
The ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’

An Annotated Translation of the 《蜀王本纪》 and Related Texts

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The Yúnnán Papers

This text is part of a series of translations of historical Chinese texts concerning Yúnnán.

This series does not aim to present any new research but to allow an English-speaking audience to better understand Yúnnán’s history and culture through original texts. The texts are heavily annotated, giving geographical, historical and cultural background information and references to contemporary academic discussions.

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1 Introduction

The ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’ 《蜀王本纪》 is a lost text narrating the history of ancient Shǔ 古蜀, a succession of polities in today’s Sìchuān 四川 before the Qín 秦 conquest in 316 BCE. Written in the mould of Sīmǎ Qiān 司马迁’s ‘*Records of the Historian*’ 《史记》, the text is thought to have been compiled by the Chéngdū native scholar Yáng Xióng 扬雄, *53BCE–†18CE, during the Hàn dynasty 汉朝.⁽¹⁾

Archaeological discoveries in and around Chéngdū 成都, particularly at Sānxīngduī 三星堆 and Jīnshā 金沙, have over the last fifty years confirmed the existence of advanced bronze age cultures in the region that are thought to correspond to the dynastic succession described in the text.⁽²⁾

The original text of the ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’ 《蜀王本纪》, recorded as being one *juàn*, was lost sometime after the Sòng dynasty. What today exists is a recreation from quotations in later texts, such as the ‘*History of the Suí Dynasty*’ 《隋书》, the ‘*Readings of the Tàipíng Era*’ 《太平御览》, the ‘*Old History of the Táng*’ 《旧唐书》, and also the ‘*New History of the Táng*’ 《新唐书》, by the Qīng dynasty scholar Yán Kějūn 严可均, *1762–†1843.

The main passages of the ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’ 《蜀王本纪》 also appear, in slightly different wording, in the 4th century ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’ 《华阳国志》.

⁽¹⁾ The authorship is not uncontested, see Farmer (2005), pp. 124–125.

⁽²⁾ see particularly Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002), however, as no decipherable written records have been unearthed, it is by no means certain these finds belong to the ancient Shǔ mentioned in Hàn Chinese texts.

2 About this Translation

All versions of the ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’ 《蜀王本纪》 in circulation today are based on the reconstruction by the Qīng dynasty scholar Yán Kējūn 严可均在 his multi-volume work of ancient texts called ‘*Complete Works of Literatur from the Ancient Times to the Three Dynasties, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties*’ 《全上古三代秦汉三国六朝文》.⁽³⁾ His text contains a number of annotations, mostly regarding the provenance of the fragments he assembled, occasionally noting a difference between the various historic sources.

The version used for this translation has been taken from the CText project at <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=357719>, which I believe is based on the abovementioned ‘*Complete Works of Literatur from the Ancient Times to the Three Dynasties, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties*’ 《全上古三代秦汉三国六朝文》.⁽⁴⁾ This online text there lacks the annotations by Yán Kējūn, but where they indicate significant differences between the sources I mention this in the notes.⁽⁵⁾

My understanding of the text has been greatly assisted by Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002) and Sage (1992).

3 Annotated Translation

蜀王本纪

‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’

蜀之先称王者，有蚕丛、柏濩、鱼凫、蒲泽、开明，是时人萌椎髻左衽，不晓文字，未有礼乐。从开明已上至蚕丛，积三万四千岁。

The ancestors of Shǔ called themselves kings, there were Cáncóng, Bǎihuò, Yúfú, Púzé, and Kāimíng. At the time, the people **wore their hair in a bun and buttoned their clothes to the left**, they **were not familiar with the characters and had neither rituals nor**

蜀王本纪 5

[2: 柏濩] otherwise also written as Bóyōng 伯雍.

[3: 蒲泽、] Yán Kējūn annotates that this name is only present in a commentary to Yáng Xióng’s ‘*Shǔ Capital Rhapsody*’ 《蜀都赋》. This text is contained in the Táng dynasty ‘*Commentaries on “Selections of Literature”*’ 《文选注》, see <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=325571#%E4%BA%AC%E9%83%BD%E4%B8%AD%E8%9C%80%E9%83%BD%E8%B5%8B>. A scan of the 《文选注》 is available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:%E5%9B%9B%E9%83%A8%E5%82%99%E8%A6%81_%E6%96%87%E9%81%B8%E6%9D%8E%E5%96%84%E6%B3%A8.pdf, the text in question is 四卷九页.

[5: 积三万四千岁] The ‘*Readings of the Tàipíng Era*’ 《太平御览》 has 凡四千岁.

r3-4: wore their hair in a bun and buttoned their clothes to the left] Both are seen as signs of uneducated people.

r5: not familiar with the characters] i.e. illiterate.

r5-6: neither rituals nor music] or ritual music.

(3) The text is contained in the 20th juàn of his ‘*Complete Works of Literatur from the Ancient Times to the Three Dynasties, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties*’ 《全上古三代秦汉三国六朝文》. A woodblock print from 1894 CE survives and is available electronically at <https://ctext.org/library.pl?res=4388> and also at <https://archive.org/embed/02107115.cn>.

(4) The text there does not give the provenance. The full text is also available at <https://ctext.org/library.pl?res=4388>.

(5) The text with annotations can be found at <https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hans/%E8%9C%80%E7%8E%8B%E6%9C%AC%E7%BA%AA>.

蜀王之先名蚕丛，后代名曰柏濩，后者名鱼凫。此三代各数百岁，皆神化不死，其民亦颇随王化去。

蜀王本纪 10

鱼凫田于湔山，得仙。今庙祀之于湔。时蜀民稀少。后有一男子，名曰杜宇，从天堕，止朱提。有一女子，名曰，从江源井中出，为杜宇妻。乃自立为蜀王，号曰望帝。

蜀王本纪 15

治汶山下邑，曰郫，化民往往复出。

music. From Kāimíng up to Cáncóng it was altogether **thirty-four thousand years**.

The first king of Shǔ was called Cáncóng, the next generation was called Bǎihuò, the following generation Yúfú. **Each generation lived for several hundred years**, they all became immortal celestials. Many of their people followed the kings in this transformation. Yúfú died while **hunting** on **mount Jiān**, today his memorial temple is on Jiān. At that time there were very few people in Shǔ. Later there was a boy, called Dùyǔ, he descended from heaven and lived in Shūshí. There was a girl, called Lì, who emerged from a well at the source of a river, she became the wife of Dùyǔ. Then he proclaimed himself king of Shǔ and called himself emperor Wàng.

He ruled at a town below mount Wèn called Pí, he educated the people who one after another emerged from their dwellings.

For comparison, the passage in the 1136 CE text ‘*Classified Sayings*’ 《类说》⁽⁶⁾ by Zēng Zào 曾慥 reads like this:

蜀本纪
杜宇
蜀始王曰蚕丛次曰伯雍次曰鱼凫又曰蜀王杜宇自号望帝

Chronicles of Shǔ

Dùyǔ

The first Shǔ king was called Cáncóng, the second Bóyōng, the following Yúfú. There was also the Shǔ king Dùyǔ who called himself emperor Wàng.

The ‘*Records of the Historian*’ 《史记》 also mentions the kings of Shǔ, but with a crucial difference as Simǎ Qiān 司马迁 places them in a line from the Yellow Emperor 黄帝:⁽⁷⁾

l3: 伯雍] alternate form of Bǎihuò 柏濩.

r6–7: thirty-four thousand years] The 《太平御览》 has a more reasonable ‘four thousand years’.

r9–10: 皆神化不死，其民亦颇随王化去。] This passage from the 《太平御览》，923rd *juàn*, see <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=406389&if=en&show=meta>.

r9–10: Each generation lived for several hundred years] Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002) points out that this suggests that the names stand for successive dynasties.

r12: died] literally: became immortal.

r12: hunting] The character *tián* 田 has an archaic meaning here, to hunt, see also Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002), p. 83. Other texts, such as the 《太平御览》 use *liè* 猎.

r12: mount Jiān] present-day Chápíng Shān 茶坪山, see Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002), p. 83.

r15: Shūshí] Shūshí 朱提 is taken to refer to what is now the north-east of Yúnnán.

r19: Pí] Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2008), p. 536 suggests that the name signifies a ‘city in the low and flat place’.

(6) a 1136 (Sòng dynasty) ‘anthology of stories, novelettes and excerpts drawn from over two hundred sources dating from the Han to the Song periods’ (Pregadio (2008), vol. 2, pp. 329–330) by Zēng Zào 曾慥.

(7) see also Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002), pp. 76–78, he suggests that one of the reasons the 《蜀王本纪》 was lost over time was that it did not conform to the orthodox view of a common genealogy of all rulers in China.

蜀王，黄帝后世也，至今在汉西南五千里，常来朝降，输献于汉

The kings of Shǔ are descendants of the Yellow Emperor and up to now live five thousand *lǐ* south-west of the Hàn, the regularly come to court to submit and present tribute to the Hàn.

The story continues that – after severe flooding affecting the region – Dùyǔ 杜宇 abdicated in favour of Biēlíng 鳖灵 who founded the Kāimíng 开明 dynasty, which is said to have lasted for twelve generations⁽⁸⁾ until 316 BCE when Shǔ was conquered by the ascending Qín 秦.⁽⁹⁾

望帝积百馀岁，荆有一人，名鳖灵，其尸亡去，荆人求之不得。鳖灵尸随江水上至郫，遂活，与望帝相见。望帝以鳖灵为相。时玉山出水，若尧之洪水。望帝不能治，使鳖灵决玉山，民得安处。鳖灵治水去后，望帝与其妻通。惭愧，自以德薄不如鳖灵，乃委国授之而去，如尧之禅舜。鳖灵即位，号曰开明帝。帝生卢保，亦号开明。

When emperor Wàng had reigned for more than one hundred years, in Jīng was a man called Biēlíng, his body disappeared, the people of Jīng searched for him without success. Biēlíng's body was brought by the river waters up to Pí, where he regained life and encountered emperor Wàng. Emperor Wàng appointed Biēlíng as adviser. During this time from mount Yù sprang water, just like the floodings of Yáo. Emperor Wàng could not control it, so he sent Biēlíng to dredge mount Yù and the people found a safe place. After Biēlíng controlled the floods, emperor Wàng had relations with his wife, ashamed that he was weak and could not match Biēlíng, the state of Wěi accepted him, so he left, just like Yáo abdicated to emperor Shùn. Biēlíng ascended the throne, and called himself emperor Kāimíng, the emperor gave birth to Lúbǎo, and the state was called Kāimíng.

蜀王本纪 200

蜀王本纪 205

蜀王本纪 210

The Sòng dynasty 'Readings of the Tàipíng Era' 《太平御览》 cites the following passage from the 'Gazetteer of the Thirteen Districts' 《十三州志》 by the northern Wèi 北魏 (386–535 CE) scholar Kàn Yīn 阚骞:

《十三州志》曰：当七国称王，独杜宇称帝于蜀，以褒斜为前门，熊耳、灵关为后户，玉垒、峨眉为城廓，江、潜、绵、洛为池泽，汶山为畜牧，南中为园苑。

The 'Gazetteer of the Thirteen Districts' states that during the period when the seven states declared themselves king, only Dùyǔ proclaimed himself emperor in Shǔ. He made Bāoxié the front gate, Xióngěr and Língguān the rear gates, Yùlěi and Éméi walled cities and Jiāng, Qián, Mián and Luò were made marshlands, mount

太平御览 5

r200: Jīng] Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2008), p. 536: in present Hubei.

r201–202: was brought by the river waters up to Pí] i.e. somewhat magically his body was floating upstream.

r2: the seven states] meaning the seven states during the Warring States 战国 period, i.e. Chǔ 楚, Hàn 汉, Qín 秦, Wèi 魏, ??MS 燕国 MS, ??MS 齐国 MS, ??MS 赵国 MS.

r3: emperor] It was the first XXX 秦 emperor Qín Shǐhuáng 秦始皇 who took this title as symbol to stand above the mere kings.

r3: Bāoxié] ancient route to Qín.

r4: Yùlěi] i.e. Chéngdū 成都.

⁽⁸⁾ see 'Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá' 《华阳国志》.

⁽⁹⁾ A somewhat shortened version of this passage appears translated in Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2008), pp. 536–537.

太平御覽 10

时有荆人，是后荆地有一死者名鳖冷，其尸亡至汶山，却更生，见望帝。

帝以为蜀相。时巫山壅江，蜀地洪水，望帝使鳖冷凿巫山，治水有功。

望帝自以德薄，乃委国禅鳖冷，号曰开明。👁️

Wèn was used to raise livestock, and Nánzhōng became gardens and parks.

At that time, there was a man from Jing who later died in the lands of Jing, his name was Biēlěng, his corpse disappeared and reappeared on mount Wèn, where he regained life and encountered emperor Wàng.

The emperor appointed him as prime minister of Shǔ. At that time Mount Wū blocked the river, the lands of Shǔ were inundated, emperor Wàng sent Biēlěng to cut through Mount Wū and he succeeded taming the waters.

Emperor Wàng felt that he was lacking virtue, abdicated and entrusted the state to Biēlěng, who called it Kāimíng.

It follows a passage about the magical transformation of emperor Wàng 望帝 into a bird, a *zǐguī* 子规, a type of cuckoo.⁽¹⁰⁾

望帝去时子圭鸣，故蜀人悲子圭鸣而思望帝。望帝，杜宇也，从天堕。

When emperor Wàng passed away a cuckoo coo-ed. The people of Shǔ feel aggrieved by the cooing of the cuckoo as it reminds them of emperor Wàng. Emperor Wàng was Dùyǔ, who had descended from heaven.

Yán Kějūn 严可均 credits the passage to the ‘*Readings of the Tàipíng Era*’ 《太平御覽》, where it records the event as a magic transformation:

遂自亡去，化为子规，故蜀人闻鸣曰：“我望帝也”。👁️

Then he died and transformed into a cuckoo, so when the people of Shǔ heard the sound of the bird, they said: “That is our emperor Wàng’.

This is similar to the ‘*Sìchuān Gazetteer*’ 《四川通志》⁽¹¹⁾ which refers to a poem by the Liú Sòng 刘宋 poet Bào Zhāo 鲍昭:

杜宇化子鹃蜀本纪华阳国志俱引之。

其作诗实起于鲍昭行路难云中有一鸟名杜鹃言是古时蜀帝魂。👁️

Dùyǔ’s transformation into a bird is mentioned in the ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’ and ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’. This poetic writing is based on Bào Zhāo’s ‘*Songs of the Weary Road*’ that mentions a bird called *dùjuān*, which is believed to be the

l8-9: 鳖冷] a variant writing of Biēlíng 鳖灵.

l17: 👁️] Source text: <https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=371564>

l57: 子圭] This form of writing *zǐguī* appears a variant of *zǐguī* 子规.

l2: 👁️] Source text: <https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=371564>

l4: 👁️] Source text: <https://ctext.org/library.pl?file=74024&page=6>

r4: *dùjuān*] The term *Dùjuān* 杜鹃 is written with *dù* 杜, the first character of Dùyǔ 杜宇, followed by *juān* for the type of bird. Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002), p. 86 notes that it is ‘a kind of bird that the people of Sichuan regard as a sacred symbol of the beginning of the agricultural cycle’.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Note that in this passage the bird is written as *zǐguī* 子圭.

⁽¹¹⁾ 46th *juàn*, see <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=266376>.

The passage attributed to Bào Zhāo can be found in the 7th part of his ‘Songs of the Weary Road’ 《行路难》:⁽¹²⁾

愁思忽而至，跨马出北门。

Melancholy thoughts suddenly arrive, mounting a horse, I exit the northern gate.

举头四顾望，但见松柏荆棘郁樽樽。

I raise my head and look around, all I see are dense pine and cypress trees, and thorny bushes.

中有一鸟名杜鹃，言是古时蜀帝魂。

Among them is a bird called *dùjuān*, believed to be the soul of the Shǔ emperor of old.

行路难 5

声音哀苦鸣不息，羽毛憔悴似人髡。

Its voice is mournful, it never stops crying, its feathers are withered like a shaven person.

飞走树间啄虫蚁，岂忆往日天子尊。

It flies and hops among the trees, pecking at insects and ants, could it recall the days when it was honored as the emperor?

行路难 10

念此死生变化非常理，中心恻怆不能言。👁️

Reflecting the unpredictable changes of life and death, my heart is filled with sorrow and I am lost for words.

The history of the Kāimíng 开明 dynasty continues in the 《蜀王本纪》.

开明帝下至五代，有开明尚。始去帝号，复称王也。天为蜀王生五丁力士，能徙蜀山。王无五丁，辄立大石，长三丈，重千钧，号曰石牛。千人不能动，万人不能移。

Five generations after emperor Kāimíng there was Kāimíng Shàng. He abandoned the title emperor and again called himself king. Heaven gave the king of Shǔ five strong men, they could move the mountains of Shǔ. The king without the five strong men erected a giant stone, three *zhàng* tall, and weighing one thousand *jūn*, called the stone cow. One thousand people could not move it and nor could ten thousand.

蜀王本纪 200

蜀王据有巴蜀之地，本治广都樊乡，徙居成都。秦惠王遣张仪、司马错定蜀，因筑成都而县之。成都在赤里街，张若徙置少城内。始造府县寺舍，令与长安同制。

The king of Shǔ resided in the lands of Bā and Shǔ, first reigned from Guǎngdū's Fánxiāng, then moved to Chéngdū. Qín emperor Huì sent Zhāng Yí and Sīmǎ Cuò to subdue Shǔ and established Chéngdū as a county. Chéngdū was at Chǐlǐ market, Zhāng Yí moved the administration within the city moat. He began to establish government, counties, temples and accommodation, just like the government in Cháng'ān.

蜀王本纪 205

蜀王本纪 210

Qín emperor Huì 秦惠王, who ruled 338–311 CE, initiated many campaigns to expand the territory of Qín 秦, culminating in the annexation of Bā and Shǔ 巴蜀 in 316 BCE.

[12: 👁️] Source text: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%8B%9F%E8%A1%8C%E8%B7%AF%E9%9A%BE%E5%8D%81%E5%85%AB%E9%A6%96/1347447>

r 211: Cháng'ān] Note that the Qín capital was at Xiányáng 咸阳, the name Cháng'ān 长安 was only used later.

(12) This poem is translated in Frodsham (1967), p. 146.

蜀王本纪 215

秦惠王时，蜀王不降秦，秦亦无道出于蜀。蜀王从万余人，东猎褒谷，卒见秦惠王。秦王以金一笥遗蜀王，蜀王报以礼物，礼物尽化为土。秦王大怒，臣下皆再拜，贺曰：「土者，地也，秦当得蜀矣。」

At the time of Qín emperor Huì, the king of Shǔ would not surrender to Qín, Qín had no road to Shǔ. More than ten thousand men followed the king of Shǔ east to hunt in Bāo valley, where the soldiers encountered Qín emperor Huì. The Qín king left a basket full of gold as a gift for the king of Shǔ, the king of Shǔ gave a gift in return, but his gift immediately turned into dust. The Qín king was extremely angry, the officials all prostrated themselves, praising him, saying: 'The dust signifies the land: Qín shall surely obtain Shǔ.'

This passage appears in the '*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*' 《华阳国志》 like this:

华阳国志 5

周显王之世蜀王有褒汉之地。

因猎谷中与秦惠王遇。

惠王以金一笥遗蜀王。

王报珍玩之物物化为土。

惠王怒羣臣贺曰天奉我矣王将得蜀土地。

During the time of king Xiǎn of Zhōu the king of Shǔ was in control of the lands of Bāohàn.

When he was hunting in the valleys, he encountered Qín emperor Huì.

King Huì left a basket of gold for the king of Shǔ.

The king reciprocated with precious items, which turned into dust.

King Huì was angry, his officials praising him said: 'Heaven favours me. The king will soon gain the lands of Shǔ.'

And in the '*Readings of the Tàipíng Era*' 《太平御览》 like this:

《蜀王本纪》曰：蜀王猎于褒谷，见秦王，以金一笥遗蜀王，蜀王报以礼物，尽化为土，秦王大怒，臣下拜贺曰：“土，地也，今秦当得蜀矣。”

The '*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*' records: when the king was hunting in Bāo valley, he encountered the king of Qín, who left a basket of gold for the king of Shǔ, the king of Shǔ reciprocated with gifts, which quickly turned to dust. The king of Qín was extremely angry, and said to his officials: 'The dust means land, I am today favoured to gain Shǔ.'

As Sichuān 四川 basin was to the north and east cut off by mountain ranges, it made the Qín assault difficult. The story here tells of a devious plot to deceive Shǔ into building a road that was then used to attack it.⁽¹³⁾ This road from the territory of Qín became known as the Jīnniú Dào 金牛道, i.e. the Golden Ox Road, and can be traced today:⁽¹⁴⁾

The Qin invested in building a road by which they could reach Sichuan. The Jinniu route goes west from Hanzhong, crosses the Bao River and Mian County 勉縣, and then enters the mountains. At this point, the route continues west until Jinniu Township 金牛鎮 before turning south into Wudingxia 五丁峽. In Ningqiang County 寧強縣, the route turns southwest again. At Qipan Pass 七盤關, it enters Sichuan's Shenxuanyi 神宣驛 and proceeds south along the steep cliffs on the eastern bank of the Jialing River. Turning southwest at Guangyuan 廣元, the route crosses the Jialing River and passes Zhaohua 昭化, Jianmen 劍門, and Mianyang 綿陽 before finally arriving at Chengdu. (Hu (2017), p. 78)

⁽¹³⁾ For this passage, see also Sage (1992), pp. 107–112.

⁽¹⁴⁾ see also Wang (2011), p. 54.

《秦惠王本纪》曰：秦惠王欲伐蜀，乃刻五石牛，置金其后。

蜀人见之，以为牛能大便金。牛下有养卒，以为此天牛也，能便金。

蜀王以为然，即发卒千人，使五丁力士拖牛成道，致三枚于成都。

秦道得通，石牛之力也。后遣丞相张仪等随石牛道伐蜀焉。

The 'Chronicles of Qín Emperor Huì' record: Qín emperor Huì desired to attack Shǔ, so he carved five stone oxen and placed gold behind them.

When the Shǔ people saw this they thought the cows can excrete gold, the offspring of the oxen could provide for the soldiers, they thought these were heavenly oxen that excreted gold.

The king of Shǔ also thought so, so he sent one thousand soldiers, and ordered the five strong men to drag the cows, creating a road, bringing three of them to Chéngdū.

A road to Qín was so opened through the power of the stone oxen. Later he sent his prime minister Zhāng Yí and others along the stone oxen road to defeat Shǔ.

蜀王本纪 430

蜀王本纪 435

蜀王本纪 440

Then follow a few passages detailing the Shǔ kings alleged carnal desires, which Steven F. Sage takes as later illustrations of the moral failures of the Shǔ rulers to justify Qín's attacks.⁽¹⁵⁾

武都人有善知，蜀王者将其妻女适蜀。居蜀之后，不习水土，欲归。蜀王心爱其女，留之，乃作《伊鸣之声》六曲以舞之。

武都丈夫化为女子，颜色美好，盖山之精也。蜀王娶以为妻。不习水土，疾病欲归，蜀王留之。无几物故，蜀王发卒之武都担土，于成都郭中葬之。盖地三亩，高七丈，号曰武担以石作镜一枚表其墓，径一丈，高五尺。

于是，秦王知蜀王好色，乃献美女五人于蜀王。蜀王爱之，遣五丁迎女。还至梓潼，见一大蛇入山穴中。一丁引其尾，不出。五丁共引蛇，山乃崩，压五丁。五丁踏地大呼，秦王五女及迎送者皆上山，化为石，蜀王登台，望之不来，因名五妇侯台。

In Wǔ Dū was a man of great wisdom. The king of Shǔ brought his wife and daughters to Shǔ. After they lived in Shǔ, they could not get used to the **climate**, and wanted to return. The king of Shǔ loved his daughter dearly and kept her, and composed six songs called 'Sound of Birds' as a dance.

In Wǔ Dū a man changed into a girl of lovely appearance, she was a mountain spirit. The king of Shǔ took her as wife. Unused to **the climate**, she fell ill and wanted to return, but the king of Shǔ kept her. Soon after she died, the king of Shǔ sent soldiers to Wǔ Dū to carry soil, and buried her inside the moat of Chéngdū. The soil covered three *mǔ* seven *zhàng* high and was called **Wǔdàn**. A stone mirror marked her grave, one *zhàng* in diameter and five *chǐ* tall.

When the king of Qín became aware that the king of Shǔ was lecherous, he gave five pretty girls to the king of Shǔ. The king of Shǔ was fond of them and sent five strong men to welcome the girls. When they returned to Zǐtóng they saw a large snake hiding in a mountain cave. One strong man pulled its tail, but could not get it out. When the five strong men together pulled the snake, the mountain collapsed and buried the five men. The five men

蜀王本纪 445

蜀王本纪 450

蜀王本纪 455

蜀王本纪 460

r 444: climate] literally 'water and land'.

r 449: the climate] the water and land

r 452: Wǔdàn] The name Wǔdàn 武担 is made up of the first character of *wǔdū* 武都 and the previously used character *dàn* 担 signifying 'to carry over the shoulders'.

⁽¹⁵⁾ see Sage (1992), p. 111.

蜀王亲埋作冢，皆致万石，以志其墓。

stomped the soil and shouted, the Qín king's five girls and those accompanying them climbed the mountain and turned into stone. The king of Shǔ climbed on the platform to look for them, but without success. So it was called the 'platform of five girls and the marquis'. The king of Shǔ personally piled the grave mound, using ten thousand stones to mark their grave.

This last story also appears in the '*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*' 《华阳国志》:

武都有一丈夫化为女子美而艳盖山精也

In Wǔ Dū there was a man who turned into a beautiful woman. She was beautiful and enchanting like a mountain spirit.

蜀王纳为妃不习水土欲去王必留之乃为东平之歌以乐之无几物故

The king of Shǔ took her as concubine. She was not used to the climate and desired to leave. The king loved her and detained her. He composed the song of Dōngpíng to entertain her. Not long after, she passed away.

蜀王哀之乃遣五丁之武都担土为妃作冢盖地数亩高七丈上有石镜今成都北角武担是也

The king of Shǔ mourned her and sent five strong men to Wǔ Dū to carry soil to make a grave for his concubine. The mount covered several *mǔ* seven *zhàng* high, on its top was a stone mirror. Today, that is Wǔdàn in the northern corner of Chéngdū.

The text continues with the battles that saw Shǔ defeated in 316 BCE.

秦惠王遣张仪、司马错伐蜀。王开明拒战，不利，退走武阳，获之。

Qín emperor Huì sent Zhāng Yí and Sīmǎ Cuò to attack Shǔ. King Kāimíng resisted but had no success, retreated to Wǔyáng, capturing it.

张仪伐蜀。蜀王开明战不胜，为仪所灭。

Zhāng Yí fought against Shǔ, the king of Shǔ Kāimíng battled without victory, and was killed by Yí.

蜀王本纪 205

秦王诛蜀侯恽，后迎葬咸阳。天雨，三月不通，因葬成都。

The king Qín killed the marquis Yùn of Shǔ, later invited his burial in Xiányáng. Heavenly rain fell for three months blocking the roads, so he was buried in Chéngdū.

蜀人求雨，祠蜀侯必雨。

When the people of Shǔ prayed for rain and brought offerings for the marquis of Shǔ, rain would invariably fall.

Then come a few passages about military ships.

蜀王有鸚武舟。

The king of Shǔ has a parrot war-ship.

r4: climate] literally 'water and land'.

r206-207: invited his burial in Xiányáng] I understand this as that a burial in the capital of Qín was an honour granted.

r211: parrot] unclear what that term signifies.

A passage in the 25th *juàn* of the ‘*Elementary Studies*’ 《初学记》 presents a bit more information:

鸛鹄

蜀王本记曰蜀王有鸛鹄舟

周迁輿服杂事曰遠国朝贡越海则有
大船一名鸛鹄合木为槽。

Myna

In the ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’ it is said that the king of Shǔ has a parrot war-ship.

Zhōu Qiān’s ‘*Various Matters of Chariots and Attire*’ states that when distant countries crossed the seas to bring tribute there was a large ship called called Myna, it was joined together from wood like a trough.

初学记 5

From the above passage from the ‘*Various Matters of Chariots and Attire*’ 《輿服杂事》 it appears that a Yīng Wǔ Zhōu 鸛鹄舟 was a ceremonial war-ship.

秦为太白船万艘，欲以攻楚。

秦为舶舡万艘，欲攻楚。

秦襄王时，宕渠郡献长人，长二十五丈六尺。

Qín ordered ten thousand *tàibái* boats for attack on Chǔ.

Qín ordered ten thousand *bógāng* boats for attack on Chǔ.

During the time of king Xiāng of Qín, Dàngqú prefecture presented a tall man as tribute, he was twenty-five *zhàng* and six *chǐ* tall.

It follows a passage on the Great Yǔ 大禹, the legendary king attributed with first taming the floods. Yǔ’s legendary birth is also in similiar way recorded on a Warring States 战国 period bamboo slip manuscript called Zígāo 子羔. There his mother is said to have swallowed Job’s tears 薏苡.⁽¹⁶⁾

禹本汶山郡广柔县人，生于石纽，其地名痢儿畔。禹母吞珠孕禹，坼副而生于县涂山。娶妻生子，名启。于今涂山有禹庙，亦为其母立庙。

Yǔ was a man from mount Wèn prefecture’s Guǎngróu county, he was born in Shíniǔ, the land was called *liérpàn*. Yǔ’s mother swallowed a pearl and became pregnant with Yǔ, she split open and gave birth in the county of Túshān. He married a wife and begat a son, his name was Qǐ. In today’s Túshān there is Yǔ’s temple, and also a temple established for his mother.

蜀王本纪 205

蜀王本纪 210

It follows a snippet explaining the founding of the Dàoist temple now called Qīngyáng Hall 青羊宫 through the patronage of Lǎozǐ 老子 himself.

老子为关令尹喜著《道德经》。临别，曰：「子行道千日后，于成都青羊肆寻吾。」今为青牛观是也。

Lǎozǐ composed the ‘*Dào Dé Jīng*’ for the master of the pass Yínxǐ. Upon leaving, he said: ‘If you follow the Dào for a thousand days, you will find me at Chéngdū’s Qīngyáng temple.’ Today that is **Qīngniú temple**.

r 214: Qīngniú temple] This temple is still extant, presently it is called Qīngyáng Hall 青羊宫.

⁽¹⁶⁾ see Allen (2009), pp. 133–134, I became aware of this through the entry at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yu_the_Great#cite_ref-25.

The end of the text narrates how Lǐ Bīng 李冰, who became regional administrator after the defeat of Shǔ, engaged in the hydraulic projects for flood control at Dūjiāngyàn 都江堰 that are extant today. Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2008) details several other irrigation projects in the area that predate those works.

To tame the waters the text says that Lǐ Bīng made stone rhinoceroses. One such large stone rhinoceros was found in 1973, but only excavated in 2012, in Chéngdū. The figure is now kept at the Chéngdū museum 成都博物馆. There is also a poem called ‘*Stone Rhino Ballad*’ 《石犀行》 by Dù Fǔ 杜甫 about these stones.⁽¹⁷⁾

For the use of magic elements to tame the waters, see Glahn (1987), p. 14.

蜀王本纪 215 江水为害，蜀守李冰作石犀五枚。二枚在府中，一枚在市桥下，二枚在水中，以厌水精，因曰石犀里也。

As to tame the power of the dangerous river waters, the administrator of Shǔ, Lǐ Bīng, made five rhinoceroses from stone. He placed two at the seat of government, one below the city bridge, and two in the water, so they were called stone rhinoceroses in the water.

蜀王本纪 220 李冰以秦时为蜀守，谓汶山为天彭阙，号曰天彭门。云亡者悉过其中，鬼神精灵数见。

Lǐ Bīng served during the Qín as administrator of Shǔ. He called mount Wèn the heavenly Péng Què, or also heavenly Péng gate. It is said, that the dead all pass through it, ghosts and spirits are often seen there.

县前有两石，对如阙，号曰彭门。

In front of the county[town] are two stones, facing each other like Què, they are called the Péng gate.

The text concludes with an early reference to salt wells in Sichuān.

宣帝地节中，始穿盐井数十所。

During the Dìjié era of Hàn emperor Xuān, more than ten salt wells were dug.

4 Glossary

Bā 巴: name of a state during the Warring States period, later used to refer to the eastern part of present-day Sichuan – see page 11

Bāo gorge 褒谷: Bāo valley, valley in the Qín-língshān 秦岭山 – see page 12, 16

Bāohàn 褒汉: ? – see page 12

Bāshǔ 巴蜀: Bā and Shǔ, term for the two major regions of present-day Sìchuān – see page 11, 16

Bāoxié 褒斜: ancient passage through the Qín-língshān 秦岭山, passing through Bāo 褒 gorge and Xiégǔ 斜谷 – see page 9

Bǎihuò 柏灌: mythological first ruler of Shǔ 蜀 – see page 7, 8

Bào Zhāo 鲍昭: poet during the Liú Sòng 刘宋, see Fuller (2017), p. 162, Knechtges and Chang (2010), pp. 25–27 – see page 10, 11

r 225: Què] ceremonial gate towers, usually in pairs at the entrance of palaces, tombs, and temples

r 226: the Dìjié era of Hàn emperor Xuān] 69–65 CE

⁽¹⁷⁾ see Owen (2016), p. 44.

- Běi Wèi** 北魏: northern Wèi, Chinese dynasty, 386–535 – see page 9, 17
- Biēlíng** 鳖灵: – see page 9, 10
- Cáncóng** 蚕丛: mythological second ruler of Shǔ 蜀 – see page 7, 8
- Cháng’ān** 长安: historic city, present-day Xiān – see page 11
- Chéngdū** 成都: capital of Shǔ 蜀, during the Táng dynasty center of administration for Jiànnán 剑南 – see pages 5, 9, 11, 13–16
- Chéngdū Bówùguǎn** 成都博物馆: Chéngdū museum, main museum in 成都 – see page 16, 17
- Chéngxiāng** 丞相: prime minister, also translated as ‘counselor-in-chief’: ‘A title of great significance in Chinese history, normally indicating the most esteemed and influential member(s) of the officialdom, who was leader of and spokesman for the officialdom vis-a-vis the ruler and at the same time the principal agent for implementing the ruler’s wishes in all spheres, civil and military’, see Hucker (1985), 483 – see pages 10, 13, 17
- Chìlǐ Jiē** 赤里街: Chìlǐ market, an old market town mentioned in the 《蜀王本纪》 – see page 11, 17
- Chūxuéjì** 《初学记》: ‘*Elementary Studies*’, classic text – see page 15, 17
- Chǔ** 楚: important state before the Qín Cháo 秦朝, in present-day Húběi 湖北 – see page 9, 15
- Chǔ Guó** 楚国: kingdom of Chǔ, ancient Chinese state before the Qin dynasty, 704–223BCE – see page 17
- Dà Yǔ** 大禹: Great Yǔ, – see page 15, 17
- Dàngú commandery** 宕渠郡: Dàngú prefecture, ancient district, mentioned in the 《汉书》 – see page 15, 17
- Dào** 道: circuit, Táng dynasty administrative division, akin to a province, first created in 627 during the Táng dynasty – see page 15, 17
- Dào Dé Jīng** 《道德经》: ‘*Dào Dé Jīng*’, classic text by Lǎozǐ 老子 – see page 15, 17
- Dì** 帝: emperor, title of Chinese rulers – see page 9, 17
- Dìjié** 地节: reign period of Hàn Xuāndì 汉宣帝, 69–65 – see page 16
- Dì Shùn** 帝舜: emperor Shùn, legendary early ruler of China – see page 9, 17
- Dōng Hàn** 东汉: Eastern Hàn, Chinese dynasty, 25–220 – see page 17
- Dōngzhōu** 东周: eastern Zhōu, – see page 17
- Dū** 都: area command, name of an administrative area – see page 17
- Dūjiāngyàn** 都江堰: important ancient hydraulic project in Sìchuān – see page 16
- Dù Fǔ** 杜甫: – see page 16
- Dùjuān** 杜鹃: *dùjuān*, a type of cockoo, but in the context of the history of Shǔ an embodiment of Dùyǔ 杜宇 – see pages 10, 11, 17
- Dùyǔ** 杜宇: mythological figure – see pages 8–10
- Éméi** 峨眉: historic city near Éméi Shān 峨眉山 – see page 9
- Éméi Shān** 峨眉山: Mt. Éméi, Buddhist temple mountain in southern Sìchuān, near Éméi 峨眉 (⊕ 29.55N 103.36E) – see page 17

- Ĕrhǎi** 洱海: Lake Ĕrhǎi, highland lake in western Yúnnán with the center of Nánzhào on its western side. It was also called Xīěr 西洱, Xiě Hé – see page 18
- Fánxiāng** 樊乡: ancient subdistrict – see page 11
- Gǔshǔ** 古蜀: ancient Shǔ, term for the ancient polities in modern day Sichuān – see page 5, 18
- Guǎngdū** 广都: ancient district – see page 11
- Guǎngróu** 广柔: county name – see page 15
- Guìzhōu** 贵州: province in south-west China –
- Hàn Cháo** 汉朝: Hàn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 202 BCE–220 – see page 5, 18
- Hàn** 汉: Hàn, main ethnic group of China, also name of early dynasty – see pages 5, 9, 17, 18
- Hàn Shū** 《汉书》: ‘*History of the Hàn Dynasty*’, one of the twenty-four Chinese histories, covering the Hàn dynasty – see page 18
- Hàn Xuāndì** 汉宣帝: Hàn emperor Xuān, Hàn dynasty emperor Xuān, 73–49BCE – see page 16, 18
- Hénán** 河南: Chinese province –
- Hóu** 侯: marquis, ‘Marquis, a title of nobility, usually next in prestige only after Prince (wang) and Duke (kung), sometimes hereditary, sometimes conferred for special merit; usually prefixed with a geographic name designating the noble’s real or hypothetical fief.’, see Hucker (1985), 2205 – see page 14, 18
- Húběi** 湖北: Chinese province –
- Huáyáng Guó Zhì** 《华阳国志》: ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’, – see pages 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18
- Huángdì** 黄帝: Yellow Emperor, mythological ancestor of the Chinese emperors – see pages 8, 9, 18
- Jiānshān** 湔山: mount Jiān, mountain name, present-day 茶坪山, see Péng Bāngběn 彭邦本 (2002), p. 83 – see page 8, 18
- Jīnniú Dào** 金牛道: Golden Ox Road, ancient road from the Chinese heartland to Shǔ – see page 12, 18
- Jīnshā** 金沙: bronze age site in present-day 成都 – see page 5
- Jìn Cháo** 晋朝: Jìn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 266–420 – see page 18
- Jīng** 荆: – see page 9, 10
- Jiùtáng Shū** 《旧唐书》: ‘*Old History of the Táng*’, major Chinese history work about the Táng dynasty – see page 5, 18
- Jùn** 郡: prefecture, historic administrative area, term in use before the Táng – see page 15, 18
- Kāimíng** 开明: reign period of Duàn Zhèngchún – see page 11
- Kāimíng** 开明: dynasty of the Shǔ 蜀 – see pages 7–11, 14
- Kāimíng Shàng** 开明尚: – see page 11
- Kàn Yīn** 阡驎: Běi Wèi 北魏 scholar, author of the 《十三州志》 – see page 9
- Lǎozǐ** 老子: author of the 《道德经》 – see page 15

- Lèi Shuō** 《类说》: ‘*Classified Sayings*’, a 1136 (Sòng dynasty) ‘anthology of stories, novelles and excerpts drawn from over two hundred sources dating from the Han to the Song periods’ (Pregadio (2008), vol. 2, pp. 329–330) by Zēng Zào 曾慥 – see page 8, 19
- Lǐ Bīng** 李冰: hydraulic engineer during the Zhànguó 战国 – see page 16
- Lǐ Shàn** 李善: Táng dynasty scholar –
- Lì** 利: mythological wife of Dùyǔ 杜宇 – see page 8, see 杜宇
- Liángcháo** 梁朝: Liáng dynasty, – see page 19
- Língguān** 灵关: mountain pass in Sichuān – see page 9
- Liú Sòng** 刘宋: Liú Sòng, Chinese dynasty, 420–479 – see page 10, 19
- Lúbǎo** 卢保: – see page 9
- Nánzhào** 南诏: southern *zhào*, regional power with its center on Ērhǎi during the 8th and 9th centuries – see page 19
- Nánzhōng** 南中: ‘most common name for the southwest region (Yunnan, Guizhou, and southern Sichuan) prior to the Tang dynasty’, Herman (2009) – see page 10
- Péngmén** 彭门: Péng gate, – see page 16, 19
- Pí** 郫: mythological capital of Shǔ 蜀 – see page 8, 9
- Púzé** 蒲泽: – see page 7
- Qín** 秦: – see pages 5, 9, 11–16
- Qín Cháo** 秦朝: Qín dynasty, – see page 19
- Qín Guó** 秦国: state of Qín, early Chinese kingdom, united China for the first time as the Qín Cháo 秦朝 – see page 19
- Qínhuìwáng** 秦惠王: Qín emperor Huì, ruler of the Qín Guó 秦国 during the Zhànguó 战国, 338–311 – see pages 11–14, 19
- Qínlíngshān** 秦岭山: Qínlíng Mountains, mountain range to the north of Sichuān – see page 19
- Qín Shǐhuáng** 秦始皇: Qín Shǐhuáng, first emperor of the Qín Cháo 秦朝 – see page 9, 19
- Qínxiāngwáng** 秦襄王: king Xiāng of Qín, Qín 秦 king – see page 15, 19
- Qīng dynasty** 清朝: Qīng dynasty, last dynasty of imperial China, 1644–1912 BCE – see pages 5, 7, 19
- Qīngniúguān** 青牛观: Qīngniú temple, Daoist temple in 成都, today Qīngyáng-gōng 青羊宫 – see page 15, 19
- Qīngyánggōng** 青羊宫: Qīngyáng Hall, present-day Daoist temple in 成都 – see page 15, 19
- Qīngyángsì** 青羊肆: Qīngyáng temple, Daoist temple in 成都 – see page 15, 19
- Qúyù** 鸚鵡: myna, bird of the starling family, they can be trained to reproduce human speech, the name comes from Sanskrit – see page 15, 19
- Quán Shànggǔsāndài Qín hàn Sānguó Liùcháo Wén** 《全上古三代秦汉三国六朝文》: ‘*Complete Works of Literature from the Ancient Times to the Three Dynasties, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties*’, Qīng dynasty compilation of pre-Táng dynasty texts by Yán Kějūn 严可均 – see page 7, 19, see 严可均

- Què 阙**: *Què*, ceremonial gate towers – see page 16, 20
- Sān Guó 三国**: Three Kingdoms, period after the Dōng Hàn 东汉, with three powers dominating China, 220–280 – see page 20
- Sānguó Zhì 《三国志》**: ‘*Records of the Three Kingdoms*’, official history of Wèi 魏, Shǔ 蜀 and Wú 吴 – see page 20
- Sānxīngduī 三星堆**: bronze age site in Sichuān – see page 5
- Shísānzhōuzhì 《十三州志》**: ‘*Gazetteer of the Thirteen Districts*’, work by the Běi Wèi 北魏 scholar Kàn Yīn 阚骃 – see page 9, 20
- Shíxī Xíng 《石犀行》**: ‘*Stone Rhino Ballad*’, poem by Dù Fǔ 杜甫, see Owen (2016), p. 45 – see page 16, 20
- Shǐjì 《史记》**: ‘*Records of the Historian*’, – see pages 5, 8, 20
- Shǔ 蜀**: name of a state during the Warring States period, later used to refer to the western part of present-day Sichuān – see pages 5, 7–16
- Shǔ Guó 蜀国**: state of Shǔ, one of the states of the Sān Guó 三国, later also used as a term for present-day Sìchuān – see page 20
- Shǔdūfù 《蜀都赋》**: ‘*Shǔ Capital Rhapsody*’, poem by Yáng Xióng 扬雄 – see page 7, 20
- Shǔdū Fù 《蜀都赋》**: ‘*Shǔ Capital Rhapsody*’, poetry collection by Zuǒ Sī 左思, translation in Knechtges (1982), pp. 341–371 – see page 20
- Shǔ Hóu Yùn 蜀侯恽**: marquis Yùn of Shǔ, – see page 14, 20
- Shǔwáng 蜀王**: king of Shǔ, term for the ruler of Shǔ 蜀 – see pages 8, 11–14, 20
- Shǔwáng Běnjì 《蜀王本纪》**: ‘*Chronicles of the Kings of Shǔ*’, ancient text about the history of ancient Shǔ 蜀, existing in fragments – see pages 5, 7, 8, 10–12, 15, 20
- Shūshí 朱提**: historic place name for what is now the north-east of Yúnnán, pronounced Shūshí, see 《古代汉语词典》 (2002), p. 2043 – see page 8
- Sīmǎ Cuò 司马错**: – see page 11, 14
- Sīmǎ Qiān 司马迁**: Hàn dynasty historian, author of the 《史记》 – see page 5, 8
- Sìchuān 四川**: Chinese province – see pages 5, 12, 16
- Sìchuāntōngzhì 《四川通志》**: ‘*Sìchuān Gazetteer*’, – see page 10, 20
- Sòng Cháo 宋朝**: Sòng dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 960–1279 – see pages 5, 9, 20
- Suí Cháo 隋朝**: Suí dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 581–618 – see page 20
- Suíshū 《隋书》**: ‘*History of the Suí Dynasty*’, one of the twenty-four Chinese histories, covering the Suí dynasty – see page 5, 20
- Tàipíng Yùlǎn 《太平御览》**: ‘*Readings of the Tàipíng Era*’, Sòng dynasty encyclopedia – see pages 5, 7–10, 12, 20
- Táng Cháo 唐朝**: Táng dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 618–907 – see page 7, 20
- Táng 唐**: Táng, Chinese dynasty contemporary with Nánzhào, 618–907 – see page 20
- Túshān 涂山**: county name – see page 15

- wáng** 王: king, 'King, title commonly used in reference to rulers of foreign states and alien peoples'. It is important to note that this does not have the meaning of a ruler equal to the Chinese emperor, it is a designation of a ruler below him, when used in titles conferred by China, the ruler of a vassal state, see Hucker (1985), 7634 – see pages 8, 9, 12, 14, 21
- Wàngdì** 望帝: emperor Wàng, name of Dùyǔ 杜宇 – see pages 8–10, 21
- Wèiguó** 委国: state of Wèi, one of the Zhànguó 战国 – see page 9, 21
- Wèi** 魏: one of the states of the Sān Guó 三国 – see page 9
- Wénxuǎn** 《文选》: 'Selections of Literature', literary anthology compiled during the Liángcháo 梁朝 – see page 21
- Wénxuǎn Zhù** 《文选注》: 'Commentaries on "Selections of Literature"', Táng dynasty work by Lǐ Shàn 李善 – see page 7, 21
- Wènshān** 汶山: mount Wèn, – see pages 8–10, 15, 16, 21
- Wū Shān** 巫山: Mount Wū, mountain in ?? – see page 10, 21
- Wú** 吳: one of the states of the Sān Guó 三国 –
- Wūdàn** 武担: a mountain region north of 成都, the name is first mentioned in the 《蜀王本纪》 and later also in the 《三国志》 – see page 14
- Wǔ Dū** 武都: Wǔ area command, region in present-day ?? – see pages 13, 14, 21
- Wǔyáng** 武阳: – see page 14
- Xīěr** 西洱: shorter form of Xīěr Hé, a reference to Ěrhǎi –
- Xīěr Hé** 西洱河: Xīěr River, historic name for Ěrhǎi, now in use for the river that flows out of the lake – see page 21
- Xiányáng** 咸阳: region – see page 11, 14
- Xiégǔ** 斜谷: Xié valley, valley in the Qínlíngshān 秦岭山 – see page 21
- Xīn Táng Shū** 《新唐书》: 'New History of the Táng', major Chinese history work about the Táng dynasty – see page 5, 21
- Xínglùnán** 《行路难》: 'Songs of the Weary Road', work by Bào Zhāo 鲍昭, see Fuller (2017), p. 162 and Minford and Lau (2000), p. 523 – see pages 10, 11, 21
- Xióngěr** 熊耳: mountain range in Hénán 河南 – see page 9
- Yán Kějūn** 严可均: Qīng dynasty scholar – see pages 5, 7, 10
- Yáng Xióng** 扬雄: scholar during Hàn dynasty – see page 5, 7
- Yáo** 尧: – see page 9
- Yìyǐ** 薏苡: Job's tears, – see page 15, 21
- Yǐnxǐ** 尹喜: Zhōucháo 周朝 philosopher – see page 15
- Yúfú** 鱼凫: mythological third ruler of Shǔ 蜀 – see page 7, 8
- Yúfú Záshì** 《輿服杂事》: 'Various Matters of Chariots and Attire', work by Zhōu Qiān 周迁, apparently dealing with issues of etiquette – see page 15, 21
- Yùlěi** 玉垒: a name sometimes used for 成都 – see page 9
- Yùshān** 玉山: mount Yù, – see page 9, 21
- Yúnnán** 云南: at the time of the Táng dynasty the name for the geographic region south of its Jiannan district – see page 8

- Zēng Zào** 曾慥: Sòng dynasty scholar, compiled the Sòng dynasty – see page 8
- Zhànguó** 战国: Warring States, Warring States period, the time before the Qin dynasty, 475–221 BCE – see pages 9, 15, 22
- Zhāng Yí** 张仪: – see pages 11, 13, 14
- zhào** 诏: *zhào*, term for a local ruler or his realm – see page 22
- Zhōu** 周: Zhōu, 1022–256 BCE, early Chinese dynasty – see page 22
- Zhōu Cháo** 周朝: Zhōu dynasty, 1022–256 BCE, early Chinese dynasty – see page 22
- Zhōu Qiān** 周迁: scholar – see page 15
- Zhōu Xiǎn Wáng** 周显王: king Xiǎn of Zhōu, king of the Dōngzhōu 东周, †321 – see page 12, 22
- Zǐgāo** 子羔: Chǔ Guó period bamboo slip manuscript, see Allen (2009) – see page 15
- zǐguī** 子规: cuckoo, a type of bird – see page 10, 22
- Zǐtóng** 梓潼: – see page 13
- Zuǒ Sī** 左思: Jìn Cháo 晋朝 poet –

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