiped. Therefore in physiognomy the sky and the sun as well as the dragon and phoenix were used to symbolize the appearance of emperor. Besides, because of the apotheosis of the tortoise in remote antiquity, the man with tortoise-like veins in the body would be regarded as rich and noble.

There is no antinomy between the correspondence of human with the nature and with the society. In Chinese elite culture, everything including all things in the nature, all forms of life and all reasons of the society are the result of the movement of *Yin Yang*. Thus, corresponding with the society is equal to corresponding with the nature, vice versa. The theory of 13 facial parts<sup>232</sup> in physiognomy was a simulation and analogy with the nature, and at the same time it was interpreted under the principle of political organization and human relations.

The main effects of the theory of *Tian Ren He Yi* on the physiognomy were manifested in the correspondence with the creatures in the nature and beings in the universe, such as the homologues of body and the sky and earth,

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<sup>232</sup>In physiognomy, the face is divided into 13 parts according to the relations among the heave, the earth and the man. From above the 13 parts are tian zhong 天中, tian ting 天庭, si kong 司空, zhong zheng 中正, yin tang 印堂, shan gen 山根, nian shang 年上, shou shang 寿上, zhun tou 准头, ren zhong, 人中 shui xing 水翼, cheng jiang 承浆 and di ge 地阁.

and the heavenly bodies, or the analogy of the body of animals and of the human, which can be divided into the following types:

First, correspondence of stars, sun and moon and the solar term<sup>233</sup>

This is closely related to astrology. The Antique usually connected one's birth with some phenomenon of the astronomic and atmospheric changes or phenomena, which was common in both official and private history. The earliest record of this is in *Liu Zi* 刘子,<sup>234</sup> which said that the fate of a man, on every aspect of being able and virtuous or foolish, of being noble or lowly, of being fortunate or unfortunate, is decided at the very time he is an embryo.....all is up to the stars. When the corresponding star is auspicious, he is auspicious, when inauspicious, he is inauspicious.<sup>235</sup> And in physiognomy, the theory of *Wu Xing Liu Yao* 五星六曜 is typically an analogy with stars, which make the left ear corresponding with Venus, right ear with Jupiter, forehead with Mars, nose with Saturn and mouth with Mercury. Each part has its features and therefore indicates some particular signs. In *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju*, the left ear is Venus; in charge of the prestige of man and that the mouth is Mercury.<sup>236</sup> In Tang Dynasty (618-907), the analogy of the stars is widely accepted. And *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* was written in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period (907-960), immediately following Tang Dynasty. So it is certain that the theory of *Wu Xing Liu Yao* is formed around Tang Dynasty. And in Song Dynasty, the theory was systematized in particular works. In *Yi Wen Zhi* of *Song Shi* (book of Song dynasty), there was a volume named *Wu Xing Liu Yao*, which was an evidence of it.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Referring to four seasons of spring, summer, autumn, winter, and eight solar terms of spring begins, summer begins, autumn begins, winter begins, vernal equinox, autumnal equinox, Summer Solstice and midwinter.

<sup>234</sup> The author of the book is unknown. And the discussion on it has never stopped. Most agree that it is written in the range of year of 200-400. See Zhiping Chen, "Textual Research the author and the creation time of *Liu Zi*," *Journal of Ancient Books Collation and Studies* 4 (2007): 14-18.

<sup>235</sup> Yashu Fu 傅亚庶 ed., *Liu Zi* 刘子 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1998), 35.

<sup>236</sup> Qiqiu Song 宋齐丘 (887-959), "Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju 玉管照神局," in *An overview of Chinese arts of necromancy* ed. Ling Li (Beijing: Ren Ming Zhong Guo Press, 1993), 687.

<sup>237</sup> Yiping Chen 陈逸平 and Bo Yi 亦波. "On the influence of Tian Ren Gan Ying on the anthroposcopic books in Dunhuang 论天人感应思想对敦煌相书的影响," *Dunhuang research* 2 (2005): 80-83.

*Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* held that the sun and the moon light the great world and make all visible. The eyes are like the sun and moon of a man.<sup>238</sup> In the extant manuscript in Duhuang there was a similar statement like “the left eye is the sun and the right eye is the moon” Moreover, in the manuscripts of Duhuang, there was a chart of distribution of twelvemonth on face, where there were marked the twelve months on the points of face up to hairline, down to the chin. One can judge the fortune in each month from the point of each month in the face.

Second, the correspondence of the nature and the mountains

Consider still the manuscripts in Duhuang as example; there were a lot of contents related to the analogy of the nature and the mountains in the denomination and the interpretation of the body. In the facial chart of *Jiu Zhou* 九州 (nine provinces), the face was regarded as the territory of China which was divided into nine regions, respectively representing the nine parts of the face as the nine regions of China: mid-forehead was Yangzhou 扬州, nose Yuzhou 豫州, chin Jingzhou 荆州, left forehead Xuzhou 徐州, right forehead Jizhou 冀州, left cheekbone Qingzhou 青州, right cheekbone Liangzhou 梁州, left cheek Yanzhou 兖州 and right cheek Yongzhou 雍州.

In *Tai Qing Shen Jian* 太清神鉴, this phenomenon is summarized in this way: as the man is born of the movement of intrinsic air of *Yin Yang*, he resembles the nature in heaven and on the earth, embracing the essence of *Wu Xing* and thus is the most spiritual among all the creations. Hence his head is as round as the sky; his feet are as square as the earth, his eyes are like the sun and moon; his sounds are like thunderclap; his blood vessels are like rivers and bones and joints like metals and stones; his nose and forehead are like mountains; his hairs are like vegetation. The sky should be high and

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<sup>238</sup> Song, “Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju,” 687.

round and the earth should be wide and massive; the mountains should be high and precipitous and the vegetation should be flourishing.

Third, the correspondence of animals

In this case there are two situations: one is the connection of the appearance of some part of body with some animal, the other is the analogy of the features of the body or the movement of the body with that of the animal.

In terms of the first, one can find many clues in the physiognomic books of Xu Fu. It is said that the eyes could be in such a form: the one having the eyes with the black and white in sharp contrast is noble. If his eyes are like the eyes of jackals and wolves, he is lowly and evil and unreliable. The one with tiger's eyes are to be generals. The one with dragon's eyes or phoenix's eyes is rich and noble. The one with elephant's is noble. The one with the wasp's eyes is the courtier.

Besides, the character and destination of a man can be seen from his bird-like mouth, swallow-like chin, tortoise-like back, crow-like belly, elephant-like knees.

The second terms are common in the manuscripts in Duhuang. In *Gait XXVI* it was said: the man walking like a dragon will be prime minister; like a tiger, general; like a goose, senior official; like a tortoise, also prime minister; like a baby, noble; like a sparrow, lowly. The woman walks like a snake, hinders her husband; like a crab, hinders the husband and is basebred; like a magpie, is lowly. All in all, the gaits of those big animals in a stable way always indicate richness and nobleness. On the contrary, the small animals always jumping indicate poor and lowly.

There were some sounds of the man related such as the phrase "the man sounding like a jackal is lowly and rapacious.

If the theory of *Tian Ren Gan Ying* is to explain the relationship between heaven and man in order to indicate the origins of all of the ethic and

hierarchy of the society and the passivity of the human, the physiognomy is to re-explain, under the guidance of the theory of *Tian Ren He Yi*, to the people the situation and social status in the past and at present or predict his destination in the future, including his favorable or unfavorable circumstance, good or ill luck, wealth or woe, safety or danger, rise or decline, rough or smooth, longevity or ephemerality, so that the man can access to psychological balance and make his choice in the passive situation.

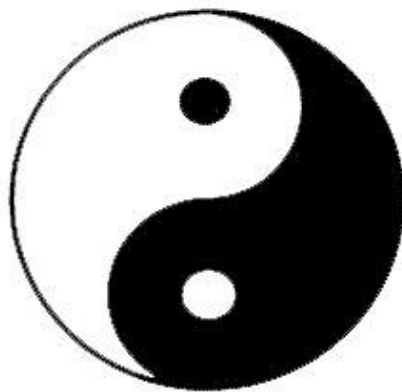
It is worth mentioning that this doctrine of *Tian Ren Gan Ying* is not a causal theory, but an induction, because it is a similar phase response, the relationship of mutual cooperation. This is one of the typical features of Chinese classical philosophy.

Moreover, there is another viewpoint in the theory of *Tian Ren He Yi*, that is, all external appearances must have relation to the inner qualities. The theory was also the principle of traditional Chinese medicine. It means that any kind of pathological changes of the human body will be reflected in the human body, which laid the theoretical foundation of Four-diagnostic method. Physiognomy makes use of it by emphasizing the ethic. The scholars in Song dynasty (960-1279) called the contactor between heaven and man *Xing* 性, which means nature or ethic principle in one's heart. So the nature inside will be reflected in outside appearance. Therefore, man with good nature will have propitious looking and will be fortunate in his life. At the same time, one's appearance formed with his natural disposition is not always unchanged. Man's deeds can influence his looking and then change his fate. In brief, if one is of good nature or if he does good deeds, his appearance will be correspondent with nature, otherwise, his appearance will be more and more conflicted with nature, and his life will thus get worse.

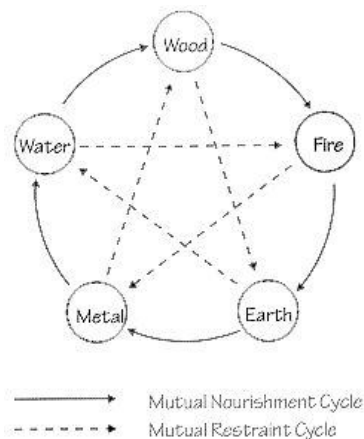
## **2.2 *Yin Yang Wu Xing* (*Yin Yang* and Five Elements)**

The theory of *Yin Yang* and five elements can be understood as the basis of the Chinese understanding of the nature of the cosmos. The *Yin Yang* holds that everything is the product of two principles: *Yin* 阴, which is negative,

weak, female and destructive and *Yang* 阳, which is positive, strong, male and creative. It is the interaction of these two principles that gives origin to the five elements and enables change to take place within the world. F.I is the most commonly used symbol to represent the *Yin Yang* philosophy. This symbol is known as *Taiji* 太极- the grand ultimate. The big enclosed circle symbolizes the whole universe. The curvature within the circle symbolizes the opposing, yet interdependent nature of *Yin* and *Yang*. The black (*Yin*) and the white (*Yang*) tear drop shapes symbolize the decreasing and increasing of *Yin* and *Yang*, as well as the transformation of *Yin* and *Yang*. At the highest concentration of *Yang* there is black dot, and at the highest concentration of *Yin*, there is white dot. The dots symbolize that *Yin* and *Yang* are not absolute. They are not only interdependent; by there are subdivisions of *Yin* and *Yang* within *Yin* and within *Yang*.



F.I



F. II

*Wu Xing* 五行 means the five elements that make of the world: wood, fire, earth, metal, water; when we talk of five elements we have to remember that they represent a dynamic process and not the “elements” that come together to produce things. The five elements represent cyclic movements. There are two orders of the five elements, called *Xiang Sheng Xiang Ke* 相生相克 (Mutual Nourishment and mutual restraint or mutual product and mutual overcome). Mutual Nourishment and Restraint cycles are not independent cycles. They interact with each other and are closely related. F.

II is a typical representation of the normal cyclic interactions of the Five Elements.

In physiognomy, the concept of *Yin Yang Wu Xing* permeates in the interpretation of the appearances and the destinations. *Yin* and *Yang* originally refers to facing or being against the sun. Ancient Chinese thinkers use the concept of *Yin* and *Yang* to resolve two opposing material forces in mutual growth and decline in nature. The people believed that everything in the world is in the situation of anatomy like *Yin* and *Yang*, emphasizing the function of differences and oppositions in the process of changes; at the same time, they believed in the identity of *Yin* and *Yang* and admire the function of Integration and coherence between them in the development of the world. *Yin Yang* theory can be traced back to *the Book of Changes*, in which there is a concept of *Qian Kun* 乾坤. Qian Kun is *Yin Yang*, or is *Liang Yi* 两仪. Lao Dan 老聃(?-?, ca. 6<sup>th</sup> century BC) said: “The Way (*Tao* 道) bears sensation; sensation bears memory, sensation and memory bear abstraction. And abstraction bears the entire world; each thing in the world bears feeling and doing, and, imbued with mind, harmony with the Way 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物，万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和。”<sup>239</sup> What Lao-tzu called *Tao* is material with its specific performance of *Yin Yang* and *Qi* 气, on which life depends. In the Warring States (403-221 BC), there was a further development of *Yin Yang* theory, as recorded in *Guo Yu* 国语, Bo Yangfu 伯阳甫 (?-?, ca. 7<sup>th</sup> century BC) once used *Yin Yang* theory to explain the seismic phenomena.<sup>240</sup>

The word *Wu Xing* first appeared in *the Shi Ji*, which put forward that *Wu Xing* refers to five elements of water, fire, wood, metal and earth. At the end of the Warring States period (403BC-221BC), philosophers like Zou Yan 邹衍 (305-240BC) realized that five elements do not exist in isolation, and then they put forward the theory of *Xiang Sheng Xiang Sheng* 相生相胜. It is

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<sup>239</sup> Qianzhi Zhu 朱谦之 ed., *Proofread of Lao Zi 老子校释* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984), 174-175.

<sup>240</sup> Yuangao Xu 徐元诰, *Guo Yu Ji Jie 国语集解* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2002), 26.

everything to maintain the relative balance as indispensable condition. Later, people matched things with five elements and formed Wu Zang 五脏 (five organs---liver, heart, lung, spleen, kidney), Wu Wei 五味 (five flavors---sweetness, sourness, bitterness, peppery hotness, and saltiness), Wu Fang 五方 (five directions--- south, north, east, west and centre) etc. to generalize all the things and phenomenon in the nature.

After the mid-Warring States period, there was the gradual convergence of *Yin Yang* and the Five Elements. Till Han dynasty, Dong Zhongshu (179-104BC) made it specific by saying: “*Shao Yang* 少阳 rises with wood and promotes spring; *Tai Yang* 太阳 rises with fire and promotes summer; *Shao Yin* 少阴 rises with metal and promotes autumn; *Tai Yin* 太阴 rises with water and promotes winter.”<sup>241</sup> Since then, *Yin Yang* and Five Elements Theory penetrates into all fields. It covered not only the phenomenon in the nature, but also the one in the society: its power is over philosophy, politics, religion, science and art.

The physiognomy explained the origin of the life with the theory of *Yin Yang*. At the beginning, people believed that the man was born of the heaven. In *Lv Shi Chun Qiu* (Mister Lv's Spring and Autumn) in Qin Dynasty (221-207BC) it said: “The human are out of *Yin Yang* and *Yin Yang* is out of heaven 凡人物者阴阳之化也, 阴阳者造乎天而成者也.”<sup>242</sup> The theory of *Bing Qi* 稟气 of Wang Chong 王充 (27-97) in Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD) also agreed that the life is from the *Tian* 天. Later the theory of *Yin Yang* and *Bin Qi* were combined to explain that the life is out of *Qi* 气 (air) of *Yin Yang*. For example, Wang Fu (83-170) said: “*Wu Xing* and *Ba Gua* 八卦<sup>243</sup>

<sup>241</sup> Zhongshu Dong 董仲舒, *Chun Qiu Fan Lu* 春秋繁露, ed. Ling Shu 凌曙 (1775-1829) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975), 409-410.

<sup>242</sup> Buwei Lv 吕不韦 (ca. 290-235BC) et. al., *Lv Shi Chun Qiu* 吕氏春秋, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975, 20.

<sup>243</sup> *Ba Gua* are eight diagrams used in Taoist cosmology to represent a range of interrelated concepts. Each consists of three lines, each either “broken” or “unbroken,” representing a Yin line or a Yang line, respectively. Due to their tripartite structure, they are often referred to as “trigrams” in English.

The trigrams are related to Taiji philosophy and the Wu Xing. The ancient Chinese classic *Book of Changes* consists of the 64 pairs of trigrams (called “hexagrams”) and commentary on them. The interrelationships among the trigrams are represented in two arrangements, the Primordial (先天八



are out of *Yin Yang*. And the Intrinsic air decides the way they work 五行八卦，阴阳所生，稟气薄厚，以著其行。”<sup>244</sup> The physiognomics makes *Yin Yang Wu Xing* as the basic idea. *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* 玉管照神局 said: “Life is born from *Qi* and one’s appearance is out of *Yin Yang* 神传气授[...]稟阴阳钟秀之源[...]才成相貌。”<sup>245</sup> *Tai Qing Shen Jian* 太清神鉴 also held: “The appearance is given by the heaven with *Yin Yang*. The *Qi* of *Yin Yang* is the true world and creates all the different men 道为貌兮天与形，默授阴阳稟性情。阴阳之气天地真，化出尘寰几样人。”<sup>246</sup>

In physiognomics, almost all the opposites like up and down, left and right, in and out, big and small, fortunate and unfortunate, good and evil, in the body, organ, sound, color, and action or human relations could be explained with *Yin Yang*. In physiognomic treatise like *Tai Qing Shen Jian* it is said: “the way of the heaven moves is *Yin* and *Yang*; the way of the earth is strong and weak. Therefore with the mutual essential strong and weak the earth bears all the lives [...] thus the man’s bones and flesh are the same. So the flesh of one’s body should not be neither too fat nor too thin, the bones should not be neither too hard nor too soft. Being over means *Yin* over *Yang*, and being lack means *Yang* over *Yin* 立天之道，曰阴与阳；立地之道，曰柔与刚。故地据刚柔之体，而能生育万物也。[...]故人之有骨肉也，亦若是矣。故肉丰而不欲有余，骨少而不欲不足，有余则阴胜于阳，不足则阳盛于阴。” *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* said as well: “The moving is in the range of *Yang*

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卦), “Earlier Heaven” or “Fuxi” bagua (伏羲八卦), and the Manifested, “Later Heaven,” (后天八卦) or “King Wen” bagua. The trigrams have correspondences in astronomy, astrology, geography, geomancy, anatomy, the family, and elsewhere. The eight trigrams are:

- Tian 天 “Heaven”
- Ze 泽 “Lake/Marsh”
- Huo 火 “Fire”
- Dian 雷 “Thunder”
- Feng 风 “Wind”
- Shui 水 “Water”
- Shen 山 “Mountain”
- Di 地 “Earth”

<sup>244</sup> Fu Wang 王符 (83-170). *Qian Fu Lun 潜夫论* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Book Company, 1985), 54.

<sup>245</sup> Song, “Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju,” 46.

<sup>246</sup> Pu Wang 王朴 (?–959) *Tai Qing Shen Jian 太清神鉴*, in *Imperial Collection of Four 四库全书*. (Beijing: Wen Yuan Ge, 1999)

while the staying is in the range of *Yin*. 凡行则属阳，坐则属阴。阳主动，阴主静”<sup>247</sup>

In the interpretation of the good appearance and bad appearance of men and women we can see clearly the contrast between *Yin* and *Yang*. In the manuscripts of Dunhuang, we can read some doctrines like: “the good appearances of men, lie in the thick and soft hands and feet, in the square and upright and square face and forehead....The good appearances of women, lie in the small and fleshy feet, thin hair, which means they make their husband sons prosperous and they would be rich and noble. 男子好相者，手足厚软，额面方正，好相也。...凡女人欲得细脚多肉，身体欲得方直，面色欲得光白，眉目白黑分明。口小，舌方，耳色白于面，手足细长，头发细，此女宜夫利子，大富贵。” Men are of *Yang* and women are of *Yin*. According to their respective property, men should be tall and strong while women should be slender and soft so that their destination should be promising. On the contrary, if men have the appearance of women or women have the appearance of men, both are bad.

Physiognomy divided people into five types according to *Wu Xing* with typical features. For example, man of metal has round head with white face and ears; man of wood has white ears, bright red lips and raised forehead; man of water has big mouth with dark lips; man of fire has sharp cheekbones and red eyes; man of earth has plane head and plump nose and chin<sup>248</sup>. The characters of the five types of people were defined by combining with yin-yang and thus the fate could be predicted in this way.

Five facial organs were matched with Five Elements, too. If they match well with each other and in line with the nature, it is propitious. If not, such as big ears with thin lips or big nose with small eyes, it is a sign of misfortune.

Furthermore, the facial colors are divided into yellow, green, white, red and black, which are associated to good or ill luck. According to the concept of *Wu Xing*, the yellow signifies center and earth, which is the most

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<sup>247</sup> Yuan “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 58.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

worshipful color. The robe of emperors in ancient China was always yellow. Therefore, yellow always indicates something lucky like winning promotion. The green symbolizes the east and wood. If one's face is green, it means he is rich. But there are some contrary thought which argues that green indicates illness and death. The white symbolizes the west and metal, which means death. The red symbolizes the south and fire, which is always connected with bleeding. The black symbolizes the north and water, indicating the death and illness.

Thus it can be seen that the traditional concept of *Yin Yang Wu Xing*, as an elementary concept of the ancient Chinese to understand the nature and the society, has been penetrating the physiognomy as a basic principle of it.

### **2.3 *Xiang Shu Si Wei* (thinking of image and number)**

Ancient philosophy, as the so-called *Xiang Shu* 象数, is overall mode of thinking on the external world. The Antique considered that the difference of objective things are decided by the harmonious cooperation of yin-yang they have. Due to the endless changes of Yin-yang, all the things keep moving and changing. Therefore, any abstract notion cannot define or describe the being and developing of things exactly and completely. The only way is to make analogy by using the known ecological form of similar things so that man can achieve an overall view and grasp of the unknown. Hence, the ancients' image feeling capacity of the specific things far exceeded the capacity of abstract thinking, and their interest in specific things was taken much more in their understanding of abstract things. Their ability to compare or metaphorize some ideas and thoughts with specific things was much stronger than to explain some specific phenomenon with abstract concepts.

The sages believed that the differences of the objectives in the form result from the ratio of the *Qi* (air) they bear. The *Qi* of *Yin Yang Wu Xing* is forever in the circle of movement, and leads to the movements and changes of all the objectives, including the swing of the pendulum, construction and deconstruction. There is no way but understanding and mastering the

unknown of the universe by making analogy with the known. That is exactly the reason why the ancient Chinese always used concrete objects or images to analyze instead of the abstract notions or definitions, just like the saying: “the sage makes a sign to represent a meaning.”

The forms of the objects are out of the image, whereas the image is evaluated by the number. Nothing in the world is out of Shu and none of Shu is out of odd and even. Again, the odd and even is in the range of *Yin* and *Yang*, which following the trace of the air of *Yin Yang*, locate themselves in the universe and form a dynamic system. The physiognomy promotes this system in its theory. It holds that the human being is a smaller universe in the cosmos. The understanding of the cosmos can be made through the understanding of this small one. And understanding the small universe can also be made through the understanding of the big one. That is, they respond to each other. Li Ling holds that because Chinese physiognomy is characterized by its visualization, what it focuses on is the out appearance such as position, situation, structure and manners; it is in the range of *Xing Fa* (shape method). From the perspective of *Xiang Shu*, it emphasizes particularly on *Xiang* 象.<sup>249</sup>

There are many principles obtained from evaluating the image and number of the man’s external features in physiognomy: “there are always the homothetic images in the appearance, so do the bones and flesh, all of which are tokens of longevity and social status. Every single body is embodied with *Wu Xing* and *Ba Gua*.”<sup>250</sup>

Physiognomy interprets the facial features exactly in this way. There is few quantified standard but figurative description. For example, the eyes being like sparkling stars, the analogy shows that sparkling stars are the quality of brightness and intelligence of one’s brain. *Yu Guan Zhao Shen Ju* expatiates specifically the relations of the appearance of the human and the

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<sup>249</sup> Ling Li 李零, *An overview of Chinese arts of necromancy 中国方术概观* (Beijing: Ren Min Zhong Guo Press, 1993), 15.

<sup>250</sup> Wang, *Qian Fu Lun*, 42.

images of the animals: the lion, tiger, elephant, rhinoceros, monkey, tortoise, snake, horse, rabbit, leopard, goat, bear, orangutan, raccoon dog, camel, deer, dog, donkey, sparrow, parrot, crane, eagle, swallow, peacock, pigeon, magpie, and some spiritual animals such as dragon, kylin, are all used as correspondence with some part of the human's body so that to be connected with one's character or destination.<sup>251</sup>

In fact most of the physiognomic descriptions are in this way, which can be seen in most of the portrait of characters.

It is notable that apart from the minute diversity, the philosophic background of Chinese and Italian physiognomies is similar. The Chinese theory of *Tian Ren He Yi*, oneness of man and heaven and the Italian idea of correspondence supply for their physiognomy the frame of reference; the Chinese *Yinyang* and Five Elements and the Italian dichotomy and Four Elements give to physiognomy the basic structure; the Chinese *Xiang* and *Shu* thought and the Italian syllogism provide to physiognomy the basic methodology. What's more, the Chinese *He* 和 and *Zhong* 中 and the western harmony and intermediacy, regardless their difference, offer respectively to physiognomy the basic aesthetic criteria.

### 3. Functions in physical description in literature

The basic idea of physiognomy, that the appearance conveys the character and the fortune of man, is also the basic concept of personal description in literature. The resonance of physiognomy and physical description facilitates the communication between writers and readers. In classical short stories and novels, the physical descriptions were made with physiognomic marks, so that the character could be easily recognized by readers. Under the impact of physiognomy on physical descriptions, in particular the typological and symbolic functions of physiognomy, as we discuss in the Italian aspect, the

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<sup>251</sup> Fu Xu 许负, "Sixteen essays on physiognomy" in *Cong Shu Ji Cheng Chu Bian* 丛书集成初编 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1991), 74-83.

image of character type was shaped. The role of physiognomy in personal descriptions can be observed in the three aspects. First, physiognomy principles helped to shape and to distinguish the character types with its influence on the physical descriptions. Second, physiognomic vocabulary was the main source of the vocabulary of physical description. Third, physiognomic methods (e.g. animal analogy) were used frequently in the physical description of characters.

In Chinese classical novel, the entering on the stage of characters usually comes accompanied by a typical physical description, which is used to help convey the personalities and fortune of those characters. It is notable that the types of characters were actually decided by the writer at the very beginning, before the actions of characters were demonstrated. The virtuous has a good look while the vicious has a bad look. The typological characters were formed, along with their compartments in the plot, with the reference of physiognomic principles.

Here we choose the *San Guo Yan Yi* 三国演义 (*Romance of Three Kingdoms*), an influential historical fiction by Luo Guanzhong 罗贯中 (1330-1400) in the end of fourteenth century as a case to exam the influence of physiognomy in the character type creation. Considering the facts that this novel is based on the history, making use of available historical records, including the *San Guo Zhi* 三国志 (Records of the Three Kingdoms) compiled by Chen Shou 陈寿 (233-297), which covered events from the Yellow Turban Rebellion in 184 to the unification of the Three Kingdoms under the Jin Dynasty in 280, and material from Tang Dynasty poetic works, Yuan Dynasty operas and the author's own personal interpretation of elements such as virtue and legitimacy, and therefore is quite relative with the subject that we are to discuss in the main part of dissertation, also that there are many characters presented in the novel with their typical appearance description, which offers us a rich gallery of characters. The more important is, the descriptions, regardless their variety, are catalogued in different character types, with the reference of physiognomy. And from the

*Three Kingdoms*, even though the characters were presented in other novels repeatedly, their physical features had not changed much.

There are more than one hundred characters in the *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. However, the character types are quite easy to distinguish. In general, the hero has a heroic look, while the villain has a villainous appearance. For example, Zhang Fei 张飞, a bold and fierce hero, was described in the *Three Kingdoms* like this:

Turning quickly [Liu Bei] saw standing there a man about his own height, with a bullet head like a leopard's, large eyes, a swallow pointed chin, and whiskers like a tiger's. He spoke in a loud bass voice and looked as irresistible as a dashing horse.<sup>252</sup>  
玄德回视其人：身长八尺，豹头环眼，燕颌虎须，声若巨雷，势如奔马。

He is not the only one who was portrayed in this way. We can find quite a lot of heroes with similar appearance:

Sun Jian 孙坚: "At the lead was one general with a broad open face, a body as an alert tiger's, and a torso as a lofty bear's 那人生得广额阔面，虎体熊腰。”<sup>253</sup>

Hua Xiong 华雄: "Dong Zhuo looked up and his eyes rested on a stalwart of fierce mien, lithe and supple as a beast. He had round head like a leopard and shoulders like an ape's 卓视之，其人身长九尺，虎体狼腰，豹头猿臂。”<sup>254</sup>

Wang Shuang 王双: "There came a tall man with a dusky complexion, hazel eyes, strong as a bear in the hips and with a back supple as a tiger's 身长九尺，面黑睛黄，熊腰虎背。”<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Guanzhong Luo 罗贯中, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* 三国演义, Trans. Charles H. Brewitt-Taylor (Rutland: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), 1, 7.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 15

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 45.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 97, 882.

In depicting the characters of the bold and fierce heroes, the beasts, such as tiger, leopard, bear and wolf, are usually used to describe respectively head, waist, back and beard. The “Bao Tou Huan Yan, Yan Han Hu Xu 豹头环眼, 燕颌虎须”, which means having leopard-like head with round eyes, a swallow-like chin and a tiger’s beard, are the most frequently used image. A leopard-like head is a round head. In ancient times, it is said that the head was the place where all of the spirits gather, and it corresponded with the sky. A round head is the token of uprightness and nobility. *Huang Di Nei Jing* 黄帝内经 (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon) said: Sky is round and Earth is square, and round head and square feet are the correspondence. Therefore, round head is the token of uprightness and nobility. Physiognomic works such as *Shen Yi Fu* (Canon of magic), held: “Having swallow-like chin and tiger-like head, Ban Chao was titled seigneur 燕颌虎头, 班超百里封侯.”<sup>256</sup> Ban Chao was a Han Dynasty general and cavalry commander in charge of the administration of Central Asia during the Eastern Han dynasty. He repelled the Xiongnu and secured Chinese control over the Tarim Basin region. His appearance is a persuasive model of a hero. In physiognomics, Ban Chao is used as a representative of brave and capable hero and military commander and his appearance became a sort of template. Also in *Shen Yi Fu*, it is said that having a round waist and a wide back, means that he is sure to be a general. And from *Three kingdoms*, this kind of hero has appearance in the fictions thereafter:

Fan Hui 樊哙: He had leopard-like head and round eyes. He had tiger-like back and bear-like waist 豹头环眼, 虎背熊腰. (*Wan Xian Dou Fa Quan Zhuan* 万仙斗法传)

Xiong Ba 雄霸: He had leopard-like head and round eyes. He had swallow-like chin and tiger-like beard 豹头环眼, 燕颌虎须. (*Fan Li Hua Quan Zhuan* 樊梨花传奇)

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<sup>256</sup> Tuan Chen 陈抟 (871-989), “Shen Yi Fu 神异赋,” in *Xiang Shu 相术*, ed. Tong Zheng 郑同 (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2000), 120.



Lin Chong 林冲: He had leopard-like head and round eyes. He had swallow-like chin and tiger-like beard 豹头环眼, 燕颌虎须. (*Water Margins* 水浒传)

Li Cong 李丛: He had leopard-like head and round eyes. He had swallow-like chin and tiger-like beard 豹头环眼, 燕颌虎须. (*Feng Jian Chun Qiu* 锋剑春秋)

Shi Biao 石彪: He had wolf-like back and bear-like waist. He had swallow-like chin and tiger-like head 狼背熊腰, 燕颌虎头. (*Yu Shao Bao Cui Zhong Quan Zhuan* 于少保萃忠全传)

Lin Dai 林岱: He had wolf-like back and bear-like waist. He had swallow-like chin and tiger-like head 狼背熊腰, 燕颌虎头. (*Lv Ye Xian Zong* 绿野仙踪)

Jiao Yangui 焦延贵: His back was wide and waist round. His face was as back as the bottom of the pot. He had leopard-like head with tiger-like eyes. (*Wan Hua Lou* 万花楼)

The other kind of hero is handsome and gentle. Guan Yu 关羽, one of the main hero is:

The man had a huge frame, a long beard, a vivid face like an apple, and deep red lips. He had eyes like a phoenix's and fine bushy eyebrows like silkworms. His whole appearance was dignified and awe-inspiring.<sup>257</sup> 身長九尺, 髯长二尺, 面如重枣, 唇若涂脂, 丹凤眼, 卧蚕眉。相貌堂堂, 威风凛凛。

Another description of Guan Yu:

He was tall and had a long beard. His eyes were those of a phoenix and his eyebrows thick and brushy like silkworms. His face was a swarthy red and his voice deep as the sound of a great bell.<sup>258</sup> 身長九尺, 髯长二尺, 丹凤眼, 卧蚕眉, 面如重枣, 声如巨钟。

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<sup>257</sup> Luo, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, 1: 8.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 47.

This man, as a favorite character by the author, was depicted twice. His appearance is in accordance with the traditional aesthetic and ethic conception. There are some other heroes who are handsome and brave.

Zhou Yu 周瑜: “When [Sun Ce] reached Linyang, he saw a body of troops in front of him, at their head a dashing leader of handsome and refined mien 行至历阳,见一军到, 当先一人, 姿质风流, 仪容秀丽.”<sup>259</sup>

Ma Chao 马超: “Hardly were the words spoken when there came out a youth general with a clear, white complexion as jade, eyes like shooting stars, lithe of body and strong of limb. He was armed with a long spear and bestrode an excellent steed. This young leader was Ma Chao, son of Ma Teng, then seventeen years of age 这个少年将军, 面如琢玉, 眼若流星, 虎体猿臂, 彪腹狼腰。扶风茂陵人也, 马腾之子.”<sup>260</sup>

Lu Xun 陆逊: “he was eight spans in height, with a beautiful face, like the finest jade 身長八尺, 面如美玉.”<sup>261</sup>

Deng Zhong 邓忠: “Presently Jiang Wei made out a youthful-looking leader riding in advance with his spear ready to thrust. He looked scarcely more than twenty years of age, his face was smooth as if powdered, and his lips were crimson 魏阵中一小将, 全装惯带, 挺枪纵马而出, 年约二十余岁, 面如傅粉, 唇似抹朱.”<sup>262</sup>

Cui Zhouping 崔州平: “While Liu Bei stood regarding it, he saw a figure coming down a mountain path. The man’s bearing was lofty; he was handsome and dignified. He wore a comfortable-looking bonnet on his head, and a black robe hung about his figure in easy folds. He used a staff to help him down the steep path 忽见一人, 神清气爽, 目秀眉清, 容貌轩昂, 丰姿英迈, 头戴逍遥乌巾, 身穿青衣道袍, 杖藜从山僻小路而来.”<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 15: 136.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 10: 89.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 83: 760.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 112: 1015.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 37: 344.

Wei Yan 魏延: “He was of middle height, with a face dark brown as a ripe date. [his eyes are like sparkling stars]<sup>264</sup> [He had an appearance like Guan Yu] 身長九尺, 面如重枣, 目似朗星, 如关云长模样。”<sup>265</sup> “[he] was bronzed and had eyes like the cowherd’s star 其人面如重枣, 目若朗星。”<sup>266</sup>

The heroes of this type are usually tall and have good vivid complexion like full moon or jade, or in bronze. Their eyes are generally like stars. The analogy with stars in describing eyes may imply two intentions. One is to convey that the hero is intelligent, whose clue can be found in physiognomic treatises. In *Shen Yi Fu*, it said that with bright eyes and delicate eyebrows, one is clever.<sup>267</sup> The other is to indicate that the hero is noble, as *Da Mo Wu Guan Zong Lun* (Bodhidharma physiognomics of facial features) said, having the eyes with pupils as black as ink, one should not be common.<sup>268</sup> Further, if one’s eyes are long and like phoenix, with ink-black pupils, he must be a dignitary.<sup>269</sup> *Da Mo Wu Guan Zong Lun* cited *Guan Jian Ji* 管鉴集 that with shooting eyes, one is to be noble and high rank in official.<sup>270</sup> Some treatises even emphasized the importance of this sort of eyes as the sign of hero. *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, for instance, said that having the eyes with ink-pointed pupils the man is the hero of the age.<sup>271</sup> The eyebrows of Guan Yu, is a sign of intelligence, as held in *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*.<sup>272</sup> There is a chapter *Yong Zhi Ge* 勇智歌 included in *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, listing some physiognomic signs of bravery and intelligence of a man, in which it emphasized the color of complexion such as the silver-red and golden-purple.<sup>273</sup> The complexion is also the sign of nobility. In *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, it said that the man with

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<sup>264</sup> In the Chinese version, there are the phrases “mu ruo lang xing 目若朗星”, and “ru guan yun chang mu yang 如关云长模样”, which are however omitted by the translator.

<sup>265</sup> Luo, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, 41: 380.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 53: 487.

<sup>267</sup> Chen, “Shen Yi Fu,” 112.

<sup>268</sup> Pseudo-Bodhidharma, “Da Mo Wu Guan Zong Lun 达摩五官冠论,” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng, (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 38.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 39

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 38

<sup>271</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 168.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

moist and bright face is noble.<sup>274</sup> And it is auspicious sign if the face is as white as jade or black but bright as ink, as yellow as booked chestnut, or as purple as satin.<sup>275</sup> The polished lips are also the noble sign. As Yuan Liuzhuang 袁柳庄 held in his *Ren Xiang Lun* 人相论: if his lips are red as polished as if there were painted with cinnabar, he is to be a general or minister with high salary.<sup>276</sup>

Comparing with the fierce and bold heroes, Luo Guanzhong highlights their intelligence. The common point is that both of the two types of heroes are noble, regarding the fact that all of them are in fact generals or military leaders in difference states. This reflects from another perspective the utilization of physiognomy by Luo.

The appearance of Cao Cao 曹操 in the *Three Kingdoms* is typical. He “was a man of medium stature with small eyes and a long beard. He was Cao Cao, a Beijuo man, holding the rank of General of the Flying Cavalry 身长七尺，细眼长髯；官拜骑都尉；沛国谯郡人。”<sup>277</sup>

The small or slit eyes are also expressed as snake eyes, mouse eyes or wasp eyes, which is the symbol of a despicable villain. The historical evidence is in *Zuo Zhuan* 左传 (Chronicle of Zuo): King Chu 楚王 wants to make his eldest son named Shang Chen 商臣 as the heir to the throne, so he asked Zi Shang 子上 for advice, who told him that Shang Chen has wasp eyes and his voice is like jackal, so he is a villain pretending to be kind. King Chu didn't believe it. Later, Shang Chen rose in rebellion and killed his father. Besides history, physiognomical works also equal the eyes of this sort to villain, which reflects in the novels.

Villains are often compared with treacherous and vicious animals such as hawks, mice, dogs, snakes, roes and jackals. Their appearance is usually characterised by: sharp head, aquiline nose and slit eyes. According to the

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>276</sup> Zhongche Yuan, “Ren Xiang Fu 人象赋,” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. . Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 164.

<sup>277</sup> Luo, *Romance of the three kingdoms*, 1: 11.

principals of physiognomy, such people often have a tragic fate: one does not see them die in their own beds. A “man with a hawk nose eats other’s heart and marrow 鷹鼻之人，食人心髓”；“having wasp eyes, you are ferocious and will die lonely; having snake eyes, you are fiendish and will be punished 蜂目蛇眼，狠毒孤刑” and ‘one with triangular eyes would be evil and would be punished because of his criminality 眼三角，狠毒孤刑.’<sup>278</sup>

In addition to Cao Cao, Sima Yi 司马懿 was said looking like an eagle and a wolf, so he must be ambitious and power-hungry and therefore should not be entrusted with military authority lest he harm the state 司马懿鷹視狼顧，不可付之兵權，久必為國家之大禍也。<sup>279</sup>

Another villain, Dong Zhuo 董卓，was described as “in appearance innocent, he was a wolf in his heart 乃豺狼也，面善心狠。”<sup>280</sup>

The depictions of villains in the *Three Kingdoms* are in concordance with physiognomic principles. It is also because of its accordance with popular aesthetics and sense of value. The process of syllogism of physiognomy works here to identify the characters, ranging them in a certain types, which make them more recognizable and understandable. Hence, many novelists followed this method of description, utilizing intentionally physiognomy as a reference. We can find many examples in the novels after the *Three Kingdoms*:

Ni Wenhuan 倪文煥: He looked like mouse and walks like wolf 鼠顧狼行. (*Shou Wu Xian Ping* 梲机闲评)

Yan Gongsheng 严贡生: wasp’s eyes 蜜蜂眼 (*Ru Lin Wai Shi* 儒林外史)

Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢: His voice was like jackal and eyes like wasp’s 豺聲蜂目. (*Wei Zhongxian Chi Jian Shu* 魏忠賢斥奸書)

Huang Chao 黃巢: His eyes were deltoid and his hair is all red 眼有三角，鬢毛盡赤. (*Xin Bian Wu Dai Shi Ping Hua* 新編五代史平話)

A Ku 阿酷: He had round belly but sharp head; his face was fat but eyes small 肚大頭尖，面肥耳小. (*Bai Mu Dan Zhuan* 白牡丹傳)

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<sup>278</sup> Gu Xie, *Collection of Physiognomy*, (Chongqing: Chongqing Press, 1993), 136.

<sup>279</sup> Luo, *Romance of the three kingdoms*, 91: 832.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 12.

Guo Huai 郭槐: His head was sharp with wide forehead. He has sharp voice and sharp nose 头尖额阔, 鹰钩尖鼻. (*Wan Hua Lou* 万花楼)

Zhang Ren 张仁: He had dog eyes and a hawk nose 犬眼鹰鼻. (*Fan Li Hua Quan Zhuan* 樊梨花全传)

Shan Yingguan 单迎官: He had the head of a buck and the eyes of a rat 獐头鼠耳, 面薄珠小. (*Yi Chun Xiang Zhi* 宜春香质)

Zhu Dali 竺大立: He had a hawk nose 鹰嘴鼻头. (*Wan Nian Qing* 万年清传奇)

It is plausible to say that the descriptions of a character's appearance in the novels of Ming-Qing dynasties are identical. Groups of animals and natural objects are used to make analogies or comparisons with parts of the human body. Almost all the descriptions used are in accordance with the principles of physiognomy. It results in characters being divided into several types, inside any one of which readers cannot tell the difference between the characters: readers can tell the differences between categories to which the characters belong. And good and evil cannot be combined in one character.

We can also see that the descriptive vocabulary utilized is closely related to physiognomy with a considerable number of these terms being borrowed directly from this discipline.

There are several expressions which are frequently used to describe heroes or villains such as *Mian Ru Guang Yu* 面如冠玉 (face like jade), *Long Mu Feng Jing* 龙目凤睛 (having dragon or phoenix eyes), *Zhang Tou Shu Mu* 獐头鼠目 (having roe head with mouse eyes), *Wu Yue Chao Gong* 五岳朝拱 (forehead, nose, cheekbones and chin are raised), *Si Du Fen Ming* 四渎分明 (nose, mouth, eyes and ears are deep and clear). As a result of popularization of physiognomy, readers can make preliminary judgments on the identification of the character and their fate as they engage with the vocabulary. Although it makes clear the good and the evil or the gentle and the simple, it makes, unfortunately, most of the characters simple and flat. It

is difficult, therefore, to create complicated and multi-dimensional images of characters, which hinders the development of these novels.

The stereotypes of physical descriptions in Chinese classical novels have their roots in history and cultural tradition. The physiognomy was so popular among the people that it penetrated in many fields of culture and became a collective consciousness. With the help of physiognomy, such stereotyping made characters easily recognizable and acceptable; however, it ignored their complexity. It can be said, to some extent, that the process of novelists creating typical and wonderful characters was hindered because of the processes, that they were unable to free themselves from the process and the power of physiognomy in depicting their characters' appearances.

## Chapter III

# Ruler's Body: Physical Description of Rulers in Chinese and Italian History and Biography

## 1. Photographic description of rulers and physiognomic analysis

The photographic descriptions of ruler are found both in Italian and Chinese history and biography. With the reference of physiognomic theory, some character of ruler was conveyed, in addition with the narration of historical events.

### 1.1 Photographic description of rulers in Italian history and biography

In Italy, as Casini observed<sup>281</sup>, much has been studied on the biographies of the rulers from multiple aspects, while little attention has been paid to the influence and relationship between the narrative and the physiognomic consciousness in descriptions which has been popular for centuries. For example, in the sixteenth century, the physiognomic works of Della Porta is a summary of the physiognomy heretofore, demonstrating the important role played by physiognomy has played in the culture. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, in particular, biographies and autobiographies that glorified men of letters increasingly contained literary portraits and self-portraits along similar lines of those in the *De Humana Physiognomoniam* (*Della Fisionomia dell'uomo*). One may undoubtedly connect this phenomenon to the tremendous vogue for portrait-biography books such as the Perna editions of

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<sup>281</sup> See Tommaso Casini, "La ricerca della verosimiglianza fisionomica nelle biografie illustrate tra cinque e seicento: ritratti dal vero, immaginari e contraffatti," in *Percorsi tra parole e immagini (1400-1600)*, ed. Angela Guidotti and Massimiliano Rossi (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2000), 75-88.



two works by Paolo Giovio, the *Elogia virorum doctrina illustrium* (Basel, 1575) and its companion volume, the *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium* (Basel, 1577), both of which were lavishly illustrated with engravings by Tobias Stimmer.<sup>282</sup>

This is the appearance of Ottone Visconti as described by Paolo Giovio:

Rilusse assai per tempo in lui, mentre era ancor garzone, un ingegno galiardo, altissimo ed ardente, e quel che era mirabile, temperato di grave prudenza. Aveva oltre di questo un'eccellentissima maestà di volto e di corpo; perciocchè egli era di statura grande, e fermissima molto per la composizione de' nervi, con un petto largo e rilevato, occhi molto grandi e pieni di raggi, e'eloquenza illustre, e, quando era bisogna ornata di esquisite lettere; di maniera che, piacendo egli grandemente a ognuno, pareva ancora a lui, ch'egli fosse degno di miglior fortuna.<sup>283</sup>

The style used by Giovio in description is typical in the biography. If we consider the possible physiognomic aspect of the description, beside the *maestà* mentioned directly, Ottone may be:

- (1) capace di riuscita e ha notevoli capacità percettive<sup>284</sup>
- (2) coraggioso,<sup>285</sup> forte nell'animo<sup>286</sup>
- (3) nobile e riesce a realizzare grandi progetti<sup>287</sup>

In the *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, Della Porta includes some thirty famous ancients among the examples given to illustrate how particular

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<sup>282</sup> For the use of author portraits by Della Porta, see Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 319-324. On these publishing trends within a specifically Italian context, see Cecil H. Clough, "Italian Renaissance Portraiture and Printed Portrait-books," in *The Italian Book, 1465-1800: Studies presented to Dennis E. Rhodes*, ed. Denis V. Reidy (London: British Library, 1993), 183-223; for author portraits in France, Ruth Mortimer, *A portrait of the author in sixteenth-century France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1980). See also Katherine MacDonald, "Humanist self-representation in Giovan Battista Della Porta's *Della Fisonomia dell'Uomo*," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*. 36 (2005): 402

<sup>283</sup> Paolo Giovio, *Vita dei dodici Visconti*, tran. Ludovico Domenchi, ed. Massimo Fabi (Milan: F. Colombo, 1853), 15.

<sup>284</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 813b; *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 88.

<sup>285</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 807b

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 810b

<sup>287</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 33

physical traits are associated with certain qualities. Of these, a large contingent is made up of Roman emperors—from Augustus to Heliogabalus—whose heads were ever in the hands of coin collectors, among them Giovan Vincenzo Della Porta, the brother of Giovan Battista. For many of the physical descriptions of emperors, the biographies by Suetonius are the declared source.<sup>288</sup> Giovio's eulogies and biographies are also an important source of him.<sup>289</sup> Therefore, when checking the description by Giovio with the treatise of Della Porta, we can find the similar result in terms of the character of Ottone Vistconti:

(1) Coloro che grandi sono e macri, e sono di color che mostri calidità, sono di nuono intellectto e di miglior senso.<sup>290</sup>

(2) Il petto grande e ben giuntato dimostra uomini d'animo forte, Aristotele gli dà il petto ampio e carnoso, ma ben attaccato di ossa; poi, descrivendo il Leone al quale lo riferisce, dice: di peto sodo e robusto ...,che Agostino di Sessa nale interpreta: giovenile. Polemone et Adamanzio da esso li dà il petto grande e forte, che dimostra gagliardia; e nella figura del forte li dà il petto et il metafreno gagliardo.<sup>291</sup>

(3) Gli occhi umidi, splendenti come acqua, ti dàn segno di omo ornato di buoni costumi. Ma Adamanzio dice così: gli occhi che luceno come gocce di chiarissima acqua dàn segno di costumi ben composti e gravi. Alberto il medesimo. Ippodamia, ragionando della bellezza di Pelope, dice che aveva un splendor dentro gli occhi. Licinio Caio, descrivendo gli occhi di Endimione, dice che splendevano come raggi, et il Sonno, per poter goder di quei lumi, permette che dormisse con gli occhi aperti. Pindario dice che Teosseo aveva gli occhi splendenti e scintillanti, se ben il petto era composto di diamante e

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<sup>288</sup> Suetonius's own interest in physiognomy is analyzed in depth in Elizabeth E. Evans "Roman descriptions of personal appearance in history and biography," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 46 (1935): 48-84.

<sup>289</sup> On the similarity between the *De humana physiognomonia* and the sixteenth-century biography collection see Katherine MacDonald, "Humanist self-representation in Giovan Battista Della Porta's *Della Fisonomia dell'Uomo*." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36 (2005): 397-414.

<sup>290</sup> Giovan Battista Della Porta, *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, ed. Mario Cicognani (Milan: Longanesi &C., 1971), 739.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, lib. II, 419.

di ferro...Fu Edoardo sesto Imperator d'Anglia di occhi splendenti; uomo d'ingegno e virtù, et amatore de' virtuosi. Da Polidoro virgilio.<sup>292</sup>

The history of powerful families contains usually some description of the physical features. For instance, Francesco Sansovino in *Historia della casa Orsina* wrote:

[...] ora in queste immagini di uomini così chiari, habbiamo da notare, che nella gente Orsina si vede grandezza et maestà nel sembiante et nel volto, perché essendo pieni di spirito et di vigor militare, con le fronte aperte, et con le bocche per la maggior parte assai grandi, significative di uomini di molta eloquenza, et con aspetti veramente reali, possiamo chiaramente credere che ...essi siano senza alcun dubbio discesi dall' altissimo e nobile sangue, se dalla faccia si dee far coniettura della grandezza de' generosi pensieri.<sup>293</sup>

Sansovino thus put in evidence the role of physiognomy in which the relationship between physical features and characters is observed. In addition with the direct physiognomic statement like in the “bocche grandi significative di molta eloquenza”, the “fronte aperte” is a sign of great courage, *sage* or *magnanimità*, as the Latin anonymous author of *Il trattato di fisiognomica* indicated.<sup>294</sup>

Della Porta as a physiognomist described the Cardinal d'Este with typical physiognomic language:

[...] il capo è di giusta grandezza e misura, o poco più...ritondetto alquanto e prominente dinanzi, dietro sostenuto da convenevol collo; né potea esser d'altra forma, avendo a contener dentro a sé, come in una gran reggia, la memoria, l'intelletto, la prudenza, la tua tanta saviezza. La fronte è quadrata, mezzana tra la tranquilla e l'annebbiata; donde chiarissimamente traspare la fortezza dell'animo, la grandezza, la giustizia, la severità, che in perpetua

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., lib. III, 579-580.

<sup>293</sup> Francesco Sansovino, *Historia della casa Orsina* (Venice: Bernardino and Filippo Stagnini, 1565), 63.

<sup>294</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 17.

battaglia già sono di superar l'una l'altra, et alfin in sì chiara battaglia di virtù superando ciascuna se stessa, spiegano nell'animo tuo ogni lor magnificenza... Splendono sotto la fronte gli occhi grandi, lucidi et alti, come quelli di Socrate; di colore azzurro, d'acuta vista, di guardo umile et altiero; ne' quali dentro appare una forza, che volendo fissarvi gli occhi tuoi, sei forzato calargli giù, come si legge d'Augusto; e vi risiede l'animosità e la mansuetudine, la clemenza, la temperanza, la piacevolezza, et i nobilissimi costumi. L'orecchie scolpite, rilevate, quadrate, di mediocre grandezza e d'acuto udito; che dimostrano esser chiuse all'adulazioni, a susurri delgi ingiuriosi, ai disonesti ragionamenti. Son le labra delicate e colorite nella bocca grandetta, di modestia perpetuo seggio e di piacevolezza. Il color de' capelli biondeggiante, il color della carne bianco rosseggiante, assai lontano da quello che rinfaccia Cicerone a Pisone, e lo chiama servile; che dimostrano il bonissimo temperamento del corpo, e da quello l'eccellente composition dell'animo, tanto eccellente, che se cercassi esser cattivo non potresti. Mi ricordo...che ne'ragionamenti doppo la cena, ci provasti con gagliardissime ragioni l'uomo esser così inchinato alla bontà, che vi bisognava molta fatica e sforzo a divenir cattivo et a commetter qualche maleficio; e convinto da molte ragioni da altri che era il contrario, ti dolesti con dir che lo dicevi come lo sentivi; ma non aver tanto gagliardi argomenti, né poterlo esprimere come era nell'animo; e tutto ciò, perché misuravi l'animi altrui con la tua bontà. Le mani grandi e sempre aperte, i diti lunghi e delicati, rivolti indietro, dimostrano il vero simulacro della liberalità; e se l'importuno rigor della chiragra l'ha tutti disformati e distort, non have alfin la sua forza potuto arruncinarli dinanzi, come per lo più si veggono ne'Principi de' nostri tempi. Questi sono il sovvenimento de' poveri, il cibo degli affamati, l' onor della pietà; e il vituperio de' Prencipi e terror dell'avarizia; la qual precipitosa fugge e si nasconde, dove compaiono i tuoi presenti e la lor splendidezza.<sup>295</sup>

In addition to the good qualities which Della Porta attributed to the cardinal directly, such as “la memoria, l'intelletto, la prudenza, la tanta saviezza” “la fortezza dell'animo, la grandezza, la giustizia, la severità” “l'animosità e la mansuetudine, la clemenza, la temperanza, la piacevolezza,

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<sup>295</sup> Mario Cicognani, Introduction to *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, by Giovan Battista Della Porta (Milano: Longanesi &C., 1971), 13-15.

et i nobilissimi costumi”, the detailed description by Della Porta conveyed much more with his physiognomic description. Sentences as “La fronte è quadrata, mezzana tra la tranquilla e l’annebbiata; donde chiarissimamente traspare la fortezza dell’animo, la grandezza, la giustizia, la severità, che in perpetua battaglia già sono di superar l’una l’altra, et alfin in sì chiara battaglia di virtù superando ciascuna se stessa, spiegano nell’animo tuo ogni lor magnificenza”, “il color della carne bianco rosseggiante, assai lontano da quello che rinfaccia Cicerone a Pisone, e lo chiama servile; che dimostrano il bonissimo temperamento del corpo, e da quello l’eccellente composition dell’animo, tanto eccellente, che se cercassi esser cattivo non potresti” are obviously direct physiognomic descriptions. The others were contained in the depiction while with physiognomic theory one can easily understand, such as the “capo è di giusta grandezza e misura’ is the sign of “ben sensati e di grande ingengno, virtù e maganimità.”<sup>296</sup>

The descriptions by Giovo, Sansovino and Della Porta are not the only examples. The photographic description of personal features of ruler is found in ancient biographies. It is to be note that Greek historians of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. made no such use of any description of personal appearance as device of characterization.<sup>297</sup> And it may be said of the Attic orators of the same period that there is little concern for the eulogy of the appearance, permanent or momentary, of an individual, or for attack by vituperative description of opponents.<sup>298</sup> However, in the Roman Empire, many examples of such descriptions have been found. H.V. Canter has made a respectable summary on the personal appearance in the biography of the Roman emperors.<sup>299</sup> In twenty-eight instances it occurs as a clearly purposed

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<sup>296</sup> Della Porta, *Della Fisionomia dell’uomo*, 188-189.

<sup>297</sup> Evans, “A stoic aspect of Senecan drama,” 170-171.

<sup>298</sup> It is important to remember that careful training in pronunciation had been neglected in Aristotle’s opinion even in his own time, and that Theophrastus was thought to have been the first to treat the subject systematically. That fact may serve to explain in part why we note an almost complete absence of description of facial expression or gesture in the Attic orator as against Cicero who introduced them frequently into his speeches (Evans, “Roman descriptions of personal appearance,” 74-76.)

<sup>299</sup> See Canter, “Personal appearance in the biography,” 385-399.

feature of a biographical sketch—twelve by Suetonius<sup>300</sup>, nine by the *scriptores Historiae Augustae*, six by Ammianus Marcellinus, and one by the author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus*.

Suetonius records all the known facts about the lives of the emperors.<sup>301</sup> Suetonius as *magister epistularum* from 119 until the year 121, was associated with Hadrian (76-138) and his court in considerable intimacy, in a post requiring discretion and circumspection. Pliny the younger, his close friend, described him in a letter to Trajan as *probissimum, honestissimum, eruditissimum virum*. During his tenure of office he must have had ready access to the imperial archives, from which he gleaned much of the material presented in the *Lives of the twelve Caesars*, published as early as 121 AD. We must remember that just before this period Polemo of Laodicea, a contemporary of Suetonius, had been sent from Smyrna to Rome to Emperor Trajan, and that shortly afterwards he was closely associated with Emperor Hadrian. Certainly the name of Polemo, if not the man himself, must have been known to Suetonius. We cannot assume, of course, that Suetonius had any personal connection with Polemo, for neither is the date of composition of the rhetor's handbook known, nor is there any direct evidence that Suetonius had actually read the book. But the striking parallelism of the ideas and expressions in Suetonius and those in the pseudo-Aristotlian manual as well as those in Polemo is of no little importance.

When we study the images of the emperors in detail in the works of Suetonius, we may gather that the biographer was inclined to consider Augustus's character as excellence, judging from the external signs of his person.

He possessed:

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<sup>300</sup> The descriptions by Suetonius are by far the most extended and in some cases show such a tendency toward expansion by comment and illustration that it is difficult to tell where description properly ends. See Canter, "Personal appearance in the Biography," 397.

<sup>301</sup> Misener, "Iconistic portraits," 107-110.

(1) Oculos claros ac nitidos quibus etiam existimari volebat inesse quiddam divini vigoris, gaudebatque si quis sibi acrius contuenti quasi ad fulgorem solis vultum summitteret. (Eyes that were bright and piercing in which Augustus wished it believed there was a certain divine vigor)

(2) cappillum leviter inflexum et subflavum (hair a little curly, and inclined to a yellow color)

(3) supercilia coniuncta (eyebrow that meet)

(4) mediocres aures (moderate sized ears)

(5) nasum a summo eminentiorem et ab imo deductiorem (a complexion between brown and fair)

(6) colorem inter aquilum candidumque (aquiline nose)<sup>302</sup>

We can easily find the reference in the physiognomic books. According to the physical features of Augustus, he should be:

(1) courageous and acute<sup>303</sup>

(2) generous<sup>304</sup>

(3) beautiful<sup>305</sup>

(4) of great vigilance in the performance of duty<sup>306</sup>

(5) intelligent<sup>307</sup>

(6) of a strong character<sup>308</sup>

In western classical tradition, Suetonius's description of Augustus's life is in general laudatory. He exercised the most severe discipline in military affairs.<sup>309</sup> He administered law with the utmost diligence and leniency.<sup>310</sup> As patron and master his behavior was mild and conciliating, but when the

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<sup>302</sup> Aug. 79

<sup>303</sup> Pesud.-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 807b; 812b

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 809b; 812b

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 812b

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 812a

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 811a; Pol.228

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 811b; Pol.244

<sup>309</sup> Aug. 21.

<sup>310</sup> Aug. 33

occasion required it, he could be severe.<sup>311</sup> Of his clemency there are abundant examples.<sup>312</sup> He was cautious in forming friendships but clung to them with great constancy.<sup>313</sup> He displayed moderation in his living.<sup>314</sup>

Suetonius has left us an interesting and vivid account of some of Caesar's physical characteristics.<sup>315</sup> "he is said to have been tall of stature (*excelsa statura*), with a fair complexion (*colore candido*), shapely limbs (*teretibus membris*), a somewhat disproportionately large mouth (*ore paulo pleniore*), and keen black eyes (*nigris vegetisque oculis*)...His baldness was a disfigurement that worried him greatly (*calvitii vero deformitatem iniquissime ferret*)...because of it he used to comb forward his scanty locks from the crown of his head (*ideoque et deficientem capillum revocare a vertice solebat*); and of all the honours that were voted him by Senate and People there was none that he accepted or made use of more gladly than the privilege of wearing a laurel-wreath on all occasions (*ius laureae coronae perpetuo gestandae*)."<sup>316</sup>

Accordingly, he might be:

- (1) tall of stature—"capace di riusicta e ha notevoli capacità percettive"<sup>317</sup>
- (2) fair complexion—"forte e coraggioso"<sup>318</sup>
- (3) shaped limbs—"forte nell'animo"<sup>319</sup>
- (4) keen eyes—"giusto, onesto e ingegnoso".<sup>320</sup>

## 1.2 photographic descriptions in Chinese history and biography

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<sup>311</sup> *Aug.* 67

<sup>312</sup> *Aug.* 51

<sup>313</sup> *Aug.* 66

<sup>314</sup> *Aug.* 72

<sup>315</sup> *Div. Iul.* 45.

<sup>316</sup> Jocelyn M. C. Toynbee, "Portraits of Julius Caesar," *Greece & Rome* 4 (1957): 4.

<sup>317</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 813b; *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 88.

<sup>318</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 90.

<sup>319</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 810 a

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 812 a



The long-line history of China supplies infinite sources for historiography. The biographic history was regarded as *Zheng Shi* 正史 (literally, orthodoxy history), that is, official history, in which kings and emperors are most interested. In terms of Chinese description, the photographic method is less used compared with Italy. The way of description is however similar.

Emperor Xianzong 宪宗(1447-1487) of Ming dynasty, was described in *Ming Xian Zong Shi Lu* (veritable records of Emperor Xianzong) as: “His Majesty was extraordinary in appearance, with a complexion surprisingly fair like pure jade. He had squared forehead and face, full and grand stature, big ears, and sparkling eyes with ink-black pupils. None of his guards and servants dared to look up at him 上相表奇异玉色和粹无不惊服。上广额丰硕方面大耳目睛如漆黑光彩射，左右侍者皆莫敢仰视。”<sup>321</sup>

With the physiognomic signs that his body carried, he might be:

- (1) fair complexion as jade –noble<sup>322</sup>
- (2) squared forehead—noble and glorious<sup>323</sup>
- (3) full and grand stature—rich<sup>324</sup>
- (4) squared face—rich and of good fortune<sup>325</sup>
- (5) big ears—noble<sup>326</sup>
- (6) sparkling eyesink-black pupils—rich and extremely noble<sup>327</sup>

Emperor Taizu 清太祖 (1559-1625) of Qing dynasty: “(He had) dragon-like face with phoenix-like eyes, grand stature and big eyes. He was born upright. His voice was deep as the sound of big bell. His deportment was

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<sup>321</sup> Ji Liu 刘吉 (?-? ca. 15th century) et al., *Ming Xian Zong Shi Lu* 明宪宗实录, (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, 1962), 1: 1.

<sup>322</sup> Zhang, “Ren Lun Da Tong Fu,” 142.

<sup>323</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 112.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 113

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 131

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 82; Pingxuan Shao 邵平轩, “Zhao dan jing 照胆经,” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng, (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 310.

<sup>327</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 70-71.

steady and majestic 龙颜凤目，伟躯大耳，天表玉立，声若洪钟，仪度威重，举止非常，英勇盖世。”<sup>328</sup>

According to the Chinese physiognomy, he might be:

- (1) dragon-like face with phoenix-like eyes—noble and clement<sup>329</sup>
- (2) grand stature—powerful and noble<sup>330</sup>
- (3) big ears—intelligent and open-minded<sup>331</sup>
- (4) voice being like the sound of big bell—noble<sup>332</sup>

Another example is of Emperor Shizu of Qing dynasty 清世祖 (1678-1735) was “born heroic and majestic. He had prominent nose, and was tall and straight. His ears were fleshy and big, his eyes sparkling, his voice deep and clear 天表奇伟，隆准欣身，双耳垂丰，目光炯照，音吐洪亮。”<sup>333</sup>

His physical features may convey some of his character:

- (1) prominent nose—noble<sup>334</sup> and majestic<sup>335</sup>
- (2) being tall and straight—noble<sup>336</sup>
- (3) fleshy and big ears—noble and longevous,<sup>337</sup> rich<sup>338</sup>
- (4) sparkling eyes—extremely noble<sup>339</sup>
- (5) voice as sound of bell—noble<sup>340</sup>

The way of the description has its root in the remote antiquity. As early in Han dynasty, it is recorded in *Hou Han Shu* (history of Later Han): “Emperor Wu 汉武帝 (156-87BC) was 7- *chi*- and- 3- *cun* tall (approximately

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<sup>328</sup> Dehongqing Le 勒德洪 et al. *Da Qing Tai Zu Gao Huang Di Shi Lu* 大清太祖高皇帝实录 (Veritable record of Emperor Taizu in Qing dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 1: 1: 139.

<sup>329</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 138.

<sup>330</sup> Chen, “Shen Yi Fu,” 122.

<sup>331</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 83.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>333</sup> Ortai 鄂尔泰 et al., *Qing Shi Zong Xian Huang Di Shi Lu* 清世宗宪皇帝实录 (Veritable Record of Emperor Shizong in Qing Dynasty), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 7:1: 139.

<sup>334</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 40.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>336</sup> Shao, “Zhao Dan Jing,” 323.

<sup>337</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 35.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

1.74m), with very beautiful eyebrows and beard, big mouth, prominent nose. He had a *Ri Jiao* (a special bone plumped in the middle of forehead) 身长七尺三寸, 美须眉, 大口, 隆准, 日角。”<sup>341</sup>

According to the physiognomic doctrine, he should be:

- (1) powerful and noble (being 7- *chi*- and- 3- *cun* tall)<sup>342</sup>
- (2) rich and noble (beautiful eyebrows and beard)<sup>343</sup>
- (3) as noble as general and prime minister and rich (big mouth)<sup>344</sup>
- (4) noble<sup>345</sup> and majestic<sup>346</sup> (prominent nose)
- (5) majestic (*Ri Jiao*)<sup>347</sup>

In the *Sui Shu* 隋书 (Book of Sui Dynasty), Emperor Wen, Yang Jian 隋文帝杨坚 (541-604), was “a man with dragon-like face. There were five protuberant bones in the forehead. His eyes were sparkling. There was a word “王” (king) in his palmprint. His upper body was longer than his lower body. He was a man serious and prudent 为人龙颜, 额上有五柱入顶, 目光外射。有文在手, 曰‘王’。长上短下, 沉深严重。”<sup>348</sup>

According to the physiognomic theory, he is extremely noble, the physiognomic signs include:

- (1) forehead with five protuberant bones
- (2) sparkling eyes<sup>349</sup>
- (3) upper parts longer than lower part.”<sup>350</sup>

## 2. General description of rulers and the physiognomic analysis

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<sup>341</sup> Ye Fan 范曄 (398-445), *Hou Han Shu* 后汉书, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1965), 1: 1; 1.

<sup>342</sup> Chen, “Shen Yi Fu,” 122.

<sup>343</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 91

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 78

<sup>347</sup> Chen, “Shen Yi Fu,” 132.

<sup>348</sup> Quoted in “Chronicle of physiognomy” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 373

<sup>349</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 70.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

## 2.1 General descriptions in Italian history and biography

The author of *Trattato di Fisiognonica (De Physiognomoniam Liber)* had made a definition of the scope of physiognomy, on the possibility of seeing the characteristics of soul from features of the body. Regardless variety of theories and treatise, this definition is widely acceptable. The physiognomic consciousness as a collective consciousness among the people was even more penetrating than the physiognomic theory did. In the physical description of emperors, sometimes, it seemed not necessary to describe all the details of subject's face; a general comment is sufficient to make sense.

At the time when the Medici family was predominant (as Mercatti stated “Questa gran famiglia ha avuto trentaquattro gonfalonieri, e sessantadue Priori.”<sup>351</sup>), the novels, eulogies and poems as well as history are given increasing importance by being brought together into a memorial column to serve as evidence of the appearance of this family members. Despite the faces depicted by the artists which are however in the issue of likeness, the real appearances of the Medici are not exactly described but reproduced intentionally. As a ruler, their aspect was as noble as their conduct, and his countenance corresponded with his character. Some essential qualities of the Medici as ruler were mirrored thus in the literary descriptions by the writers.

Aldo Mannucci once wrote that Lorenzo Magnifico is “della grandezza dell'animo, e fortezza del corpo.”<sup>352</sup>

Lucio Paolo Rosello described Cosimo I de' Medici: “potente nel corpo, come l'esser robusto, gagliardo et grande.”<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> I gonfalonieri regnarono nel 1296. 1298. 1307. 1312. 1314. 1333. 1340. 1349. 1352. 1354. 1356. 1370. 1378. 1392. 1421. 1434. 1438. 1445. 1446. 1455. 1460. 1468. 1472. 1481. 1483. 1484. 1487. 1490. 1498. 1513. 1516. 1518. 1530. 1531.

I Priori governarono nel 1291. 1301.1303. 1304. 1306. 1308. 1309. 1313. 1315. 1316. 1317. 1318. 1319. 1320. 1321. 1322. 1324. 1325. 1328. 1329. 1330. 1338. 1344. 1349. 1350. 1351.1352. 1354. 1358. 1360. 1365. 1368. 1373. 1375. 1377. 1381. 1383. 1384. 1395. 1397. 1402. 1408. 1411. 1416. 1428. 1436. 1452. 1453. 1459. 1462. 1465. 1467. 1469. 1476. 1493. 1503. 1508. 1517. 1522. 1523. 1525. 1526. Giuseppe M. Mecatti, *Storia genealogica della nobiltà, e cittadinanza di Firenze* (Bologna: Forni Editore Bologna, 1754, 1971), 349.

<sup>352</sup> Aldo Mannucci, *Vita di Cosimo I de' Medici, Granduca di Toscana*, (Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1823), 24.

<sup>353</sup> Lucio P. Rosello, *Il ritratto del vero governo del prencipe* (1552), ed. Matteo Salvetti (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2008), 159.

Another example is on Camillo Giordano Orsini by Francesco Sansovino:

“questo volto così asciutto e di color macilente, dimostrativo di qualità di huomo nervoso e per natura agile e forte è il vero ritratto del signor Camillo Orsino.”<sup>354</sup>

Marsilio Ficino told Niccolo Michelozzi that he recognized in Cosimo il Vecchio as an old man “not human, but heroic virtue”.<sup>355</sup>

And the description of Paolo Giovio on Cosimo I, making the face and the soul related again, is like this: “onoratamente temprato fra la severita e l'allegrezza; severa e minacciosa fronte” and Alessandro de' Medici: “forte fisicamente e intellettualmente.”<sup>356</sup>

This is related with the physiognomic consciousness, and it can be found in the classical tradition. Giovan Battista Della Porta once took some examples. Themistio Eufrada, in his *Della Clemenzia di Teodosio imperadore*, said: “Nasce il re tra gli uomini, ma tanto di rado e dopò molti intervalli d'anni, cioè allora quando si unisce la bellzza dell'animo con l'eccellenzia del corpo, e quello è veramente gran re, che ha la forma e bellezza intera e per ogni parte, assoluta e perfetta.”<sup>357</sup> Following the statement, he presented other examples in the ancient time: “Priamo, appresso Omero, contemplando la bellezza e maestà d'Agamennone, ancorché non sapesse chi è si fusse, confessò ch'era simile ad un re. Ettore, come si raccorda da Darete, figliuolo di re, si narra che fu di faccia venerabile, d'animo grande, clemente à cittadini e degno.”

According to Della Porta, Luigi d'Este had similar appearance:

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<sup>354</sup> Sansovino, *L'istoria di casa Orsina*, 81.

<sup>355</sup> *Opera*, I, 622 (Cogniovi in eo sene non humanam virtutem sed heroicam)

<sup>356</sup> Paolo Giovio, *Vita dei dodici Visconti*, tran. Ludovico Domenchi, ed. Massimo Fabi (Milan: F. Colombo, 1853), 887.

<sup>357</sup> Giovan Battista Della Porta, *Coelestis physiognomonia*, ed. Alfonso Paoletta (Napoli: edizioni Scientifiche italiane, 1996), 194.

“Luigi d’Este percioché si scorgea in quello una certa indole reale e piena di maestà, forse dal sangue reale di Lodovico undecimo, re di Francia, suo avo.”<sup>358</sup>

“[il cardinale d’ Este] è così riguardevole l’ornamento, la dignità e la maestà del tuo volto, [...] che ivi si leggono i costumi et il valor di tanta anima.”<sup>359</sup>

These general descriptions are based on the ancient tradition. The examples are: Claudius II “fit intellectually and physically to be emperor”; Diocletian “majestic looking”; Valentinian I “beauty of figure and harmony of features corresponded to dignity of person which should attend a monarch.”<sup>360</sup>

Gradually the political meaning of later representation could be rendered without inscriptions and largely without a literary key to the significance of their elaborate details. The gap between physiognomic description and impersonal allegories of rule and power was avoided; the metaphors of our early examples were now spelled out in the terms of undisguised political propaganda.<sup>361</sup>

## 2.2 General descriptions in Chinese history and biography

In Chinese history and biography, the general description of kings and emperors were more preferred, compared with photographic description,. Many rulers were depicted without details while the images were made out successfully.

There are usually two modes of general description. One is that the feature of ruler was generalized with the statement that his inner natural was reflected from his appearance or his qualities were correspondent with his physique. The other is that his whole physical feature was compared with

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>359</sup> Cicognani, introduction, 13-15.

<sup>360</sup> Amm. Marc., 30, 9, 6; Auct., *Epit. de Caes.*, 45, 5

<sup>361</sup> Kurt W. Forster, “Metaphors of rule: political ideology and history in the portraits of Cosimo de’ Medici,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 15. (1971): 70.

some image inducing immediate reflection at the first glance. Both of the modes are often employed by biographers.

As for the first mode, there are some instances:

Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398), Emperor Taizu 太祖 of Ming dynasty “looked majestic and splendid 姿貌雄杰，奇骨贯顶，志意廓然，人莫能测。”<sup>362</sup>

Zhu Di 朱棣 (1360-1424), Emperor Chengzu 成祖 of Ming was “grand imposing, with beautiful beard 王貌奇伟，美髭髯。”<sup>363</sup>

Zhu Gaochi 朱高炽 (1378-1425), Emperor Renzong 仁宗 of Ming “looked steady and calm 端重沉静。”<sup>364</sup>

In description of Chinese emperors, the general method was favored by historians. This method can be found more in the history.

In *Tai Zu Ben Ji* 太祖本纪 (Annals of Emperor Taizu) of *Song Shi* (history of Song dynasty), Zhao Kuangyin 赵匡胤 (927-976) had “a face conveying courage and grandness, and he was extraordinary to whoever read his face 容貌雄伟，气度豁如，识者知其非常人。”<sup>365</sup>

More examples are in the early history. In *Lun Heng* (discourse balance) it recorded that Emperor Gaozu 汉高祖 (296-195BC) of Han dynasty had “a looking incredibly noble 相贵不可言也。”<sup>366</sup>

Fu Jian 苻坚 (338-385), “looked great and had a outstanding nature.” And he “had a face of overlord 姿貌瑰伟，质性过人，非常相也；有霸王之相。”<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Jin Xie 解缙 (1369-1415) et al., *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu* 明太祖实录 (veritable records of Emperor Taizu of Ming dynasty), (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, 1962), 1: 1:1. Tinyu Zhang 张廷玉 (1672-1755) et.al., *Ming Shi* 明史 (history of Ming), (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1986), 1:1:1.

<sup>363</sup> Shiqi Yang 杨士奇 (1364-1444) et al., *Ming Tai Zong Shi Lu* 明太宗实录 (veritable records of Emperor Taizong of Ming dynasty), (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, 1962), 1: 1:1. Zhang et. al., *Ming Shi*, 5: 5: 1.

<sup>364</sup> Yi Jian 蹇义 (1363-1435) et al., *Ming Ren Zong Shi Lu* 明仁宗实录 (veritable records of Emperor Renzong of Ming dynasty), (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, 1962), 1. Zhang et. al., *Ming Shi*, 8: 8.

<sup>365</sup> Toqto'a 脱脱 et al., *Song Shi* 宋史, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 1: 1.

<sup>366</sup> Chong Wang 王充 (27-97), *Lun Heng* 论衡, (Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2006), 3: 11

As for the second mode of analogy, the ruler was often analogized with dragon, phoenix, tiger or other nature beings. Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398), Emperor Taizu 太祖 of Ming dynasty is said to have dragon-like stance and phoenix nature in the third volume of *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu* 明太祖实录.<sup>368</sup>

Zhu Di, Emperor Taizong of Ming dynasty had “dragon’s face and heavenly appearance 龙颜天表”, as it was recorded in *Ming Tai Zong Shi Lu* 明太宗实录 (veritable records of Emperor Taizong).<sup>369</sup>

The reason why the general description of rulers was so appreciated in ancient China can be explained from two perspectives. First, from the perspective of traditional aesthetics, realistic and detailed image was less interesting than a simple but incisive one both in art and literature. The portraiture, for example, in ancient times was named *Chuan Shen* 传神 (literarily, conveying the spirit) or *Xie Zhen* 写真 (writing true appearance) by artists. That is to say, portraiture is to describe the real physical appearance and convey true spirit of the sitter. However, the so-called real appearance is not as important as the true spirit. Too detailed and trivial actions could even destroy the overall image. It is the same in writing. The second is related to the political situation in which the historiographers were, particularly, the distance between the rulers and the writer. Unlike in most western countries such as Italy, Chinese rulers were always far from the people, both physically and mentally. Without seeing the exact appearance of rulers and observing them carefully, it is difficult to depict their detailed features, which is the same in the royal portraiture. Besides, the emperors, being far away from the ordinary people, kept them majestic and mysterious. There was a taboo to discuss the emperor among the people. It was even forbidden to call directly his name. Thus it is not difficult to understand why

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<sup>367</sup> Xuanling Fang 房玄龄 (579-648) et al., “Zai Ji 载记,” *Jin Shu* 晋书, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974), 13.

<sup>368</sup> Xie et al., *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*, 3.

<sup>369</sup> Yang et al., *Ming Tai Zong Shi Lu*, 1.



the historians used more often the general description to record the appearance of emperors.

### 3 Comparison of the descriptions: similarities and differences

#### 3.1 Physiognomic particulars emphasized in description

The manipulation of focalization on some particular part of the body serves similarly to instruct the reader in the proper virtues of a king and on the discriminating appreciation of royal physiognomy.<sup>370</sup> If we put together the photographic descriptions of Italian and Chinese rulers, we will find that some particular physical features were emphasized, some of which demonstrate the common interest of Italian and Chinese historians while some of which reflect cultural diversities.

Cosimo I de' Medici, second Duke of Florence and first Grand Duke of Tuscany, ruled with absolute power over the State of Florence from 1537 until 1574. These years coincided with the presence in Florence of numerous gifted individuals active in the literary and visual arts. His appearance was described by many writers in literary and biography. Aldo Mannucci portrayed him as following:

Fu il Gran Duca di buona complessione, gagliardo, e robusto, e atto a soffrire ogni fatica, ben proporzionato, e grande, di bell'aspetto, di cera alquanto bruna, e di guardatura molto grave, e anzi che nò altiera, massime nell'età sua più matura, e così maestevole, che chi non l'avesse conosciuto per quel, ch'egli era, subito vedutolo, l'avrebbe qualche gran Principe stimato.<sup>371</sup>

The passage recalls the appearance of the ancient rulers even at the first sight.

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<sup>370</sup> Alain Deremetz, "Plutarque: Histoire de l'Origine et Genèse du Récit," *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 103 (1990/91): 54-78.

<sup>371</sup> Mannucci, *Vita di Cosimo I de' Medici*, 234-235.

There is another depiction of Cosimo I de' Medici by Domenico Mellini:

Fu il Gran Duca Cosimo di grande formata, e bella statura, e di bella faccia grazioza, e piena di majesta, e grandezza: ebbe gli occhi grandi, e lucenti, e secondo i movimenti dell'animo talora folgoranti, e pieni di un certo che di terribile: fu di pelo castagnino, e con molta barba: ebbe la voce anzi che no, gracile (slender, delicate) e sottile, ma però chiaro, soave (agreeable, gentle, sweet), e sonora (sonorous, harmonious, resounding); e in tutte le sue maniere, e portamenti, fu modesto, grave, e di dignita pieno, e di majesta.<sup>372</sup>

It is not difficult to find some common points of the appearance of Cosimo I de' Medici in both descriptions, such as grande stature, bellezza e colore bruna, and the majesta. In terms of the physiognomy, the personality (or the virtue) of Cosimo I is conveyed.

For example, "occhi grandi, e lucenti" indicate a noble person who is ambitious and will succeed in realizing great project. It is well known that Alexander the Great had the similar eyes. And Plutarch also wrote that Alexander the Great<sup>373</sup> had humid eyes and had a habitude to turn his neck slightly to the right, which is a physiognomic character that the sculptor Lysippus had made in his works.

This is not a rare phenomenon. In fact, with the aid of a wealth of resident intellectuals of such quality as Paolo Giovio, Benedetto Varchi, Cosimo Bartoli and Vincenzo Borghini, present at different times, a personal 'historical' imagery was created from family traditions, Florentine mythology, pseudo-historical events, and historical coincidences.<sup>374</sup>

Among the physical features described, some are emphasized particularly as important signs of ruler. As in the examples above, we can see

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<sup>372</sup> Domenico Mellini, *Ricordi intorno ai costume, azioni, e governo, del sereniss. Gran Duca Cosimo I, Scritti da Domenico Mellini di commissione della Serenissima Maria Cristina di Lorena e ora per la prima volta pubblicati* (Firenze: Stamperia Magheri, 1820), 1.

<sup>373</sup> *Alex.* 4.1

<sup>374</sup> Richelson, "Personal imagery." 11.

that the stature is one of the interesting particular features that writers preferred to emphasize. The robust and well-proportioned body is an important sign of a strong ruler. Another example is the cardinal Luigi d'Este, described by Della Porta as "proporzionata l'armonia delle parti del tuo corpo."<sup>375</sup>

In the roman tradition, as Canter studied, one of the most frequently mentioned particulars is that of stature: 12 emperors are described as tall and well proportioned; 2 as tall and ill proportioned; 3 as above average, large and evenly proportioned; 6 as average; 7 as below average or short; 2 as slender.<sup>376</sup> Being well proportioned seemed the most preferred.

Suetonius takes especial interest in the use of phrases relating to the good proportions of the human body, as when he describes Tiberius as *latus ab umeris et pectore, ceteris quoque membris usque ad imos pedes aequalis et congruens*,<sup>377</sup> (broad in the shoulders and chest, and proportionable in the rest of his frame) or Augustus, who had *staturam brevem quam tamen Iulius Marathus libertus etiam memoriam eius quinque pedum et dodrantis fuisse tradit...sed quae commoditate et aequitate membrorum occuleretur*,<sup>378</sup> (his stature was but low, but Julius Marathus, his freedman, says that he was five feet and nine inches tall. This, however, was so concealed by the just proportions of his limbs, which it was perceivable only upon comparison with some taller person standing by him.)

The physiognomists attribute the greatest significance to right of the proportions. An ill-proportioned body indicates a rogue, says the pseudo-Aristotelian manual, while a well-proportioned frame is characteristic of upright and brave men.

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<sup>375</sup> Quoted in Cicognani, introduction, 14.

<sup>376</sup> Canter, "Personal appearance in the Biography," 398.

<sup>377</sup> *Tib.* 68

<sup>378</sup> *Aug.* 79

With reference to physical strength, constitution, etc., 19 Roman emperors are described as strong or robust, 6 as enervated and weak, 2 as sickly and of uncertain health.<sup>379</sup>

Tiberius, for example, is large, robust, and in good health during almost his entire reign.

Hadrian: physically strong—rode and walked a great deal

Commodus physically strong enough to engage in gladiatorial combats, to fight with wild beasts, to drive in chariot races

The physical strength is the sign of “*fortezza e magnanimo*”, as Della Porta indicated in his treatise,<sup>380</sup> who declared that the Aristotle, Polemo and Adamanzio hold the same opinion.

The second particular sign of Italian rulers described constantly is eyes. Paolo Giovio, for example, often used the terms such as “*occhi rilucenti* (shining) e *profondi* (deep)”. According to the treatise of physiognomy, the man with “*occhi rilucenti*” is brave.<sup>381</sup> What most of all plants the expectation of physical description in the mind of Giovio’s reader is the author’s own intense and abundantly demonstrated interest in representing the ethos of his subject, a topic which invites a related interest in the subject’s physiognomy.<sup>382</sup> In the principle, the eyes are the most favorite position in conveying a man’s characteristics, as emphasized in Pseudo-Aristotle’s manual.<sup>383</sup> In the Latin antonym *De physiognomoniam liber*, the eyes are analyzed in detail: from the size, colour to the way they move, being regarded as the most vivid and sure physiognomic sign.<sup>384</sup> In Della Porta’s physiognomic treatise, the eyes occupied also the most important

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<sup>379</sup> Canter, “Personal appearance in the Biography,” 398.

<sup>380</sup> Della Porta, *Della Fisionomia dell’uomo*, 831.

<sup>381</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 807b.

<sup>382</sup> On the ethical purpose of the *Lives* see Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, ed. Chris B. R. Pelling, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 11; Timothy E. Duff, *Sign of the soul, Moralising in the parallel lives of Plutarch* (PdD diss., Cambridge University, 1944) 2, each with further literature.

<sup>383</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 812a

<sup>384</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42

position, which was treated in the whole book of Book III in *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*. As he stated that the eyes are “il maggior e il più importante negozio di tutta la fisonomia.”<sup>385</sup>

It is plausible to say that the physical descriptions of Chinese emperors in history and biography are mostly in metaphor. Some particular parts of face or body are selected to describe in order to outline the feature of person. Effective as it was, it however simplified the character of person, lacking the subtle differences among the similar persons.

Like Italian rulers, the Chinese kings and emperors are described with particular concern with stature.

The emperors of Jin dynasty were almost described in the aspect of stature. Wanyan Yong 完颜雍, Emperor Shizong 世宗 (1123-1189), for instance, had “grand stature 体貌奇伟”;<sup>386</sup> Wanyan Yunji 完颜允吉 (1168-1213), Prince Shao of Wei 卫绍王 was “tall 长身”;<sup>387</sup> Wanyan Zongfu 完颜宗甫 (1096-1135), Emperor Ruizong, 睿宗 was “tall and strong-built 魁伟尊严”;<sup>388</sup> Wanyan Yungong 完颜允共 (1146-1185), Emperor Xianzong 宪宗, was “strong and magnificently imposing 体貌雄伟.”<sup>389</sup>

In the traditional description before Qin Dynasty, the height of emperors was begun to be recorded with numbers. The number, however, is imaginary and therefore unreliable.

In *San Guo Zhi* (records of Three Kingdoms), Liu Bei 刘备 (161-223), the founder of Shu 蜀 state, was “7 *chi* and 5 *cun* tall (approximately 172.2 meters) 身长七尺五寸.”<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Della Porta, *Della fisonomia dell'uomo*, 503.

<sup>386</sup> Toqto'a 脱脱 (1314-1356), *Jin Shi* 金史 (History of Jin), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company), 6: 6: 1

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 13: 13.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 19: 19

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Shou Chen 陈寿 (233-297) and Songzhi Pei 裴松之 (372-451), *San Guo Zhi* 三国志 (records of the Three Kingdoms), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2006), 31: 1.

In *He Tu* 河图, Liu Ji 刘季, that is Liu Bang 刘邦 (296-195 BC), founder of Western Han dynasty, was “7 *chi* and 8 *cun* tall (approximately 1.81 meters) 帝刘季[...]长七尺八寸.”<sup>391</sup>

As mentioned before, grand stature is a sign of richness and nobility. Therefore, the highness of rulers seemed correspond with the highness of their status.

Symmetry and good proportion are both accounted in Chinese physiognomy. However, it is just limited in the ordinary people. A body can be divided into three parts, named three Ting, the head and neck is the upper Ting; from shoulder to waist mid Ting; and from waist to feet is lower Ting. A man with the three Ting in good proportion is beautiful. In terms of nobility, however, the upper and mid Ting should be longer than the lower Ting, as *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* said: “man with upper parts longer than lower part would be vassal 上长下短公侯相.”<sup>392</sup>

The fleshy and round neck was very much preferred by Chinese kings and emperors, which is far different from the Italian idea, which preferred the straight and upright one. As *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* said, “the man with straight neck is just but unlucky.”<sup>393</sup> While “the man with the neck as round as the sleeve is rich and longevous;” and “the man with the fleshy neck like swallow is noble 颈立端直者，性正而福薄。圆叠如农袖者，富寿、圆肥如燕颈者，高贵.”<sup>394</sup>

In the western tradition, when discussing physical traits in antiquity, physiognomic theories are clearly relevant, as mentioned before. We must ask what importance ancient physiognomists attributed to the neck in order to understand better what intentions or concepts may lay behind ancient

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<sup>391</sup> Fang Li 李昉 (925-996) et. al., *Tai Ping Yu Lang* 太平御览 (Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era), (Beijing: Zhong Hua Book Company, 1960), 1:412.

<sup>392</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 50.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

descriptions focusing on the neck. The answer is quite clear. Having a strong, thick and not too short neck was considered a virtue. A thin and curved neck, or a short and thick one, was considered a negative quality. A passage from Juvenal (3.86-89) will illustrate this point:

Quid quod adulandi gens prudentissima laudat  
sermonem indocti, faciem deformis amici,  
et longum invalidi collum cervicibus aequat  
Herculis antaeum procul a tellure tenentis.<sup>395</sup>

The neck recalls the lion, which has a neck of good length and moderate thickness. Incidentally, both pseudo-Symeon and the anonymous author of Guidi's "*Life*" compared Constantine to a lion when describing his eyes and face.<sup>396</sup> The second-century physiognomic writer Polemo and the fourth-century Anonymus Latinus present many references to the neck. Polemo states in his description of the Greek race, considered superior to all others: *Est autem purus Graecus...nec parvi nec magni capitatis, cuius in collo crassitudo et fortitudo.*<sup>397</sup>

The nose is frequently mentioned in the description of Chinese kings and emperors. Emperor Xiaozong 明孝宗 (1470-1505) of Ming dynasty, for example, had a prominent nose *Long Zhun* 隆准.<sup>398</sup>

Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (1654-1722) of Qing dynasty was "born heroic and majestic [...] he had pupils as bright as the sun, nose as prominent as a hill. His voice was loud and clear 天表奇伟，神采焕发，双瞳日悬，隆准岳立，耳大声洪，徇奇天纵。”<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> "What of this again, that these people are experts in flattery, and will commend the talk of an illiterate, or the beauty of a deformed friend, and compare the scraggy neck of some weakling to the brawny throat of Hercules when holding up Antaeus high above the earth." trans. G. G. Ramsay, Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>396</sup> Christer Bruun, "The thick neck of the Emperor Constantine: slimy snails and *quellenforschung*," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 44 (1995): 477.

<sup>397</sup> Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomoni* I: 242

<sup>398</sup> Jian Liu 刘健 (1433-1526) et al., *Ming Xiao Zong Shi Lu 明孝宗实录* (veritable records of Emperor Xiaozong), (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, 1962), 1:1.

<sup>399</sup> Ma Qi 马齐 (1652-1739) et al. *Qing Sheng Zu Huang Di Shi Lu 清圣祖皇帝实录* (veritable record of Emperor Shengzu of Qing dynasty), (Beijing: Zhong Hua Book Company, 1985), 4: 139.

It is clear that almost all the emperors (except for tyrants) have prominent nose. This is emphasized in physiognomic treatises. *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* said prominent nose is a sign of prominent social status.<sup>400</sup> *Guan Jian Ji* 管鉴集 also stated that with the reference of *Wu Xing* (Five Elements), nose is of Earth. All beings are from Earth. So is Mountain. Mountain is rather high and earth is rather thin. This is just like the face of man.[...] nose as the middle of face, should be high like mountain, meaning nobility.<sup>401</sup> *Da Tong Fu* 大统赋 also said that the nose is Mount Song 嵩山, Central Mount of the Great Five Mounts. (In Chinese physiognomy, as is mentioned before, five facial organs, namely eyes, mouth, nose, cheeks are compared with the Great Five Mounts of China.) It should be high and straight to indicate nobility.<sup>402</sup>

The prominent nose of emperor has even a proper name—*Long Zhun* 隆准, or *Long Bi* 龙鼻. According to physiognomic theory, the man with Long Zhun would surely be king.<sup>403</sup> It can be traced back to the Han dynasty.

In *Shi Ji* (Records of the Grand Historian), Liu Bang 刘邦, founder of Han dynasty “was a man with a prominent nose and the front of a dragon, with beautiful beard on his chin and cheeks, seventy-two spots on the left thigh 高祖为人，隆准而龙颜，美须髯，左股有七十二子。”<sup>404</sup> In *Suo Yin* 索隐, he was also described as having long neck and prominent nose 长颈而高鼻.

Emperor Guangwu 光武 (6BC-57AD), founder of Eastern Han Dynasty, has the similar physiognomy. In *Hou Han Shu*, it said: “(Emperor Guang Wu) was 7 *Chi* and 3 *Cun* tall. He was a man with beautiful beard and eyebrows, big mouth, prominent nose and *Ri Jiao* 身长七尺三寸，美须眉，大口，隆准，日角。”<sup>405</sup>

<sup>400</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 39.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>404</sup> Qian Sima 司马迁 (145? 135?-87 BC), *Shi Ji* 史记, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1972), 8:8, 342.

<sup>405</sup> Fan, *Hou Han Shu*, 1: 1.



In *Annals of Emperor Yuan* 晋元帝纪 in *Jin Shu* 晋书(Book of Jin), “when Emperor Yuan 元帝 (276-323) grew up, he had white hairs on the left of his left eye. His nose was prominent. And he had a forehead of a dragon 及长，白毫生于日角之左，隆准龙颜。”<sup>406</sup>

Another important sign is the length of arms.

In *San Guo Zhi* (record of Three Kingdoms), Chen Shou 陈寿 (233-297) depicted Liu Bei, founder of Shu state “was 7 *Chi* and 5 *Cun* tall, with long arms reaching knees 身長七尺五寸，垂手过膝。” The phrase was continued being used by the historians hereafter. For example, Emperor Wu 晋武帝 (236-290) of Jin dynasty (266-420) in *Wu Di Ben Ji* 武帝本纪 (Annals of Emperor Wu) of *Jin Shu* 晋书(Book of Jin) was: “[...] brave at his time. He had hair so long to touch the floor, and arms long past his knees 神武有超世之才，发委地，手过膝。”<sup>407</sup>

Emperor of Gaozu 陈高祖 (503-559) in Chen 陈 state was: “7 *Chi* and 5 *Cun* tall, [...] with long arms reaching knees. 高祖身長七尺五寸...手过膝”<sup>408</sup>

Emperor Wen 文帝 (507-556) of Northern Zhou 北周 state was: “8 *Chi* tall. He had hair so long to touch the floor and arms long past his knees. 身長八尺，发委地，垂手过膝”<sup>409</sup>

In *Xiang Shou* 相手(On Hands) of *Sheng Xiang Quan Pian*, it is said: “those with long arms to knees are the heroes of the age 手垂过膝，盖世英贤”， which demonstrates the importance of hands in physiognomy.”<sup>410</sup>

*Xiang gui* 相贵(On nobility) of *Sheng Xiang Quan Pian*, long arms reaching knees is also a sign of nobility.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Fang et al., *Jin Shu*, 9.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>408</sup> Silian Yao 姚思廉(557-637), *Chen Shu* 陈书 (Book of Chen), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1972), 1:1.

<sup>409</sup> Defen Linghu 令狐德棻 (582-666), *Zhou Shu* 周书 (Book of Zhou), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1971), 1:1.

<sup>410</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 183.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., 100.

It is interesting that in the *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, there is a passage particularly on the “*Braccia lunghe infino alle ginocchia*”:

Quando le braccia si stendono tanto, che le mani giungono alle ginocchia, dimostrano audacia, bontà e liberalità. Da Aristotele ad Alessandro. Le braccia, se tanto saran lunghe, che le mani distese giungano insino alle ginocchia, dàn segno di calda e fortezza e felicità. Rase: quando le braccia saranno tanto lunghe, che le mani giungano alle ginocchia, dimostrano arroganza, altezza d'animo e cupidiggia di regnare; e disse ciò avvenire dal temperamento del core caldo e umido. Alberto dice: non che l'estremità del dito tocchi le ginocchia, ma benché manchi la misura di quattro diti, dimostra umiltà e fortezza. Leggiamo Aristotele esser stato di braccio lungo. Si scrive Alessandro Magno aver avuto tali braccia; epperò aver avuto, con l'audacia, e la bontà e la liberalità. Artaserse fu cognominato Longimano, perché aveva la man destra più lunga della sinistra; epperò aver avanzato tutti li Re di Persia di santità et umiltà di costumi, e grandezza di animo. Strabone dice Dario Longimano, il qual fu il più bello di tutti gli uomini [...]<sup>412</sup>

And in the ancient *Trattato di Fisiognomica*, we can find a similar doctrine: “Le mani quando sono lunghe sì da toccare le ginocchia, allorché le si abbassa tenendo però diritto tutto il corpo, indicano persone abili e sono segno di forza.”<sup>413</sup>

### 3.2 Physiognomic significance in Chinese and Italian descriptions

The power of a ruler derived from many sources: from armed support, from legal and constitutional recognition, eventually also from the sheer inertia of a bureaucratic machine. Among other factors, a not negligible role was played by persuasion and belief.<sup>414</sup> The physiognomy of Italian and Chinese rulers mentioned above shows the interpretation of rulers with the help of physiognomic theory and physiognomic consciousness in it. As an ancient

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<sup>412</sup> Della Porta, *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, lib. II, 440-441.

<sup>413</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 59.

<sup>414</sup> Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “The emperor and his virtues,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 30 (1981): 298.

tool to identify people, the physiognomy helped rulers to make people know what they look like, and to create an image of them in the mind of people, especially their validity as ruler. In this way, the nobility find its gist in addition to others such as military power. This is the same in Italy and in China. The difference of the two countries lies in the particulars.

In the interpretation of Italian rulers, personalities and virtues are the main concern, that is, what personalities and virtues were conveyed out of their physical features. At least in part, the rulers in Italy was what Max Weber termed a charismatic ruler; that is to say, one whose power depends on the conviction of his subjects that he is personally in possession of gifts or talents essential for their well-being, yet beyond the reach of the ordinary mortal.<sup>415</sup> While in China, most of interests were taken in the born nobility of kings and emperors. It roots in the difference in traditional conception of nobility between the two kinds of culture.

Modern discussion of the place of virtues in the ideology of the Roman Empire moves from an old but still illuminating paper by Charlesworth.<sup>416</sup> His thesis was briefly this: For the mass of the population of the Empire the legal and constitutional position of their ruler was an irrelevance. What mattered was their belief that he was right for them and that they needed him. This belief centered on his possession of certain “virtues.” The choice of the virtues so advertised depended on assumptions about the ideals of a ruler were, which ultimately flowed from Greek philosophical thought about kingship, and which became “canonised” in the Golden Shield presented to Augustus.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> For Max Weber’s views on the bureaucracy and charisma see Hans. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills ed., and trans., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 166, 245.

<sup>416</sup> Martin P. Charlesworth, “The virtues of a Roman emperor: propaganda and the creation of belief,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 23 (1937), 103-133.

<sup>417</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, “The emperor and his virtues,” 299. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, however, argued that the virtues mentioned by Charlesworth caused hesitation because it allows no room for difference of viewpoint between different groups of people, let alone a distinction between elite and masses. Nor dose allow for difference between different periods and historical circumstances, even between different societies. And Augustus’s Golden Shield is perhaps better regarded as the end of an old tradition, rather than the beginning of a new one. Virtus, clementia, iustitia and pietas

Pliny wrote his *Panegyric*, flattering the ruler not as a god but as a man (nusquam ut deo, nusquam ut numini blandiamur). Twenty perfectly human *virtutes*, moral qualities, are mentioned within three chapters alone (2-4), and at least fifteen more in the rest of the speech. These are: pietas, abstinentia, mansuetudo (2, 6); humanitas, temperantia, facilitas (2,7); pudor (2,8); modestia, moderatio (3,2); frugalitas, clementia, liberalitas, benignitas, continentia, labor, fortitude (3,4); severitas, hilaritas, gravitas, simplicitas (4,6). Add later vigilantia (10,3); indulgentia (21,4); bonitas (30,5); iustitia (33,2); veritas (54,5); patientia (59,3); sanctitas (63,8); fides (67,1); reverentia (69,4); comitas (71,6); aequitas (77,3); diligentia (92,2).<sup>418</sup>

C. F. Norena has made a survey on individual virtues of Roman emperors in the coinages and measured their relative frequency with respect to each other. The data illuminate a long-term structure of imperial ideology by revealing which imperial virtues in particular were emphasized during our period and to what degree they were emphasized.<sup>419</sup>

The survey exposed that *Aequitas* is the most frequently mentioned virtue (24%). The others are: *Clementia* (2%); *indulgentia* (4%); *iustitia* (2%), *liberalitas* (12%) *munificentia* (less than 1%); *patientia* (less than 1%); *pietas* (20%); *providential* (11%); *pudicitia* (11%); *virtus* (13%).<sup>420</sup>

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individually may all have been important, indeed central “virtues” in certain contexts under the empire; but there is simply no evidence for supposing that the Shield played any authoritative role in spreading belief in them, nor that they constituted a “canon”. And Norena also said that the personalization of Roman virtues under Augustus did not give rise to any canon of imperial virtues, nor did particular virtues associated with Augustus correspond to any pre-existed canon. *Vitus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas*—the four virtues of the *clupeus virtutis* awarded to Augustus and the only virtues cited in the *Res Gestae* (34,2)—do not correspond to the four cardinal virtues of Greek philosophical thought on kingship, *andreia* (bravery), *sophrosune* (temperance), *dikaosune* (justice) and *Sophia* (wisdom), and were never, as a group, the principal virtues of Roman emperor. See Carlos F. Norena, “The communication of the emperor’s virtues,” *The journal of Roman studies*, 91 (2001): 152.

<sup>418</sup> Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “The emperor and his virtues,” 312.

<sup>419</sup> Norena, “The communication of the emperor’s virtues,” 156

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

Imperial coinage as one of the important propagandistic tools of rulers could be a circumstantial evidence. According to Norena, the reverse types on the imperial coinage can be divided iconographically into five broad categories. (1) Personifications; (2) gods, goddesses, and minor deities; (3) inanimate objects and miscellaneous scene; (4) depictions of emperor and various members of the imperial family; (5) provinces, cities, and rivers.<sup>421</sup> Measuring the relative frequency of these five categories indicates that personifications were overwhelmingly the most common types. Gods and goddesses were also fairly common. These data reveal some fundamental facts about long-term modes of representation and communication. First, the use of personification to express imperial ideals and values and the various benefits of imperial rule was more pervasive than other forms of expression. The predominance of this particular mode of representation cannot have been the result of conscious planning, but instead reflects a deep structure of Roman thought.<sup>422</sup> In fact, personification remained an important means of visual and symbolic expression well into the Middle Ages.<sup>423</sup>

The physiognomy of Italian rulers conveyed much more ideal virtues of them, such as courageousness, magnanimity and justice, as we analyzed in the previous passage. The physical descriptions of rulers have been done

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<sup>421</sup> Norena added, these divisions are not conceptual and are only intended to isolate different iconographic categories; some of the inanimate objects, for example, may be read as symbols for one of the other categories (e.g. a club to represent Hercules). A few comments on the placement of certain types. Within the category of "gods, goddesses and minor deities" he has placed Genius types and those of the hero Hercules. The "objects and miscellaneous" category includes inanimate objects (altars, buildings, military equipment, religious implements etc.), animals, events (e.g. adventus), imperial titulature and scenes not involving the "emperor or members of the imperial family" (e.g. a lector burning debts). Depictions of the reigning emperor's predecessor have been included in the category of the "emperor and the imperial family". Finally, the provinces category includes Hadrian's *Adventus*, *Exercitus* and *Restitutor* series. See Norena, "The communication of the emperor's virtues," 153-154 and note 41.

<sup>422</sup> On personification in Roman imagery see e.g. Per Gustaf Hamberg, *Studies in Roman Imperial art with special reference to the state reliefs of the second century*. (Uppsala, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri aktiebolag, 1945); Jocelyn C. M. Toynbee, "Picture-language in Roman art and coinage," in *Essays in Roman coinage presented to Harold Mattingly London*, ed. Robert A. G. Carson and Carol H. V. Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 216.

<sup>423</sup> On the importance of the obverse portrait of the emperor, see C. E. King, "Roman portraiture: images of power," in *Roman coins and public life under the empire*, ed. George M. Paul and Michael Ierardi (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 123-136. After the coinage, imperial portraiture was surely the most important medium for spreading the emperor's image.

according to the virtues which are mentioned above. In this way, the virtue was embodied by the ruler's physiognomy.

The characteristic of Chinese rulers conveyed straightly by their physiognomy is "nobility". As it was surveyed, almost all the physiognomic features were in the same end, so as to support the inevitability of the fact that the ruler must be ruler. Comparatively, the main concerns of physiognomy of ordinary people focused on the concrete aspects such as wealth, longevity and career, while that of rulers were abstract and particular, making their image detached from the common people.

#### 4. Negative physiognomy of tyrants

That the body served as a testimony for the political purpose can be seen from its power of denial. The good appearance conveys the good personality or destiny, while the bad appearance conveys the bad. In history, tyrants are criticized not only in their actions, but also in the physical features described. The difference in the purpose of representation seems here less significant between Chinese and Italian rulers: the vice, the moral aspect is the same focus this time. In the depiction, there formed some sorts of stereotypes.

Some particulars of physiognomic features were emphasized to indicate the vice of rulers, such as cruelty, insidiousness. The eyes as the most important part in the physiognomic observation and window of the soul, was described in both Chinese and Italian history.

Liu Zhiyuan 刘知远 (895–948), the Shato founder of the Later Han Dynasty in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period of Chinese history, for example, was described as "the king was weak in physique. He was a serious countenance and is silent. When he grew up, his face was in violet and wall-eyed 帝弱不好弄，严重寡言，及长，面紫色，目睛多白。<sup>424</sup>

The readers can recognize at once that this means a face of a vice man,

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<sup>424</sup> Juzheng Xue 薛居正 (912-981) et. al., *Jiu Wu Dai Shi 旧五代史* (history of the Five Dynasties), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000), 99; Xiu Ouyang 欧阳修 (1007-1073), *Xin Wu Dai Shi 新五代史* (New History of the Five Dynasties), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974), 1:10.

cruel, sinister, and frightening. According to the physiognomic treatise *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, the insidious man is usually reticent<sup>425</sup>. The purple complexion is a sign of nobility, as he is an emperor<sup>426</sup>. The walled eyes are a sign of irascibility, pugnacity and a tragic death, as indicated also in *Shen Yi Fu* 神异赋 and *Yu Guan Jue* 玉管诀.<sup>427</sup> Here the phrase *Mu Jing Duo Bai*, meaning the walled eyes, with the spread white and small pupils, is a typical sign to indicate a vice man.

Comparing with the Italian, the Chinese vice physiognomy has always been connected with the future prediction based on the judgment of their moral character. First, the common concept of one good return deserves another, connected closely with the physiognomic idea of judging a man's virtue or vice from his face led to a classification of the vice and virtue based on their appearance. On one hand, fate is what comes over people at the beginning, when they are born. Life and death depend on Destiny; wealth and honor come from Heaven. The notion of Ming 命 in ancient times can be summarised briefly as follows: it is named "Zheng Ming 正命" by Pao Xi 庖西; "Tian Ming 天命" by Confucius; "Fu Ming 复命" by Lao Dan 老聃. All of them are indeed obtained from Heaven and assigned to the people. The destiny is predetermined by heaven. This idea has been interpreted much in Chinese philosophy and literature and is the basic tenet of physiognomy.

On the other hand, the good or the bad in a character is correspondent with the fortune or the misery of that character's fate. Confucius said: "One is able to live because he is honest. A man who dupes others is able to survive because he is spared at the moment 人之生也直，罔之生也幸而免。"<sup>428</sup> It is a clue that morality and fate is closely related. In the Tang and Song dynasties, the Buddhist concept of cause and effect also influenced the physiognomy, making the process of judgment one's fate on the base of his face more persuasive.

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<sup>425</sup> Yuan "Shen Xiang Quan Bian," 57.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 57, 248.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 57. Chen, "Shen Yi Fu," 127. Kuocang Yao 姚括苍, "Yu Guan Jue 玉管诀 (secrets of Yuguan)," in *Xiang Shu*, ed Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 160.

<sup>428</sup> Confucius, *Lun Yu 论语* (analects of confucious), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2009), 6:17.

At the same time, one's appearance formed with his natural disposition is not always unchanged. Man's deeds can influence his looking and then change his fate. Wang Fu 王符 also said in his work *Qian Fu Lun* 潜夫论 that the fate of one person is predetermined when he was born imbibing the Qi 气 (fluid). However, he added, if man's conduct is evil, his fate would be miserable even if he were born fortunate. A similar opinion can be found in the field of physiognomy, for example, in the incomplete physiognomic series of Xu Fu found in Dunhuang, it is said:

Telling fortune from the face is indeed from the conduct as well. A man who has an auspicious look will be blessed only if he conducts well. If not, his good physiognomy will be damaged, so will his fortune.

In brief, if one is in good nature or if he does good deeds, his appearance will be correspondent with nature, otherwise, his appearance will be more and more conflicted with nature, and his life will thus get worse. The face and the conduct are the exterior demonstration of the nature and the fate of a person.

Yang Guang 杨广 (569-618), Emperor Yang 隋炀帝 of Sui dynasty (581-619) is recorded as "His majesty was beautiful in face and in deportment 上美姿仪", "King Jin (his title before enthroned) with his rise brow bone was precious 晋王眉上双骨隆起, 贵不可言."<sup>429</sup> however, despite his good appearance, Emperor Yang was generally considered by traditional historians to be one of the worst tyrants in Chinese history and the cause for the Sui Dynasty's relatively short rule. He was killed by the rebel forces.

It is notable, however, that with the strengthening of the centralized authority, the negative description of emperors is less and less founded. In *Ming Shi Lu* 明实录 (veritable records of Ming dynasty), for example, none critic description was found in all the sixteen emperors of Ming.

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<sup>429</sup> Zheng Wei 魏征 (580-643) et.al., *Sui Shu* 隋书 (book of Sui), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1973), 3: 3.



The eyes, as the “perno di tutta la fisiognomica”<sup>430</sup> were paid attention to by most of the writers in describing appearance in Italian history and biography. Paolo Giovio described Cesare Borgia (1475-1507) as:

Il Cesare Borgia, il quale di sanguinoso ingegno, e arrabbiata crudeltà si può credere che eguagliasse gli antichi tiranni, fu ingenerato di velenoso sangue, e di maledetto seme: perciocché egli haveva la faccia sparsa, di rossor nero e piena di molti cossi, i quali leggermente mandavano fuor marcia e gli occhi fitti in dentro, i quali con serpentina e crudele guadatura pareva che schizzassero fuoco; talché gli amici e i familiari suoi non potevano pur soffrire di guararvi, benché ch’egli scherzando tra le donne, meravigliosamente mutandogli volesse mostrargli molto piacevoli.

At the beginning, Giovio actually pointed out the character of Cesare Borgia with an obvious critic attitude: “di sanguinoso ingegno”, “crudeltà”, “di velenoso sangue” and “di maledetto seme”. These features are correspondent with the physiognomic signs that Giovio placed following the direct indication. In this passage, “la faccia sparsa, di rossor nero e piena di molti cossi,” and “gli occhi fitti in dentro, i quali con serpentina e crudele guadatura pareva che schizzassero fuoco” of Borgia were picked out as the typical physiognomic signs: The black red face is the sign of craftiness, pusillanimity and ingenuity, as Pseudo-Aristotle wrote “La faccia rosso: I rossi [sono] scaltri. Si vedano le volpi”<sup>431</sup> and *Trattato di fisiognomica* held that “il colore nero indica persona leggera, imbelle, pusillanime ma ingegnosa.”<sup>432</sup>

As described by Giovio, the eyes of Borgia indicate the frivolousness,

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<sup>430</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 20.

<sup>431</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 812a.

<sup>432</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 79.

the cruelty and insidiousness, the evidences can be found in lots of physiognomic treatises.<sup>433</sup>

In the physiognomic treatise by Della Porta, this was even a correspondent doctrine, making Borgia as an example:

Gli occhi cavi e piccioli dan segno di uomini ingannevoli. Così Polemone. Adamanzio ci aggiunge: pieni d'insidie, invidie et emulazioni. L'aquila ha gli occhi cavi in dentro, e vede assai lunghi. Cesare Borgia, Duca Valentino, aveva gli occhi cavi in dentro e di guardo viperino e atroce, scintillante foco, che gli stessi suoi amici non vi potevano fissare il guardo, ancorché stesse festevole et allegro.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> "Quelli che guardano di traverso sono frivoli e così quelli che hanno una palperbra che scende un po' sugli occhi, mentre l'iride sta fissa nel mezzo e quelli che ritraggono le pupille sotto le palpebre superiori[...]" (Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 812b.) "I serpenti ha le pupille piccole, che denunciano cattiveria." (*Trattato di fisiognomica*, 20.) "Gli occhi statici, piccoli indicano persona avara, avida e bramosa di guadagno." (*Trattato di fisiognomica*, 22.)

<sup>434</sup> Della Porta, *Della fisionomia dell'uomo*, 144.

## Chapter IV

# Ruler's Body: Templates of Ruler in Image-producing

In both Chinese and Italian history and biography, the rulers had rather similar appearance. The likeness or the reality of the depiction seems not the interest of both the rulers and the writers, but a construction of the image in the sovereign system. In the previous chapter we have observed the features of the physical descriptions of rulers which were made in history and biography and which were very common to see. In this chapter we will analyse what physiognomic features an ideal ruler must have, or what kinds of physical characteristics are the sign of rulers, in order to demonstrate the physiognomic meanings of the elements constructing the image of rulers. There are three main templates formed under the influence of physiognomic theory.

## 1. Template of physiognomic quality

### 1.1 Extraordinary physiognomy of Chinese ruler

To be an easily recognizable and acceptable ruler, he had better have some feature unique and extraordinary. In Chinese culture, “The noble’s appearance must be different 贵者必定形殊.”<sup>435</sup> Ban Gu 班固(32-92) stated in *Bai Hu Tong De Lun* (virtue of white tiger): “The sage has his extraordinary appearance 圣人异相.”<sup>436</sup> There are many records on the extraordinary features of the pre-destined king or emperor in *Tai Ping Yu Lan* 太平御览 (Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era). For instance, the king Yao 尧 (2356-2255BC) had “the forehead with a bird-shape bone, [...] eight eyebrows. 鸟庭[...]八眉”<sup>437</sup> “King Shun 舜(23rd-22nd century BC legendary leader) had

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<sup>435</sup> Chen, “Shen Yi Fu,” 113.

<sup>436</sup> Gu Ban 班固 (32-92), *Bai Hu Tong De Lun* 白虎通德论. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Press, 1989, 51

<sup>437</sup> Li et.al., *Tai Ping Yu Lang*, 371.

a dragon's look; his had double pupils and big mouth.”<sup>438</sup> Emperor Gaozu 汉高祖 of Han Dynasty had temples like sun and moon, narrow chest, back like turtle's shell. He had dragon-like appearance. He was 7 *Chi* 8 *Cun* tall. He was a ruler wise and tolerant.<sup>439</sup> The same idea is found in the physiognomic treatise. In the first paragraph of *Jing Shen Fu* 惊神赋, it recorded: “the Emperor Yao had the eyebrow in eight colors; Emperor Shun had eyes with double pupils; Emperor Wu 武王 of Zhou dynasty (ca.1087-1043BC) had the ears with three holes; Emperor Wen 文王 (of Zhou dynasty) (1152-1056 BC) had a chest with four breasts; Emperor Gaozu 高祖 of Han dynasty had dragon's front [...] Emperor Gaozu 高祖 had 72 naevi in the left thigh.”<sup>440</sup> The idea that the rulers have some special features in the body is accorded in physiognomic theory and social practice.

Such kind of appearance is undoubtedly strange and ugly. However, it was preferred by the rulers. In *Han Shu* 汉书 (history of Han Dynasty) : “Emperor Gaozu 高祖, (Liu Bang 刘邦, founder of Han Dynasty) had 72 naevi in the left leg.” In *Hou Han Shu* 后汉书 (History of Hou Han Dynasty), Emperor Yuan 晋元帝 (276-323) in Jin Dynasty: “When he grew up, there was white hair in the left of the temple. His nose was straight like that of a dragon 及长, 白毫生于日角之左, 隆准龙颜.”<sup>441</sup> And “the physiognomist said that he would be an emperor.”<sup>442</sup> Liu Bei 刘备 (161-223), the king of Shu 蜀 in the Three Kingdoms era, “was 7 *chi* 5 *cun* tall. His hands were so long that could reach the knees. He could see his own ears 身长七尺五寸, 垂手下膝, 顾自见其耳.”<sup>443</sup>

The uniqueness is what the emperors intended to convey. The ancient rulers often referred to themselves as the *Gua Ren* 寡人 (one man) or the *Gu* 孤 (solitary one). This highlights loneliness in the exercise of power and responsibility. It serves also to reinforce the notion of the king as collective

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 377.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 412

<sup>440</sup> Yuan, " Shen Xiang Quan Bian, " 168.

<sup>441</sup> Fan et al., *Hou Han Shu*, 6.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>443</sup> Chen, *San Guo Zhi*, 23.

man, as mediator between Heaven and earth. He is, in fact, the “one man” who represents all human beings on the earth in the presence of a superior Heaven. All in all, there are mainly three particular features frequently mentioned by historiographers.

### 1.1.1 Strange phrenology

Among the extraordinary features, having a unique bone on head is common for kings.

Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398), founder of Ming dynasty was recorded with *Qi Gu Guan Ding* 奇骨贯顶 (having a special bone lying from the forehead to the top of the skull) in history. In *Ming Shi* 明史 (History of Ming), it said “(Zhu) was heroic and splendid from his appearance and action. He had a *Qi Gu Guan Ding*.”<sup>444</sup> He Qiaoyuan 何乔远 (1558-1631), historiographer in Ming dynasty also wrote in his *Ming Shan Cang* 名山藏 that Zhu Yuanzhang had the *Qi Gu Guan Ding*. In the third volume of *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu* 明太祖实录 (veritable records of Emperor Taizu), it is nearly magic: Zhu Yuanzhang dreamed that someone put a jade in his nape. When he woke up, he felt a plump in the nape, with slight pain. Supposing it sickness, He applied some ointment to it, which however did not work. Later, the plump hardened and became a strange bone. The story is a hint for his rising to power, because the appearance of bone was on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1367 (Chinese traditional calendar), which was 28 days (a month in Chinese calendar) before his ascendance to throne. As official history, *Ming Tai Zu Shu Lu* and *Ming Shi* intentionally included the obviously fabricated event and description, which reflected the fact that the writing of history is under some control of the central government.

The *Qi Gu Guan Ding* is a term in ancient physiognomic knowledge and is in the range of phrenology. In the historiography as early as *Shi Ji*, Kuai

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<sup>444</sup> Zhang, *Ming Shi*, 1: 1.

Tong 蒯通 (?-?, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) said to Han Xin 韩信 (?-196BC): “The phrenology tells nobleness and lowliness 贵贱在于骨法.”<sup>445</sup>

In the *Xiang Gu Ge* 相骨格 (Reading bone structure) of *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, there are three types of strange bone. The first is named *Jin Cheng* 金城, lying in temples; the second is *Tian Zhu* 天柱, rising from the ophryon to the middle of forehead; the third is *Fu Xi* 伏羲, vaulting from the middle of forehead over the top of head. All the three are the sign of kingship.<sup>446</sup>

In *Xiang Fu* 相赋 (prose of physiognomy) ascribed to the immortal Luo 罗真人, it said “having horns near to the eyes, he would be duke or minister 日月有角，不公即卿.”<sup>447</sup>

In *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, there are some other doctrines on the strange bone. For instance, it said “with *Yu Zhu* on the head, one would be Son of Heaven 玉柱入顶，贵为天子。” “With a hiding bone from ophryon to top of head, one would be successful and glorious 印堂上至天庭，有骨隐然而现者，必达而荣.”<sup>448</sup>

The signification of the bone *Fu Xi*'s was confirmed in *Shen Yi Fu* 神异赋, which declared “with bone of *Fu Xi*, he would be in prices and marquises 伏犀贯顶，一品王侯.”<sup>449</sup>

In *Ren Lun Da Tong Fu* 人伦大统赋, Zhang Xingjian 张行简 (?-1215) wrote “if one has a rising bone of *Fu Xi*, he will be prime minister in future 若见伏犀之骨起，定做元臣.”<sup>450</sup>

Guan Ge 管辂 wrote in *Ren Lun Yuan Ao Fu* 人伦渊奥赋: “Having a perfectly rising bone of *Fu Xi*, one will surely be distinguished in the court 伏犀隆俊，终为廊庙之英贤.”<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Sima, *Shi Ji*, 92: 23.

<sup>446</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 31.

<sup>447</sup> Zhenren Luo 罗真人, “Xiang Fu 相赋 (prose of physiognomy),” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 170.

<sup>448</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 223.

<sup>449</sup> Chen, “Shen Yi Fu,” 122.

<sup>450</sup> Zhang Xingjian, “Ren Lun Da Tong Fu 人伦大统赋,” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 143

<sup>451</sup> Guan Lu 管辂, “Ren Lun Yuan Ao Fu 人伦渊奥赋 (prose of the human secrets),” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 167.

In *De Yi Ge* 得意歌, there is also a principle on Fu Xi: “The bone of Fu Xi at the back of head is the reason for his title 脑后有骨伏犀生, 辞世封侯因.”<sup>452</sup>

The strange phrenology of Zhu Yuanzhang therefore found its theoretic base in the well accepted physiognomy among the people.

### 1.1.2 Double pupils

Having double pupils is another significant sign of kingly appearance. In his *Lun Heng* (discourse balance), Wang Chong mentioned that Shun, one member of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors in prehistory had double pupils. Xiang Yu, the overlord had such pupils as well. Wang Mang, usurper of Western Han dynasty and founder of Xin (or Hsin, meaning “new”) Dynasty, had also dicoria.

In *Shu Yuan Za Ji* of Lu Rong 陆容 (1436-1494), he wrote “Emperor Taizong 太宗(1330-1424, Ming dynasty) [...] had double pupils and dragon’s beard 太宗[...]重瞳龙髯.”<sup>453</sup>

In history there were quite a few kings and emperors with double pupils: Cang Jie 仓颉 (c. 2650 BC), the legendary inventor of Chinese characters; Chong Er 重耳 (697-628), titled Duke Wen 文王 of the state of Jin during the Spring and Autumn Period; Lv Guang 吕光(338-399), founding emperor of the Chinese/Di state Later Liang; Gao Yang 高洋 (529-559), first emperor of the Chinese dynasty Northern Qi; Li Yu 李煜 (937-978), last ruler of the Southern Tang Kingdom from 961 to 975 during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period.

In physiognomy, double-pupiled eyes are the sign of kings and saints. In *Yun Ji Qi Qian* 云笈七签, it said “as for the evidence (of kingship) in body, there are always something special, such as the squame-covered body, four-breast chest, double-pupiled eyes and colored eyebrows 且教有内外, 故

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<sup>452</sup> ZhongcheYuan, “De Yi Ge 得意歌(song of fulfilment),” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 175.

<sup>453</sup> Rong Lu 陆容 (1436-1494), *Shu Yuan Za Ji 菽园杂记* (Essays in Shu Yuan), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 11.

理有深浅耳。求之形体，则有鳞身四乳，重瞳彩眉之异。”<sup>454</sup>In the volume II of *Shui Jing Ji* 水镜集, it held that man with double-pupiled eyes will be general or prime minister.” *Shen Yi Fu* took Shun as example to state the significance of double pupils: “Shun had double pupils, he attained throne by Yao 若夫舜目重瞳，遂获禅尧之位。”

### 1.1.3 Black moles

In stead of being the blemish of ordinary people, the moles in some particular number are also the sign of kingship. Usually the number was 12, 36, and 72, which is out of the traditional thought of number. “72” is the amount of *Yin Yang* and *Wu Xing*. “36” is the total of “12” and “24”. And “12” is the number of 12 months in a year; “24” is the number of 24 *Jie Qi* 节气(24 divisions of the solar year in the traditional Chinese calendar). Therefore the moles in such numbers marked the universe. It only happened to the king that he might bear the moles in such numbers with the blessing of the Heaven and god.

Emperor Shizong 世宗 of Jin dynasty (1115-1234), named Wanyan Yong 完颜雍 (1123-1189), had “grand stature and beautiful beard long to the belly. There are seven black moles in his chest, in the shape of the Big Dipper 体貌奇伟，美鬚髯，长过其腹。胸间有七子如北斗星。”<sup>455</sup>

In the more ancient period, there have already been many emperors with black moles in a special number. In *Shi Ji*, Emperor Gaozu 高祖 of Han dynasty was recorded having 72 moles in the left thigh. And Emperor Taizu 太祖 of Ming Dynasty had also 72 moles in the face. The face of this kind was surely ugly but made the emperor so different from the ordinary people. Another example is Yuwen Tai 宇文泰 (507-556), Emperor Wen 文帝 of Northern Zhou dynasty (557-581), who was “8 *Chi* Tall, with broad forehead and beautiful beard. His hair was so long to touch the ground. There are

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<sup>454</sup> Junfang Zhang 张秀房 (?-? ca. 11<sup>th</sup> century), *Yun Ji Qi Qian* 云笈七签 (Seven Yunji), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2003), 15.

<sup>455</sup> Toqto'a, *Jin Shi*, 6: 6: 1.



black moles in the form of dragon with purple light 身長八尺，方頰廣額，美須鬣，發長委地，垂手過膝，背有黑子，宛轉若龍盤之行，而有紫光。”<sup>456</sup>

## 1.2 Beautiful physiognomy of Italian rulers

The criteria are different in Italy. There is much less descriptions alike to demonstrate the extraordinary qualities of the rulers. Even though there was one example, in western classical world, of Sertorius, the general, who retained only one eye which is a symptom indicating superior and military capacity.

Unlike the supernatural appearance of Chinese emperors, the typical representation of the king in Italy is strikingly handsome, which is in accordance with the Italian aesthetic idea that “I belli di faccia siano ancor belli di animo, e se i brutti medesimamente di animo brutto.”<sup>457</sup> It is an old but already proved idea by all the professionals in physiognomy that the beautiful body demonstrates the good soul. The beauty is a measure of all part of a body, which is also the model and the image of the soul. As Della Porta said “le parti di dentro hanno la medesima composizione che le parti di fuori; e quelli che hanno una simile azione dimostrano di fuori una simil forma. Perciò che la natura ha fabricato il corpo conforme agli effetti dell’animo. La bellezza dicono dono di Dio; e quelli che la possiedono si può dir che possiedono gran parte del suo favore.”<sup>458</sup>

If the beauty of a body shows a harmony and concord in all parts, with a symmetry and good proportion, it is a sign of nobility, according to the treatise of Della Porta. “se veramente non riempie l’occhio, almeno lo tira a sé, e lo trattiene con una dolcissima catena a mirarla. Questa bellezza è quella che si tira dietro tutte le virtù, et è lontana da ogni vizio.”<sup>459</sup> Ficino also said: “if we bring into the view of men and marvelous sight of Virtue herself, there

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<sup>456</sup> Linghu, *Zhou Shu*, 1.

<sup>457</sup> Della Porta, *Della Fisonomia dell’uomo*, 748.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, 749.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*

will be no further need for our persuading words: the vision itself will persuade more quickly than can be conceived.”<sup>460</sup>

The rulers are usually beautiful in appearance. Galeazzo Visconti (1227-1328) was “di bellezza di faccia avanzò tutti quelli del suo tempo; così di virtù, magnificenza et opere illustri. Edificò una libreria et una scola, e fé venir molti dottissimi uomini professori di varie scienze, et accumulò molti rarissimi libri.”<sup>461</sup>

Francesco Sforza (1401-1466) had a beautiful face, wrote Paolo Giovio.

Cosimo I de' Medici: “Infin della fanciullezza si scoperse l'eccellenza della natura di Cosimo: perciocchè, oltre all'essere di corpo molto bello e di benigno e grazioso aspetto, e di compressione robusta, ora di molto vavace ed acuto ingegno.”<sup>462</sup>

The beauty of a governor has its roots in the antique tradition. The Alexander of Homer, responding to Hector, thinking of his beauty, said that it was a glorious done of the God, and it is granted him by the Gods.<sup>463</sup>

Julius Caesar, is tall, handsome, round limbed, somewhat slender; fair of complexion, with bloom of youth as if of divine inheritance; skin soft and white; eyes dark and vivacious; mouth somewhat full; expression kindly.<sup>464</sup> Augustus is notably handsome in entire person and graceful through every period of his life; eyes bluish gray, very large and so bright and piercing that there appeared to be a divine vigor in them; stature below average, but fine proportion and symmetry of figure made lack of height noticeable only by comparison; countenance, when speaking or silent, calm and serene; hair somewhat curly and of shade approaching golden; eyebrows grown together, ears of medium size; nose aquiline; teeth widely set, small and rough[...].<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *The letters*, trans. the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, (London: Shephard-Walwyn Ltd., 1988), 66.

<sup>461</sup> Della Porta, *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, 758.

<sup>462</sup> Mannucci, *Vita di Cosimo I*, 37.

<sup>463</sup> Della Porta, *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, 749.

<sup>464</sup> Suet., *Iul.*, 45; Cic., *Brutus*, 75; Vell., 2, 41, 1: Plu., *Caes.*, 4;17; Appian, *B.C.*, 2, 90;2, 110;2,151; Dio Cass., 42, 40;43; 44; 38; *Julian, Caesars*, 309; Auct. *Bell. Alex.*, 21,2; Macrob., *Sat.*, 2,3,9. quoted in Canter, “Personal appearance in the biography,” 385-399.

<sup>465</sup> Suet., *Aug.*, 79-81; Auct., *Epit. de Caes.*, 1,20; Dio *Caes.*, 48,34; Tac., *Ann.*, 1, 42;Plin., *N.H.*, 7,

### 1.3 Heroic physiognomy of Chinese and Italian rulers

As for the qualities that a ruler's image should present, the Chinese thought is quite different from Italians, which had been revealed above. There is, however, a common point between the two cultures. The heroic image of a ruler was necessary no matter when and no matter where the ruler was. Heroic image include the strength in physique, the power in politics and the force in military. All of them are important to control the country and keep their authority.

Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398) of Ming “looked heroic and majestic 姿貌雄杰.”<sup>466</sup>

Zhu Zhanji 朱瞻基 (1399-1435), Emperor Xuanzong of Ming “had a heavenly appearance and a heroic complexion 天日之表且英气满面.”<sup>467</sup>

Zhu Qizhen 朱祁镇 (1427-1464), Emperor Yingzong of Ming was “handsome and heroic, with a dragon skull and of grande stature 上天质秀杰，龙颡，魁硕迥异.”<sup>468</sup>

Renaissance Italy saw one of the great bursts of heroic image-making in art and literature. In art, for example, the patriotic icon, the portrait cycle of culture heroes, and the equestrian monuments all emerged in their characteristic post-classical Western forms in this context.<sup>469</sup>

Military prowess was considered an essential virtue for princes in political and cultural discourse during the Italian Renaissance, for, as Machiavelli declared in the *Prince*, “A ruler ... should have no other objective

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59;11,54;Verg., *Aen.*, 8, 680; Julian, *Caesars* 309. quoted in Canter, “Personal appearance in the biography,” 386.

<sup>466</sup> Xie et al., *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*, 1: 1:1. Zhang, *Ming Shi*, 1: 1: 1.

<sup>467</sup> Shiqi Yang 杨士奇 et al., *Ming Xuan Zong Shi Lu 明宣宗实录* (veritable records of Emperor Xuanzhong), (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, 1962), 1:1.

<sup>468</sup> Wen Chen 陈文 (1405-1468) et al., *Ming Ying Zong Shi Lu 明英宗实录*(veritable records of Emperor Yingzong), (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, 1962), 1:1.

<sup>469</sup> Randolph Starn, “Reinventing heroes in Renaissance Italy,” *The Journal of interdisciplinary history*, 17 (1986): 67.

and no other concern, nor occupy himself with anything else except war and its methods and practices.”<sup>470</sup>

In the Renaissance time, sanctity, chivalry and scholastic learning defined the highest values long after the textbook triumphs of the new civic culture, and the authority of popes, emperors, and kings was admitted to be superior. For example, in Florence, the heroism is expected to the Medici as ruler both by the Medici and the populace.

Marsilio Ficino told Niccolò Michelozzi that he recognized in Cosimo de’ Medici as an old man “not human, but heroic virtue”.

In the descriptions of *Giovio*, the observation of the portraits in his museum also provided the concrete possibility to create a correspondence and draw a conclusion on the noblemen’s appearance and character. From the image that the artists had known before they painted he tried to find out the meaning. Paolo Giovio wrote on Cosimo I de Medici: “la natura, che a quanto pare non ti è mai matrigna ma sempre favorevole, per Ercole, ti ha regalato un’ indole invece di cercare la gloria che ti arriva dalle tue imprese e dalle tue straordinarie qualità, la disprezzi.”<sup>471</sup>

One of the peculiar features of the employment of symbolic language for propagandistic purposes is the degree to which at times, strongly enough, exclusivity becomes an undesirable quality. A long and complex prior existence within another year, society, or individual can become the very reason for its selection. For Cosimo I Hercules was this type of figure, who was one of Cosimo’s most faithful emblematic companions. Eventually Cosimo’s own personality would even come to be presented in Herculean terms.<sup>472</sup> In physiognomic treatises, there were often good physiognomy in according with *Hercole*, who was taken as template of ideal king or hero. Being associated with *Hercole*, the family of de’ Medici assumed themselves as heroic as *Hercole*.

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<sup>470</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 52; Baldesar Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* also considers proficiency with arms an important virtue of a courtier. See Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 57-58, 115.

<sup>471</sup> Giovio, *Elogi*, 982.

<sup>472</sup> Richelson, “Personal imagery.” 79.

How a virtuous and dramatically active figure that became a demi-god could be of much service to the Duke of Florence is explainable. The metaphorical connection was possible in part because of the important identification, if a disputed one, of Hercules as the founder of the city of Florence and as her continuing symbolic protector. Renaissance Florentines regarded the virtuous Hercules as the legendary founder of their city. And as early as 1281 the mythological hero had appeared on the official seal of Florence.<sup>473</sup> “This idea had come about when Florentine civic pride and a desire to trace continuity back into shadowy mythological beginnings were combined with accounts of the pseudo-historical deeds of Hercules.” When the Florentine’s “stressing the roman beginnings” of the city became a blinding and hypnotic reality in the late sixteenth century in Florentine courtly circles, a self-serving historical interpretation would come to blot out Hercules as founder. The focus was then placed on the actions of the Emperor Augustus, bestowing on him the honor of founder.<sup>474</sup> Before that happened, however, Cosimo I came into an awareness of the potential of Herculean imagery and acted accordingly to utilize it.

According to P. W. Richelson, for Cosimo I the most unusual circumstance surrounding his emblematic selection of Hercules was “simply that of an absolute ruler adopting the symbol of a republic.”<sup>475</sup> After the rather abortive years of Alessandro, Cosimo I, in an uncertain position,

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<sup>473</sup> Leopold Ettliger, “Hercules Florentinus,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 16 (1972): 119-142.

<sup>474</sup> Ettliger traces the fortunes of Hercules in Florentine culture from the late trecento to the time of Cosimo I. (Ettliger, “Hercules Florentinus,” 119-142) While developing all aspects, he selects a moral-political motivation as the probable reason behind the adoption of the Hercules symbol rather than because of his identification as founder of the city. Annis of Viterno by 1498, presumably reflecting a traditionally held belief, writes of Hercules as founder of the city. See Ettliger, and Nicolai Rubinstein “Vasari’s painting of the *Foundation of Florence* in the Palazzo Vecchio.” in *Essays in the history of Architecture presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, ed. Douglas Fraser et al. (New York: Phaidon, 1967), 64-73) for bibliography, historiography of this question, and the latter especially for the Augustus founding. Rubinstein also notes that under Borghini’s revisionism not only was the Emperor Augustus made the sole founder of the city, but its day of creation set as March 25<sup>th</sup>, 43 B.C., the first day of the Florentine calendar and auspiciously the birthday of Cosimo I’s son and heir Francesco I. Rubinstein, *ibid.*, 71. For further bibliography on artistic works with Herculean subjects see Virginia B. Mockler, “Colossal sculpture of the cinquecento from Michelangelo to Giovanni Bologna” (PhD. diss., Columbia University, 1967). Richelson, “Personal imagery.” 93.

<sup>475</sup> Richelson, “Personal imagery.” 80.

sought to style himself and be accepted as the legitimate heir to Alessandro and thus, “Dux II”. At the same time he tried to vault over those years going back in time to tie himself in with the long history of the city and state of Florence, her glory and her myths, both as citizen as well as ruler. By this act he re-established contact with his Medici forebears in full possession of their power and reputation. It was the symbolically powerful figure of Hercules which, in part, helped him accomplish this goal.<sup>476</sup>

## 2. Template of animal analogy

The tendency to think in terms of types is to some degree inevitable and more or less outweighs the individual features. As for the rulers’ image, their features are more typical with different types or templates. The presupposition that more or less implicitly lies behind the uniformity with each species complements the presupposition that the qualities of a single animal are more constant than those of a man and therefore appear more sharply defined.<sup>477</sup> The dual aspect of the analogy with animals were used both in the description of Chinese and Italian rulers, with the diversity of the species. (Even if the dragon is not a natural animal, it has an image of animals).

### 2.1 Dragon: monopolized physiognomy of ruler in China

In China, as a being created out of imagination, dragon was a symbol of the divine power. With the birth and development of hereditary monarchical system, it became the monopolistic emblem of king. In the physical description of Chinese emperor, *Long Yan* (Dragon countenance) is an inevitable mention which is also the terminology only for the king and emperor. Fu Xi 伏羲 is said to be the primogenitor of Chinese and the first ruler of China, ranking the first one in the group of *San Huang Wu Di* 三皇

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<sup>476</sup> Ibid., 81

<sup>477</sup> Sassi, *Science of man*, 38.

五帝<sup>478</sup> according to the historic record. *Qian Fu Lun* 潜夫论 wrote: “the *San Huang Wu Di*, usually included Fu Xi and Shen Long 神农, the rest of which is said to be Sui Ren 燧人, or Zhu Rong 祝融, or Nv Wa 女娲, remaining uncertain 世传三皇五帝, 多以伏羲, 神农为三皇, 其一者, 或曰燧人, 或曰祝融, 或曰女娲, 其是与非未可知也.” *Di Wang Shi Ji* 帝王世纪(records of emperors) record that Fu Xi “being the king mandated by heaven and therefore is the first of human kings. The king was located in the east, in charge of spring. He is the light of sun, so he is called *Tai Hao* 伏羲其象日角, 世称太昊.” The history of Fu Xi is somehow mysterious. In terms of his appearance, *Bai Hu Tong Yi* 白虎通义 (resolution after White Tiger conference)said “Fu Xi had a forehead with a string of bones like small pears, big eyes, and a dragon’s nose 伏羲禄衡连珠, 唯大目, 鼻龙伏.”<sup>479</sup> *Shi Yi Ji* 拾遗记 (Picking up the lost) said that he has “long head and long eyes, teeth of tortoise and lips of dragon 长头修目, 龟齿龙唇”; in *Yun Zhong Ji* 云中记 (records in cloud) he has “dragon-like body.” His image, therefore, is analogized with that of dragon, which can be regarded as the first one that being related with such spirit animal.

The kings and emperors hitherto, including Huang Di 黄帝 (2717-2599BC), Yao 尧(2377-2259BC), Shun 舜 (?-?, ca. 2300-2200 BC) and Yu 禹(?-?, ca. 2200-2100 BC), had all the face of dragon. In *Yuan Shen Qi* 援神契(contract with Yuanshen)of *Xiao Jing* 孝经 (on piety), it recorded that Shun has dragon’s face, doubled pupils, and big mouth. And *Bai Hu Tong Yi* said that Huang Di’s appearance is from the Heave, so his face is like

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<sup>478</sup> San Huang Wu Di meaning The Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, were a group of semi-mythological rulers and culture heroes from ancient China during the period circa 2852 BC to 2070 BC. This period preceded the Xia Dynasty. Depending on the source, there are many variations of who classifies as the three sovereigns or the five emperors. There are six to seven known variations. Many of the sources listed below were written from much later dynasties. The three sovereigns may therefore refer to Fu Xi (伏羲), Nü Wa (女娲), Shen Nong (神农), Sui Ren (燧人), or even the Yellow Emperor (黄帝). The five emperors in Shi Ji refer to Yellow Emperor (黄帝), Zhuan Xu (颛顼), Emperor Ku (瞽), Emperor Yao (尧), Shun (舜). See Charles Hucker, *China’s Imperial Past: an Introduction to Chinese History and Culture* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1995).

<sup>479</sup>Gu Ban, “*Bai Hu Tong Yi* 白虎通义,” in *Si Ku Quan Shu* 四库全书, ed. Ji Yun et al., Zi: Zajian: Za KaoTaipei: Comercial Press, 1986, 850: 2: 44.

dragon. Kings and emperors, especially the founders of dynasty are willing to be described like a dragon:

Zhu Yuanzhang, Emperor Taizu of Ming dynasty is said to have dragon-like stance and phoenix nature 龙姿凤质 in the third volume of *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*.

*Ming Shan Cang* by He Yuan Qiao also recorded: “Emperor Taizu (Zhu Yuanzhang)’s nature was like sun in the sky. He had phoenix’s eyes and walks like a dragon 明太祖日章天质，凤目龙姿，声如洪钟，奇骨贯顶。”<sup>480</sup>

Nurhaci (1559-1626), Emperor Taizu of Qing dynasty had also “dragon-like face and phoenix-like eyes 龙颜凤目。”<sup>481</sup>

Looking back into the history earlier, almost all the emperors were described with features of dragon. Liu Bang, founder of Han dynasty, as we mentioned before, has “prominent nose and dragon’s face.” in *Shi Ji*. The description was confirmed in *Wen Lei* 文类 (literature class), in which he is “like dragon, with long neck and prominent nose 龙颜，长颈高鼻.” Emperor Yuan 元帝 in Jin dynasty: “when grown up, he had white hair in the left temple, prominent nose and dragon-like face 及长，白毫生于日角之左，隆准龙颜。”<sup>482</sup>

Xiao Daocheng 萧道成(427-482), Emperor Gaozu 高祖 of Southern Qi dynasty (479-502) “looked heroic and outstanding, with dragon-like face [...]. He was 7 chi 5 cun tall; his body was covered with scales 姿表英异，龙颡钟声，长七尺五寸，鳞文遍体。”<sup>483</sup> Chen Baxian 陈霸先 (503-559), Emperor Gaozu 高祖 of Chen dynasty (557-589): “had *Ri Jiao* 日角 and dragon-like face 日角龙颜，垂手过膝。”<sup>484</sup> Xiao Yan 萧衍(464-549), Emperor Wu 武帝 of Liang dynasty (502-557) “had extraordinary out-looking, with Ri Jiao and

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<sup>480</sup> He, *Ming Shan Cang*, 1: 1: 1.

<sup>481</sup> Le et al., *Qing Tai Zu Gao Huang Di Shi Lu*, 1: 1: 139.

<sup>482</sup> Fang et. al., *Jin Shu*, 6.

<sup>483</sup> Yanshou Li 李延寿 (?-? 7<sup>th</sup> century), *Nan Shi* 南史 (History of Southern Dynasties), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975), 4. 1 ; Zixian Xiao 萧子显 (489-537), *Nan Qi Shu* 南齐书 (Book of Qi), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975), 1:1.

<sup>484</sup> Yao, *Chen Shu*, 1: 1.



dragon-like face 状貌殊特，日角龙颜。”<sup>485</sup> Emperor Taizong 太宗 (599-649) of Tang dynasty: “he had the face like dragon or phoenix; his appearance was as glory as the heaven or sun 龙凤之姿，天日之表。”<sup>486</sup>

The description is obviously metaphoric. Dragon is an “animal” inexistent. Even though there is some literary description of its looking, it is however the result out of miscellaneous notions. The problem is, this fictional image made the ruler’s image vivid and concrete. In the physiognomic treatises, there are numerous doctrines on the dragon-like appearance.

In *Ren Xiang Qing Shou Jue Duan* (Physiognomy of man-animal), there is a section on the dragon:

The dragon-shaped man has prominent nose and ears. He looks just and serious. He is tall with long extremity. He is phrenologically beautiful. He has finely-cut eyes and eyebrows. His behavior is outstanding, kingly and wise. In the past, Emperor Gao of Han dynasty had prominent nose and dragon-like face, so did Emperor Taizong of Tang dynasty. That is the physiognomy of a king, not ordinary people.<sup>487</sup>

夫龙形者，其人鼻高耳耸，形貌端严，身体长大，骨格清秀，眉目分明，举止出众，有威权，足机变。昔汉高帝隆准龙颜，唐太宗龙姿日角，乃帝王之相，非常人也。

In the physiognomic treatises, the physical features of kings and emperors in the past were often taken as example for the dragon-like physiognomy. On the one hand, it supports the argument that the dragon-like man should be dragon-like superior in social status; on the other hand, it legitimates that only the ruler can have a dragon’s face. After the repetition for ages, the concept was established among the people. The facial features of dragon are also presented.

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<sup>485</sup> Li, *Nan Shi*, 6:1.

<sup>486</sup> Xu Liu 刘昫 (887-946), *Jiu Tang Shu 旧唐书* (*Book of Tang*), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975), 2: 2.

<sup>487</sup> “Ren Xiang Shou Xing Jue Duan 人像禽兽形决断,” in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 216.

Dragon's eyebrow should be clear and curving, like the alignment of wind goose. The parents of the man with dragon eyebrow would both longevous and noble. And he himself would be outstanding and superior.<sup>488</sup>

Dragon's eyes should be "as distinctive as sun and moon 眼如日月要分明."<sup>489</sup> "The man with dragon or phoenix's eyes is extremely noble 龙眉凤眼人中贵."<sup>490</sup>

Dragon's nose should be full and prominent. The nasion is rising like *Fu Xi* (rhinoceros); the bridge is straight. The man with dragon nose is noble imperial.<sup>491</sup>

Dragon's mouth is with the lips are full and symmetric, with finely-cut corners. The man with dragon's mouth is powerful.<sup>492</sup>

In terms of the walking posture, it is said "walking like dragon or tiger, one is extremely noble 龙行虎步，至贵."<sup>493</sup> The Emperor Wu 武帝 of Song dynasty was taken as example: "he walks like tiger and dragon, so he ascended the throne 虎步龙行，刘裕至九重之位."<sup>494</sup>

Besides, there were some doctrines on the general appearance of dragon. For example, "with the gestures of dragon and phoenix, with the appearance of sky and sun, the man would be a beneficent king 龙凤姿，天日表，知必安民."<sup>495</sup> "with the conduct like phoenix, and the appearance like dragon, he is so extraordinary and surely superior 凤姿龙表，非世格而岂凡庸."<sup>496</sup>

Being so far from the normal and real animal image, dragon helps to keep the emperors superior to the populace. It is rather to say that such noble appearance or temperament is what the image of dragon endowed with the ruler than that the ruler endowed with the dragon such appearance and temperament. That is to say, it is properly the ruler's image that put on the

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<sup>488</sup> Yuan, "Shen Xiang Quan Bian," 68.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>494</sup> Chen, "Shen Yi Fu," 120.

<sup>495</sup> "Yan Dian Dao Ren Shen Yan Jing 岩电道人神眼睛 (magic eyes of Yan Dian Dao Ren)," in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 138.

<sup>496</sup> "Zhu Juan Jing 烛卷经 (Zhu Juan scriptures)," in *Xiang Shu*, ed. Tong Zheng (Beijing: Hua Ling Press, 2009), 169.

dragon. In the syllogism of physiognomy, the sequence is inversed: ruler→dragon. The kings and emperors are in an absolutely authority.

There are plenty of explanations on the reason for the image of dragon as the monopolized image of Chinese rulers.

Most of human rulers in the Chinese ancient mythology were related with dragon. According to *Di Wang Shi Ji* 帝王世纪 (Record of the Lives of Emperors and Kings), the *Three Sovereigns and the Five Emperors* were almost all had some connection with dragon. Yan Emperor 炎帝 (Flame Emperor), a legendary Han Chinese ruler who lived in pre-dynastic China, was born by his mother Nv Deng 女登 and a dragon; Huang Emperor 黄帝 (Yellow Emperor), a legendary Chinese sovereign, was born by Fu Bao 附宝 when she saw the dragon flying along the Triones; Emperor Yao 尧 was born by Qing Du 庆都 when she felt the dragon inside; Emperor Shun 舜 was born by Wo Deng 握登 when she saw a dragon. And Zhuan Xu 颛顼 wandered the world with a dragon. However, the reason why the births of the earliest sovereigns were related with dragon remains debatable. There is one explanation by K. A. Wittfogel may be acceptable.

According to Wittfogel, it is related with the importance of water gods. They are large in number and diverse in origin; they have anthropomorphic traits; and they belong to a mythological hierarchy which parallels the terrestrial hierarchy of “hydraulic despotism” in imperial China.<sup>497</sup> In every cosmic or historic cycle, water exists at the beginning and returns at the end. In cosmogony, folklore, myth, ritual and iconography, water fills the same function,, whatever the type of cultural pattern. And numerous Chinese gods, heroes, and mythological creatures, and the dragon, are associated with water. As Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 stated in his *Zuo Zhuan* 左传, it wrote: “Dragon is water being 龙，水物也。”<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental despotism: a comparative study of total power*. (New Haven: Yale university Press, 1964)

<sup>498</sup> Qiuming Zuo 左丘明 (556-451 BC), *Zuo Zhuan* 左传 (Chronicle of Zuo), ed. Bojun Yang 杨伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981), 10: 29.

It is in Chinese myth and high culture that the dragon becomes a symbol imperial authority. The Chinese mythological dragon expresses the notion of nature, nationality and royalty. An alternative title of Chinese emperor is *Zhen Long Tian Zi* (true dragon and son of Heaven). As a means of interpreting social and natural events, the Chinese mythological dragon or the original Chinese dragon, exists of its own dignity, unlike Chinese folktale dragon.<sup>499</sup>

According to Wittfogel's theory about oriental despotism, in an arid and highly civilized Oriental society like China, emperorship must be closely integrated with hydraulic activities and water resource management.<sup>500</sup> Wittfogel has written:

Evidently the masters of hydraulic society, whether they ruled in the Near East, India, China, or pre-Conquest America, were great builders. The formula is usually invoked for both the aesthetic and the technical aspect of the matter; and these two aspects are indeed closely interrelated.<sup>501</sup>

In agricultural society, the hydraulic leadership means the political leadership. The effective management of hydraulic agriculture involves an organizational web which covers either the whole, or at least the dynamic

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<sup>499</sup> There are at least five distinctions between the Chinese mythological dragon and the folktale dragon, the Dragon King: first, the mythological dragon is associated with hydraulic despotism, while the Dragon King is connected with hydraulic agriculture. Water manifests itself as only one component part of the mythological dragon's multiple implications. It is, however, the only implication of the Dragon King, who does not suggest sky, nationality, emperorship, spiritual nobility, or cultural continuity. Second, the mythological dragon is symbolic and abstract, while the Dragon King is concrete and supposedly credible. Third, the mythological dragon is associated with Taoist and Confucian visions of the world which originated in China. The Dragon King is influenced by Buddhism and Hindu folk beliefs disseminated from India. Fourth, the mythological dragon belongs to the classic Chinese mythology, the Dragon King to folk religion and local legends. Finally, and importantly, the mythological dragon is a celestial supreme being; while the Dragon King is both a constructive rain-god and a destructive flood-devil. That is to say, the mythological dragon shows only positive implications; the Dragon King displays both positive and negative factor. See Qiguang Zhao, "Chinese mythology in the context of hydraulic society," *Asia Folklore studies*, 48 (1989): 238.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>501</sup> Wittfogel, *Oriental despotism*, 42.

core, of the country's population. In consequence, those who control this network are uniquely prepared to wield supreme political power.<sup>502</sup>

Wittfogel's study permits us to include in our study of mythological or historical Yu 禹 an element of institutional and historical reasoning. We can reveal now inner connection between water and the implications of the dragon, such as spiritual nobility, good omen, Chinese nationality and emperorship.

Like legendary Yu, the dragon is a product of the hydraulic system. For the ancient Chinese with the Yellow River as their birthplace, the dragon and water are inseparable. According to Xun Zi 荀子 (312-230BC), "when much earth makes a hill, there will be a wind and a rain. When much water makes a river, there will be a dragon 积土成山，风雨兴焉，积水成渊，蛟龙生焉。"<sup>503</sup> The royal position of the Chinese mythological dragon should be attributed to the early integration of water and national leadership.<sup>504</sup>

Being so far from the normal and real animal image, dragon helps to keep the emperors superior to the populace. Besides, on the specific facial features, the shapes of head, the forehead are usually compared with that of the vault of sky or the shape of chin is compared with that of the earth. This is a resonance with a principle in Chinese classical philosophy, namely *Tian Ren He Yi* (oneness of heaven and man). In this case, the appearance of emperors is also the explicit demonstration of the notion "son of heaven."

## 2.2 Lion: emphasized physiognomy of ruler in Italy

One part of the physiognomic "science" was based on comparison with animals that were considered to have certain qualities. Both in the textual and in visual sources regarding the outward appearance of kings and emperors scholarship has recognized the influence of the lion's

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>503</sup> *Zhu zi ji cheng 诸子集成* (complete collection of classical philosophers), (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1986), 2: 1: 4.

<sup>504</sup> Zhao, "Chinese mythology in the context of hydraulic society," 234.

physiognomy.<sup>505</sup> In the third century B.C. *Fisiognomonica* of the so-called Pseudo-Aristotle, the lion is considered the most noble of animals and clearly represent the most perfect male type therefore is used usually to compare with the emperors. The physiognomy of lion is as follows:

il leone ha infatti una bocca bella grande, il muso abbastanza squadrato, non troppo ossuto, la maschella superiore non sporgente, ma ben equilibrate con quella inferiore; il naso più grossoo che sottile, gli occhi scuri lucenti infossati, non troppo rotondi né troppo oblungi, di giusta grandezza, le sopracciglia belle grosse, la fronte squadrata, leggermente incavata a partire dal centro; dalla parte invece delle sopracciglia e del naso, sotto la fronte, una sporgenza, quasi una nube sovrastante. Sopra la fronte, in corrispondenza del naso, ha dei peli che si ripiegano verso l'esterno come se fossero un ciuffo, e ha una testa delle giuste dimensioni, un collo bello lungo, proporzionato alla grossezza, coperto di biondi crini, non irti, ma neanche troppo arricciati; la zona delle claviole è bella sciolta, più che compatta; ha spalle forti, petto vigoroso, dorso largo, un bel torace e una schiena robusta come si deve; l'animale è piuttosto smilzo nelle anche e cosce; ha le gambe forti e muscolose, l'andatura vigorosa; tutto il corpo nerboruto e muscoloso, né troppo duro, né troppo umido. Camina poi lentamente, incede a grandi passi e si muove nelle spalle quando avanza. Queste sono le caratteristiche fisiche; quanto all'animo poi è generoso e liberale, magnanimo e desideroso di vittoria, tranquillo e buono e incline a mostrare affetto nei confronti di eventuali alleati.<sup>506</sup>

The lion is endowed with a well proportioned body, and in character is generous and liberal, and proud, at the same time gentle and just and affectionate. The panther, on the other hand, is more closely akin to the

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<sup>505</sup> Peter Meller, "Physiognomical theory in Renaissance heroic portraits," in *Acts of the twentieth international congress of the history of art: studies in western art, Renaissance and Mannerism*, ed. Millard Meiss and Richard Krautheimer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), vol. II, 53-62.

<sup>506</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomonica*, 809b. "Molte delle qualità che l'autore attribuisce al leone fanno parte ovviamente dell'immaginario antico, per cui al re degli animali è giusto assegnare attributi di forza, coraggio, ma anche di mitezza e bontà." Giampiera Raina, note 66 of *Fisiognomonica e anonimo Latino il trattato di fisiognomica* by Pseudo-Aristotle. (Milano: RCS Rizzoli Libri S.p.A., 1993), 93.

feminine type, but has its whole body ill articulated and badly proportioned. In character it is mean and thievish and deceitful.<sup>507</sup>

And also in Polemo the man devoted to the liberal is closely akin in form to a lion: he is of moderate stature, very straight, of fair complexion tinged with red, his hair verging on yellow, not too curly, his eyes moist and shining and filled with joy.

The characters and virue correspondent with the lion-like appearance are “liberale, magnanimo, desioso di vincere; forte, piacevole, giusto, pietoso, e facilmente ama dii conversa con lui.” They are exactly what a ruler should be endowed with.

In *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo* of Della Porta, the doctrine is similar:

Il Leone ha il capo mediocre, la fronte quadra nel mezzo un poco cava; sopra le ciglia verso il naso ha una certa eminenza come una nube; et ha la fronte elevata verso il capo; ha gli occhi leonati non molto rotondi, né molto usciti in fuori, ciglia grandi, naso grosso, più tosto che delicato o piccolo, quasi rotondo e soco; ha la mascella superiore non molto uscita in fuori, ma eguale a quella di sotto; con bocca ampia, labra sottili, sì che la parte di fuori giace sopra quella di sotto, e non rilassate verso gli angoli de' labri; ha il collo grande, ma mediocrementemente grosso, il quale è fatto di un solo osso dritto; il cui collo e spalle son vestite di crini, crespi solamente nell'estremità di essi; di petto gagliardo, di spalle larghe, di coste e di dorso gagliardissimo; di ossa robuste e sode, che dentro han tanta poca midolla, che quasi non ne han nulla, e di tanta durezza che percotendole buttano faville di guoco come la selce; e di color leonato; camina piede dopo piede molto tardi, e ad ogni passo muove gli omeri dolcemente; è di voce grave.<sup>508</sup>

Machiavelli argued that a prince should be the combination of lion and fox, in terms of quality. As he said: “A prince, therefore, being compelled knowingly to adopt the beast, ought to choose the fox and the lion; because

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<sup>507</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 809b

<sup>508</sup> Della Porta, *Della Fisonomia dell'uomo*, 93-94.

the lion cannot defend himself against snares and the fox cannot defend himself against wolves. Therefore, it is necessary to be a fox to discover the snares and a lion to terrify the wolves.”<sup>509</sup> It is, from another perspective, reflects the essential image of ruler. The lion-like outward appearance is always of importance.

Alexander the Great was regarded as the model of almost every ruler from Antiquity onwards.<sup>510</sup> Plutarch discussed Alexander’s external signs in his works. His image was constructed according to the lion’s physiognomy, which implied, in the interpretation of physiognomy, that he possessed the lion’s internal nature as well: magnanimous, just, brave and generous.<sup>511</sup> The physiognomical image-creating, to fit the features existing in reality to an ideal was followed afterwards in the representations of the roman emperor, and medieval rulers as well. In the detailed portraits of the emperors themselves, Augustus as described by Suetonius can be associated with the lion.

The elemental features of Augustus are correspondent with those of the lion, according to the Pseudo-Aristotelian manual, he possessed:

- (1) gli occhi scuri lucenti infossati
- (2) uno collo bello lungo, proporzionato alla gorssezza, coperto di biondi crini, non irti ma neanche troppo arricciati
- (3) il corpo nerboruto e muscoloso, né troppo duro, né troppo umido.<sup>512</sup>

Representatives of the leading Italian courtly families —the Este (not surprisingly, given the dedication to cardinal Luigi d’Este) and the Sforza make up the lion’s share.

Luigi d’Este, for example, according to Della Porta, had “il capo di giusta grandezza e misura, o poco più...ritondetto alquanto e prominente

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<sup>509</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, XVIII.

<sup>510</sup> Enikő Békés, *The physiognomy of a Renaissance ruler*, 15.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>512</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 809b-810a.



dinanzi, dietro sostenuto da convenevol collo”, “la fronte quadrata”, “l’orecchie scolpite, rilevate, quadrate, di mediocre grandezza e d’acuto udito”, and “capelli biondeggianti”. These features can all recall an image of lion.

The comparison of man and lion has a long history in literature. The Homeric hero is “like a lion” when he pits himself against the enemy in battle, showing both the animal’s courage and its ferocity in combat. Diomedes’ destructive violence is compared to that of a lion breaking the neck of a bull calf or of a grazing heifer. The mere sight of Hector, like a “fine-maned lion”, is enough to terrify and scatter the Danaans. And Patroclus himself, though destined for defeat and death, fights to the end with all his might, showing “the force of a lion, which in attacking a farmstead is wounded in the chest and is undone by its own strength.”<sup>513</sup> The image of noble and glorious lion recurs with notable frequency in the *Iliad* as befits its celebration of the aristocratic virtues of warrior-hood.

The idea that the lion is the symbol of the perfect male and an emblem of strength and power is in fact based on the conception that the ruler is basely a perfect male, a human, rather than a god. This is much different from the divine ruler in ancient Chinese culture.

### 3. Template of previous ruler

The meanings people give to the past always derive from complex processes of selection, transmission and construction, whether unconscious or deliberate in nature.<sup>514</sup> As we survey the iconography of monarchs, we seem to see this process wheeling in circles: each monarch’s image is built from both the recent past and more distant past. And both these recent and distant pasts are filtered through the prism of each present time which is putting them to use, just as we cannot help using these past figures as

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<sup>513</sup> Hom. Il. V 161, XV 271, XVI 752. See Sassi, *The science of man*, 36.

<sup>514</sup> Malcolm Smuts, *Culture and power in England 1585-1685* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 1999), 154-155.

templates for thinking about royalty and celebrity<sup>515</sup>. And the past emperors which had been regarded great were actually used as templates by the emperors in throne. The face of them which had been examined already with physiognomic principles was also copied partly.

Observing the emperors in Jin dynasty, we find that the physiognomy of all the emperors is surprisingly similar. Wanyan Yong 完颜雍 (1123-1189), Emperor Shizong 世宗, for instance, was described as being “of grand sature, with beautiful beard long to the pelly 体貌奇伟, 美须髯, 长过其腹.”<sup>516</sup> His successors then were portrayed with the alike physical features. Wanyan Yunji 完颜允吉 (1168-1213), Prince Shao of Wei 卫绍王 was “tall and had beautiful beard 长身, 美髯须”;<sup>517</sup> Wanyan Zongfu 完颜宗甫 (1096-1135), Emperor Ruizong 睿宗, was “tall and strong-built 魁伟尊严”;<sup>518</sup> Wanyan Yungong 完颜允共 (1146-1185), Emperor Xianzong 宪宗, was “strong and magnificently imposing 体貌雄伟.”<sup>519</sup> The physiognomy of the later emperor can always recalled that of the former, with the recollection of the virtues carried by their physiognomy, which was endowed again on the later emperor.

The parentage of Liu Xiu 刘秀 (6BC-57AD), founder of Eastern Han dynasty is worthy of mentioning in this case. As one of the leaders in the tangled warfare after Wang Man 王莽 (45BC-23AD) ended Western Han dynasty and founded Xin dynasty, Liu Xiu needed a persuasive identity for his rebellion. So he declared that he was the ninth generation of Liu Bang 刘邦, Emperor Gaozu, founder of Early Han dynasty (Eastern Han dynasty). In addition to the ties of blood and genealogy, his appearance was described similar with that of Liu Bang.

The legitimate authority of Liu Bang was obviously made successfully by the historians with the help of physiognomic theory. In the end of Early Han

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<sup>515</sup> Helen Hackett, “Dreams or designs, cults or constructions? The study of images of monarchs,” *The historical journal*, 44 (2001): 823.

<sup>516</sup> Toqto'a, *Jin Shi*, 6: 6.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*, 13: 13.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*, 19: 19

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*

dynasty when rebellions against Wang Man was all over the country, there was a humor of “re-mandate” among the people, saying that Liu Xiu was the mandated king by Heaven because he had the blood of Liu Bang in his body, which could be seen in his appearance. He had *Ri Jiao* 日角 and *Long Zhun* 隆准 (prominent nose) like Liu Bang. In *Hou Han Shu*, it described Liu Xiu like this: “[Emperor Guangwu] was 7 chi 3 cun tall, with beautiful beard and eyebrow, big mouth, prominent nose and Ri Jiao.”<sup>520</sup> It is almost the same appearance with Liu Bang, as we mentioned before.

Nobility was inherited or was based primarily on the idea that the children of great men inherit not only the physical beauty, strength and appearance, but also the moral and intellectual qualities of their ancestors was still undeniable. This idea was widely accepted in Italian culture. The children should be honored with nobility as a means of paying off the debt owed to the ancestors of their services to the community. It was also the opinion of the vulgar that nobility was inherited.<sup>521</sup>

Della porta described Luigi d’Este “Simil grazia ebbe ancor Demetrio, come riferiscono l’istorie di Plutarco, che in un medesimo tempo mostrva grandia e terrore, una gravità e benignità, che non bastò scultore o pittore giammai a poterlo ritrarre.”<sup>522</sup> The d’Este was also compared with Augustus: “di colore azzurro, d’acuta vista, di guardo umile et altiero; ne’ quali dentro appare una forza, che volendo fissarvi gli occhi tuoi, sei forzato calargli giù, come si legge d’Augusto; e vi risiede l’animosità e la manusuetudine, la clemenza, la temperanza, la piacevolezza, et i nobilissimi costumi.”<sup>523</sup>

The face of Augustus was a template of an emperor with whom the later emperors and rulers wanted to be like.

Of all the overtly symbolic imagery of Cosimo I the most highly developed in both art and literature is that association made with the Roman Emperor Augustus.

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<sup>520</sup> Fan, *Hou Han Shu*, 1: 1.

<sup>521</sup> Charles Trinkaus, *Adversity’s noblemen* (New York: Octagon books Inc., 1965), 48.

<sup>522</sup> Cicognani, introduction, 13-15.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

Comparing with the face of Cosimo I and that of Augustus, we can find some similar points:

1. bello
2. gli occhi grande e lucente
3. Bella statura

The three points are indeed the crucial physical features for the ruler. According to the physiognomic theory, they conveyed:

1. bontà
2. divine vigore, coraggioso<sup>524</sup>
3. giusto e coraggioso.<sup>525</sup>

Regardless some small differences, the important essentials were picked intentionally in order to present the majestic image of Cosimo I. The connections of Cosimo I with Augustus are more than this.

According to the observation of Richelson, Augustus intimations first appear when Cosimo unabashedly courted favor with the Emperor Charles V by flatteringly adopting the Emperor's *impresa*, the Capricorn, as his own. Augustus used it as well. Significantly Paolo Giovio specifically mentions the use of the Capricorn by Charles V and intimates that its subsequent use was due to the protection Cosimo had had during the early years from the Emperor. By this act Cosimo I very profoundly matched the Emperor's own approach to political iconography as he had himself stressed his tenuous connection with Capricorn in his horoscope. In fact, as Richelson observed, none of the three principals was born under Capricorn as his zodiacal sun sign, December 22 to January 20, nor do they share similar ones. Respectively their dates of birth and correct zodiacal sun signs are: Augustus, September 23, 63 B.C., Virgo; Charles V, February 24, 1500, Pisces; Cosimo I de' Medici, June 11, 1519, Gemini.<sup>526</sup> Augustus appears to have claimed the Capricorn not

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<sup>524</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *Fisiognomica*, 812b.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, 814a

<sup>526</sup> Richelson, "Personal imagery."49.

so much because of the date but the hour of his birth, which placed him under it as the constellation present at that time.<sup>527</sup>

The parallel between Augustus and Cosimo I is beyond their sharing of the Capricorn astrological sign and their having won their most important military victories, Battles of Actium and of Montemurlo respectively, on the same day.<sup>528</sup> Both had emerged as rulers following the assassination of the previous ruling figure, at exceptionally young ages through an electoral procedure. They had each fought a civil war, pacified their respective states and took on the difficult tasks of consolidating the transition from a republic to a principality.<sup>529</sup>

Augustus managed, especially in his early reign, a very subtle balance between the Roman republican heritage and his clearly unprecedented

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<sup>527</sup> *Suet.*, 1, XCIV. 12, records the visit at Appollonia of Augustus to the studio of the astrologer Theogenes where he was said to have only reluctantly revealed the time of his birth but when he did in an indirect manner, "just before sunrise," Theogenes sprang up and threw himself at his feet. "From that time on Augustus had such faith in his destiny that he had his horoscope public a disused a silver coin stamped with the constellation Capricorn under which he was born."

Within the zodiac there are twelve constellations which have the same names as those twelve signs used by astrologers but they astrologically have nothing to do with the situation. This is because of the "precession of the equinoxes." Louis MacNiece, *Astrology*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 73-74. Foster believed that "Cosimo adopted the Capricorn of Augustus coming to power as he did in January..." (Kurt Forster, "Metaphors of rule: political ideology and history in the portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 15 (1971): 85) As Forster points out, January, ruled by Capricorn as a sun sign of the zodiac, had indeed been a very important month in the life of Augustus; on January 2, 43 B.C., he had been termed "inter quaestorios" for his seat and vote. And Augustus took the date of January 7, 43 B.C. as his "dies accepti imperii". Mason Hammond, *The Augustan principate in theory and practice during the Julio-Claudian period*, (Cambridge: Harvard university press, 1933), 19. Hammond notes that "at the beginning of 27 B.C. the Senate honored him for his services by voting him an oak wreath, the Victoria Cross of Rome, "ob cives servatos." It allowed him to keep laurels perpetually on his doorposts. It ordered a shield inscribed in his honor to be hung in the Julian Curia and most significant it voted him a formal and semi-religious title, Augustus, by which he was ever since been known." (Ibid., 22.)

As no biographer examined mentions this parallel of a similar coming to power in January, it certainly cannot be considered as an explanation which tradition offered for Cosimo's fascination with Capricorn. In general Forster's discussion of Cosimo and Augustus does not particularly stress the importance of Charles V in his context. For Ludovico Dolce's sonnet in which Augustus, Charles V, and Cosimo are described as having a common ascendant under which great things have and will be accomplished. See Battista Pittoni, *Imprese di diversi principi, duchi, signori ed altri personaggi, et huomini illustri novamente ristampate con alcune stanze, sonnette di M. Iodovico Dolce*, (Venezia, 1602), 8 XIII or note 9 in Richelson, "Personal imagery," 49-51.

<sup>528</sup> Both battles were fought on August 1. Battle of Actium, the decisive victory of Augustus, then Octavianus, over Mark Antony and Cleopatra was won in 31 BC. For the parallel between Augustus and Cosimo, see also Janet Cox-Rearik, *Dynasty and destiny in Medici art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the two Cosimos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 257.

<sup>529</sup> Sang Woo Kim, "Historiography of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici's cultural politics and theories of cultural hegemony and opposition," *The Michigan Journal of History*, (2006), 1-70, 25.

authority. In appearance, he was insistent in honoring the republican offices and institutions and took the civic title of *Princeps*, the First Citizen. When he wrote the *Res Gestae*, he remained insistent that he had restored the Roman republic ruled by the Senate and the people of Rome.<sup>530</sup> In short, he would have demonstrated for Cosimo that the seemingly contradictory aims of consolidating an empire and propagating it as a continuation of the illustrious republican past could be realized simultaneously. After all, on the outset of his reign in 1537, Cosimo I had been elected as the Head and First Citizen of the Florentine republican government.<sup>531</sup>

With the retirement in 1556 and death in 1558 of Charles V Cosimo stood alone with only his reflection in the Augustan mirror. At least for the art of the Florentine court and its literature the acquiescence of the Duke towards accepting and probably promoting his total personal identification with Augustus was of great impact and released to those in creative control the great wealth of analogies and images which hitherto had been more limitedly utilized.<sup>532</sup>

As previously hinted at, among the fascinating consequences of this quasi doctrine was the open contemplation of the idea that the power of the Duke's Augustan horoscope had charted for him a course in life beyond the normal and therefore Cosimo's sudden, perhaps even circumstantial, election to head the Florentine state, by analogy, could come to be viewed as an act of divine will by the propagandists of the Medici.<sup>533</sup>

Mario Matasiliani in his *La Felicità del Serenissimo Cosimo Medici* published in 1572 which is the most complete attempt to parallel the lives of Augustus and Cosimo written either before or after the Duke's death, sums it

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<sup>530</sup> Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 34., translated in *Augustus and the creation of the Roman Empire: A brief history with documents*, ed. Ronald Mellor (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2006).

<sup>531</sup> Andrew C. Minor and Bonner Mitchell, "Political background," *A Renaissance entertainment, Festivities for the marriage of Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, in 1539*, ed. Andrew C. Minor and Bonner Mitchell (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1968), 10.

<sup>532</sup> Richelson, "Personal imagery." 34.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*, 35

all up saying: “we are forced to confess that everything that has happened has been by the personal and miraculous ordination of God, that is, we strongly believe that for no other reason than Divine Providence that some Princes are sent the success and attributes which in one are so similar in the other.”<sup>534</sup>

According to Richelson, accounts of the life of Cosimo I de Medici can be separated into two approaches: those writers such as Mellini, who provide a straightforward recitation of his life and accomplishments and others, as Baldini’s several publications, who weigh down the same events with a surfeit of illusions and parallels to previous rulers and illustrious historical figures to whom Cosimo is compared. Matasiliani is unique in his attempt to examine at length within a more broadly conceived framework of the general and the particular the striking correspondence between the course of the life of Cosimo I and just one figure from the past. Fully aware that what he finds unique might by others be seen as only the result of a limited set of possibilities, he rejected this idea and accepts the theoretical causal postulation of the intervention of Divine Providence. As a result of his broader analysis, Matasiliani touches upon the problem of developing the political image of Cosimo as the ideal ruler.<sup>535</sup>

Divine election is expectably signaled by events which indicate to all the special quality of the “chosen” individual. Matasiliani and especially those who almost immediately wrote obituary-orations at Cosimo’s death or later biographers developed a complete set of such “signs”. Cosimo’s very birth was said to have been distinguished by small signal fires which first mysteriously appeared in the Mugello where he was born and spread from there answered by other lights which then moved eastward the Adriatic sea.<sup>536</sup> Similarly for Augustus in Suetonius V, it mentions that ‘A portent [according to Julius

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<sup>534</sup> Mario Matasiliani, *La Felicità del Ser. Cosimo de’ Medici, Granduca di Toscana*, (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1572), 10.

<sup>535</sup> Richelson, “Personal imagery.” 66.

<sup>536</sup> Mannucci, *Vita di Cosimo I*, 35.

Marathus] was generally observed at Rome, which gave warning that nature was pregnant with a king for the Roman people.<sup>537</sup>

The history could be seen as a pathway to the present. With such logic introduced into the past, everything fell into place, not only in the evidence of historical parallels and development. Thus confirmed, history had a message beyond itself: a new age came into being.

### 3.3 Genealogies in the image-making of rulers

Let's digress a little to the subject of genealogy, an effective means for the ruler to legitimize his authority.

The tracing of genealogy and the imitating the physical features of previous rulers are the two different roads leading to the same goal. By recalling the greatness of the previous rulers, no matter in outward appearance or in virtue or in deeds, the greatness of target ruler was mirrored.

We can take again Cosimo I de' Medici as an example. In the decorative program and festivities for Duke Cosimo's wedding he was figured as a competent and independent ruler by celebrating his father, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in imperial trappings and his regime was also consciously projected as a continuation, if not fulfillment, of republican aspirations. In the light of these, it is possible to envision that the decorative program and thematic occupations of the festivities for Cosimo's wedding in 1539 essentially created a genealogy in two dimensions. On the one hand, Giovanni, never before celebrated publicly as one of the Medici illustri, was figured alongside the illustrious Medici ancestors like Cosimo il Vecchio and Lorenzo il Magnifico that Cosimo was destined to follow. On the other hand, his regime was put in the context of the entire history of Florence as a rightful heir to the city's glorious republican past. Put in Foucauldian terms, a discursive operation of this kind allows for certain contradictions:

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<sup>537</sup> Suet., XCV, further descriptions of events, dreams, and predictions of the future good fortune and greatness of Augustus are presented in other passages. Suet., XCV, XCIV.



An examination of descent also permits the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which – thanks to which, against which – they were formed. Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to all its vicissitudes. ... On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the error, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents.<sup>538</sup>

If so, the two dimensions of the genealogy created at Cosimo's marriage can be seen as finally putting into order the series of complicated events that took place after the assassination of Duke Alessandro with regard to Florence's history. Cosimo, through the imagery of his father as a victorious general, marked the dissociation not only with the republican past, but also with the previous Medici ruling figures in Florence.<sup>539</sup>

Connecting with the great past rulers and claimed them forebears in genealogy in China was as common as in ancient Italy. *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu* 明太祖实录 begins with the citation of Emperor Taizu's posthumous temple-name, and continues with an undated account of his genealogical lineage, going back to antiquity and through the end of the Southern Song, when his ancestors moved to Sizhou 泗州:

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<sup>538</sup> Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Michel Foucault, *Language, Countermemory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard; trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 146.

<sup>539</sup>Sang Woo Kim, "Cosimo I de' Medici's Cultural Politics and Theories of Cultural Hegemony and Opposition," 26-27.

The Great Ming Grand Progenitor, the Holy and Divine, Cultivated and Martial, Revered and Brilliant, Dynasty-founding, Refined and Virtuous, Successful and Accomplished, One-with-Heaven, and the Great Filial Exalted Emperor was surnamed Zhu, *taboo* name Yuanzhang, courtesy name Guorui, a native of the Eastern Village of the Zhongli [county] of the Hao Subprefecture. His ancestors were the descendants of Lord Zhuangxu [of the earliest ages]. King Wu of Zhou enfeoffed his progeny at Zhu; during the Chunqiu period (722-481 B.C.) his descendants left the county and formed the clan of Zhu. For generations they made their home at the Xiang County of the State of Pei, and sometime later some of them moved to Jurong. For generations they were a great clan, and people called their settlement Zhujiexiang (Zhu family Lane). The Great-great Grand Progenitor the Virtuous progenitor, the Great Grand Progenitor the Exemplary Progenitor, and the Grand Progenitor the Prosperous Progenitor accumulated goodness for the generations but they remained confined to the fields and villages. At the end of the Song the Prosperous Progenitor started moving the family across the Huai River and settled in the Si Subprefecture.<sup>540</sup>

大明太祖圣神文武钦明启运俊德成功统天大孝高皇帝， 姓朱氏， 讳元璋， 字国瑞， 濠之钟离东乡人也。其先帝颛顼之后，周武王封其苗裔于邾。春秋时子孙去邑为朱氏，世居沛国相县，其后有徙居句容者，世为大族，人号其里为朱家巷。高祖德祖、曾祖懿祖、祖熙祖，累世积善，隐约乡里。宋季时熙祖始徙家渡淮，居泗州。

In its biography of empress Wang Zhengjun 王政君 (71BC-13AD) and her family, the *Han Shu* carries what may be termed Wang Mang 王莽's family tree, in which Wang Mang was said to be the descent of Huangdi, Shun, Emperor Wu of Zhou. The family tree was as follows:

- (1) Huangdi 黄帝 named Yao 姚
- (2) 8 generations
- (3) Birth of Yu Shun 虞舜, who arose at Gui 媯; adopted Gui as his name

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<sup>540</sup> Xie et al., *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*, 1:1. Translated by Chan Hok-Lam in "Xie Jin (1369-1415) as imperial propagandist: his role in the revisions of the *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*," *T'oung Pao* 91 (2005): 87.

(4) Shun's descendant Gui Man 媯满 enfeoffed by Zhou Wu wang 周武王 at Chen 陈; this was Hu gong 胡公

(5) 13 generations

(6) Birth of Wan 完, with style Jingzhong 敬仲; fled to Qi 齐, where Huan gong 桓公 appointed him to be a high ranking official; surnamed Tian 田

(7) 11 Generations

(8) Tian He 田和 took possession of Qi 齐

(9) 2 generations

(10) Adopted title Wang 王

(11) Qi destroyed by Qin at the time of king Jian 建

(12) Jian's grandson An 安 appointed king of Jibei 济北 Xiang Yu 项羽

An deprived of his kingdom at the foundation of the Han empire; called "Royal family" 王家 population of Qi; Wang adopted as the family name.<sup>541</sup>

The genealogy, recalling the greatness of the early established wise kings and emperors, helps to produce a copied image of the present ruler, the function of which is what the physiognomic description of rulers intends to.

#### 4. Template of divine

"Mito e storia non erano, nel mondo antico, domini separati."<sup>542</sup> In the earliest historic age we find the members of the community regarded as descendants of the gods or even as their earthly embodiments. In the first place they are rulers. Their title, related in root to *genus* or *genein*, implicitly conveys the reason for their innate superiority through supernatural ancestry. The supreme authority could nowhere derive from a mortal house.<sup>543</sup> As Hacart held "The earliest known religion is a belief in the divinity of kings...

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<sup>541</sup> See Michael Loewe, "Wang Mang and his forbears: the making of the myth," *T'oung Pao*, 80 (1994): 203-204.

<sup>542</sup> Zanker, *Augusto e il potere delle immagini*, 224.

<sup>543</sup> Otto Forst de Battaglia, "The nobility in the European Middle Ages," *Comparative studies in society and history*, 5 (1962): 62.

[In] the earliest records known, man appears to us worshipping gods and their earthly representatives, namely kings.”<sup>544</sup>

It happens, according to De Battaglia, at the dawn of history among Indians, Iranians, baltoslavians, Germans, Celts, Greeks and Italians, in which we meet the seed of the gods, descendants of legendary name-giving heroes. It is on this belief in their divine origins that the great base their claim to a monopoly of political and economic power. This same belief leads them to perpetuate themselves as a caste.<sup>545</sup> The mass of the free-born accepts this social order as divinely ordained.

In Italy, the divinity of rulers was also mentioned by writers. For example, Cirni refers to Cosimo I and Eleonora di Toledo, the royal couple, as “due Semidei.”<sup>546</sup>

Rosello by 1552 already was describing Cosimo I as a monarch chosen by Divine Providence.<sup>547</sup>

Patronized by the ducal court Ammirato’s *Opuscoli* has a quasi-official Medici-mythological aspect to its approach and contents.<sup>548</sup>

Now the ruler is the image of god who orders all things. Such a ruler, by his virtue and his physiognomy he forms himself in the likeness of god and thus creates a statue most delightful of all to behold and most worthy of divinity.

The Greek and Roman practice of producing and distributing portraits of their rulers evolved from ancient religious art, with its images of the gods.<sup>549</sup> The iconographic devices frequently added to signify the monarch’s divine relationship with the gods. These supplemented the diadem, the

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<sup>544</sup> Arthur M. Hocart, *Kingship*, (London: Watts and Co., 1941), 1.

<sup>545</sup> Battaglia, “Nobility in the European Middle Ages,” 60.

<sup>546</sup> Anton Francesco Corso Cirni, *La reale entrata dell’Ecc. Sig. Duca e Duchessa di Fiorenza in Siena con la significazione delle latine iscrizioni e con alcuni sonetti*, (Roma: Antonio Blado Stampator Camerale), 3, quoted in Richelson, “Personal imagery.” 34. For “signs” of the “Divus Cosmas” or “Apotheosis of Cosimo I” in the ceiling of the Salone dei Cinquecento which is the quintessential visual representation of Cosimo as a “Semidio”, see Foster, “metaphor of rule,” 97-98.

<sup>547</sup> Rosello, *Il ritratto del vero governo del principe*, 10.

<sup>548</sup> Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli*, (Florence: la stamperia d’Amadore Massi, e Lorenzo Landi, 1642), 229-234.

<sup>549</sup> See K. Jex-Blake trans. *The elder Pliny’s chapters on the history of art*, (Chicago: Argonaut Inc., 1968).

primary and requisite royal emblem. It metaphorically indicated the ruler's status of comparability with the deities implied.

In the borderland between legend and history, David was first and foremost a warrior-chieftain. His virtues—prowess, loyalty, largesse, *courtoisie*—manifested themselves in deeds, his gestures were formulaic, and his formalities were those of all true knights. In this way, the mission of chivalry, like the formal motifs of chivalric culture in song, literature, and art, or the ideal feudal tenure, could be regarded as a legacy passed on through time,<sup>550</sup> and the Chivalry could be regarded as virtue of the ruler too.

In ancient monarchical and early republican Rome the kings and patricians were descendants of the gods enjoying a monopoly of political power, priestly functions, and of most of the land.<sup>551</sup>

The power, beyond the reach of the ordinary human, tends to the divine. The emperor has the necessary almost mystical powers and gifts (or that he enjoys the divine favor required) to grant his people what they needed.<sup>552</sup>

Despite the doubt of pseudo-science on *se*, Physiognomy is an ancient accepted knowledge with which one can not only convey the character and nature of person, but also tell the future of him. The divine of emperors from external appearances has engaged the attention of man from the earliest of periods which we have record down to the present time. "The earliest known religion is a belief in the divinity of king."<sup>553</sup> In his well-known book, A. M. Hocart speaks of kingship as a gift of the gods, which is inherited through a special lineage. Even if the rulers in Italy are more humanistic, they preferred still to be unique and thus more persuasive as rulers. The physiognomy thus helps to deify the power of them.

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<sup>550</sup> Starn, "Reinventing heroes in Renaissance Italy," 75.

<sup>551</sup> Battaglia, "Nobility in the European Middle Ages," 62.

<sup>552</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, "The emperor and his virtues," 316.

<sup>553</sup> Hocart, *Kingship*, 1.

## 5. Story of reading ruler's face: Physiognomic narration in and Italian and Chinese history biography

Both in Italian and Chinese history and biography there is a particular phenomenon in which the destiny of the ruler was predicted by observing his face. The physiognomic activities in this context are the straightforward tool of persuading, providing mystery to the image of rulers at the same time. Regardless the difference of physiognomic doctrines, the plot is almost the same in Chinese and Italian culture.

The logic that if you have a royal face you are destined to be a king is in the western culture. As early as the times of Polybius, Antiochus III judged Demetrius, the son of Euthydemus I of Bactria, “worthy of kingship on account of his appearance, demeanour and bearing.” Predicting the future ruler by reading his physiognomy can be found some clues in Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages, the predictive function of physiognomy was suppressed because it went against the church. Nor can we find much physiognomic prediction in the sixteenth-century, in the manual of Della Porta, for example.

The rare example can be found in the Renaissance Italy. Don Basilio, an astrologer (*matematico*) was said to have predicted the richest of heritages for Cosimo I revealing to him that all this was due to the fact that at his birth Capricorn was ascendant illuminated by the admirable aspects of planets in agreement as it already had been for Augustus.<sup>554</sup>

Mannucci mentions the observation of Don Basilio but in addition mentions a youthful episode when Cosimo's palm was read by a Greek who predicted a rich heritage for Cosimo. Being at the moment in the company of his cousin Duke Alessandro the Greek was described as similarly having

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<sup>554</sup> Matasiliani, *La Felicità del Ser. Cosimo de' Medici*, 31.

continued to specify that before Cosimo could claim this heritage a great many of them must die.<sup>555</sup>

The founders of dynasty in China seemed fond of this kind of story in which the physiognomy is involved. In both official and private history, there are narrations alike.

There was an old man Lv Gong 吕公 who was good at physiognomy. Once he met Liu Bang 刘邦 (the future founder of Han Dynasty) and was shocked by his appearance. So he respected Liu Bang very much and invited him to dinner. After the dinner he said to Liu Bang: "I like physiognomy and had done it on many people. None of them has a looking as noble as you. So I hope you to take care of yourself. I have a daughter and I allow you to marry her 臣少好相人, 相人多矣, 无如季相, 原季自爱。臣有息女, 原为季箕帚妾。"<sup>556</sup> So he married his daughter Lv Zhi 吕雉, who became the queen later.<sup>557</sup>

In Lv's observation, Liu Bang was born of dragon, which means he was son of dragon, therefore he was born noble. So he had dragon-like face with prominent nose. His neck was long and he had 72 naevi in his left buttock. "Because of him, his entire family member would be noble."<sup>558</sup>

The inflated portrait of Zhu Yuanzhang, the Ming founder, transformed him from an illiterate, beggar mendicant monk and rebel leader into the *topoi* of a righteous hero, dynasty founder and exemplar ruler in traditional official historiography.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> Mannucci, *Vita di Cosimo I de' Medici*, 42. Richelson, "Personal imagery." 66.

<sup>556</sup> Sima, *Shi Ji*, 8: 874.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 1287.

<sup>558</sup> There was also a physiognomic story of Lv Zhi, the queen when Liu Bang, the emperor was still a peasant before his career. One day Lv Zhi and two of her sons were working in the field. Came a old man to ask for water. So Lv Zhi did. When the old man caught sight of her face, he said: "madam, you are the most honorable nobleman in the country." And then he saw the two sons. He pointed the son Xiao Xian and said: "you are noblest because of this boy". Also he said that the other son was noble. Soon after the old man left, came back Liu Bang. His wife told him all what the old man said. He was so curious about it that he pursued the old man to ask him his own fate. The old man answered: "your wife and your sons are all noble because of you." Gao Zu was very delighted and said: "if it is true, I will never forget your goodness." *Ibid.*, 8: 1280.

<sup>559</sup> Hok-lam Chan, "The rise of Ming T'ai-Tsu (1368-98): facts and fictions in early Ming official

In *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*, there is a story relating of how the future emperor met an elderly scholar who predicted his destiny by observing his physiognomy when he was a sixteen-year-old Buddhist novice caught in the midst of rebel uprising:

[...] when he arrived at Liu-an, (his Majesty) met an elderly scholar, looking rather weary with a basket of books on his back. Pitying his advanced age, His Majesty volunteered to bear it for him. The elderly scholar made no objection and the two journeyed together. On reaching Chu-sha-chen, as they were resting at the foot of a locust tree, the elderly scholar said to His Majesty: “as I examined your features I found them extraordinary. I am well versed in astrology, let me have your date and year of birth and I shall make a prognostication for you.” His Majesty complied. The elderly scholar remained silent for a long while and said: “I have made prediction for many people, but no one was as noble as you. I wish you could be cautious. It will favor you if you proceed northwest but not southeast.”<sup>560</sup>

It presents a vivid example of fusion of historical facts with a cycle of fictional anecdotes in the popular imagination, in which the physiognomy is the key for the author to make readers see the destiny of Zhu Yuanzhang to be an emperor in future.

In the *Ming Shi* 明史, there is a narration on the first meeting of Guo Shanfu 郭山甫, an intelligent man with extensive knowledge of physiognomy, and Zhu Yuanzhang. When Guo met Zhu, he was astonished by Zhu at the first sight. He said to him: “Your appearance is ineffably noble 公相贵不可言!”<sup>561</sup>

The other was the equally publicized story about the rise of the Song dynasty founder Zhao Kuangyin 赵匡胤 (927-976) who is said to have met,

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historiography,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (1975): 679.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, 692.

<sup>561</sup> Zhang, *Ming Shi*, 113: 1.



during his residence in a monastery in Xianyang in his early years of obscurity, a strange monk gifted in physiognomy that foretold his destiny and advised him to proceed north. This anecdote, transmitted in fictional miscellanies presumably drawing on the popular tradition, was later copied into the imperial annals of the official Song History.<sup>562</sup>

In the presenting the image of ruler, the unusual destiny of ruler was also reflected in the miraculous natural phenomena on them.

In history, the life of a ruler or dynastic founder is recast in the standard *topoi* accorded to the imperial ruler and further embroidered by the imaginative embellishments of the official historiographers. These imperial attributes may range from his exceptional physical or moral capacities, or miraculous scenes attending the emperor's birth presence of extraordinary features alluding to, or the manifestation of prodigious cosmological signs, deities or supernatural figures indicative of his auspicious imperial destination.<sup>563</sup> This is in fact similar with what physiognomic observation functions.

Miraculous signs consisting of unusually natural phenomenon were noted as having been given to both men in their youth at auspicious moments in their lives; the sun circled by a rainbow appeared to Augustus outside Rome the day Julius Caesar was assassinated<sup>564</sup> and at Cosimo's villa at Castello outside Florence the garden burst into flower in January the day he was elected when all the surrounding farms were still locked in the grip of winter.<sup>565</sup> Rounding out the cycle of events contributing to the justification of Cosimo as a "semi-god" was the brilliant comet which was reported to have appeared in the sky on the night of April 21, 1574 marking Cosimo's death, and which was visible for some months afterward.

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<sup>562</sup> Chan "The rise of Ming T'ai-Tsu," 695.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 686.

<sup>564</sup> Matasiliani, *La Felicità del Ser. Cosimo de' Medici*, 28; Suet. XCV. 12. Further descriptions of events, dreams and predictions of the future good fortune and greatness of Augustus are presented in other passages. Suet. XCIV.

<sup>565</sup> Matasiliani, *La Felicità del Ser. Cosimo de' Medici*, 28. Jean Nestor, *Istoire des hommes illustres de la maison de Medici* (Paris: C. Perrier 1564), 203. Ammirato, *Opuscoli*, 224.

In Chinese history and biography, the miraculous scene “happened” more frequently. On the birthday of Emperor Taizu of Ming, for example, it is recorded as:

[...] On the following day His Majesty was born; the room was saturated with a red glow. It was the *zi* (11pm-1am) or *chou* (1-3am) hour of the eighteenth day of the ninth month of the first year of Tianli (October 21/22, 1328) [of the Yuan Emperor Wenzong 文宗 (r. 1328-29)]. Following that, the glow flashed several times at night. Sighting it from a distance the neighbors were terrified, thought it was a fire and all rushed to rescue. When they arrived they found nothing, and were quite astonished.<sup>566</sup>

明日，上生，红光满室，时元天历元年戊辰九月十八日子、丑也。自后夜数有光，邻里遥见，惊以为火，皆奔救，至则无有，人咸异之。

The similar record can be found in *Guo Que* 国权 (discussion on the state) by Tan Qian 谈迁 (1594-1658). The birth of kings and emperors, from Liu Bang 刘邦, founder of Han dynasty to Zhu Youjian 朱由检 (1611-1644), the last emperor of Ming dynasty, were often with unusual phenomenon, which seems a routine in the official biography. The miraculous natural scene, based on the classical philosophy on the correspondence of the heaven and man, or the heaven-heaven oneness, was used by the authority as propaganda of their power's legitimacy. The fictional writing was opposed by some philosophers. Wang Chong 王充 (27-97), for example, wrote the chapter *Miracles* 奇怪篇 in *Lun Heng* 论衡 saying that was ridiculous and false statement), it was not however abandoned in official history. In this sense, the physiognomy of nature and the physiognomy of the ruler are correspondent.

## 6. Templates of tyrant

The templates of animal are widely used in the representation of rulers. As one of the most important physiognomic methodologies, the animal analogy

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<sup>566</sup> Xie et al., *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*, 1:1-2. Translated by Chan Hok-Lam in “Xie Jin (1369-1415) as imperial propagandist: his role in the revisions of the *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*,” *T'oung Pao*, 91 (2005): 91.

helped to sketch the personality of rulers effectively: the doubtless catalogue among animals makes it much clear to what catalogue the criticized rulers belong. In this way, the templates of animals are formed.

Paolo Giovio described Ezzelino da Romano (1194-1259), tyrant of Padua in *Elogia* (262, Dom. 39v, fig.7):

Ezzolino, tiranno di Padova, mostro del genere humanno, con questa crespa e bestial fronte, con questa terribil pallidezza e con questi occhi da serpe, mostrando la fierezza della sua indomita natura, è dipinto nel palazzo di Padova.

Interest in Ezzelino's history was revived in the early 1540's with the publication of the *Historia d'Ezzelino terzo da Romano* (Venice, 1543); Giovio probably acquired the painting by Bronzino between 1546 and 1549. What was known of Ezzelino's appearance and life originated in the chronicles of contemporaries or near-contemporaries set forth in vivid descriptions. According to this, the tyrant not only was the bastard offspring of a demon but, had a vice appearance. His crinkled and bestial face, with a pale complexion is the sign of fierceness. Were this not memorable enough, he had one additional feature of note: the serpent eyes.

The portrait of Ezzelino by Bronzino also subdues or eliminates altogether the implausible elements described in the chronicles of Ferrarese historian Gaspare Sardi, though Ezzelino's appearance is slightly caricatured. He is bearded, but not at all shaggy with hairy—indeed, he has a receding hairline and a thin head of hair—with a pale face, and narrow almond-shaped eyes, which Giovio describes as being like those of a serpent. Holding a pike in one hand, and wearing a jerkin bearing the Ghibelline eagle over a suit of lustrous armor, he is conceived as a menacing figure with a dramatic, glowering expression, created by eyebrows which flex sharply downwards to the bridge of his nose. The portrait may be one of those that fall into the same category as the portraits of tyrant; it is strongly evocative of Ezzolino's character, particularly in the emphasis that is given to his “serpent-like” eyes.

The description in Spacciarino's manuscript history of Vanice, where

Ezzelino is described as having a terrible and savage physiognomy, with a large head, small eyes, and a big nose, aquiline in shape.<sup>567</sup>

In physiognomics, the serpent is used to signify a cruel and insidious man, as it was held in the *Trattato di fisiognomica*: “Il serpente è un animale crudele, che fa del male, insidioso, terribile quando ha preso una decisione, pronto a scappare quando ha paura, ingordo. [...] Gli uomini di questo tipo potranno essere anche degli assassini, sfrontati e paucosi al comtempo, amanti del male.”<sup>568</sup> It becomes a typical sign of a cruel and insidious tyrant.

The same method can be found in China. In the descriptions of tyrants that the writers criticized, the photographic description was rare. More often, the brief analogy with animals was used. The animals such as jackal, wasp, wolf, eagle are the most frequently employed to be compared with criticized kings and emperors. In *Jin Shi* (history of Jin dynasty), for example, the Emperor Hailingwang of Jin 海陵王 (1122-1161) was said to “look like a wolf and was obsessed with ambition to conquer the south of Yangtze River 海陵狼顾，志欲并吞江南.”<sup>569</sup>

As it was stated in the *Da Mo Wu Guan Zong Lun* 达摩五官总论, the man looking like a wolf is stingy and greedy.<sup>570</sup> It is confirmed in *Shen Xiang Quan Bian* where there is a principle that the man with wolf’s eyes or bows his head and knits his brows while looking is usually greedy.<sup>571</sup> In *Ren Lun Da Tong Fu*, Zhang Xinjian held that the man looking like a wolf is atrocious and therefore will not be successful.<sup>572</sup>

There are relative resources founded in antique historical records of such doctrine of physiognomy. In *Jin Shu* 晋书 (history of Jin Dynasty) Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220) noticed that Sima Yi 司马懿 (179-251) is ambitious in the

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<sup>567</sup> Gianbattista Verci, *Storia degli Eccelini*, (Bassano: Stamperia Remodini, 1779), 154.

<sup>568</sup> *Trattato di fisiognomica*, 128.

<sup>569</sup> Toqto’a, *Jin Shi*, 2: 9: 1.

<sup>570</sup> Pseudo-Bodhidharma, “Da Mo Wu Guan Zong Lun,” 38.

<sup>571</sup> Yuan, “Shen Xiang Quan Bian,” 222.

<sup>572</sup> Zhang, “Ren Lun Da Tong Fu,” 146.

crown and wanted to check his physiognomy. Then he sent a secretary to observe, who reported that Sima Yi looked like a wolf did.<sup>573</sup> From then on, the wolf became a sign of wild ambition and atrociousness of a king or emperor.

The eyes of tyrant of the same type with Ezzelino in ancient China were usually analogized with those of wasps, with a jackal's voice. Sima Guang 司马光 (1019-1086) recorded in *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government) that Emperor Dezong 德宗 of Tang dynasty had a suspicion that his crown prince conspired against him. His minister persuaded him by saying that the prince did not because he had not a physiognomy with wasp eyes and jackal voice.<sup>574</sup> It is certain that till the Tang dynasty wasp and jackal is still the sign of crafty, cruelty and ungratefulness as they have been. The early record of such physiognomy is in *Zuo Zhuan* 左传, in which King Mu 穆王 (?-614BC) of Chu 楚 State in Spring and Autumn period “had wasp's eyes and jackal's voice and was a sinister man 蜂目而豺声，忍人也。”<sup>575</sup> His father, regardless the warning of Dou Zishang 鬬子上, minister and at the same time a physiognomist, chose him the crown prince. At the end, King Mu killed his father for the throne. In *Jin Shu* 晋书, it recorded that Pan Tao 潘滔 (?-?, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century) met Wang Dun 王敦(266-324) and said, “Wang Dun has shown off his wasp's eyes, while his jackal's voice is still unheard. Even if he will not kill people, he will be killed 处促(王敦字)蜂目已露，豺声未振，若不噬人，亦当为人所食.” His prediction came true: Wang Dun was ungrateful and treacherous as expected and slaughtered a lot.<sup>576</sup>

In physiognomy, the catalogue of vice sign usually includes such wasp's eyes and jackal's voice. *Shen Xiang Quan Bian*, for example, held “be

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<sup>573</sup> Fang et al., *Jin Shu*, 1: 1.

<sup>574</sup> Guang Sima 司马光 (1019-1086), *Zi Zhi Tong Jian 资治通鉴*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1956), 232: 787.

<sup>575</sup> Zuo, *Zuo Zhuan*, 6: 1.

<sup>576</sup> Fang et al., *Jin Shu*, 98: 68.

cautious of the partner with jackal's voice and wasp's eyes: he will either hurt you or himself."<sup>577</sup> *Shen Yi Fu* stated that the eyes like wasp are ill omen of criminal.<sup>578</sup> *Zhao Dan Jing* said that the man with wasp-like eyes and jackal-like voice will conquer others by force.<sup>579</sup>

Besides, the eyes like that of tiger, eagle, serpent, the neck of egret, the nose like that of hawk are established signs of cruelty and insidiousness for Chinese kings and emperors. The physiognomic basis is rich: "the man with eagle's eyes would never be amiable."<sup>580</sup> "The man with tiger's eyes will be rich in mid-life but will lose his son, unless he is strong-minded and cold-blooded."<sup>581</sup> "The man with serpent-like eyes will hurt his father."<sup>582</sup> "The man with aquiline nose eats human heart and marrow."<sup>583</sup> "How to know the man will be prosecuted? He has egret-like neck."<sup>584</sup>

There is one point worthy of attention. It seemed that from Tang Dynasty, the critic description of rulers had been less than before, when we can easily find examples of tyrant's appearance depictions. The templates of animals were mostly formed before Tang dynasty, when the historiography was relatively freer. There are surely complicated and various reasons for this phenomenon, however, the space of historians that they can do their job are one factor. With the increasingly intensive controlling of the court, there were no more new templates came out being.

The descriptions of tyrants in Italian and Chinese history and biography are of the tradition in the classical world. From the very beginning, the appearances of them were described as the good rulers being done. In the biography of Roman emperors, for example, Caligula (12-41) was described as: tall, ill-proportioned, an object of derision; neck and legs very thin; feet enormous; head misshapen, eyes and temples sunken; hair thin, with crown

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<sup>577</sup> Yuan, "Shen Xiang Quan Bian," 97.

<sup>578</sup> Chen, "Shen Yi Fu," 135.

<sup>579</sup> Shao, "Zhao Dan Jing," 307.m

<sup>580</sup> Yuan, "Shen Xiang Quan Bian," 71.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

of head bald; hair and beard worn long for a time after death of his sister; neck covered with bristles and rest of the body hairy; color exceedingly pale; countenance naturally frightful and hideous rendered more so by grimaces intended to inspire horror and fright; eyes staring and with a glare savage enough to torture. In boyhood subject to epilepsy and in manhood sound neither in body nor mind; had fainting spells at times which made him incapable of any effort.<sup>585</sup> His physical features, according to physiognomic theory, reflect his cruelty, irascibility, insidiousness and incapability. Claudius (10BC-54) was: tall, but not slender, with pleasing expression and becoming white hair; neck thick set; appearance stately and graceful, but only when standing, sitting or sleeping; when walking he was clumsy, dragged his right foot, and give way in the knees; was marred by other traits also, whether he attempted to be cheerful or serious; was unseemly in laughter, disgusting in anger, when he foamed at the mouth and trickled at the nose; in speech stammering and harsh; hand trembled and head shook with tremulous motion when under any exertion; eyes at corners bloodshot.<sup>586</sup>

The main ancient historians Tacitus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio all wrote after the last of the Flavians had gone. All three were senators or *equites*. They took the side of the Senate in most conflicts with the Princeps, invariably viewing him as being in the wrong. Suetonius portrayed Claudius as a ridiculous figure, belittling many of his acts and attributing the objectively good works to his retinue.<sup>587</sup> Tacitus wrote a narrative for his fellow senators and fitted each of the Emperors into a simple mold of his choosing.<sup>588</sup> Dio was less biased, but seems to have used Suetonius and Tacitus as sources. Thus the conception of Claudius as the weak fool, controlled by those he supposedly ruled, was preserved for the ages.

In his book *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, Suetonius describes Nero

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<sup>585</sup> Suet. *Calig.*, 24, 50, 52; *Sen., De Const. Sap.*, 18,1; *De ira*, 3,19; *Plin., N. H.*, 11,54. See Canter, "Personal appearance in the biography," 387.

<sup>586</sup> Suet., *Claud.*, 2-4; 30-31; *Dio Cass.*, 60,2; *Plin., N.H.*, 11,54; *Juv.*, 6,622; *Sen., Apocol.*, 5-7; *Joseph., Antiq. Iud.*, 19, 222.

<sup>587</sup> Vincent Scramuzza, *The Emperor Claudius*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), 29.

<sup>588</sup> D. W. Vessey, "Thoughts on Tacitus' Portrayal of Claudius," *American Journal of Philology* 92 (1971): 385-409.

(37-68, r.54-68)<sup>589</sup> as “about the average height, his body marked with spots and malodorous, his hair light blond, his features regular rather than attractive, his eyes blue and somewhat weak, his neck over thick, his belly prominent, and his legs very slender.”<sup>590</sup> The ill proportion in his body reflects the vice character, which is exactly the contrary of the virtue, as we mentioned before; the good ruler is usually well proportioned, as a lion is.

Macrinus (165-218) was described as: born of humble parentage, a Moor by race; left ear bored in token of servile origin; shameless in countenance, rigid and stern in action; head bald, face bearded; gluttonous and fond of wine; sought a venerable appearance in superficial ways by imitating Marcus Aurelius in hesitating speech, slow majestic gait, and in manner of trimming beard.<sup>591</sup> His humble origin was emphasized in his appearance, with some signs of stupidity, gluttonousness and rigidity. The physiognomy of Maximian (286-305) was even worse: an Illyrian of low birth; ignorant, rustic and barbaric in appearance and manners; harshness and ferocity seen in his very features, for which reason he was called “father of the iron age.”<sup>592</sup>

It is plausible to say that the elements in the description of their appearances are all on the basis of the physiognomic tradition, from which we find the evidence in the rereading that the physiognomics was revived in the fifteenth and sixteenth century: Michele Savonarola, Bartolomeo Cocles, Jean D’Indagine, e Pomponio Gaurico, and Gian Battista Della Porta.<sup>593</sup> There is no wonder then that the portraiture of dukes, kings and other rulers were in the air of physiognomy.

The negative records of rulers in history appeared early in the Spring

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<sup>589</sup> The history of Nero’s reign is problematic in that no historical sources survived that were contemporary with Nero. These first histories at one time did exist and were described as biased and fantastical, either overly critical or praising of Nero. Tacitus, *Annals* I.1; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* XX, 8.3; Tacitus, *Life of Gnaeus Julius Agricola* 10; Tacitus, *Annals* XIII.20.

<sup>590</sup> Suet. 12; 51

<sup>591</sup> Capitol., *Vita*, 2,1; 4,1-6; 5,6; 11,1; 13,4; 14,2; Herod., 5,2,3-4; Dio Cass., 78,11. See Canter, “Personal appearance in the biography,” 392.

<sup>592</sup> Eutrop., 9,27; 10,3; Lampr., *Elegab.*, 35,4; Aurel. Vict., *Liber de Caes.*, 39, 18; Auct., *Epit. de Caes.*, 40, 10

<sup>593</sup> Tommaso Casini, “La questione fisiognomica,” 109-110.



and Autumn period where historiographers utilized description of rulers' physique as a way to reflect their characteristics in China. The first emperor in Chinese history, Ying Zheng 嬴政 (259-210BC) was said to have "wasp-like nose, long eyes, bird-like chest and jackal voice 蜂准，长目，挚鸟膺，豺声", signifying that he was "ungrateful and cruel and ambitious 少恩而虎狼心."<sup>594</sup> The physiognomic interpretation was so significance that the signs were established.

The similar happened to other tyrants. Gou Jian 勾践 (496-465BC), the king of Yue 越 state was described by Fan Li 范蠡 (?-?, ca.5<sup>th</sup> century BC), his counselor who helped him regain his throne, as "long-necked and with a bird's beak. He is a man with whom one can share in distress but cannot share in the profits 越王为人长颈鸟喙，可与共患难，不可与共乐."<sup>595</sup> In *Nan Shi* 南史 (history of Nan dynasties), the historiographer described Liu Yu 刘彧 (439-472), king of Song in the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589) that he had wasp's eyes, bird's beak and long neck. His appearance was disliked by the king, who often rebuked him 蜂目鸟喙，长颈锐下.<sup>596</sup> *Guo Yu* (Discourses of the States) recorded that Shu Yu 叔鱼 (580-531BC) had tiger's eyes, pig's mouth, kite's shoulder and ox's belly, which meant that he was insatiably avaricious and would die of it 是虎目而豕喙，鸢肩而牛腹，溪壑可盈，是不可饜也，必以贿死.<sup>597</sup> What's more, tyrant's vice nature was even conveyed once he was born. There was a story that Ziliang 子良, the Si Ma 司马 of Chu state had a new son named Jiao 椒 (?-605BC). His brother Ziwen 子文 predicted when he saw the baby: "You must kill him. This boy has a body resembles the figure of a bear and tiger, and his voice that of jackal. Otherwise, he will destroy our entire Ruo'ao 若敖 clan.熊虎之状而豺狼之声；弗杀，必灭若敖氏矣." Ziwen's prediction came to realize, when Yue Jiao led an unsuccessful rebellion, which did indeed bring about the destruction of the Ruo'ao clan.<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>594</sup> Sima, *Shi Ji*, 6.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>596</sup> Li et al., *Nan Shi*, 3: 3

<sup>597</sup> Qiuming Zuo 左丘明 et. al., *Guo Yu* 国语, (Shanghai: Gu Ji Publishing House, 1986), Jin: 8: 90.

<sup>598</sup> Zuo, *Zuo Zhuan*, 7: 4.

Chinese physiognomy was often manipulated in historical writing to deprive the legitimacy of a usurper. The Han dynasty was briefly interrupted by Wang Mang from 8 to 25AD. To Han historiographers, Wang Mang's reign was unacceptable and needed to be denounced. The Latter Han attack on Wang Mang was intensified in two ways: rebuking his morality and demonizing his body.<sup>599</sup>

Wang Mang was depicted in *Han Shu* (Book of Han) as following:

As a person Wang Mang had a large mouth and a short chin. His eyes were protuberant and his pupils red. His voice was loud and hoarse. He was seven *chi* and five *cun* tall. He liked thick-soled shoes and wore a tall hat, and stuffed his clothes with furs. He had a dented chest and looked with his head facing up. To those around him, he looked at them as if watching far away. At that time there was one who, because of his expertise, served as a palace attendant. When asked about Wang Mang's appearance, the attendant said: "Wang Mang is what is to be called a man with the eyes of an owl, the mouth of a tiger and the voice of a jackal. Therefore he is able to eat people but will also be eaten by people." The inquirer reported this to Wang Mang; Wang Mang killed the attendant and rewarded the reporter. After that Wang Mang often hid his face behind a mica fan. No one except his favorites could see him.<sup>600</sup>

莽为人侈口蹶颡，露眼赤精，大声而嘶。长七尺五寸，好厚履高冠，以鼈装衣，反膺高视，瞰临左右。是时有用方技待诏黄门者，或问以莽形貌，待诏曰：“莽所谓鸱目虎吻豺狼之声者也，故能食人，亦当为人所食。”问者告之，莽诛灭待诏，而封告者。后常翳云母屏面，非亲近莫得见也。

The depravity of Wang Mang's face and the malformation of his body symbolize the illegitimacy of his rule. The message behind this manipulation

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<sup>599</sup> Jianjun He, "The body in the politics and society of early China" (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 2007), 32.

<sup>600</sup> Ban, *Han Shu* 69:2. Passage translated by He in "Body in the politics and society," 32-33.

of history is clear.

## Chapter V

# The Circumstance of the Idealized Physiognomy of Rulers

## 1. Fabricated ideal image of rulers

### 1.1 Physiognomic description as a type of fabrication in history writing

Generally speaking, the attitude of historian to rulers was reflected correspondently in narration and physical description as well. That is to say, in description, there included the opinion of historian on the rulers, the phenomenon of which was widely observed in Chinese historic study. As all known in the field of Chinese historiography, the ancient historic writing contained much judgment of historians. In the biographic historiography, the judgment can be found more. Physical descriptions were also in the range. On the other hand, the theoretical statements of historians and the decisions reportedly taken by emperors or officials may be matched by practical arrangements contrived in the task of governing mankind.<sup>601</sup>

It was a common practice of the Chinese official historiographers to employ pseudo-historical, semi-fictional source materials alongside the factual, ascertainable data in their narratives and descriptions for prescribed political or didactic purposes despite their commitment to the time-honored principles of the truth and objectivity in the Confucian-oriented traditional historiography.<sup>602</sup> As Chan observed, there are two types of non-historical elements in the voluminous output of traditional Chinese historical records: the unintentional fictions and the deliberately fabrications.

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<sup>601</sup> Michael Loewe, "The cosmological context of sovereignty in Han times," *Bulletin of the school of oriental and African studies, University of London*, 65 (2002): 342.

<sup>602</sup> Chan, "The rise of Ming T'ai-Tsu," 679.

The first denotes records or expressions that are historically doubtful by modern reckoning, but which people at a certain stage might have believed, or accepted as factual. They present quasi-scientific expressions or folkloristic motifs shared by the literati and populace, such as ancient myths about the universe, the deities, cosmological manifestations or miraculous stories about prophetic revelations or the superhuman qualities possessed by gifted individuals.

The second refers to accounts or statements which historians consciously fabricated or which they adapted from doubtful sources, either literary records or oral traditions, with full knowledge of their spuriousness. They featured inflated or distorted versions about prodigious events or personages, forged episodes or imaginary speeches, rhetoric, stock phrases and the like supposedly transmitted by imperial rulers or scholar-official.<sup>603</sup> They were incorporated in the records deliberately by historian to dramatize, simulate, and even to distort the account of a given episode or personage in violation of the Confucian convention to fulfill prescribed political or didactic missions or to serve specific contemporary expediencies.<sup>604</sup>

In official histories, the accounts of the rise of a ruler or the founding of a dynasty provide the most vivid illustration of the intrusion of pseudo-historical, fictive elements into the factual records.<sup>605</sup>

Both of them were traceable in Chinese physiognomized monarchical depiction. On the one hand, the exaggerated or mystified physique of the ruler is the result out of the physiognomic consciousness of historians, which reflected the secular power of this traditional conception at that time. On the other hand, on the story of physiognomic prediction of the future rulers, without any verification, it is obviously out of the intentional fabrication of historians (it is possible that even they themselves did not believe it.). The

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<sup>603</sup> In comparison with their Western counterparts, Chinese historians seemed to have shown a much more rational attitude towards the supernatural, although quasi-scientific and pseudo-historical expressions nonetheless filled the pages of ancient chronicles. This is illustrated, among others, in Watson, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien*, 150, 233.

<sup>604</sup> Chan, "The rise of Ming T'ai-Tsu," 679-715.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 685

purpose of the two sorts of fabrications is clear—it is to constitute the proper image of the rulers. In fact, what the rulers were concerned with was not their real appearance being interpreted, but how their authoritative image could be admitted by the people, so that their power could be maintained reasonably. It is also the reason why the authenticity of ruler's physical description yielded to the physiognomic depiction.

It is more or less the same in Italy. As Alison M. Brown said, despite Leonardo Bruni's dictum *aliud es historia, aliud laudatio*, it is difficult to draw a clear dividing line between humanist eulogies and histories, and for this reason the writing in which the rulers were praised during his lifetime, although they made no claim to be histories, are nevertheless important as contemporary evidence of how they were idealized and interpreted his role in the country.<sup>606</sup>

## 1.2 Ideal image of rulers

As mentioned before, the ruler's representations were indeed constructed according to certain ideals by applying patterns inherited from Antiquity onwards. With the reference of physiognomic theory, the ideal face and body of rulers were set up. Due to the particularity of his identity, it is acceptable by the people that the physiognomy of rulers was somewhat different from the common people. Even if it was not ideal actually, the historians would construct an ideal image.<sup>607</sup>

From the fourth century BC, prescriptions for the best kind of king are provided in abundance by philosophers and orators: he must possess every excellence justice being the universally recognized *sine qua non* of the good ruler, and he ought to be superior in bodily appearance.<sup>608</sup> The idea of

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<sup>606</sup> Alison M. Brown, "The Humanist portrait of Cosimo de' Medici, Pater Patriae," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 24 (1961): 186.

<sup>607</sup> Qin Ding 丁勤, "Visual Explanation --Cultural Connotation and Social Function of the Images of Ancient Chinese Emperors 视觉的阐释," *Journal of Beijing Institute of Technology* 13 (2011): 143.

<sup>608</sup> The importance of justice: Erwin R. Goodenough, "The political pilosoph of Hellenistic kingship," *Yale classical studies* 1 (1928): 57-79; Frank W. Walbank, "Monarchies and monarchic ideas," in *Cambridge Ancient History* ed. Frank W. Walbank et al. (Cambridge University Press, 1984), VII. 1: 82.

physiognomy was inherent in royal ideology from the start. The necessity of reinventing monarchy during the period of the “successor kings” created an opportunity for artists and philosophers to explore the nature of the institution, one result of which is that Hellenistic monarchy remained the vehicle for the examination of the good ruler well into the empire.<sup>609</sup>

In the Renaissance time, prescriptions for the best kind of king were still a hot topic for philosophers and writers.

Lucio Paolo Rosello wrote *ritratto del vero governo del prencipe* which Cesare Vasoli thought “un’operazione propagandistica, probabilmente ben concertata tra il Rosello e gli agenti medicei di Venezia e rivolta e rendere popolare la persona del Duca[.]”<sup>610</sup> It is easy to find that Rosello in his book insisted to identify Cosimo I with the image of ideal prince.<sup>611</sup>

The Prince-wrote the Rosello, always referring to the portrait of Cosimo, in the guise of “paternal” Erasmian-sovereign is, in fact, the living image of God in respect of sinful men, be made worthy of eternal death because of our sins; and, as such, must benefit all, good or bad, without promising himself no reward, and be, like God, first merciful, and then right.<sup>612</sup> Since Cosimo I was the living image of god, he should have an excellent outward appearance and his virtues could be seen in eyes. Therefore, he said: “Chiunque giudiciosamente considera illustrissimo signore le parole di fuilio, il quale seguendo Platone afferma che se la virtù si potesse vedere con gli occhi del corpo, essa sveglierebbe gli animi ad amarla mirabilmente: non può se non preder grandissima maraviglia, come quell’intelletto nobile non avesse opinione molto diversa. Percioche le forze della virtù sono tali che mostrano la bellezza di quella anche a gli occhi sensibili.”<sup>613</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> Tatum, “The regal image in Plutarch’s Lives,” 140.

<sup>610</sup> Cesare Vasoli, “Lucio Paolo Rosello e un’immagine cinquecentesca del principe,” *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 65 (1981): 571.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, 553

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.*, 563

<sup>613</sup> Rosello, *Il ritratto del vero governo del prencipe*, 99.

The works of Rosello was constituted a real and proper ideology of the Prince and of the state that seemed functions either in explaining his idea or in a certain propaganda of the Medici.

Of course, it may be that Rosello, so tried by the trial and prison, tried, as did also Brucioli Antonio, protection and help from the powerful Duke. However, it is difficult to believe that the published works, dedicated to Cosimo's son, the future Francesco I, was not, in some way, in concert with those who intended to popularize the image of the Duke like a perfect prince, just and gentle, a good soldier and a good "literary", a skilled politician and yet also a man of peace, of good and attentive with all the virtues you want.

The problem is, the descriptions of these rulers are so idealized that in many cases the real appearances are lost. Just like the portraiture of the rulers in the Renaissance, sitters habitually gave instructions to be *ritratto al naturale* (portrayed as if from nature or life) and the resulting portrait was routinely characterized as *una vera effigie* (a true likeness). These true likenesses from life, however, were acceptable to most Italian sitters only when presented under an idealized guise.<sup>614</sup>

Gradually the political meaning of later representation could be rendered without inscriptions and largely without a literary key to the significance of their elaborate details. The gap between physiognomic description and impersonal allegories of rule and power was avoided; the metaphors of our early examples were now spelled out in the terms of undisguised political propaganda.

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<sup>614</sup> Joanna Woods-Marsden, "Ritratto al Naturale: questions of realism and idealism in early renaissance portraits," *Art Journal* 46 (1987): 209.



## 2. The concept of the nobility in the theory of legitimacy of rulers

### 2.1 The nobility mandated by Heaven in China

There are two expressions which are the most often seen in describing a man. One is “Tian Ting Bao Man (middle of forehead being plump) and “Di Ge Fang Yuan” (chin being square and fleshy)”. They are also in common use for emperor and king, general and minister, and sage. Physiognomic book like *Shen Yi Fu* says: who is *Di Ge Fang Yuan* benefits from Earth, who is *Tian Ting Bao Man* benefits from Heaven. Benefiting from Sky, one will be noble; benefiting from Earth, one will be wealthy. The idea of “Benefiting from Heaven, one will be noble” is commonly accepted by the people. It makes the nobility of rulers legitimated because it was mandated by the Heaven.

At the expense of likeness of emperors in Chinese and Italian description, both succeed in making the emperor in a superior and noble image. And it is plausible yet that Italian rulers were conveyed by writers (both in literature and history) more details of their character and virtue. On the contrary, this aspect was omitted by Chinese deliberately to keep emperors far from the human, so to the people.

In China, traditionally, the ruler has also been called *Tian Zi* (天子), a title going back to Zhou times. The Zhou was the first concrete case of heaven worship, or one may say a “heaven cult”. It also established for the first time in Chinese history the concept that the king was a “son of Heaven.” This justified by the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven (*Tian Ming* 天命), the philosophical and political doctrine of legitimacy, according to which the ruler possesses the mandate to rule, given to his dynastic founder, which is, however, only maintained by good government. And the title is more than just symbolic. It signifies a special relationship between the ruler and the supreme. Deity called Heaven, represented by the celestial firmament.<sup>615</sup> The traditional conception is “one who is living must have a physiognomy and one

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<sup>615</sup> Julia Ching, “Son of Heaven: Sacral Kingship in Ancient China,” *T'oung Pao* 83 (1997): 16.

who has a physiognomy must be living, both the life and the physiognomy are given by the heaven. ... when one is born, the physiognomy and the destiny is decided, which cannot be changed by neither ghost nor god and cannot be transformed by neither sage nor wise.” With this conception, the heaven-given kingship is legitimated.

The emperor as *Tian Zi* was provided the power by Heaven which was not permitted to be oppugned. In order to demonstrate the natural rationality and inviolability of the royal power, the emperor and the queen were glorified and mystified by changing the description of the appearances of them according to the principles of physiognomy. Till Western Han Dynasty (206BC-8AD), a fusion of politics and physiognomy had emerged. And physiognomy had affected a lot in maintaining the authority of the dynasty and the union of the state as well as the order of the hierarchy. In the official histories it was like a principle.

In China, absolute monarchy reached its peak in Ming dynasty when Emperor Taizu abolished the system of Zai Xiang 宰相 (prime minister) in 1380 and placed the *Liu Bu* (six departments 六部) directly under the emperor. The theoretical basis of the absolute authority was *Tian Ming* (Mandate of Heaven) and the virtues of emperor were left behind of it. Lv Zhengya stated that there are five levels of the legitimacy of Chinese monarchy. The first is Tian Ming, the second is morality. Covering with the morality, the monarch was endowed with saint, having the power to make the people obey his order. The third is the conception of *Tian Xia Wei Jia* 天下为家, meaning the whole state is a family in which the son should obey the father, the wife should obey the husband and likewise the courtier should obey the ruler. The fourth is absolute sage, emphasizing that only the sage was legal in governing the state. The fifth is Authoritarian power.<sup>616</sup> Therefore, the theory of Mandate of Heaven is the initial point of the whole system, out of which come the moral requirements of ruler. There was a particular process for the emperor to be mandated by Heaven and rule the

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<sup>616</sup> Zhenya Lv 吕振亚, “The ideology on the legitimacy of chinese autocratic authority 中国皇帝专制权威合法性的思想系统,” *The Journal of Humanities*, 1 (1989): 85-90.

sate: *Gan Sheng* (birth myths of the mother being pregnant, without physical Relationship 感生), *Yi Xiang* (extraordinary physiognomy of destined ruler 异相), *Shou Ming* (Mandate of Heaven 受命) and *Feng Shan* (great ceremony 封禅). In the great religious ceremonies the ruler and his central and local officials assumed the leading roles, leaving only secondary functions to the professional sacerdotalists and their aids. The emperor was the chief performer in the most sacred of all ceremonies, the sacrifice to Heaven; and he was the chief performer also in the sacrifices to Earth, for the prospering of the crop, for the early summer rains, and for the national deities of Soil and Millet. Some of these rites were confined to the national capital. Others were also enacted in many regional and local sub centers of state power by distinguished provincial, district or community officials: the great rain sacrifice, the ceremonial plowing, the sacrifices to Confucius and to the patron of agriculture, etc.<sup>617</sup> To sum up, in the Chinese state religion, the ruler and a hierarchy of high officials fulfilled crucial priestly functions, although in their vast majority these officials and the emperor himself were primarily occupied with secular matters.<sup>618</sup>

## 2.2 Differences in the divine-right theory of kings of China and Italy

Similarly, the divine-right theory of kingship in feudal Europe including Italy is a political and religious doctrine of royal and political legitimacy which asserts that a monarch is subject to no earthly authority, deriving the right to rule directly from the will of God. God had bestowed earthly power on the king, just as God had given spiritual power and authority to the church, centering on the pope. Therefore the right of king is subject to the religion.

There is a different aspect between the two divine right theories of kinship. The Chinese Mandate of Heaven would transfer to those who would rule best. The mere fact of a leader having been overthrown is itself

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<sup>617</sup> Wittfogel, *Oriental despotism*, 95

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, 96

indication that he has lost the Mandate of Heaven. It postulates that *Tian* 天 (heaven) would bless the authority of a just ruler, as defined by the Five Confucian Relationships, but would be displeased with a despotic ruler and would withdraw its mandate, leading to the overthrow of that ruler. As it argued for the removal of incompetent or despotic rulers, and provided an incentive for rulers to rule well and justly. The concept is often invoked by philosophers and scholars in ancient China as a way to curtail the abuse of power by the ruler, in a system that otherwise offered no other check to this power. Therefore, the notion was more often mentioned especially when a new dynasty was founded. It was reflected also in the physiognomic description of Chinese kings and emperors. It happened more often that the physical appearances of new founders of dynasties (and certainly the destroyer of the old dynasty) were described according to the physiognomic theory, so as to persuade the legitimacy of their right.

### **2.3 Humanist nobility in Renaissance Italy**

In the Renaissance Italy, compared with the China, the physical description of rulers demonstrated the revival of Roman tradition, not only in the philosophical explanation of the legitimacy of the rule but only in the physiognomic signification of the description. In other words, the philosophy at that time was the theoretical circumstance in which the physiognomic descriptions were made. In that period, the inner qualities of rulers conveyed by the physical appearance were in accordance with the humanism that began in Italy around 1350. Therefore we need take account of humanism, “the reception of Roman law, and the rediscovery of classical antiquity; of the growing power of fluid capital and the corresponding decay of the near-monopolistic ascendancy of agrarian feudalism; of the heightened authority of the rulers of national states and of the territorial principalities within the Empire; of the rise of educated groups whose background was non-sacral, and of a professional bureaucracy exercising delegated executive powers; of the generally higher evaluation now placed on achievement in

learning, art and letters; of the effects of long-distance trade in diffusing knowledge of conditions at least in part of christen Europe.”<sup>619</sup>

One of the forms which the humanists’ concern over their career and life in this world assumed was a debate over the nature of true nobility. The humanist nobility is the theoretical source of this kind of description of rulers. Robert Baldwin divided the multiple humanisms into three kinds for the three dominate social groups, court, church, and burgher. Many texts and images combined aspects of burgher and court humanism and especially the new humanist idea of nobility as virtue.<sup>620</sup> So the adjective *noble* in the Renaissance more usually connotes ethical respectability than lofty birth. Nobility was defined as the possession of virtue. The theme was carried over into Italy and taken up in a similar way by Dante.<sup>621</sup> This idea was taken up by humanists working for middle-class audiences such as the Florentine civic humanists of the 15th century when Florence was a burgher republic, and later Northern writers like Erasmus, writing for a broad reading public.

In part, the new humanist idea of nobility as inner virtue challenged traditional courtly identity and power by allowing any educated commoner to claim new inner nobility. This explains its enormous appeal to burghers and other educated commoners. Wealthy burgher patrons like the Medici took up a highly intellectual courtly patronage in the late fifteenth century and thereafter.

In Platina’s *On the Prince* (1471) he invokes the common idea that the earliest human beings had no class hierarchies or aristocracy and that social levels developed slowly out of what were originally innate differences in virtue. Despite his strong support for monarchical rule (which he compares to noble mind ruling the base, disorderly body) he transformed traditional absolutist thinking with a new humanist concern for an inner nobility of mind. Because

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<sup>619</sup> Battaglia, “Nobility in the European Middle Ages,” 71.

<sup>620</sup> Robert Baldwin, “Humanism and the new idea of nobility as virtue,” <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CDIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.socialhistoryofart.com%2FThemes%2FBaldwin%2520%2520Nobility%2520As%2520Virtue%25201450%2520to%25201700.doc&ei=bNm8ULD0HcyM4gTcjIGwAw&usg=AFQjCNFs-3iM5yz4hR6p7H-yMjBlaAvPLQ&sig2=DfsTwpnP9za5OC-b6VOYQC>. Accessed June 3, 2012.

<sup>621</sup> Charles Trinkaus, *Adversity’s noblemen*, (New York: Octagon books Inc., 1965), 48.

the new humanist virtue was grounded in nature, it was easily represented as something everyone could recognize, regardless of their station, as the physiognomy could function.

Although humanists criticized the traditional nobility as lineage and outward splendor by ranking the former much lower than nobility as inner virtue and by disparaging the latter as sordid greed, they deemed all contemporary secular European regimes as legitimate, including not only the Emperor but also the various Italian signori.<sup>622</sup> For example, Marsiglio da Padova, advanced egalitarian notions such as popular sovereignty and wide political participation, but at the same time considered aristocracy and monarchy, including hereditary monarchy, as legitimate forms of government. Historians are agreed that the Florentine republic, like practically all other republics in Italy, was becoming increasingly oligarchic in comparison to the golden period of the medieval commune. After the collapse of the popular government of 1378-1382, the erosion of political participation became a clear and irreversible trend. The flowering of civic humanism—and the days of Bruni’s chancellorship of Florence—came in the early decades of the fifteenth century, precisely when the oligarchy of a few rich families consolidated its hold on power. This explains why the rulers were usually described by writers positively even though they ruled the state in some autocratic way.

The new “inner nobility” also worked to strengthen the claims on power made by the princely class. The new humanist idea of inner or natural nobility founded on virtue was irresistible to the Italian princely class in the fifteenth century. Redefined as an inner quality, princely power was now imbedded in the “true” hierarchies of nature rather than in the artifice of traditional aristocratic lineage and conspicuous consumption. “Natural nobility” gave the princely class a new and powerful justification for its right

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<sup>622</sup> See Antony Black, *Political thoughts in Europe, 1250-1450*, (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 60; Janet Coleman, *A history of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 140. Hanan Yoran, “Florentine civic humanism and the emergency of modern ideology,” *History and theory*, 46 (2007): 332.

to rule, a justification none could easily dispute because of its new natural quality. This is also what the physiognomic descriptions of them conveyed.

### **3. The relationship between rulers and writers in China and Italy**

The Emperor possessed power analogous to the divine; the personifications identify the various aspects of use of power, the patron saints, so to speak, of various benefits, under the ultimate control of the emperor. The “physiognomized” description of rulers reflects also the situation of historians and intellectuals then. It is, to some extent, out of the obeying and the flattery to the rulers, which can be regarded as both the cause of their writing, and the result of it.

#### **3.1 The writers controlled by rulers in ancient China**

During the course of collecting their images, the rulers demonstrated a keen attitude of participating. The writers, being aware of it, were usually cautious of their writing. It is common if we take in account of the situation of intellectuals. In the ancient autocratic country, the writing is controlled by the king or emperor, which is one part of the cultural despotism. Despite the difference in how intensive it was in Chinese dynasties, it is undeniable that the central authority controlled very strictly in the field of academy and culture. There are four stages of the cultural despotism in general. The first was in the Qin and Han dynasties and theretofore. Before the Spring and Autumn Period, the cultural and academic activities were official, in the guard of rulers and patrician. After the Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought from 770 to 221 BC during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period, the golden age of philosophy was ended with the *Fen Shu Keng Ru*<sup>623</sup> 焚书坑儒 (Burning of the books and burying of the scholars)

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<sup>623</sup> Fen Shu Keng Ru 焚书坑儒 is a purported policy and a sequence of events in the Qin Dynasty of Ancient China, between the period of 213 and 206 BC. During these events, the Hundred Schools

by Qin Shi Huang, first emperor of unified China and *Ba Chu Bai Jia Du Zun Ru Shu* 罢黜百家独尊儒术<sup>624</sup> (oust others doctrines, the overwhelming Confucianism). The second stage is Period of Disunity (220-589) in which there flourished literature, historiography, metaphysics and grew popularity of Buddhism. It was also the period in which much man-made disasters out of the remonstrance, writing of history and poem, and by the Buddhism. The period saw the growth of cultural despotism. The third state is in the dynasties of Sui, Tang and Song. The inquisition mentioned above continued. And the imperial examination system was set up to select the intelligent person for the court by which the intellectual of the state got controlled. In Song dynasty, the partisanship caused constant fights especially on the reformation and on the battle against Jin dynasty. Besides, the compilation of great encyclopedia led by the central government was also a method for controlling culture by extraction and categorization intentionally. The fourth stage is Ming and Qing dynasties, in which the cultural despotism reached its peak. The government persecuted the intellectuals much more brutally than ever. It is clear that the cultural despotism in ancient China has been cruel and long-lasting, playing an important role in the maintenance of absolute monarchy.

In historiography, only those written by official institutes belonged to official history and were called *Zheng Shi* 正史 (orthodoxy history), while those by individuals were private history and were called *Ye Shi* 野史 (wild history). Official historical records, compiled for or by the ruling class, served the interest of the state and the literati and expounded the orthodox ideology and views of the great tradition.

Due to the influence of historiography to the society, the feudal rulers permitted no direct records of their wrongful conduct. For the sake of their safe ruling, it seemed necessary for them to control the history writing,

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of Thought were pruned; legalism survived. One side effect was the marginalization of the thoughts of the school of Mozi and the survival of the thoughts of Confucius.

<sup>624</sup> Emperor Wu adopted the principles of Confucianism as the state philosophy and code of ethics for his empire and started a school to teach future administrators the Confucian classics.



limiting the private and free historiography so as to control the direction of public opinion.<sup>625</sup>

In fact, before Qin dynasty, the historians had some little right of direct and objective recording. In the Spring and Autumn Period, for example, Cui Zhu 崔杼(?-546BC), the powerful courtier of Qi state, murdered the king Zhuangong 庄公(?-548BC). Being angry with the official historian who recorded the affair directly, he killed in succession three historiographers, while at the end he gave up killing the fourth, even though the fourth had also decided to record it honestly. The historians' bravery is, not only out of their personal quality, but also out of the contemporary cultural circumstance. After Qin dynasty, the political status of historians got even more inferior, however, the independence of them somewhat remained. The tradition was destroyed more in Tang dynasty, when Emperor Taizong began to read the *Qi Ju Zhu* 起居注, the veritable record of the emperor's ordinary and political conduct that had been kept independent and out of the monitoring of emperors for centuries. From then on, the veritable record was often falsified to some extent.<sup>626</sup>

As for the institution of historiography, it became systematical in Tang dynasty, which at the same time means the reinforcement of the controlling over writing. In Tang dynasty, private historiography was forbidden. The Emperor Wen announced "all the private history on the state and private biography containing personal critics are forbidden."<sup>627</sup> There were particular institutes in court for literature and history in each dynasty, regardless their different titles.

For example, in Ming dynasty, there was Han Lin Academy 翰林院, under which placed Shi Yuan 史院, Office of Historiography. Ming dynasty reached the peak of autocratic imperial power, in which the intellectuals had little freedom in their writing. At the beginning when Han Lin Academy was

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<sup>625</sup> Fang Xiao 萧放, *A brief history of chinese culture 中国文化历史* (Wuhan: Hubei People's Press, 1997), 146.

<sup>626</sup> Fengxiang Hu 胡逢祥, "Official historian system and official history compilation 史官制度与正史编纂," *Li Shi Jiao Xue Wen Ti*, 1 (2005): 42-43.

<sup>627</sup> Wei et.al., *Sui Shu*, 1: 2.

founded by Ming, the scholars of the Academy such as Tao An 陶安 (1315-1368), Song Lian 宋濂 (1310-1381) were responsible for both drafting imperial edicts and writing state history, respectively politic and academic. There are particular officials writing *Qi Ju Zhu* 起居注, who were also from Han Lin Academy mostly.<sup>628</sup> It can be said that almost all the Han Lin members were historians. The compilation of veritable records, chronicles was usually led by the Cabinet minister, and executed the big scholars of Han Lin Academy; all must obey the emperor. Therefore, the emperor controlled the actual activities of the historical writing. The so-called veritable biography of Emperor Taizu of Ming dynasty, *Ming Tai Zu Shi Lu*, contained none misdeeds of Emperor Taizu after three times of revisions. It was the same in the *Ming Shi* (history of Ming), another later official history. It can be found only in the unofficial history the evil doings of the emperor.<sup>629</sup>

Another markable despotic phenomenon in culture was *Wen Zi Yu* 文字狱(literary inquisition). It took place under each of the dynasties ruling China, although the Ming and Qing were particularly notorious for the practice. Such persecutions could owe even to a single phrase or word which the ruler considered offensive. In a serious case, not only the writer but also his immediate and extended families would be killed. For instance, *Han Shu* (history of Han dynasty) recorded that Yang Yun 杨恽 (?-54BC), the grandson of Sima Qian, irritating Emperor Xuan by his *Bao Sun Hui Zong Shu* 报孙会宗书, was sentenced to *Yao Zhan* 腰斩(cutting him in two at the waist, a cruel punishment in ancient China). The record of literary inquisition in Ming dynasty could not be found in the official historiography, instead, much of them were mentioned in the private historiography and the essays.

<sup>628</sup> Zhang, *Ming Shi*, 73: 49: 2.

<sup>629</sup> There are a number of private accounts of the Ming founding by contemporary scholar-historians, who naturally, were biased in favor of the dynasty founder. The important are: Lu Shen 陆深 (1477-1544), *Ping Hu Lu* 平胡录 (2.3.10); Wu Kuan 吴宽, (1435-1504), *Ping Wu lu* 平吴录 (2.3.9); Tong Chengxu 童承叙 (?-?, 16<sup>th</sup> century), *Ping Han Lu* 平汉录 (2.3.13).

Numerous anecdotes about the rise of Ming founding are available in pseudo-historical, semi-fictional miscellaneous writings, such as: Song Lian 宋濂 (1310-1380), *Hong Wu Sheng Zheng Ji* (2.3.2) 洪武圣政记; Xu Zhenqing 徐祜卿(1479-1511), *Jian Sheng Ye Wen* (4.5.7) 翦胜野闻; Zhu Yunming 祝允明 (1460-1526), *Qian Wen Ji* (4.5.8) 前闻记; Lang Ying 朗瑛 (1487-1566), *Qi Xiu Lei Gao*, 七修类稿; Wang Wenlu 王文禄, *Long Xing Ci Ji*, 龙兴慈记; These accounts provide the main sources for the late Ming historical novel *Ying Lei Zhuan* 英烈传.

Zhu Yunming 祝允明(1406-1526), one of the most well-known intellectual in Ming dynasty wrote in his *Ye Ji* 野记 that Gao Qi 高启(1336-1373) was beheaded for his essay *Shang Liang Wen* 上梁文, along with his friend Wei Guang 魏观 (1305-1374).<sup>630</sup> Qing rulers are particularly notorious for their use of literary inquisitions. Under the Qing, literary inquisition began with isolated cases in Shun Zhi 顺治 and Kang Xi 康熙 times, and then evolved into a pattern. There were 53 cases of literary persecution during Emperor Qian Long 乾隆's reign.<sup>631</sup> Therefore, the imperial power had an overwhelming effect to intellectuals. With the popularity of physiognomic knowledge among the people, historians felt quite difficult to depict the real appearance of rulers especially in the case that the appearance was not very favorable with physiognomic doctrine, because it might defect the ruler's image.

Being limited by the government, writers described rulers very cautiously, and the safest way was to follow the formed principles, both in vocabulary and in methodology.

Chinese historians had a penchant for conformity rather than innovation, and when there were established precedents and rules, they tended to adhere to conventions and reproduce them in their writings. In this case, historical expressions and themes, once established as standard *topoi* in entrenched models of illustrious personages or events in the formal histories, came to be transmitted as stereotypes in later compositions.<sup>632</sup>

Therefore, traditional Chinese historical records are the product not only of a general conception of what constituted the facts of history in the pre-scientific reasoning, but also a prescribed criterion out of the purposes of historical records indigenous to the Chinese intellectual and cultural traditions.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> Yunming Zhu 祝允明 (1460-1527), "Ye Ji 野记," in *Guo Chao Dian Gu* 国朝典故, ed Deng Shilong 邓士龙 et al., (Beijing: University of Beijing Press, 1993), 32.

<sup>631</sup> Kam C. Wong, "Black's Theory on the Behavior of Law Revisited IV: the Behavior of Qing Law," *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 28 (2000): 327-374.

<sup>632</sup> Chan, "The rise of Ming T'ai-Tsu," 684.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*, 680.

### 3.2 The writers patronized by rulers in Italy

In Italy, the explanation can be found more in the problem of patronage. If Francesco Vettori's notion of history was dark and deeply pessimistic, the rulers wanted to convey, with the help of a virtually total political and cultural propaganda, a new sense of historical purpose and progress. To this end, history writing, literary and artistic production and exegesis, public ceremonies and festivities<sup>634</sup>, architecture and diplomacy<sup>635</sup> were marshaled into service.<sup>636</sup> Artists and writers labored in ruler's service to create an extensive and sophisticated group of works all directed towards the establishment of a permanent propagandistic discourse of the ruler's accomplishments, actual and so historical, programmatic and thus symbolical.

Besides, the image of the ruler had its immediate political needs. In the sixteenth century Florence, for example, Cosimo I de' Medici was prettified in both literary and art, which had something to do with the political situation at that time. Once consolidated his power in Florence, Cosimo I was able to devote himself to the expansion of his state. To prepare the ground for his subsequent military exploits, as well as to further stabilize the consent in Florence, it was necessary to create a true legend of Cosimo. With the intention to forge a new image of power, the intensive works of propaganda and self-congratulation were started in the field of art, architecture and literature.

From 1540's, the "image" of Cosimo I became more important than his actual appearance; ideology prevailed over biography, if the portrait stood alone.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>634</sup> Andrew C. Minor and Bonner Mitchell, *A Renaissance entertainment: Festivities for the Marriage of Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, in 1539* (Columbia : University of Missouri Press, 1968).

<sup>635</sup> Eletto Palandri, *Les négociations politiques et religieuses entre la Toscane et la France à l'époque de Cosme I et de Catherine de Médicis*, Paris-Florence-Brussels, 1908

<sup>636</sup> Forster, "Metaphors of rule," 89.

<sup>637</sup> Cfr. Giorgio Spini ed. *Architettura e politica da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1976); Susanna Pietrosanti, *Sacralità medicee*, (Florence: Firenze libri, 1991); Elena F. Guarini, "La fondazione del principato da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I (1530-1609) ," in *Storia della civiltà toscana, III. Il principato* ed. Elena F. Guarini (Florence: Le Monnier, 2003), 3-40.

It is necessary to consider the relationship of the ruler and the intellectuals as we did in Chinese case. As for that of the Medici and the intellectuals, we can find something interesting in the founding of all kinds of *Accademie*.

The Accademia degli Umidi was founded on November 1, 1540. At the beginning there are only 11 members, including Giovanni Mazzuoli, Anton Francesco Grazini, Francesco de' Vieri, Michelangelo Vivaldi, Cynthio d'Amelia, Simone Della Volta etc. These eleven people were taken by surprise when, in a few months, their initiative attracted the attention of almost all the intellectuals in Florence. Later there joined Cosimo Bartoli and Pierfrancesco Giambullari, writers already established their fame in the Italian culture, Pier Vettori, the eminent follower of philological methods of Poliziano, future historians Bernardo and Filippo de' Neri, Francesco Campana, first ducal secretary and renewal of the University of Pisa, Lelio Torelli, curator of the texts of the Pandects and the constitutional creator of the new regime, Luca Martini, cultural counselor, and Pierfrancesco Ricci, a former teacher and director of the Duke administration. We were joined several powerful nobles twelve prelates, and even, with the honorary title, the father of the Duke, Don Pedro de Toledo.<sup>638</sup>

A much more important fact is that the initiative earned the official support of Cosimo I de' Medici, who was looking for an accommodation between the courts, papal and imperial. He soon realized, by political genius that in Renaissance culture was an essential ingredient of that indispensable part of the political power. In 1546-47 the Academy was reformed in the sense oligarchic and more stringent regulations provided the means to impose that the work would take place "in order and silence", under the control of the Duke.<sup>639</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> Eric Cochrane, "Le Accademie," in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500*, ed. Giancarlo Garfagnini, (Florence: Leo S. Olschiki Editore, 1983), 4.

<sup>639</sup> [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cosimo-i-de-medici-duca-di-firenze-granduca-di-toscana\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cosimo-i-de-medici-duca-di-firenze-granduca-di-toscana_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

In the sixteenth century, there were many *accademie* in Italy. For example, Doni was a member of the Accademia degli Ortolani till he was elected secretary of the Accademia Fiorentina in 1546. Similar academies were founded not only in Ferrara, the Accademia degli Elevati, but also in Siena, the famous Accademia dei Rozzi. At the Accademia degli Intronati, founded between 1525 and 1527, the magistrate academic consisted of a prince, or architect, six censors, two members of a clerk and a treasurer.<sup>640</sup> Accademia degli Infiammati was founded in London a few months earlier, in imitation of the Accademia Romana and the Accademia degli Intronati. When Della Porta decided to reveal to his followers three hundred secrets he discovered in nature, he founded an academy, which joined in a short time the entire major writers and even some powerful barons of Naples.<sup>641</sup>

Cosimo I noticed that only the writers and artists were able to create an official art of the regime, to use the happy expression of Giorgio Spini, through which the regime potese keep in mind, even in an era devoid of mass media, before the eyes of their subjects and potential competitors and protesters.

The result corresponded perfectly to the best hopes of the Duke and hopes of Secretaries-writers who advised him. The Academy became the fulcrum around which turned a growing segment of people of different cultures. The Academy became also an integral part of the ducal regime.<sup>642</sup>

On one hand, it reflected the close relationship of the Medici and the intellectuals; on the other hand, it demonstrated the intangible control of the Medici over the intellectuals. Comparing with it, the Chinese restriction was more serious. As it mentioned before, Chinese rulers had direct power to decide the life and career of intellectuals. It remained till the end of the Qing dynasty.

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<sup>640</sup> Fabio Iacometti, *L'Accademia senese degli intronati*, (Siena: Accademia senese degli Intronati, 1950). Cochrane, "Le Accademie," 10.

<sup>641</sup> Nicola Badaloni, "Fermenti di vita intellettuale a Napoli dal 1500 alla metà del '600," *Storia di Napoli* 5 (1971): 641-689.

<sup>642</sup> Cochrane, "Le Accademie," 6.

### 3.3 The flattering writers

From the perspective of writers, the positive description of rulers was a direct flattery to the object. By satisfying the rulers, writers benefited pretty much. The lives of artists and writers make it clear that the success of their work depended primarily on the success of their adaptation and thereby subordination to the ruler's will. The ruler put the writers in a position which corresponds precisely to the place which he assigned to art and literature: they were both means and not ends in themselves.<sup>643</sup>

Smuts usefully observes that just as monarchs needed writers and artists to forge their public image, so writers and artists needed monarchs to give them inspirational material and to personify their values and aspirations.<sup>644</sup> A group of writers was as eager to be made into the ruler's instruments as he was interested in using them for the realization of his cultural plans. For example, while the patronage of Cosimo il Vecchio was essentially directed at institutions and hence dominated by architecture and books, Lorenzo Magnifico built very little and commissioned few works from established artists, but he collected preciousities and sponsored crafts neglected by traditional patrons. Lorenzo realized the value of art and artists for diplomatic and propagandistic purposes; Cosimo I de' Medici picked up where Lorenzo had left off. The duke drew art and scholarship fully into the service of politics.<sup>645</sup> It was the job of the court humanists to articulate the princes' taste and values, and their enthusiastic literary efforts reveal that sometimes, the art and literature corresponded to an ideal fostered in court circles.

Traditionally close to the Medici family, Domenico Mellini also worked to get to their service. In 1559 he turned to the Duke Cosimo I, through the mediation of relatives and friends, to get a place in the family of Giovanni de'

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<sup>643</sup> Forster, "Metaphors of rule," 102.

<sup>644</sup> Smuts, *culture and power*, 60

<sup>645</sup> Forster, "Metaphors of rule," 65-104.

Medici, the sixteen year old son of the Duke. At that time he did not fail to praise the merits of their relatives: Uncle Pietro, for example. The insistence of Mellini felt their effects and since the early sixties he was incardinated into the political life and courtesan of Medici Florence.

His first assignment worthy of note was that of secretary to Giovanni Strozzi, Cosimo I's ambassador to the Council of Trent from 1562 to May 1563. After the departure of the Strozzi, Mellini stayed in Treno as the sole representative of the Medici, although his position as mere secretary did not allow him to take part in the meetings.

Landino eulogized Piero de' Medici as a "Maecenas Tyrrhenis alter in oris/ Claris qui favet ingeniis"<sup>646</sup>, Naldo Naldi praised him as the Maecenas celebrated by all the ancient poets of Rome; and other aspiring poets like Francesco da Castiglione or Angelo Lapo of Faenza referred to Cosimo's patronage and openly expressed their hope of being rewarded for their verse.<sup>647</sup> As a result, Naldo Naldi was to be found in 1476 asking Lorenzo to recommend him to the tax-collectors, and two years later appealing for the custodianship of the fortress of Corzana.<sup>648</sup>

In Ming dynasty, the Cabinet and the Han Lin Academy kept closed in personnel. Wang Shizhen 王世贞 (1526-1590) once said: "The Cabinet often consists of scholars of Han Lin Academy 内阁，故翰林学士任也。"<sup>649</sup> Examining the background of Cabinet ministers, it is true that most of them are related with Han Lin Academy. The Academy was therefore an important ladder to official career.<sup>650</sup> It was more serious after the year of 1459 when

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<sup>646</sup> Cristoforo Landino, *Carmina Omnia*, ed. Alessandro Perosa, Florence: S. Olschki, 1939,

<sup>647</sup> Francesco of Castiglione, appointed to the Chair of Greek in Florence in 1446 through Medici influence and in 1462 made a Canon of S. Lorenzo (see Pietro M. Cianfogni and Domenico Moreni, *Memorie Istoriche della R. Basilica di S. Lorenzo*, (Florence: Domenico ciardetti, 1804), 274-280), sent a consolatory letter to Cosimo on the death of Giovanni in December 1463.

<sup>648</sup> Brown, "the Humanist portrait of Cosimo de' Medici," 209.

<sup>649</sup> Shizhen Wang 王世贞 (1526-1590), *Nan Shan Tang Bie Ji 弁山堂别集* (essays in Nan Shan Shi) (Beijing: Zhong hua Book Company, 1985), 833.

<sup>650</sup> Qi Wu 吴琦, Jinying Tang 唐金英, "The political function of the imperial Academy in Ming Dynasty 明代翰林院的政治功能," *Journal of Huazhong Normal University* 45 (2006): 98.



there was a policy “no one could enter Han Lin Adademy without title of Jin Shi and no one could enter Cabinet without title of Han Lin 非进士不入翰林，非翰林不入内阁。”<sup>651</sup> It demonstrated the tendency of the man of letters to enter politics. On the other hand, it reflected the way in which the scholars were taken over by the government. Once entered the office, the intellectuals got the chance to rise in the world; however, it means at the same time being controlled by the court.

Qian Mu had his comment on this phenomenon: “The celebrity in Ming and Qing dynasties was mostly out of Han Lin Academy. It was because they were kept closed to central government after entitled Jin Shi 进士 and became familiar with the political affairs. Since the government gave them a good background, and promising future, they could do their study at ease. Jin Shi and Han Lin became the storage of the talent for the court.”<sup>652</sup>

In the situation either of Chinese or of Italy, the same point is that the ruler was in the dominant position in the physiognomic description of him. Due to their influence and participation, the historians could only write according to the willing of ruler.

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<sup>651</sup>Zhang, *Ming Shi*, 70: 2.

<sup>652</sup>Mu Qian 钱穆, *The Gain and Loss of Chinese Political Affairs In All The Past Dynasties 中国历代政治得失*, (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2001), 129.

## Conclusion

The face of ruler has been viewed by himself and the populace as symbol with special potency and significance. It was set apart from those of other mortals not only to indicate his royalty and concomitant power, but to project an image suggesting the superior vision, and qualities of leadership associated with his office, therefore the image of rulers is also an expression of the energetic authority he personally wished to assume. The physiognomy that both ruler and the people understand is the bridge.

By examining the physiognomy in the physical descriptions of rulers both in Italian and Chinese history and biography, the ruler's representations are constructed according to certain ideals by applying patterns inherited from Antiquity onwards. The imperial power is demonstrated from a perspective that has not emphasized much. What we observed demonstrated clearly how physiognomic descriptions of ruler could be manipulated for propaganda and persuasion. It is expected to shape the attitudes of the populace. They were included in the records either because they were construed by historian as facts, or they were employed, regardless of their veracity or vulgarity, to serve the prescribed historic functions warranted by the tradition, such as commemorative adornment, political legitimating or moral persuasion. It can be also stated that in the shaping of his physiognom, ruler had an even prominent role than writers. The analysis has also proved by philological evidence that physiognomy could indeed have influenced the descriptions and portraits of the king.

The physiognomy as a bridge connecting the royal and the populace is employed by the ruling class as an expression of power itself. It is interesting that the period when the physiognomy was in flourish is almost the same in China and Italy (esp. in 13<sup>th</sup> century and 17<sup>th</sup> century). The physiognomic consciousness as a common consciousness influenced art, literature and

culture. Besides, what we have discussed in the dissertation furnished us with vivid examples of the adaptation of the expressions of the mass heritages into the use of the great tradition and helps to enlighten our understanding of the multi-faceted Italian and Chinese cultural tradition.

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