THE HAN RIVER AS THE CENTRAL AXIS AND THE PREDOMINANCE OF WATER: QUESTIONING THE CLAIM OF “NO CHU-RELATED TRAITS” IN THE VIEW OF TERRESTRIAL SPACE IN THE RONG CHENG SHI MANUSCRIPT (FOURTH CENTURY B.C.E)

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**The Han River as the Central Axis and the Predominance of Water:
Questioning the Claim of ‘No Chu-related Traits’ in the View of
Terrestrial Space in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript (4th c. BC)**

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**version below differs from the published in formatting and
contains some more details marked in grey**

0. Introduction

A new account of the “Nine Provinces” (*Jiu zhou* 九州) discovered in the *Rong Cheng shi* 容成氏 (Mister Rong Cheng [?]) manuscript of Chu provenance dated to the late 4th century BC has resulted in the immediate addition of this text to the list of the key early Chinese sources describing terrestrial space. Its importance is enhanced by the general rarity of manuscripts among early Chinese terrestrial descriptions, its description of the “Nine Provinces” being the only manuscript version known to date. However, it has close affinity with a wide spectrum of transmitted texts, and is distinguished by its combining of diverse spatial concepts with the central role of draining excess waters. Its eclecticism thus throws more light on transmitted versions of the “Nine Provinces” than manifests any radically new or specifically Chu traits. This conclusion is true with

I am most grateful to Olivier Venture for remarks and suggestions on the first draft of this article, to Constance Cook for discussing and proof-reading the revised version during our stay as Visiting Fellows at the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (IKGF) in Erlangen (summer 2016), to Sarah Allan and two anonymous reviewers for useful remarks on the revised version, and to John Moffett for the final corrections to my English. All mistakes found in this paper are my own responsibility. I was preparing the manuscript for publication during my research stay at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin (July-September 2020) and considerably benefited from its excellent research facilities and most helpful staff. My special thanks are to Cathleen Paethe, the Subject Librarian for Sinology of the Institute.

respect to the description proper of the “Nine Provinces” and is based on parallels with other texts. In this study I reassess this conclusion with respect to the context of this passage in the *Rong Cheng shi*, challenging an initial impression of its lack of any Chu flavour.

While the parallels of the new description of the “Nine Provinces” with those in transmitted texts has attracted considerable scholarly attention, its relation with other issues concerning terrestrial space in the *Rong Cheng shi* has not yet been studied. Before discussing the spatial issues in this manuscript, I shall first revise all the reconstructed sequences of its slips (Introduction). Then I shall focus on the especially controversial slip 31, which appears to be of primary relevance to spatial concepts (Part 1). It contains a reference to a “cosmograph”-like pattern followed by a description of managing landscape features, beginning with waterways. I shall discuss the place of this pattern in early Chinese cosmography, in particular, the link of the “policy statement” on the predominance of waters to the version of the “Nine Provinces” in the manuscript. I suggest that, from the point of view of the revealed spatial concepts, slip 31 should be placed prior to the group of slips that describe terrestrial disasters that preceded the establishment of the “Nine Provinces”. Having concluded that the predominance of waters is the distinguishing feature of the representation of terrestrial space in the manuscript, and comparison with another cosmographical manuscript of Chu provenance contemporary with the *Rong Cheng shi*, the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 (ca. late 4th century BC), I suggest that this feature may be characteristic of Chu descriptions of terrestrial space.

My main attention is focussed on solving the spatial problem in the conclusion to the “Nine Provinces”, which up to now has been noted only in passing as somewhat confusing (Part 2). It provides a summary of structuring terrestrial space through waterways, and cuts the space thus mapped into southern and northern halves along the Han River. I argue that this unusual usage of the Han River as the central axis implicitly shifts the mapped area to the South, and thus conveys a Chu view of space, while explicitly respecting the spatial framework of transmitted descriptions of the “Nine Provinces”. In addition to philological analysis of the descriptions of terrestrial space, I apply an innovative method of investigation of them through landmarks. Landmarks found in these descriptions, including the Han River, will be explored as elements of what can be tentatively defined as relational, positional or diagrammatic maps. Such maps are characteristic of traditional Chinese cartography. The earliest specimens covering the entire imperial realm date from the twelfth century onwards. Although the majority of these maps appeared as part of commentaries on early terrestrial descriptions and are products of a continuous tradition of representing space, they are rarely taken into consideration in studies of early texts. Finally, I discuss a

correlation between structuring terrestrial space through waterways and the concept of Yu's personal and exhausting physical engagement in hard work (Part 3).

The description of the “Nine Provinces” with the related preceding and following slips – slips 31 and 23-15-24-25-26-27-28-29 – is provided in the ANNEX).

0.1. General characteristics of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript

The *Rong Cheng shi* belongs to the Shanghai Museum Bamboo Slips Collection (*Shangbo cangjian* 上博藏簡). The corpus was purchased by the Shanghai Museum in 1994 in Hongkong. The precise location and date of this find are still unknown. Compared to manuscripts discovered in *situ*, looted manuscripts pose two major research problems – the lack of archeological context and thus their being, by definition, of questionable authenticity.¹ There is general consensus that the Shanghai Museum corpus includes genuine manuscripts originating from a Chu aristocratic tomb closed shortly before the Chu court was obliged to leave the capital at Ying 郢 in 278 BC.² No data contesting this point of view has been found to date.

The *Rong Cheng shi* is one of the largest (some 2000 characters) and best preserved manuscripts among the corpus.³ Its title is found on the verso of the last

¹ For a summary of problems with looted manuscripts, see Kern 2019, pp. 45-49; see also Lai and Wang 2017 and Hein (2019). For some methods for establishing fakes, see the article on one of the Tsinghua University manuscripts (acquired in 2008) by Jiang Guanghui 姜廣輝, Fu Zan 付贊, Qiu Mengyan 邱夢燕 2013.

² Ying 郢 was the Chu capital from about 690 BC though 278 BC when it was occupied by Qin 秦, the kingdom that eventually absorbed all the ancient Chinese kingdoms and founded the Qin empire (221-207 BC). The precise location of Ying is unknown. Two possible locations – “Southern” and “Northern” – are proposed in relevant scholarly literature – Jinancheng 紀南城 and Chu Huangcheng 楚皇城, both in Hubei, see Blakely 1999, pp. 10-13; for Jinancheng, see also Guo Dewei 郭德維 1999. The discussion about Chu capitals has been given new life with the publication of the *Chuju* 楚居 (“Chu Settlements”) manuscript from the Qinghua University collection of Warring States bamboo slips (*Qinghua Daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡), see Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed. 2011, even if the manuscript itself depicts rather the shift of the palaces of the Chu kings and not the shift of capitals, see articles by Shou Bin 守彬 and Taniguchi Mitsuru 谷口滿 in the 10th issue of the “Collection of Articles on Studies of Chu Culture” 楚文化研究論集 (2011) and Xin Deyong 辛德勇 2017, pp. 1-18. For an extensive discussion of the genealogy of Chu rulers, according to this manuscript, see Cook and Luo Xinhui 2017. I am grateful for details about recent studies to one of the anonymous reviewers.

³ Due to damaged slips and obscure characters, a precise calculation of the total is not possible. It is, for instance, approximately equal in length to the “Yu gong” 禹貢 (“Yu's [System] of Tribute,” ca. 5th-3rd century BC) chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書 (*Book of Documents*), *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義 (*Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 ed.), 6.1a-19b, systematically referred to below.

among the originally identified 53 surviving slips of the manuscript.⁴ It is written as *song cheng di* 訟城氏, commonly accepted to stand for Rong Cheng shi 容成氏 – Mister Rong Cheng.⁵ Rong Cheng shi is one the sage rulers of High Antiquity.⁶ The manuscript provides an overview of Chinese history, beginning from the mythical sage rulers through to the establishment of the Zhou dynasty (c. 1046 – 256 BC).⁷ While

⁴ Several slips at the beginning and in the end of the manuscript, and possibly a couple of slips in between, have deteriorated. Difference in lightness between characters on the recto and the verso of slip 53 and the possible discrepancy between the last character of the title and its analogues in the text (see the next note) allow one to conclude that the title was added later by another hand (Zhao Ping'an 趙平安 2003). This conclusion is now commonly shared (Niu Xinfang 牛新房 2010, pp. 75-76; Allan 2015, p. 187).

⁵ In March 2005 I benefited from email communications with Wolfgang Behr, who revealed the complexity of identifying the 訟城氏 as a plausible phonetic loan characters for 容成氏, and can only regret that his notes have not been published. For an annotated list of investigations of the manuscript's title by Chinese scholars, see Sun Feiyan 孫飛燕 2010, p. 13. The identification of 訟城氏 with 容成氏 has to deal with the discrepancy between the characters designating "Mister" in the title of the manuscript and in the surviving names of the sage rulers in the main body of the manuscript: *di* 氏 = *shi* 氏 and *shi* 是, respectively. Sun Weilong 孫偉龍 & Li Shoukui 李守奎 (2008) supposed that the bottom stroke in the 氏 may not be part of the character in the title, making it 氏, but this supposition, not largely supported, though simplifying the identification of the title still does not solve the discrepancy problem. Finally, there is a "stray" interpretation of the title that is still worth taking into consideration: it may not refer to Rong Cheng shi at all, but be the name of a person derived from a placename (Jao Tsung-I 饒宗頤 2006). Finally, the two translations of the manuscript into English by Yuri Pines and Sarah Allan contain regretful errors or misprints in the title transcription: Pines, 2010, p. 4, footnote 5, 訟成是 instead of 訟城氏; Allan, 2015, p. 188, 成 instead of 城.

⁶ For a brief analysis of the two presumably earliest references to the sage Rong Cheng shi in transmitted texts, which are found in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (4th-3rd cc. BC), as well as the occurrences of titles of two lost texts bearing his name listed in the "Yiwenzhi" 藝文志, the bibliographical treatise of the *Hanshu* 漢書 by Ban Gu 班固 (AD 32-92), which relies on the lost bibliography *Qilue* 七略 edited by Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca. 46 BC – AD 23), see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 15-16. For the sage rulers of High Antiquity enumerated at the beginning of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript and in transmitted texts, with a focus on the role of Rong Cheng shi, see Allan 2015, pp. 186-191. Among the transmitted texts referring to Rong Cheng shi is the somewhat overlooked overview of Chinese history in the "Benjing xun" 本經訓, chapter 8 of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (compiled shortly before 139 BC), which is especially interesting for its being typologically close to the Rong Cheng shi manuscript's historical narrative; Rong Cheng shi is also briefly mentioned to in the "Xiuwu xun" 修務訓, chapter 19 of the *Huainanzi*, see *Huainan honglie jijie* 1989, pp. 253-256 (ch.8) and 646 (ch.19); Le Blanc and Mathieu, trans. 2003), pp. 340-341 and 925-926; Major et al. 2010, pp. 275-276 (§ 8.6) and p. 778 (§ 19.5). For references to Rong Cheng shi and other sages in the *Jinlouzi* 金樓子 (6th century) also focussed on the worthy rulers, see Khayutina 2020.

⁷ Chen Ligui 陳麗桂 proposed a quantitative distribution of slips with respect to the described rulers: 3 slips refer to the sage rulers of remote antiquity, 2 slips to the events towards the end of remote antiquity preceding Yao, 8 slips to Yao, 4 slips to Shun, 17 slips to Yu, 9 slips to Cheng Tang, 6 slips to King Wen and 4-5 slips to King Wu, see Chen Ligui 2004, p. 336. Even if the attribution of some slips is debatable, these calculations give a general idea of the narrative's structure and show the substantial place of Yu's deeds in the manuscript.

having multiple parallels with transmitted texts describing the same historical periods and events, the manuscript is distinguished by laying special emphasis on the “supremacy of power transfer through the ruler’s abdication in favour of a worthier successor”.⁸

0.1. Sequence of slips in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript: concurring reconstructions

The investigation of the content of unearthed manuscripts on bamboo slips depends on solving two basic technical problems – the transcription of characters, and the restitution of the sequence of slips. Though there are relatively few variations in the transcriptions of the characters of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript, the sequence of its slips still remains a highly controversial issue, even though this work is considerably facilitated by the narrative chronology. Once the slips of a manuscript have been arranged into a more or less meaningful sequence, the focus of scholarly discussion tends to move on from such basic technical problems to the content and the context of the manuscript, unsolved technical issues fading into the background.⁹ Instead of the common method of choosing one sequence and then discussing the content, I propose to discuss the content of the slips while considering all their possible arrangements. I shall demonstrate that this approach may provide conclusive arguments for determining the most plausible place for some controversial slips.¹⁰

The first arrangement of the *Rong Cheng shi* slips and their transcription was proposed by Li Ling 李零 in the second volume of the *Shanghai guji chubanshe* edition of the corpus published in 2002.¹¹ Since then the sequencing of slips and transcription of certain characters have been continuously challenged.¹² Shortly after this publication, Chen Jian 陳劍 substantially changed Li Ling’s sequence:

[Chen Jian]

⁸ Pines 2010, p. 2; see also Pines 2005 and Allan 2015, pp. 181-184.

⁹ Cf. the discussions of the state of the art of another manuscript from the Shanghai Museum Collection, the *Kongzi Shilun* 孔子詩論, in Staack 2010, p. 858. For a general discussion of reconstructing arrangement of bamboo slips, see Staack 2016.

¹⁰ Staack has a stab at establishing a system of criteria for reconstructing the arrangement of bamboo slips comprising of all the available material and textual evidence, see Staack 2010, esp. pp. 857-881. The case of the *Rong Cheng shi* is somewhat more straightforward, as it is much better preserved, and my task is also simpler, as I discuss only a part of the manuscript.

¹¹ Ma Chengyuan, 馬承源, ed. 2002, pp. 91-146 [coloured photographs of numbered slips], pp. 247-293 [transcription and commentary by Li Ling 李零]. For an annotated version of Li Ling’s sequence, see Qiu Dexiu 邱德修 2003.

¹² For reviews of relevant studies, see Pines 2005, p. 263, footnote 50; 2010, p. 3, footnote 6; Niu Xinfang 牛新房 2010, pp. 73-75 (§ 1); Sun Feiyan 孫飛燕 2010, pp. 13-14; Allan 2015, pp. 184-185, footnotes 4-5.

1—3, 35B, 4—7+43, 9—11+13—14+8+12+23+15+24—30+16—21+31-32+22+33-34+35A+38—41+36-37+42+44—53¹³

Chen Ligui 陳麗桂¹⁴ and Bai Yulan 白於藍¹⁵ made further partial adjustments to the sequence, having restituted the succession of slips 21 and 22 proposed by Li Ling:¹⁶

[Chen Ligui]

13—15+23—31+16—21-22+32—34

[Bai Yulan]

21-22+31+33-34+32+35A

The articles surveying Chinese scholarship on the *Rong Cheng shi* by Sun Feiyan 孫飛燕 and Niu Xinfang 牛新房 distinguish the following main suggestions about the slips' arrangements:¹⁷

- 1) Chen Jian noticed that two damaged fragments, considered by Li Ling to constitute slip 35, are in effect pieces of two different slips, now referred to as slip 35A and slip 35B.¹⁸
- 2) Dan Yuchen 單育辰 joins slips 15 and 24, arguing that these slips are pieces of one slip;¹⁹
- 3) Guo Yongbing 郭永秉 links slips 31 and 32 with slips 4 and 5;²⁰
- 4) Guo Yongbing also proposes to insert slip 43, already advanced to the beginning of the text by Chen Jian, after slip 35A.²¹

Niu Xinfang concludes his evaluation with a summarising rearrangement of slips, where he proposes to distinguish eight coherent groups:²²

[Niu Xinfang]

I 1—3

II 35B + 43+7B

¹³ Chen Jian 2004; first published at the Bamboo and Silk forum (*Jianbo yanjiu* 簡帛研究 www.jianbo.com), 09.01.2003. Punctuation (, - +) is given, following Chen Jian. I only use short and long lines to distinguish between two successive slips and a group of successive slips, e.g. slips 36-37 and 24-30, respectively.

¹⁴ Chen Ligui 2004, pp. 339-341.

¹⁵ Bai Yulan 白於藍 2003 and 2004, pp. 91-92.

¹⁶ The restitution is now supported by the majority of scholars.

¹⁷ Sun Feiyan (2010) provides an annotated bibliography by subject of *Rong Cheng shi* studies, with the aim to encompass all the suggestions advanced, while 牛新房 (2010) focuses on the suggestions he personally supports.

¹⁸ He subsequently counts 54 slips.

¹⁹ Sun Feiyan refers to an article by Dan Yuchen 單育辰 (2010) in “簡帛研究 *Jianbo yanjiu* 2007”, pp. 37-44. If we accept this suggestion, the total number of slips will again be 53.

²⁰ Guo Yongbing 郭永秉 2006, first published at the Bamboo and Silk forum (*Jianbo yanjiu* (簡帛研究 www.jianbo.com), 7.11.2005; 2008.

²¹ Guo Yongbing 7.11.2005, 2006, 2008.

²² Niu Xinfang 2010, pp. 74-75.

III	31-32+4 – 6+7A
IV	9 – 11+13-14+8
V	12+23+15=24 – 30+16 – 21-22
VI	33-34
VII	35A+38 – 41+36-37
VIII	42+44 – 53

Yuri Pines, the author of the first English translation of the manuscript, follows Chen Jian's sequence, with the exception of reinstating the place of slip 22 after slip 21, but expresses strong doubts about Chen Jian's placement of slips 31 and 32 (I distinguish them by *italics*):²³

[Chen Jian/Pines]

1 – 3, 35B, 4 – 7+43, 9 – 11+13 – 14+8+12+23+15+24 – 30+16 – 21-22+31-32+33-34+35A+38 – 41+36-37+42+44 – 53

Sarah Allan, who has provided a second translation of the manuscript with extensive commentary updated by recent studies, follows Guo Yongbing's sequence and the general consensus on reinstating Li Ling's sequence of slips 21-22; she also reinstates slips 36-37 before 38:²⁴

[Guo Yongbing/Allan]

1 – 3, 35B, 43, 31-32, 4 – 7, 9 – 11, 13 – 14, 8, 12, 23, 15, 24 – 30, 16 – 22, 33-34, 35A, 36 – 42, 44 – 53

In sum, each scholar who has tried to deal with the sequence of slips in the *Rong Cheng shi* has come up with more or less different suggestions about their arrangement. There are groups of slips the order of which is shared by the majority of scholars. These groups can be recognised as *definitive sets*. There are at the same time some *errant slips*, the placement of which differs, sometimes rather considerably, among the suggestions advanced.²⁵

1.0. The “cosmograph” pattern and putting waterways first in constructing space: reassessing slip 31

One especially controversial slip – N° 31 – contains a “policy statement” for conceptualising terrestrial space in the *Rong Cheng shi*. It is preceded by a description of a cardinaly-oriented twelve-fold pattern. Due to the conciseness of these references,

²³ Pines 2010, pp. 13-14. I shall discuss these two slips below.

²⁴ Allan 2015, chapter 6: pp. 181-222 (passage-by-passage interpretation); pp. 223-262 (translation supplied with comments on transcriptions and the identification of characters in current scholarship).

²⁵ To the usual difficulties of assembling a sequence from disordered elements, the early Chinese bamboo manuscripts add damaged and missing slips. Some slips are evidently missing from the beginning of the manuscript, but there might also be some missing from the body of the text, which further complicates the sequencing.

neither the meaning of this spatial pattern, nor the significance of the “policy statement” have been fully appreciated in studies of this manuscript. Their profound implication emerges from an analysis within the broad context of early Chinese concepts of space derived from transmitted and manuscript texts. At the same time, the comparison of this passage with similar occurrences provides new arguments for determining the most plausible place of this slip in the *Rong Cheng shi* narrative.

1.1. *Placements and interpretations of slip 31*

Varying placements have been proposed for slip 31. Essentially there have been two approaches:

- 1) Li Ling, Chen Ligui, Bai Yulan and Chen Jian associate slip 31 with Yu, whose deeds are featured around the middle of the manuscript.
- 2) Guo Yongbing and Niu Xinfang place slip 31 at the beginning of the manuscript, considering it to be part of the description of an ancient sage ruler named Youyu Tong 有虞通, who is not found in transmitted texts. Guo Yongbing identifies characters 又吳迴 on slip 5 with 有虞通, and further reconstructs the same name in a group of faint graphs on slip 32, which is damaged.

It should also be noted that some scholars regard slip 31 as a pair to slip 32, others do not.

Yuri Pines in his translation follows the first approach, but expresses doubts about its belonging to the “Yu part” of the manuscript and the relation to slip 32.²⁶ Sarah Allan’s translation relies on Guo Yongbing’s hypothesis about Youyu Tong and his placement of slip 31 at the beginning.²⁷

The passage in question occupies almost the whole of slip 31. Sarah Allan claims that it advocates musical harmony.²⁸

[*Rong Cheng shi*, translation by Allan

slip 31, beginning from character N° 2; translation by Allan:]

始方爲三宮,	<i>shi fang wei san gong,</i>	He first made three tones,
救聲之紀:	<i>jiu sheng zhi ji:</i>	seeking a guide for the sounds (of a musical scale).
東方爲三宮,	<i>dong fang wei san gong,</i>	He made three tones for the East,
西方爲三宮,	<i>xi fang wei san gong,</i>	three tones for the West,
南方爲三宮,	<i>nan fang wei san gong,</i>	three tones for the South,
北方爲三宮,	<i>bei fang wei san gong,</i>	three tones for the North,

²⁶ Pines 2010, p. 14, footnote 34.

²⁷ Allan 2015, p. 192, footnote 15.

²⁸ Allan 2015, pp. 192-195 and 228-231.

以甕於溪浴 (= 谷),	<i>yi wei (yue) yu xi yu,</i>	using [the sounds of] crossing brooks and streams
濟於廣川,	<i>ji yu guang chuan,</i>	and fording wide rivers,
高山陞,	<i>gao shan sheng</i>	of mountains high up [and]
藁林	<i>zhen lin</i>	dense forests
[end slip 31]		
[slip 32, 1st character:]		
入。	<i>ru.</i>	deep in.

Allan focuses her attention on the musical scale, which may be implied in the phrase *jiu sheng zhi ji* 救聲之紀. Allan translates it as “seeking a guide for the sounds (of a musical scale)” and identifies the character *gao* 佺 with *gong* 宮 (“tone”). In this case the total of twelve *gao* corresponds to the twelve-pitch scale 十二律 *shi'er lü* used in ancient Chinese music.

Allan (Li Ling, Chen Jian and Guo Yongbing) begins the passage with the second character on slip 31, which she reads, having accepted one among its identifications, as *shi* 始, and ends it with the first character on slip 32, which is generally transcribed as *ru* 入 (“to enter, to penetrate”). *Ru* used as a predicate with forests makes a good match with *sheng* 陞 (“to mount, to ascend”) used as a predicate with mountains – *gao shan sheng, zhen lin ru* 高山陞, 藁林入 (“high mountains became ascendable, dense forests penetrable”). One issue with this reading is the fact that after *ru* 入 follows *yan* 焉 (= *yu zhi* 於之). The combination of these two characters is quite common in early Chinese texts. It means “to enter somewhere” and as a rule is found at the end of a phrase. *Ru yan* at the beginning of slip 32 looks more likely to be the ending of another passage, so some scholars, for instance, Bai Yulan and Chen Ligui separate slips 31 and 32.

Although Yuri Pines in his translation of the *Rong Cheng shi* accepts a successive arrangement of slips 31 and 32, he tries to solve the problem of their mismatch by calling attention to the damaged nature of slip 32, suggesting that some neighbouring slips might be missing. He translates the beginning of slip 32 as the end of a lost piece of text: *ru yan, yi xing zheng* 入焉, 以行政 “[he] entered there to perform administrative tasks”. Pines also feels that no satisfactory identifications of the character *gao* have been made and cautiously translates it as some type of ritual.²⁹ He gives credit to the musical aspect, but does not exaggerate it, and better fits the transmitted written tradition in translating the context.³⁰

[*Rong Cheng shi*, translation by Pines;
slip 31, beginning from character N° 3:]

²⁹ See Pines 2010, p. 14, footnote 35.

³⁰ Pines begins the passage with the third character on slip 31, and considers the second character to be *jun* 君 (and not *shi* 始 accepted by Allan).

方爲三佺,	<i>fang wei san gao,</i>	At every direction he performed <i>gao</i> ceremonies (?), ³¹
救聲之紀:	<i>qiu sheng zhi ji:</i>	to obtain the essentials of the sounds (?):
東方爲三佺,	<i>dong fang wei san gao,</i>	three <i>gao</i> to the east,
西方爲三佺,	<i>xi fang wei san gao,</i>	three <i>gao</i> to the west,
南方爲三佺,	<i>nan fang wei san gao,</i>	three <i>gao</i> to the south,
北方爲三佺,	<i>bei fang wei san gao,</i>	three <i>gao</i> to the north:
以甕(=越)於溪浴(=谷),	<i>yi wei (yue) yu xi yu,</i>	thereby he traversed creeks and gorges,
濟於廣川,	<i>ji yu guang chuan,</i>	crossed broad rivers,
高山陞,	<i>gao shan sheng,</i>	ascended high mountains,
蓁林...	<i>zhen lin</i>	□ dense forests.

[end of slip 31]

I give preference, with some minor amendments of my own, to Pines' interpretation of the passage:

[*Rong Cheng shi*, translation by the author of this article,

slip 31, beginning from character N° 3:]

方爲三佺,	<i>fang wei san gao,</i>	At/to every cardinal direction [he] performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies,
救聲之紀:	<i>qiu sheng zhi ji:</i>	seeking the proper order of the sounds:
東方爲三佺,	<i>dong fang wei san gao,</i>	in/to the East performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies,
西方爲三佺,	<i>xi fang wei san gao,</i>	in/to the West performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies,
南方爲三佺,	<i>nan fang wei san gao,</i>	in/to the South performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies,
北方爲三佺,	<i>bei fang wei san gao,</i>	in/to the North performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies.
以甕(=越)於溪浴(=谷),	<i>yi wei (yue) yu xi yu,</i>	This enabled [him] to traverse brooks and river-valleys;
濟於廣川,	<i>ji yu guang chuan,</i>	cross broad rivers,
高山陞,	<i>gao shan sheng,</i>	high mountains became ascendable,
蓁林...	<i>zhen lin</i>	dense forests....

[end of slip 31]

1.2. A twelve-to-four pattern for tailoring space

According to both interpretations, this passage first of all describes structuring space into twelve cardinally-oriented units – three at each of the four cardinal directions. This spatial structure underlies all the other possible correlations, including the twelve-pitch scale. At the same time, the character *ji* 紀, designating here the order of sounds, in contemporary transmitted texts is systematically used in relation to duodecimal temporal cycles, in particular the system of twelve months of the year, the “Shi’er ji” 十二紀 (“Twelve Monthly Records”) section of the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (“Springs and Autumns of Mister Lü”, compiled shortly before 239 BC) and its counterpart, the “Yue ling” 月令 (“Monthly Ordinances”, ca. 2nd century BC) chapter of the *Li ji* 禮記 (“Records of Ritual”, compiled about the 1st century AD), being the *loci classici* for the duodecimal

³¹ Taking *fang* 方 as a noun in relation to the subsequent focus on the cardinal arrangement makes much more sense.

calendar texts.³² The twelve months arranged into four seasons correlated with the four cardinal directions constitute the Chinese cosmographical conception of space-time, which is in the first place evoked by the twelve-to-four pattern. **Figure 1** shows the spatio-temporal deployment of the twelve months with a correlated cardinally-oriented arrangement of twelve *gao*.

		South 南 / Summer 夏				
		4 th month 四月 [gao 佺]	5 th month 五月 [gao 佺]	6 th month 六月 [gao 佺]		
East 東 / Spring 春	3 rd month 三月 [gao 佺]				7 th month 七月 [gao 佺]	West 西 / Autumn 秋
	2 nd month 二月 [gao 佺]				8 th month 八月 [gao 佺]	
	1 st month 一月 [gao 佺]				9 th month 九月 [gao 佺]	
		12 th month 十二月 [gao 佺]	11 th month 十一月 [gao 佺]	10 th month 十月 [gao 佺]		
		North 北 / Winter 冬				

Figure 1. 12 months of the year arranged into 4 seasons correlated with the 4 cardinal directions with superimposed 12 *gao*

One could argue that the scheme above is a reconstruction and that there are other possible ways to array the twelve months of the year. However, their pictorial representation, according to the pattern above, is found in another manuscript of Chu provenance roughly contemporary with the *Lüshi chunqiu* and the *Rong Cheng shi*, the so-called Chu Silk Manuscript, recently re-labelled as Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 (ca.

³² For the “Shi’er ji”, Section I of the *Lüshi chunqiu*, see *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 1.1a – 12.10b; for translations of this section that put in evidence the twelve-to-four pattern emulated by its textual structure, cf. Wilhelm, trans., 1928, pp. 1-156; Kamenarovic, trans., 1998, pp. 29-189; Knoblock and Riegel, trans. 2000, pp. 59-273; Tkachenko, trans., 2001, pp. 71-181; for a summary on the “Shi’er ji” structure, see Tkatchiënko, 1991; for the “Yue ling” chapter of the *Li ji*, see *Liji Zheng zhu* 禮記鄭注 (Sibu beiyao ed.), 5.1a-29b; for translations of this chapter that put in evidence the twelve-to-four pattern emulated by its textual structure, cf. Legge, trans., vol. 27, 1885, pp. 229-310; Couvreur, trans., vol. 1, 1913, pp. 330-410.

47x38.7 cm in its present condition, estimated original size 48x40 cm;³³ ca. late 4th century BC, unearthed by grave robbers sometime between 1934 and 1942 at Zidanku 子彈庫, Changsha, Hubei province). This has been studied intensively since the middle of the 20th century. Among milestone studies are those by Li Ling, who not only takes notice of its peculiar spatio-temporal layout, which combines textual passages and pictures, but also calls attention to its meaning and a functional significance.³⁴ Having first explored various shapes of the *shitu* 式圖, which he translates as “a diagram of *shi* 式 (or cosmic model)”,³⁵ Li Ling establishes the link between the layout of Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 and cosmological devices *shipan* 式/栺盤, commonly referred to as divining or cosmic boards or cosmographs. The divining or cosmic board or “cosmograph” has a square base plate with a rotating disc on top, representing Earth and Heavens, respectively.³⁶ He supports his point of view with two diagrams, which demonstrate their parallels. The first diagram shows the arrangement of the manuscript’s textual units supplied with indications to the reading direction of each unit and their tentative sequence – clockwise from the centre to periphery. This requires the rotation of the manuscript by its “user” and makes the diagram a process-oriented scheme (**Figure 2a**).³⁷ This diagram highlights the non-

³³ Li Ling 2013, p. 181 and 217.

³⁴ Insights into these aspects made in Li Ling’s first monograph on Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 (Li Ling 1985) were then developed in a special article (Li Ling 1991), and further in the context of *fangshu* 方術 practices (Li Ling 2000 [rev. 1993], pp. 89–231). The manuscript was recently reassessed by Li Ling in two monographs (Li Ling 2013 and 2017). The 2013 book is a convenient collection of Li Ling’s studies on Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, including a translation, glossary and several articles, some in Chinese and English versions, discussing the similarity between Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 and the “diagram of *shi* 式 (or cosmic model)” from different angles (Li Ling 2013, pp. 1-74, pp. 155-243, pp. 252-287). He also makes observations on the context of the discovery and material aspects of the manuscript, as well as the other silk manuscripts found together with it, unfortunately considerably damaged (Li Ling 2013, pp. 171-243). These are the focus of his most recent study (Li Ling 2017). The first volume (see also its English version translated by von Falkenhausen, Li Ling 2020) is devoted to the history of the discovery and scholarly transmission of these manuscripts. The second is focussed on reconstructions and philological analysis of the manuscripts and fragments; for Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 labeled 四時令 *Sishi ling*, see Li Ling 2017, vol. 2, pp. 43-77, for Chu Silk Manuscript no.2 labeled 五行令 *Wuxingling* and other fragments, see Li Ling 2017, vol. 2, pp. 78-113.

³⁵ Li Ling 2013, p. 155

³⁶ Such devices are discussed in two recent monograph studies of early Chinese cosmography and cosmology: Pankenier 2013, who refers to these devices throughout his book as a “mantic astrolabe”, and Cullen 2017, Chapter 5 “The Measures and Forms of Heaven,” pp. 179 – 222, especially pp. 202-207 and fig. 5.7 on p. 203, and in an article by Huang Ru-Xuan 黃儒宣 (2019), which discusses a series of “cosmograph”-related depictions, including manuscripts on silk from the Mawangdui. For a list of earlier studies of “cosmographs”, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2007, p. 249 (footnote 79). The earliest excavated copies of “cosmographs” date from the Western Han dynasty.

³⁷ See Li Ling 1985, pp. 30-31; 2013, p. 29 (small diagram with no title). Even if one accepts a different reading sequence, it would still require a rotation. In Li Ling 2000 [rev. 1993], p. 111 (fig. 21), the scheme is provided at a larger scale and with a title – 楚帛楚的圖式 *Chuboshu de tushi* “Scheme of the Chu Silk

linear textual structure of the manuscript, especially valuable due to its being the original, not reconstructed textual arrangement.³⁸ The second diagram shows the pictorial images in a square pattern, that is, the twelve monthly divinities, three on each side of the manuscript, with four trees placed in the corners (**Figure 2b**).³⁹ The same pattern is found on the square bottom (=Earth) plate of the so-called *Liuren* 六壬 type of a cosmograph, on which the twelve cyclic signs (Earth branches) are arranged within the second square zone from the outside (**Figure 2c**).

Summer-South

Summer-South

Manuscript”, but regretfully does not provide indications to the reading direction and the sequence of passages.

³⁸ Although non-linear texts *per se* are not the focus of Li Ling’s interests, from the very beginning of his studies of Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 he pointed out this attribute of the manuscript and its typological similarity with reconstructions of the “You guan” 幼官 chapter of the philosophical treatise *Guanzi* 管子 (compiled about the end of the 1st century BC) in the shape of a cardinally-oriented ground “plan of the Dark Palace” (玄宮圖 *Xuangong tu*), as well as with the textual structure of the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (“Itineraries of Mountains and Seas”, compiled about the 1st century BC), see Li Ling 1985, pp. 39-44; 2000 [rev. 1993], pp. 135-140; 2013, pp. 37-40, 123-125. The first reconstruction of the Dark Palace plan, which was ground-breaking for considering non-linear textual structures, was proposed by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 and Wen Yiduo 聞一多在 1956. I discuss spatially organised early Chinese texts as a type of textual structure and their studies in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2004, and the structure of the *Shanhai jing* in relation to Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2007 (for Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, see pp. 242-249). Studies of various non-linear textual structures not necessarily dealing with space were mainstream in Soviet studies of early China in the 1970s through the late 1990s. For a survey and some translations, see Chemla, Volkov and Lichtmann 1991; see also more recent surveys by Rykov 2016 and Grebnev 2020. Argumentation by means of textual diagrams in neo-Confucian scholarship, many diagrams referring to early texts, is extensively discussed by Michael Lackner, and for an overview, see Bray 2007, esp. 5-40. There has been a rise in interest in non-linear textual studies in Western sinology from the mid 2000s, see, for instance, the latest collection of articles edited by Gentz and Meyer 2015. Regretfully, the editors, while apparently relying on previous scholarship in the field, do not give full credit to it.

³⁹ Li Ling 2000 [rev. 1993], p. 180 (fig. 27). Reproduced several times under the title 楚帛書的圖像[安排] *Chuboshu de tuxiang [anpai]* and translated for the English version as “The twelve gods representing the months of the year”, in Li Ling, 188 (fig. 15), 224 (fig. 9), 273 (fig. 1)..

Winter-North

Figure 2a

Winter-North

Figure 2b

Figure 2a (left)

General arrangement of Chu Silk Manuscript no. 1 and its tentative reading sequence

[Reproduced from Li Ling 2013, p. 29, re-oriented with the South on top; estimated size of the original diagram ca. 40x40 cm]

Centre: two long textual passages written inversely with respect to each other, one comprised of thirteen and the other of eight columns.

Margins: twelve short textual passages related to the monthly divinities, the names of which are placed in the reading direction of the respective passage.

Figure 2b (right)

Cosmograph-like square pattern marked by the twelve monthly divinities and four corner trees in Chu Silk Manuscript no.1

[Reproduced from Li Ling 1993, p. 170, fig. 47; estimated size of the original diagram ca. 40x40]

A group of three divinities at each side of the manuscript corresponds to a season.

Cardinal orientation is not noted explicitly, but may be reliably derived from its correlation with the seasons.

Summer-South

Winter-North

Figure 2c

Figure 2c

The so-called *Liuren* 六壬 type of the divining or cosmic board or “cosmograph”

from the tomb of Marquis of Ruyin 汝陰侯 closed in 165 BC, Shuanggudui 雙古堆, Fuyang 阜陽;

[Redrawing with cross-section below, laquered wood, bottom plate: 13,5 cm, upper disc diameter: 9,5 cm.

reproduced from Yin Difei 陰濂非 1978, p. 340, fig. 1; for a slightly different redrawing, see *Anhui sheng wenwu gongzuodui* 安徽省文物工作隊 1978, p. 25, fig. 10].

Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 was accompanied by at least one text, which contains a diagram with a circular arrangement of months. The diagram is considerably damaged, but its colours and shape can still be ascertained from the surviving pieces – two concentric circles, both delineated in black and red, each with regular arrangements of the twelve months, see in **Figure 2d** (extant state) and **Figure 2e** (reconstruction).⁴⁰ The circular diagram has affinity with the “cosmograph’s” heavenly disc and with the device composed of two discs conventionally referred to as a “lodge dial” found together with the *Liuren* “cosmograph” (see **Figure 2f**).⁴¹

Figure 2d

Figure 2e

Figure 2d

Diagram with two circular arrangements of the twelve months, extant state
[Delineated in red and black, reproduced from Li Ling 2017, p. 79, fig. 1]

Figure 2e

Diagram with two circular arrangements of the twelve months, reconstruction
[Reproduced from Li Ling 2017, p. 79, fig. 2]

⁴⁰ Li Ling 2017, vol. 2, pp. 10-11 (colour plates), reconstruction and interpretation pp. 78-81, the diagram labelled by Li Ling “The Diagram of Month’s Names” *Yuming tu* 月名圖 belongs to the text, which he refers to as the 五行令 *Wuxing ling*.

⁴¹ Cullen 2017, pp. 205-206.

Figure 2f

Figure 2f

The “lodge dial” device from the tomb of Marquis of Ruyin 汝陰侯 closed in 165 B.C.E, Shuanggudui 雙古堆, Fuyang 阜陽 [Redrawing with cross-section below, laquered wood, bottom disc diameter: 25,5 cm, upper disc diameter: 23 cm. reproduced from *Anhui sheng wenwu gongzuodui* 安徽省文物工作隊 1978, p. 19, fig. 8; for a slightly different redrawing see Yin Difei 陰滌非 1978, p. 342, fig. 3].

The circular diagram in Chu Silk Manuscript no.2, which has become available to the scholarly community only recently, offers an important argument in favour of typological parallels of Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 with a “cosmograph”. The two manuscripts constitute a pair as both convey schematic arrangements of the twelve months: their arrangement according to the square twelve-to-four pattern in Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 was complemented by their circular arrangement in Chu Silk Manuscript no.2. The two manuscripts are, therefore, related as with the earthly and the heavenly plates of a “cosmograph”.

The importance of Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 for understanding the system of twelve *gao* in the *Rong Cheng shi* is not limited to structural parallels between the arrangement of the twelve monthly divinities in the former and the deployment of *gao* in the latter. Their pictorial content – symbolizing months by their divinities – points to a highly important role of divinities in the early Chinese conception of space, coordinated with the yearly cycle of seasons and months.⁴² Yet this text, as well as being a

⁴² I discuss the role of divinities in ordering terrestrial space in early China in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2003a, 2003b, and 2007, on the example of the *Shanhai jing* in relation to the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1.

“cosmograph”, provides a diagram or device imbued with some intrinsic techniques for process-oriented use – rotation, though they do not describe the process proper. Indeed, the process of managing this space-time accomplished through sacrifices to divinities in charge of units of the spatio-temporal division perfectly qualifies Emperor Shun’s “tour of inspection” *xun shou* 巡狩, as described in a transmitted source roughly contemporary with the *Rong Cheng shi*, the “Shun dian” 舜典 [Karlgrén: “Yao dian 2” 堯典續] chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書.⁴³ This description is a case of verbal mapping devoid of graphical illustrations, as is the description of the twelve *gao*. The juxtaposition of such verbal schemes or relevant texts with authentic visual aids, for some reason often missing in extant scholarly approaches, allows one to establish the missing links between *scheme* and *action* necessary for understanding both.

Without going into the details of the various sacrifices, the “tour of inspection” may be summarized as follows:

In the 2nd month of the year (*sui eryue* 歲二月 = mid-Spring) the “tour of inspection” goes
in the Eastern direction towards the Taizong 岱宗 (= Eastern Peak) for performing a series of rites;
In the 5th month (*wuyue* 五月 = mid-Summer) the “tour of inspection” goes
in the Southern direction towards the Southen Peak for performing the same series of rites;
In the 8th month (*bayue* 八月 = mid-Autumn) the “tour of inspection” goes
in the Western direction towards the Western Peak for performing the same series of rites;
In the 11th month (*shiyiyue* 十一月 = mid-Winter) the “tour of inspection” goes
in the Northern direction towards the Northern Peak for performing the same series of rites.

One can see that the “tour of inspection” is accomplished according to the twelve-to-four pattern mapped out by the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1. The “tour of inspection” can therefore be devined as a seasonal succession of rites, performed at the corresponding cardinal directions. The “tour” starts in Spring in the East and proceeds *clockwise* to the South in Summer, then to the West in Autumn and finally to the North in Winter, thus accomplishing a complete yearly cycle encompassing the entire terrestrial space. The

⁴³ I discuss the implications of this passage in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009], pp. 638-640. For the complete passage and its three main scholarly translations that differ and at the same time complement each other, see *Shangshu zhengyi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 3/3a-6b; Legge, trans. 1865, pp. 33-37 (§ 6-9); Couvreur 1897, pp. 15-19 (§§ 6-9); Karlgrén, trans. 1950, pp. 2 and 4, §§ 17-20. Legge’s and Couvreur’s translations have extensive, but not always similar commentaries. Karlgrén’s “The Book of Documents” is preceded by separate glosses (1948, 1949). It assembles only the “New Script” chapters of the “Book of Documents” (*Shu jing*), having rearranged some of them, namely, the “Shun dian”, which corresponds to the 2nd part of the “Yao dian” chapter. For a general discussion of the “Yao dian” chapter in the modern-script recension, including the complexity of its dating, see Kern 2017, and also Vogelsang 2017, pp. 78-89. Both articles are parts of a recent volume devoted to the *Shang shu*, see Kern and Meyer, eds. 2017, reviewed by Schaughnessy 2018. The passage is cited in the “Wang zhi” 王制 chapter of the *Li ji*, see *Liji Zheng zhu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 4/5a-6a; Legge 1885, vol. 27, pp. 216-217 (II, § 13-16); Couvreur 1913, vol. 1, pp. 275-278 (II, § 13-16), discussed below.

space-regulating rites are performed in the middle month of each season at the true cardinal points marked by the four Peaks (*yue* 岳).⁴⁴

“Performing *gao*” (*wei gao* 為佁) described in the *Rong Cheng shi* also starts in the East, but proceeds *crosswise* – first from East to the West, then from the South to the North. Temporal correspondences are not in evidence in “performing *gao*”, as it regulates terrestrial space through delineating its crosswise/horizontal and longwise/vertical axes, unrelated to the seasonal sequence. Similarly to the arrangement of the monthly divinities in the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, the cardinally-oriented threesomes of *gao* does not put any special emphasis on the central *gao* among the three at each cardinal direction.

Despite these structural variations, “performing *gao*” and the “tour of inspection” describe *actions* aimed at establishing *a regular framework of terrestrial space*, both being typologically similar *process-oriented* schemes. This is a strong argument in favour of understanding *wei gao* as the performance of certain space-regulating ceremonies. The ceremonies may have a musical aspect, but their main goal is spatial arrangement.⁴⁵

1.3. From mountains to waters or vice versa?

An even stronger argument in favour of the primary spatial significance of the twelve *gao* is the similar outcome of “performing *gao*” and the “tour of inspection” – to establish manageable elements of terrestrial space. Shun’s “tour of inspection” results in the initiation of “provinces” as units of territorial division, twelve in total, followed by the establishment of a matching number of key mountains and making rivers deeper, the latter unnumbered. The repeated emphasis on the number twelve correlates with the twelve-to-four pattern underlying the “tour of inspection”.⁴⁶

[*Shang shu*, “Shun dian”, Karlgren “Yao dian 2”, § 21:]

肇十有二州，封十有二山，濬川。 *Zhao shiyouer zhou, fu shiyouer shan, dian chuan*

[Shun] founded the “Twelve provinces”, assigned twelve mountains [and] deepened rivers.

⁴⁴ An elaborate month-by-month description of the yearly ritual cycle, starting from the first month of spring, constitutes the “Shier ji” section of the *Lüshi chunqiu* and the “Yue ling” chapter of the *Li ji*, referred to above.

⁴⁵ In particular, during his “tour of inspection” Shun “unified pitches, degrees, volumes and weights” (*tong lü du liang heng* 同律度量衡), but these actions are part of arranging space, and not the main goal. Though a relation between the twelve *gao* 佁 and a twelve-pitch scale is highly plausible, the interpretation of landscape features in terms of their sounds, as proposed by Allan in her translation of slip 31, does not have any grounds for support in the manuscript or transmitted texts.

⁴⁶ *Shangshu zhengyi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 3/8b; Legge, trans. 1865, pp. 38 (§ 10); Couvreur 1897, p. 20 (§ 10), Karlgren, trans. 1950, pp. 5-6, § 21. References to the *Shang shu* hereafter follow its convenient division into chapters and paragraphs by Bernhard Karlgren; translations of the *Shang shu* provided hereafter are my own; they take into consideration the three main scholarly translations that differ between each other and include my own emendations.

The outcome of Shun's "tour of inspection", in turn, is further paraphrased in the introduction to the establishment of the "Nine Provinces" (*Jiu zhou* 九州, literally "Nine Isle-lands") by his subordinate and then successor, Yu the Great 大禹, as described in the "Yu gong" 禹貢 ("Yu's [system] of Tribute") chapter of the *Shang shu*.⁴⁷

[*Shang shu*, "Yu gong", Karlgren, § 1:]

禹敷土, 隨山刊木, 奠高山大川. *Yu fu tu, sui shan kan mu, dian gao shan da chuan*

Yu laid out the lands; moved along the mountains [as orientation marks and]
cut down trees (or made cuts [as signs] on trees)
[in order to blaze itineraries through forested highlands],
settled the high mountains [and] the big rivers.

According to these summaries, both Shun and Yu first put in order mountains and then rivers. A detailed arrangement of terrestrial space in this particular sequence is developed further in the "Yu gong", in the description of the ways of communication Yu paved through the "Nine Provinces": first nine land itineraries marked by mountains, then nine river itineraries.⁴⁸

Another summary of Yu's regulations included into the "Yi [and Hou] Ji" 益 稷 (Karlgren: "Gao Yao mo 2") chapter of the *Shang shu* contains the same phrase about mountains found in the introduction to the description of the "Nine Provinces" in the "Yu gong", but is distinguished by paying special attention to regulating waterways:⁴⁹

[*Shang shu*, "Yi [and Hou] Ji", Karlgren: "Gao Yao mo 2", § 9:]

予乘四載, 隨山刊木... *Yu cheng si zai, sui shan kan mu...*

予決九川, 距四海; *Yu jue jiu chuan, ju si hai,*

濬畎澮, 距川. *Dian quan kuai, ju chuan.*

I (= Yu) having mounted my four (kinds of) conveyances,
moved along the mountains [as orientation marks and]
cut down trees (or made cuts [as signs] on trees)
[in order to blaze itineraries through forested highlands].

I (= Yu) released the flows of the nine [main] rivers and
led [them] into the seas of the four [cardinal directions],
deepened field-drains and [drainage] ducts and led [them] into the [main] rivers.

⁴⁷ *Shangshu zhengyi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 6/1a-b; Legge, trans. 1865, pp. 92-93 (§ 1); Couvreur, trans. 1897, pp. 61-62 (§ 1); Karlgren, trans. 1950, pp. 12-13, §1.

⁴⁸ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009], pp. 627-629.

⁴⁹ *Shangshu zhengyi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 5/1a-b; Legge, trans. 1865, pp. 77-78 (§ 1); Couvreur, trans. 1897, pp. 49-50 (§ 1); Karlgren, trans. 1950, pp. 9-10, § 9, but is not identical to any of them. The resulting translation is to a considerable extent inspired by the interpretation of this passage by Artemy M. Karapetiants during his classical Chinese lessons I was privileged to attend during my university and post-graduate studies (1980-1985). For a recent general discussion of "Gao Yao mo" chapter in the modern script recension, see Vogelsang 2017, pp. 63-78.

In contrast to the simple “deepening” of rivers by Shun and by Yu in the introduction to the “Nine Provinces”, the passage from the “Yi [and Hou] Ji” (“Gao Yao mo 2”) describes his arranging waterways into a two-level system of interconnected waterways for draining the excess waters of the Flood – the higher level of the “nine [main] rivers” *jiu chuan* 九川, which empty their waters into the seas of the four cardinal directions, and the lower level of “field-drains and [drainage] ducts” *quan kuai* 畎澮, which drain into the main rivers.⁵⁰ Yet, despite this focus on waterways, arranging space still starts from mountains.

A more elaborate and structurally perfect version of successive drainage system of six levels is featured in the “Shi shui” 釋水 (“Explaining Waterways”), chapter 12 of the *Er ya* 爾雅 dictionary (ca. 2nd century BC).⁵¹ The waterways are also listed from large to small, as follows: *chuan* 川 [main] rivers ← *xi* 谿 creeks ← *gu* 谷 *gu* [river] valleys ← *gou* 溝 [drainage] ditches ← *kuai* 澮 [drainage] ducts ← *du* 瀆 [drainage] trenches.⁵²

[*Er ya*, ch. 12 “Shi shui”, §1:]

水注川曰谿, *shui zhu chuan yue xi*,
 注谿曰谷, *zhu gu yue gu*,
 注谷曰溝, *zhu gou yue gou*,
 注溝曰澮, *zhu gou yue kuai*,
 注澮曰瀆.⁵³ *zhu kuai yue du*

Waterways, which pour into the [main] rivers are called creeks;
 those which pour into creeks are called [river] valleys;
 those which pour into [river] valleys are called [drainage] ditches;

⁵⁰ For a recent reassessment of the Flood legend see Allan 2017.

⁵¹ Being drawn from different materials, the *Er ya* retains some concepts rejected in early imperial historiography, such as the location of the Yellow River source at Kunlun Mountain. In the “Yu gong” the Yellow River begins in Jishi 積石, whereas in late Warring States – Early Han texts such as the *Mu Tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (“Narrative of the Son of Heaven, Mu”, late 4th-early 3rd cc. BC) and the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (“Itineraries of Mountains and Seas”, compiled about the 1st century BC), its begins in Kunlun Mountain. For the ideological importance of determining the ‘true’ source of the Yellow River in early imperial cartography, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2005-2006.

⁵² Precise translation of these waterway terms needs a special study. Here I try to use more or less matching equivalents, different for each different character.

⁵³ *Erya Guozhu* 爾雅郭注 (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 7.9b. Subsequently, see *Erya Guozhu* 爾雅郭注 (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 7.10a, the drainage trenches *du* 瀆 are glossed by the four rivers pouring into the sea: 江河淮濟為四瀆, 四瀆者, 發源注海者也 *Jiang He Huai Ji wei Sidu, Sidu zhe, fa yuan zhu hai zhe ye* “The Jiang, He, Huai and Qi rivers constitute the Four [main] drainage trenches; the Four [main] drainage trenches are those who have spouting sources that pour into the sea”. However, from the logic of the drainage system described in the “Yi [and Hou] Ji”/“Gao Yao mo 2”, the four rivers match better as a gloss for the largest waterways in the system – *chuan* 川.

those which pour into [drainage] ditches are called [drainage] ducts,
 those which pour into [drainage] ducts are called [drainage] trenches.

While at first sight the richness of the vocabulary for types of waterways in the *Er ya* is impressive, a closer look reveals that the vocabulary for mountains in this dictionary is even more abundant. Entries about mountains are divided with respect to two categories – “Shi qiu” 釋丘 (“Explaining Peaks”, chapter 10) and “Shi shan” 釋山 (“Explaining Mountains”, chapter 11). These two chapters precede chapter 12 on waterways, thus again respecting the sequence from mountains to waters. Finally, the sequence from mountains to waters determines the structure of the most comprehensive early Chinese description of the “natural” world in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (“Itineraries of Mountains and Seas”, compiled about the 1st century BC), composed of the “Shan jing” 山經 (“Itineraries of Mountains”) and the “Hai jing” 海經 (“Itineraries of Seas”). In addition, as in the case of the *Er ya*, it is characterised by the quantitative prevalence of mountains over waters. Firstly, the “mountains” part is about twice as large as the “seas” part. Secondly, the itineraries of the “Shan jing”, a detailed version of Yu’s land itineraries, are delineated from mountain to mountain. Rivers here are secondary landmarks, subordinated to mountains. They are registered only in cases where they have their source in mountains, and are greatly outnumbered by mountains.⁵⁴

In sum, according to such representative texts as the *Shang shu*, the *Er ya* and the *Shanhai jing*, the conception of terrestrial space builds on the predominance of mountains over rivers. This point is of crucial importance for understanding the message behind the outcome of “performing the *gao*” in slip 31:

[*Rong Cheng shi*, slip 31:]

以匳(=越)於溪浴(=谷),	<i>yi wei (yue) yu xi yu,</i>	This enabled [him] to traverse brooks and river-valleys,
濟於廣川,	<i>ji yu guang chuan,</i>	cross broad rivers;
高山陞,	<i>gao shan sheng,</i>	high mountains became ascendable,
蓁林...	<i>zhen lin</i>	dense forests...

[end of slip 31]

The wording is very similar to the summaries of space regulation by Shun and Yu in the *Shang shu*, especially to those by Yu, which are more detailed – they include trees, as attributes of mountains, and supply mountains and rivers with augmenting adjectives, though this is a difference of detail rather than substance. At the same time, in slip 31 the sequence of managing landscape features is inversed – *arranging waterways precedes arranging mountains*. In addition, moving across terrestrial space is effectuated not with respect to mountains – as a tour of cardinal peaks by Shun or “moving along mountains” (*sui shan* 隨山) by Yu, but through waterways – “traversing” and “crossing”

⁵⁴ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 1995, esp. p. 59, footnote 8, and p. 90, table 1.

them (*wei* [=yue] 甌(=越) and *ji* 濟, respectively). This is a cardinally different view of terrestrial space, one in which the main structuring elements are waterways.⁵⁵ And, indeed, this characteristic perfectly matches the version of the “Nine Provinces” described in the *Rong Cheng shi*, which primarily builds on the idea of successive drainage. Its general principle, as mentioned above, is formulated in the “Yi [and Hou] Ji” (“Gao Yao mo 2”) and the “Shi shui” through a system of abstract waterways of hierarchically different types. The “Nine Provinces” of the *Rong Cheng shi* apply this principle to specific waterways and describe the well-known rivers of the Yellow River and the Yangzi River basins as such a system.⁵⁶ The emphasis on waterways in slip 31 correlates with the primary role of waterways in the “Nine Provinces” in this manuscript.

1.3. Proposed placement of slip 31

The above comparison of slip 31 with transmitted texts and the correlation of arranging landscape, beginning from waters, with the drainage concept of the “Nine Provinces” allows one to conclude that it most likely refers to the group of slips that describe Shun’s and Yu’s activities.

In the *Shang shu*, which became the canonical version of the origins of history in early imperial historiography, one finds an interesting phenomenon – the spatial arrangements of Shun and Yu are characterised by a certain replication with respect to each other. The similar summaries of Shun’s and Yu’s management of landscape features progressing from mountains to waters provide a good example. Although Shun’s “Twelve Provinces” are only briefly mentioned and Yu’s “Nine Provinces” are described in much greater detail, both follow the same principle of managing terrestrial space, where the number of “provinces” is matched by the same number of arranged features of landscape, and is, therefore, also a replication. Shun’s and Yu’s spatial arrangements are distinguished on a formal level, from the attribution of different numbers to the separation of certain functions. Elsewhere I have discussed that the regulation of space through communicating with spirits *shen* 神 in the *Shang shu* is an exclusive prerogative of Shun, but that in transmitted texts not included into the Confucian “canon” this distinction is not respected.⁵⁷ The reason is that, with the exception of the *Shang shu* and its citations, the division into “provinces” is credited only to Yu, as is the major input into regulating space in all its aspects. In the *Shang shu*

⁵⁵ For the concept of “water” (*shui* 水) in early Chinese thought and its implications, see Allan 1997.

⁵⁶ I have discussed the “Nine Provinces” of the *Rong Cheng shi* in detail elsewhere, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 37-41. The description of the “Nine Provinces” is reproduced in APPENDIX.

⁵⁷ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009], pp. 636-644. Thus, in alternative versions of Yu’s labours, e.g., in the *Shanhai jing*, Yu relies heavily on spirits. However, spirits do not play an important role in the *Rong Cheng shi*. The character *shen* occurs only once as part of a placename in slip 40, and, through a loan character, in the name of Shen Nong (slip 1), so cannot serve as a criterion by which to distinguish between the functions of Shun and Yu in this manuscript.

the merit is divided between Shun and Yu: as ruler Shun initiated and inspired spatial regulation, while Yu successfully developed on them, having started as Shun's foreman.

The transmitted version of Shun's and Yu's spatial regulations found in the *Shang shu*, more precisely in the "Shun dian" ("Yao dian 2"), the "Yi [and Hou] Ji" ("Gao Yao mo 2") and the "Yu gong" chapters, underwent considerable editing in becoming the canonical version, which allowed for replication. Replication is also apparent in Yu's regulations – the very similar summaries that precede the draining of excess waters in the "Yi [and Hou] Ji" ("Gao Yao mo 2") chapter and the description of the "Nine Provinces" in the "Yu gong" can be regarded as such. Putting aside the reasons for such replications in the *Shang shu*, let us strip them down to the basic structural nodes of Shun's and Yu's spatial regulations. These are as follows: Shun performs the ritual regulation of space according to a twelve-fold "cosmograph"-like pattern → summary of managed landscape features → Yu realises practical regulation of terrestrial space through draining floodwaters and establishing the "Nine Provinces".⁵⁸ In the *Rong Cheng shi* one finds a concise version of these three nodes: a cardinaly-oriented scheme of performing twelve *gao* followed by a summary of managed landscape features in slip 31, and establishing the "Nine Provinces" in the drainage process in slips 24-27. If we take the canonical version of Shun's and Yu's regulations as a basis for comparison, slip 31 most likely refers to Shun's regulations and should precede the description of the "Nine Provinces".

The description of the "Nine Provinces" in the *Rong Cheng shi* is the core of a *definitive group* of slips (23+15+/-24–30), nine slips in total, or eight if one considers slips 24 and 15 as pieces of the same slip, the sequence of which is not in doubt. Many scholars now consider slips 16 – 22 as belonging to this group, and place them immediately after slip 30. I suggest that a possible placement of slip 31 could be prior to slip 23.⁵⁹ The beginning of this slip is broken off, but the surviving piece is the second and the final reference to the general state of the landscape in the manuscript, this time in its negative state: after three years of Shun's rulership the landscape features became unmanageable and required Yu's appointment as a foreman:

[*Rong Cheng shi*, slip 23:]

...舜聽政三年, *Shun ting zheng sannian,*

山陞(=陵)不^𡵓(尻=處), *Shanling buchū,*

水滌(=潦)不^𡵓(?), *Shuilao bujie,*

乃立禹以為司工. *Nai li Yu yi wei sigong.*

Shun administered the government for three years.

⁵⁸ A summary of Shun's regulations concludes his "tour of inspection", and in the case of Yu's regulations they precede them, so if one considers them as replications, one can reduce them to one.

⁵⁹ The beginning of slip 31 does not fit with the end of slip 12, which since Chen Jian's rearrangement has been accepted as preceding slip 23 by the majority of scholars. Therefore, such a placing of slip 31 would require further rearrangements.

[During this time] mountains and hills were uninhabitable,
waterways and rainwaters did not flow,
[Shun] then established Yu as the Master of Public Works.

This description of terrestrial space as being in disorder follows the common sequence *from mountains to waters*, because in this way it prioritises the main problem – the “uninhabitability” (*bu chu* 不處) of the land. Establishing the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* means solving this problem, as “provinces” are conceived of as pieces of land which have become “suitable for inhabiting, habitable” (*ke chu* 可處) due to Yu’s regulations of waterways.⁶⁰ The description of the disordered landscape in slip 23 alludes to the image of the Flood in the *Shang shu* – inundated mountains and hills:

[*Shang shu*, “Yao dian”, Karlgren, § 11, and “Yi [and] Ji”, Karlgren “Gao Yao mo 2”, § 9:]

懷山襄陵 *huai shan xiang lin*

[The waters of the Flood] encircled mountains and rose above the hills.

In addition, the occurrence in the “Yi [and] Ji”, Karlgren: “Gao Yao mo 2”, is followed by the phrase *xia min hun dian* 下民昏墊, which can be understood as “people [dwelling] below [live] in semi-darkness and make pillar constructions”, implying a difficulty of habitation.⁶¹ The landscape becoming unmanageable after a certain period of time, as

⁶⁰ The term 可處 in total is used 6 times (slips 25-27), see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 24-27. This character occurs in the manuscript one other time in the meaning “to reside at [place]” (*chu yu* 處於) in the description of Yao’s whereabouts: 昔堯處於丹府與囿陵之間 *Xi Yao chu yu Danfu Dianling zhi jian* (“In former times Yao resided between Danfu and Dianling”), slip 6. Altogether this character is found in the *Rong Cheng shi* 8 times. However, in slip 23 an error in transcription of this character was introduced with the first transcription of the manuscript by Li Ling and has persisted since then in all relevant studies and translations. The graph 𡵚 in slip 23 is drawn in the same way as all its other occurrences in the manuscript, where it is identified with the character *chu* 處. Yet, Li Ling identifies it with *xu* 序 (“to make into a sequence, to order”) and Chen Jian with *shu* 疏 (“to guide, to direct, to sparse [as a comb sparses hair]”), see Ma Chengyuan (ed.), 2002, p. 267; Chen Jian 2004, p. 329. Yuri Pines and Sarah Allan, following Chen Jian, translate the phrase in question a similar way, as “mountain ranges could not be passed through” or “the mountains and hills did not have passes”, respectively, see Pines 2010, pp. 9-10; Allan 2015, pp. 202-203 and 239, see also Allan 2017, p. 27, alluding to Yu’s passing through mountains. For comparison, in the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 the character 處 occurs once, also as a verb and is written in a close, but not completely similar way: 𡵚, see Li Ling 2013, p. 86, and is transcribed as 𡵚 (inner short text, column 1, character 11), Li Ling 2017, vol. II, p. 229 (here the reference to the occurrence of the character in the text is missing, for the occurrence, see p. 59).

⁶¹ *Shangshu zhengyi* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 5/1a. This phrase has posed difficulties for commentators and translators, cf. translations of the Flood description by Legge, trans. 1865, pp. 77-78 (§ 1); Couvreur, trans. 1897, pp. 49-50 (§ 1); Karlgren, trans. 1950, pp. 9-10 (§ 9). The translation provided here is based on its analysis by my teacher of classical Chinese, Artemy M. Karapetiants, during text-reading seminar of selected chapters of the *Shang shu* for post-graduate students of the Institute of Asian and African Studies (Moscow State University) in 1990. For the history of dwelling constructions in China, see Liu Dunzhen 刘敦桢 1957.

stated in slip 23, implies that it was manageable before, and from this point of view the proposed sequence of slips 31 and 23 fits. According to the proposed sequence of slips the narrative on the regulation of terrestrial space matches the general logic of its development in the *Shang shu*: Shun made initial, but insufficient arrangements, and Yu completed them.

Apart from the summaries on the state of terrestrial space in slips 31 and 23, mountains are mentioned in the *Rong Cheng shi* only once more, in an enumeration of types of land suitable for habitation – highlands (mountains and hills) and lowlands (*ping xi* 平隰 – plains and marshes):

[*Rong Cheng shi*, slip 18:]

禹乃因山陵平隰之可邦邑[*end of slip 18; beginning of slip 19*:]者而繁實之.

Yu nai yin shanling pingxi zhi ke bangyi zhe er fan shi zhi

Yu then, having [established places] suitable for polities and settlements, according to [the configuration of] mountains and hills, plains and marshes, lavishly filled them [with population].⁶²

1.4. The correlation of mountains and waterways in the *Rong Cheng shi* and the *Chu Silk Manuscript No.1*

References to mountains in this manuscript are not only quite rare – three in total, but in all these cases they refer to generic mountains.⁶³ In contrast to mountains, references to waterways in the *Rong Cheng shi* are not only numerous and diverse, but the majority are specific rivers, lakes and marshes.⁶⁴

Now the question is whether this emphasis on waterways in the *Rong Cheng shi* is only due to the central role of drainage in the conception of terrestrial space in this manuscript, or whether it may be considered generally characteristic of Chu texts. To this end, let us turn to the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, which is especially representative for its focus on cosmography. The Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 always respects the sequence *from mountains to waters*. The traversability both of mountains and rivers, is, however, expressed by a term, the literal meaning of which is to “pass through rivers” (*she* 涉), similar to the terms for traversability in slip 31 of the *Rong Cheng shi*. In

⁶² Pines 2010, p. 12; Allan 2015, pp. 207-208, 245-246.

⁶³ The names of two specific mountains are found in the *Rong Cheng shi*, but only as parts of personal or lineage names – 岷山是(=氏) Minshan shi and 鬲山是(=氏) Lishan shi (slips 38 and 40, respectively), and, therefore, not directly related to describing terrestrial space.

⁶⁴ In the description of the “provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* (slips 24-27) one finds fourteen specific waterways, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, p. 47, table 3.

addition, the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 is distinguished by a rich diversity of waterways types, the passage below being an example of all three characteristics:⁶⁵

[Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, inner short text, column 3, characters 24-31:]

...以涉山陵瀧汧函溝 *yi she shan ling long gan dang wan*

...in order to pass through mountains [and] hills, fast waters, dirty waters, reservoirs(?), 10000 rivulets(?)

At the same time, in the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, mountains are more prevalent than in the *Rong Cheng shi*. Mountains paired with hills are mentioned in this manuscript three times independently from waterways.⁶⁶ One of these occurrences is of special interest, as it is an attribute of the “Nine Provinces” similar to the pattern found in the “Yu gong”:⁶⁷

[Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, inner short text, column 5, characters 3-10:]

九州不坪 *jiuzhou bu ping* Nine Provinces were not on the [appropriate] ground-level.

山陵備峽 *shanling bei shi(?)* Mountains and hills were about to collapse(?)⁶⁸

Two more references to mountains are found in summaries of the main landscape features, where mountains appear first, but waterways are diverse and in a hierarchy:

[Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, inner short text, column 3, characters 11-14:]

山川四海 *shanchuan sihai* mountains [and] rivers, the four seas⁶⁹

[Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, inner long text column 11, characters 15-18:]

山川溝浴 *shanchuan, wanyu* mountains [and] rivers, 10000 rivulets(?) [and] river-valleys.⁷⁰

In sum, both the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 and the *Rong Cheng shi* pay considerable attention to waterways. In the former it is manifest through outstandingly diverse terminology for waters. In the *Rong Cheng shi* there is a quantitative and qualitative predominance of waters over mountains. Though the evidence of these two

⁶⁵ The Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 is hereafter referred to according to its transcription by Li Ling following the manuscript’s non-linear layout and his sentence-by-sentence comments in his two last books focused on this manuscript, see Li Ling 2013, plate 8 (transcription); 2017, vol. 2, 62 (comments). Translations are by the author of this article.

⁶⁶ Inner long text: column 2, characters 19-20; inner short text: column 3, characters 5-6, and column 5, characters 7-8 (Li Ling 2013, plate 8; 2017, vol. 2, p. 48, 61 and 63, respectively). In comparison, “[main] rivers” *chuan* 川 are mentioned separately once (surrounding text 7, column 1, character 6, see Li Ling 2013, plate 8; 2017, vol. 2, p. 72), “waters” *shui* 水 twice (inner short text, column 1, character 29; surrounding text 6, column 1, character 7, see Li Ling 2013, plate 8; 2017, vol. 2, p. 60 and 72, respectively).

⁶⁷ Yu is probably referred to in the manuscript, although the meaning of this occurrence is not clear (inner short text, column 2, character 26).

⁶⁸ Li Ling 2013, plate 8; 2017, vol. 2, p. 63.

⁶⁹ Li Ling 2013, plate 8; 2017, vol. 2, p. 61.

⁷⁰ Li Ling 2013, plate 8, 2017, vol. 2, p. 56.

Chu manuscripts may not be conclusive, they are still representative enough to suggest that the emphasis of waters may be a manifestation of a Chu flavour in conceptualising terrestrial space. Concepts of space are necessarily influenced by the nature of the territory where they are produced. In both manuscripts the traversability of territory is designated by terms for passing through waterways. This can only result from the practice of moving through territories with an abundance of waterways, which is, indeed, the case in the middle and lower parts of the Yangzi River basin. If the hypothesis that a pronounced emphasis on waterways may be characteristic of descriptions of terrestrial space of Chu provenance needs further confirmation, it is undeniable that in the *Rong Cheng shi* waterways constitute the main structural elements of the conception of space.

2.0. Drawing a demarcation line along the Han River: cosmographic implication

This evidence for the predominance of waters in the conception of terrestrial space in the *Rong Cheng shi* provides the missing context for understanding the conclusion to the description of the “Nine Provinces” in the manuscript, which by definition points to the main outcome of Yu’s regulations:

[*Rong Cheng shi*, slips 27-28:]

禹乃

從灘(=灘=漢)以南為名浴(=谷)五百,

從 [end of slip 27; beginning of slip 28:]

灘(=灘=漢)以北為名浴(=谷)五百.

天下之民^宅(=居)奠.

Yu nai cong Han yi nan wei ming yu wubai

Cong Han yi bei wei ming yu wubai

Tianxia zhi min ju dian.

Yu then

to the South from the Han [River] created 500 named river-valleys,

to the North from the Han [River] created 500 named river-valleys.

The dwelling places of people through the Under-Heavens [thus] became settled.

This passage, in effect, concisely formulates the general premises of conceptualising terrestrial space in the *Rong Cheng shi*. Firstly, waterways are explicitly recognised here as the main structural elements of the mapping of terrestrial space. Secondly, the orderly arrangement of waterways further assures the stability of “dwelling places” (*ju* 居) or inhabitable land in the Under-Heavens. As mentioned above, the establishment of the “Nine Provinces” is conceived of as a conversion of “uninhabitable” (*bu chu*) landscape into “suitable for inhabiting” (*ke chu*) pieces of land that emerged when the

waters were drained.⁷¹ The stability of “dwelling places” through the entire Under-Heavens is, therefore, the ultimate goal of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi*.

Yet, this does not solve the main puzzle – the unusual division of the mapped terrestrial space into South and North along the Han River. It is even more puzzling that the Han River is not mentioned in the description proper of the “Nine Provinces” or elsewhere in the *Rong Cheng shi*. This curious reference to the Han River has been noticed only in passing in previous scholarship. The first explorer of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript, Li Ling, simply mentions the noteworthiness of delineating a borderline between the North and the South along the Han River.⁷² Pines is aware that the phrase “hints at the Han River being of central importance for the authors, which would fit nicely with a Chu location”, but still believes that “the association with Chu remains very meagre” in the manuscript.

I now argue that the demarcation line along the Han River between the South and the North is the crucial point in the description of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi*, if not *the point* of it. In order to clarify all the implications of the demarcation line along the Han River, it is necessary to determine how the position of this river was conceived of in early terrestrial descriptions and traditional historical cartography, beginning from the system of the “Nine Provinces”.

2.1. “Provinces” described in the *Rong Cheng shi*: the method of locating by landmarks

The new version of the “Nine Provinces” discovered in the *Rong Cheng shi* attracted much attention from Chinese specialists on manuscripts and concepts of space.⁷³ The

⁷¹ The synonymous characters for inhabitable land in the manuscript – *chu* 處 and *ju* 居 – are distinguished between each other by their shape (𡩂 and 𡩃, respectively) and function: the former is consistently used as a verb “to inhabit, to dwell, to reside” (8 occurrences in total, see footnote 60 above). Constance Cook noted a similar distinction between these two characters, which were close in their pronunciation, in the *Shifa* 筴法 manuscript from the Qinghua University collection of Warring States bamboo slips (*Qinghua Daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡), see Cook and Zhao Lu 2017.

⁷² Ma Chengyuan, ed., 2002, p. 272 (*Jianwen yi Hanshui zhide zhuyi* 簡文以漢水值得注意).

⁷³ The peak of scholarly interest are the two first years following the manuscript’s publication in 2002, where Li Ling already highlights them in his introduction, see Ma Chengyuan, ed. 2002, p. 249. For the “provinces” proper, see Chen Wei 陳偉 2003, Li Ling 2003, pp. 190-192, Su Jianzhou 蘇建洲 2003, pp. 139-142, §§ 36, 37, 39-41, 45; first published at the Bamboo and Silk forum (*Jianbo yanjiu* (簡帛研究 www.jianbo.com), 29.03.2003; Yan Changgui 晏昌貴 2004a; 2004): 503-06; first published under a slightly different title at the Bamboo and Silk forum, 6.04.2003; Shen Jianhua 沈建華 2004; Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清 2004; first published at the Bamboo and Silk forum, 07.08.2003; Yi Desheng 易德生 2006, 2009; first published at the Bamboo and Silk forum, 5.02.2006 and 27.03.2006, respectively. For related issues, see Chen Jian 2004, first published at the Bamboo and Silk forum, 09.9.2003, Liu Lexian

unusual names of many of the “provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* and the unusual way of describing them in pairs gave an initial impression that a Chu version of the “Nine Provinces” has been discovered.⁷⁴ However, multiple investigations of it showed that, apart from these, the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the “Nine Provinces” does not contain anything new with respect to transmitted texts. On the contrary, it has multiple parallels with a broad range of transmitted texts, in particular with descriptions of the “Nine Provinces”. My own input into these investigations was to evaluate the new version of the “Nine Provinces” with respect to their transmitted accounts and other references to them in terms of conceptualising space. In this respect, this approach reveals the outstandingly eclectic character of the manuscript version of the “Nine Provinces”. It combines spatial concepts related to the “Nine Provinces” that became distinct in transmitted texts, and, therefore, throws new light on the group of transmitted sources concerned and their filiation. At the same time, the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* appear to have close affinity with the mainstream representation of the “Nine Provinces”, according to the “Yu gong” and its four derivations – the “Youshi lan” 有始覽 (“Observations on the Beginnings”) chapter of the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂始春秋 (compiled by 239 BC), the “Shi di” 釋地 (“Elucidations on the Earth”) chapter of the *Er ya* and the “Zhifang shi” 職方氏 (“Officer in Charge of the Cardinal Directions”) chapter of the *Zhou li* 周禮 (“Zhou Rituals”, compiled by the middle of the 2nd century BC).⁷⁵ My method of determining their affinity was to explore *the names and types of landmarks* that occur in the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the “Nine Provinces” in comparison to their transmitted descriptions, combining a philological approach with their analysis as markers of “positions” in a conception of space.⁷⁶

Firstly, I compared placenames and the context of their occurrence in the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the “Nine Provinces” with their transmitted descriptions and other relevant texts. As already mentioned, all landmarks found in the *Rong Cheng shi* description of the “Nine Provinces” are waterways, and all but one river, Lou 婁, in the most northern “province”, overlap with rivers, lakes and marshes found in descriptions

劉樂賢 13.01.2003, Xu Quansheng 許全勝 14.01.2003, Yan Shixuan (Yen Shih-Hsuan) 顏世鉉 20.02.2003, Cheng Yuanmin 程元敏 2004. For a survey of the first series of these studies, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 22-23. For more studies, see Huang Ren'er 黃人二 2005, Fan Guodong 凡國棟 2007, Yin Hongbing 尹宏兵 2007, Du Yong 杜勇 2008 and 2010, Wang Kunpeng 王坤鵬 15.10.2010.

⁷⁴ Names of seven “provinces” are not found in other sets of the “Nine Provinces”, six “provinces” are described by pairs.

⁷⁵ Dorofeeva-Lichtman 2019 [rev. 2009], pp. 595-644; 2010, pp. 13-58.

⁷⁶ I discuss the concept of “position” in Chinese cosmography in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 1996.

of the “Nine Provinces” of the “Yu gong” group of accounts.⁷⁷ In many cases the context of their occurrence shares the same wording with the transmitted descriptions.

In addition to the usual philological analysis, I explored depictions of waterways found in the *Rong Cheng shi* description of the “Nine Provinces” in maps showing the “Yu gong” topography. The earliest extant maps of the “Nine Provinces” are known from the Southern Song dynasty.⁷⁸ These maps appeared as a form of commentary on the “Yu gong”, and continued to be produced and re-produced from then onwards. Formally referring to the “Yu gong” and mostly based on its topography, these maps sometimes include topographical data from other sources.⁷⁹ I argue that early Chinese descriptions of terrestrial space cannot be adequately comprehended without taking into consideration traditional Chinese cartography, which continues the same tradition of conceiving of space, and especially not without the historical maps drawn as visual elucidations on early texts. Modern Western maps, often used by default for illustrating early Chinese texts in contemporary studies, are aimed at a topographically accurate and complete representation of the terrestrial surface. Song maps of the “Yu gong” topography are of a radically different – relational, positional or diagrammatic – category of maps, typologically similar to relational tree diagrams.⁸⁰ The Song dynasty maps build on a limited selection of landmarks, and aim to show their arrangement with respect to each other, which serves to convey spatial ideas without much concern for topographical accuracy. The majority of landmarks listed in the “Yu gong” and then visualised in maps are inspired by the real topography of the Yellow and the Yangzi river basins, but once selected, these landmarks immediately become markers of relative positions.⁸¹ Positions in maps can be shifted quite considerably with respect to the real locations of landmarks for the sake of the desired spatial arrangements. In addition, landmarks borrowed from real topography are often transformed and supplemented by landmarks that actually do not exist.⁸²

⁷⁷ For identifications of this river with rivers mentioned in early Chinese terrestrial descriptions, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 32-33; a list of waterways found in the description of the “Nine Provinces” of the *Rong Cheng shi* is provided in the Annex to the article, see p. 47, table 3.

⁷⁸ Two examples of such maps are provided in my survey paper on the transmitted accounts of the “Nine Provinces” and the *Rong Cheng shi* version in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009], Map 1 and 2 on pp. 619-620. For a detailed study of the Song maps related to the “Yu gong”, see Hofmann 2007.

⁷⁹ For instance, in some maps the Yellow River source is delineated from Kunlun Mountain, as described in the *Shanhai jing*, and not from Jishi 積石, as according to the “Yu gong”, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2005-2006.

⁸⁰ These are tentative definitions, a standard term has not yet been worked out. Typology of East Asian maps was recently discussed by Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Alexei Volkov (2019), their article “Typology of East Asian Maps and Formal Approaches to Their Study” is in preparation for the *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine* journal.

⁸¹ In particular, itineraries of the “Yu gong”, as well as of the *Shanhai jing* are chains of relative locations.

⁸² One notable non-existent landmark is the “Nine [branches] of the He River” (Jiu He – 九河) located on “Yu gong” maps in the lower Yellow River valley and apparently inspired by the changing flow of the

While using waterways found in the description of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* as a means by which to approximate locations of each “province”, I combined the application of the Western maps and the “Yu gong” topography maps.⁸³ This is not simply circumscribing geographical areas. This method shows the “provinces” of the *Rong Cheng shi* and their landmarks as elements of relational mapping, and compares them with the relational topography of the “Yu gong”. Apart from sharing the same landmarks as markers of the same territorial core with the “Yu gong” group of the “Nine Provinces”, the *Rong Cheng shi* set of “provinces” manifests a typological affinity with them in terms of the relational arrangements of landmarks.⁸⁴

Following the text of the early Chinese written sources and the images of traditional “Yu gong” cartography, I refer to the rivers as they appear in these texts and maps, for instance, He and Jiang not the Yellow River and the Yangzi River. This is because these latter names, especially in the case of the Yangzi, do not always completely correspond to the configuration of landmarks listed in the early sources. In addition, Yangzi is a toponym current in the Western cartography, its Chinese equivalent is a derivate of Jiang – Changjiang 長江 (“Long Jiang”). This approach allows one to understand what precisely is meant in the references to these landmarks in early texts, and is one of the reasons why I provide, in the majority of cases, my own translations of textual passages.

Yellow River. It is usually depicted as a splitting of the Yellow River course into nine separate branches, which unite again before the Yellow river falls into the sea (see **Map 4**) or less frequently as a widening of its course (see **Map 1a**). Transformed landmarks are often depicted in a variety of ways. This is the case with the Three Jiang rivers 三江 and the Nine Jiang rivers 九江, although in “Yu gong” topography they are always shown as being around the mouth of the Yangzi (for the Three Jiang) and its middle course for (the Nine Jiang). For a survey of representations of the Nine [branches of the] He River and the Nine Jiang in Song maps of the “Yu gong”, see Hofmann 2007, pp. 98-114 and 115-132, respectively. An example of a non-existent landmark difficult to associate with a real river is the Black River (*Heishui* 黑水), see Hofmann 2007, pp. 133-148. For examples of the Three Jiang, the Nine Jiang and the Black River, see **Map 1a** and **Map 4**.

⁸³ For the approximate regions covered by the “provinces” of the *Rong Cheng shi*, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009] (Map 4 on page 634, discussed on pp. 630-635) and 2010 (Map 1 on pp. 46-48, discussed on pp. 44-45).

⁸⁴ It would be interesting to apply this method to one more transmitted set of the “Nine Provinces” found in the “Dixing xun” 地形訓, chapter 4 of the *Huainanzi*. Names of “provinces” in this set are radically different from those in the “Yu gong” group. The difference in names is generally explained by the fact that, in contrast to the “Yu gong” group, the *Huainanzi* extrapolates the 3x3 grid to mapping the entire inhabited world, see Major 1984, Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009], table 5 on p. 614. However, landmarks listed in the *Huainanzi* to a considerable extent overlap with the landmarks occurring in the “Yu gong” group of descriptions of the “Nine Provinces”. In addition, the “Dixing xun” chapter of the *Huainanzi* has much in common with the “Youshi lan”, chapter 13 of the *Lüshi chunqiu*. It may be interesting to revisit the “Nine Provinces” set of the *Huainanzi* with the approach I have applied to the *Rong Cheng shi* description of the “Nine Provinces”.

2.2. The limits of the “Nine Provinces” : the transgressible and non-transgressible

The investigation by landmarks of the “Nine Provinces” described in the *Rong Cheng shi* summarised above was primarily aimed at approximating the areas of single “provinces”. Drawing a demarcation line between South and North along the Han River raises the issue of the general area of the territory thus divided and its limits. The limits of the area covered by different sets of the “Nine Provinces” have not yet been systematically discussed in scholarly literature. Under the limits here I mean landmarks, which are conceived of as bordermarkers. I shall investigate them applying the same method, which combines philological analysis with the examination of their positions in maps of the “Yu gong” topography. The limits of the “Nine Provinces” described in the “Yu gong” are defined in the conclusion to their description:⁸⁵

[*Shang shu*, “Yu gong”, Karlgren, § 38:]

東漸于海,	<i>Dong jian yu Hai</i>	In the East washed by the Sea ,
西被于流沙,	<i>Xi bei yu Liusha</i>	In the West tucked by the Flowing Sand ,
朔南暨,	<i>Shuo nan ji</i>	In the North and the South reach the limits ,
聲教,	<i>Sheng jiao</i>	[Yu’s] fame and teaching
訖于四海.	<i>Qi yu Sihai</i>	filled up all within the four seas.

The East and West are delimited by “fluid” boundaries, the Sea and the Flowing Sand, inspired by the East China Sea and the Gobi-Taklamakan desert zone, respectively.⁸⁶ The zone of sand in the Chinese view of space was designated by “watery” characters – the character “sand” (sha 沙) has the “water” radical and its adjective “flowing” (*liu* 流) is usually applied to rivers. In this way the sand zone in the West made a “fluid” counterpart to the Sea in the East. The indefinite northern and southern limits in the ‘Yu gong’ are further determined in one of the latest texts related to the “Yu gong” group, the “Wang zhi” 王制 chapter (ca. 2nd century BC) of the *Li ji*. It does not feature any

⁸⁵ Difficulties in understanding and alternative interpretations of this passage are discussed by Legge 1865, pp. 150-151 (§ 23); Couvreur 1897, pp. 88-89 (§ 23). See also Karlgren 1950, pages 16 and 18, § 38. The character 聲 *sheng* (“sound”), here usually translated as “fame”, plays an important role in the cardinally-oriented space regulation described in slip 31.

⁸⁶ Gobi-Taklamakan is a long desert zone to the North-West of the core Chinese territories. The desert zone includes smaller deserts, the closest of which to the territories covered by the “Nine Provinces”, the Tengger and Badain Jaran, are characterised by sand dunes, which most likely inspired the idea of the Flowing Sand. In traditional Chinese cartography, the Flowing Sand gradually became the name of the Taklamakan Desert, beginning from the Ming dynasty depicted as a cyst-shaped branch of the main part of the desert zone – Shamo 沙漠 (Gobi), literally the Sand Mist, shaped as a thick band, which crosses the north-western periphery of the imperial realm. Although the Gobi is a rocky and pebble-strewn desert, its Chinese name provides clear evidence that in the Chinese tradition of representing space it was conceived of as a sandy desert. For the graphic symbol for a desert zone in Chinese cartography, which appears only in the Ming dynasty, see Kazutaka UNNO, 1981, Papelitzky 2021.

specific set of “provinces”, but instead provides a list of measurements, which allow one to assemble an ideal 3x3 square grid framework underlying the “Nine Provinces”. The Eastern boundary here appears with the adjective “eastern” - the Eastern Sea, making it a better pair to the Flowing Sand, and the limits in the South and North are marked by mountains, Heng 衡 and Heng1 恆, respectively. Thus, there is the symmetry of the fluid boundaries in the East and West, and the mountains in the South and North:

[*Li ji*, chapter “Wang zhi”:]

西不盡流沙, <i>Xi bu jin Liusha</i>	In the West does not exceed the Flowing Sand ,
南不盡衡山, <i>Nan bu jin Hengshan</i>	In the South does not exceed the Heng Mountain ,
東不盡東海, <i>Dong bu jin Donghai</i>	In the East does not exceed the Eastern Sea ,
北不盡恆山. <i>Bei bu jin Heng1shan</i>	In the North does not exceed the Heng1 Mountain . ⁸⁷

Heng and Heng1 mountains are mentioned in the “Yu gong”, but not yet as markers of the cardinal points.⁸⁸ It is also noteworthy that in the “Yu gong” the definition of limits is centrifugal – the territories inside extend as far as the defined limits, while in the “Wang zhi” it is centripetal – the territories do not exceed them. The Heng and Heng1 mountains are now identified with real mountains having these names in southern Hunan and northern Shanxi, respectively. One should, however, keep in mind that their actual identifications may have been determined later, and that these mountains may have had alternative identifications, as is the case with many Chinese placenames. For this reason it is especially important to examine depictions of landmarks under these names in traditional Chinese maps, as they show their relative locations.⁸⁹

One of the earliest and the most clearly drawn example of the “Yu gong” maps is the “Map of moving along mountains and deepening rivers, as registered in the Yu gong” (*Yugong suo zai suishan junchuan zhi tu* 禹貢所載隨山濬川之圖) from the *Collected Commentaries on the Book of Documents* (*Shu jizhuan* 書集傳) completed in 1209 by Cai Shen 蔡沈, also known as Cai Jiufeng 蔡九峰 (1167-1230), see **Map 1a**. The Eastern Sea and the Flowing Sand, Heng and Heng1 Mountains are prominently

⁸⁷ *Liji Zheng zhu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 4.18a; Legge, 1885, vol. 27, p. 245 (V, § 19); Couvreur 1913, vol. 1, pp. 321-322 (V, § 19).

⁸⁸ These mountains belong to the “Five Peaks” (*Wuyue* 五岳), sets of which can, however, vary in early Chinese sources.

⁸⁹ Relative locations can vary between the maps, but only within a limited area. For instance, a landmark associated with the East will never be depicted in the West. Detailed investigation of these variations and their meaning is beyond the scope of this article.

depicted at the corresponding cardinal sides of the map, thus showing how these landmarks demarcate the area, as described in the “Nine Provinces” of the “Yu gong”.

Map 1a. “Map of moving along mountains and deepening rivers, as registered in Yu gong² (*Yugong suo zai suishan junchuan zhi tu* 禹貢所載隨山濬川之圖), in: *Collected Commentaries on the Book of Documents* (*Shujizhuan* 書集傳) completed in 1209 by Cai Shen 蔡沈/Cai Jiufeng 蔡九峰 (1167-1230). National Library of China (Beijing) 中國國家圖書館. [Reproduced from Yan Ping 1998, p. 65]. Printed on two pages in a block-printed book, precise dimensions unavailable.

The key difference between the historical “Yu gong”-type maps and maps showing administrative divisions of the Chinese Empire consists in their southern limits. Those of the “Yu gong” topography do not include territories to the South of Heng Mountain, as is the case of the map by Cai Shen. Contemporary maps of the Song Empire, on the other hand, extend to the sea in the South. Especially instructive here are maps that combine both historical and contemporary topography and administrative divisions. One such example was drawn by Cai Shen for the *Collected Commentaries on the Book of Documents* and, according to its title, aimed at making a comparison between the “Yu gong² topography and the Song imperial realm – “Map of the Nine Provinces of the Yu gong of the contemporary provinces and commanderies” (*Yugong*

Jiuzhou ji jin zhoujun zhi tu 禹貢九州及今州郡之圖), see **Map 1b**. Such maps include southern territories between Heng Mountain and the sea in the South, but historical place-names are only given for landmarks to the North of Heng Mountain and are distinguished from contemporary place-names through using different legends.

Map 1b. “Map of the Nine Provinces of the Yu gong of the contemporary provinces and commanderies” (*Yugong Jiuzhou ji jin zhoujun zhi tu* 禹貢九州及今州郡之圖), in: *Collected Commentaries on the Book of Documents* (*Shujizhuan* 書集傳) completed in 1209 by Cai Shen 蔡沈 /Cai Jiufeng 蔡九峰 (1167-1230). National Library of China (Beijing) 中國國家圖書館. Names of the “Nine Provinces” are marked by circles. [Reproduced from Yan Ping 1998, p. 64]. Printed on two pages in a block-printed book, precise dimensions unavailable.

Another example of maps combining “Yu gong” topography with the Song imperial realm is the “Map of Yu’s Tracks” (*Yuji tu* 禹跡圖, ca. 79.0 (80.0) x 77.0 (79.0) cm, engraved in 1136/7), reproduced in all reference studies on the history of Chinese cartography.⁹⁰ This is a rare case of traditional Chinese cartography with a

⁹⁰ For the pioneering and still most thorough study of the map in the Western languages, see Chavannes 1903. His large-format redrawing of the map with transcription of its characters is reproduced in all the following studies. For a photograph of the stone stele with the map, its rubbing and redrawing with transcription, see the reference atlas of Chinese maps by Cao Wanru 曹婉如 et al. 1999 [repr. 1990],

mathematical background, based on applying a square quantitative grid. The grid scale is 100x100 *li* to the division or the grid's check (see **Map 1c**).⁹¹

Map 1c. “Map of Yu’s Tracks” (*Yuji tu* 禹跡圖, engraved on a stone stele in 1136/7, ca. 79.0 (80.0) x 77.0 (79.0) cm. Redrawing. Square quantitative grid encompassing 72 horizontal and 70 vertical lines of checks; grid scale : 100x100 *li* to the division; side of a check: ca. 1.1-1.2 cm. [Reproduced from [Cao Wanru 曹婉如 et al. 1999 (repr. 1990), plate 56].

This way of the superimposition of historical cartography on the contemporary imperial realm became especially current in Ming cartography and after, see for instance **Map 3** and **Map 5**.

In terms of modern physical geography, the territory covered by the “Nine Provinces” is delimited in the South by the arc of the Nanling and Wuyi mountain

plates 54, 55 and 56, respectively, for the 1142 AD version of the map, see plates 57-9. For discussions of this map in the two main conceptual histories of the Chinese cartography, see Needham and Wang Ling 1959, pp. 547-549, and Yee 1994, pp. 46-49. See also an interesting revision of this map by Hilde De Weerd (2009).

⁹¹ The definition “square [quantitative] grid” is used in the history of the Chinese geography and cartography by Joseph Needham and Wang Ling 1959. The square quantitative grid is cardinally different from the graticule of latitudes and longitudes – they are based on different principles, but since both have a mathematical background, a grid map can be conformed to the system of latitudes and longitudes, and, therefore, geo-referenced. For an attempt at evaluating the map’s topographical precision through its geo-referencing, see Akin and Mumford 2012, whose methods were criticised by Volkov 2015 and 2019.

ranges. These mountains are difficult to cross and thus formed a natural obstacle to going South.⁹² The same applies to depictions of the eastern and the western borders of the “Nine Provinces” in Chinese cartography. These borders are also inspired by serious natural obstacles to territorial extension – the desert region in the North-West and the sea in the East. Maps of the “Nine Provinces” keep strictly to these borders, and in this respect differ from some maps of the contemporary Chinese Empire. Many contemporary maps include the Western Region, and the sea in the East contains the names of insular neighbours. In the “Yu gong” topography maps, the sea is reduced to a thin blank margin, and the Flowing Sand does not have a special cartographic image, being marked only by its name. It is also noteworthy that the Flowing Sand is a natural western limit only of the Yellow River basin, while the Yangzi River basin is delimited by mountainous areas, though it was the view of the Yellow River Basin that determined the idea of the western boundary of the “Nine Provinces”. The “Yu gong” maps adhere to topographical reality and place the Flowing Sand in the North-West.

The situation with the northern boundary is different from all the other cardinal limits of the “Nine Provinces”, which are distinguished by the difficult nature of their transgressibility. Some of the “Yu gong” topography maps include landmarks mentioned in the “provinces”, which are missing in the initial “Yu gong” set. All these supplementary landmarks are small rivers draining into the Bohai Sea. In the maps in question, this region occupies the north-eastern corner.⁹³ One can see from a physical map of China that the Bohai Sea is, indeed, surrounded by lowlands covered by a dense river network, which facilitated territorial expansion, and at the same time is delimited to the West by mountain ranges, thus channelling expansion in a north-easterly direction, see **Map 2a**. It is also noteworthy that Heng1 Mountain located almost on the same longitude with Heng Mountain (113°44'08"E and 112°41'05"E, respectively) in the “Yu gong” maps, is considerably shifted to the North-East. This shift most likely reflects the impulse towards the North-West. The only exception is the “Map of Yu's Tracks” based on the square quantitative grid. Here the placement of Heng and Heng1 mountains (in this map the latter is given its different name – 常山 Chang Mountain)⁹⁴ is close to their real locations – they are placed along two neighbouring vertical columns of the grid, so that the shift is minimal, see **Map 1c**.⁹⁵

⁹² For a long time this natural border protected territories in the South from northern intruders. The southern territories were annexed only with the unification of China into an empire. It is also noteworthy that the southern territories were easier to reach by sailing along the coast.

⁹³ A highly detailed depiction of these rivers is to be found in the “Map of Yu's Tracks”. The data about rivers draining into the Bohai Sea is borrowed mostly from the ‘Zhifang shi’.

⁹⁴ For the variation in the mountain name, see Nienhauser, ed., 1994, pp. 23-24, footnote 27.

⁹⁵ For survey methods that would allow one to locate these two mountains almost along the same latitude – a large-scale gnomonic survey, see Wu Chia-Yun 2021. She compared some locations in the “Map of Yu's Tracks” with a roughly contemporary map of the imperial realm of the same format, which is not explicitly related to the “Yu gong” and does not contain a square grid – “Map of prefectures and counties of the nine districts” (*Jiuyu shouling tu* 九域守令圖 engraved on a stone stele in 1121, ca. 130.0 x 100.0

Map 2a. Physical map of China.

In sum, the “Nine Provinces” is a conception of space reflecting the reduced capacity for territorial expansion, with the exception of the north-eastern corridor, as one can grasp from a scheme of the topographical areas of China, see **Map 2b**. The only flaw of this useful scheme is the lack of a special symbol for the desert area, encompassing the southern part of the Inner Mongolian Plateau and the Tarim basin. This is an interesting echo of the original absence of a special cartographic symbol for desert in Chinese cartography.

cm, see Cao Wanru 1999 [repr. of 1990], plate 65). Some of these locations placed in the “Map of Yu’s Tracks” along a vertical line, in the “Map of prefectures and counties of the nine districts” form a line slightly inclined to the north-east. Shifts of locations between the Chinese scaled maps and maps with no explicit scale or diagrammatic maps deserve a more detailed study, which is beyond the scope of this article.

Map 2b. Topographical areas of China.

The “Nine Provinces” sets of the “Yu gong” group differ in one or two positions; altogether they include twelve names of “provinces”.⁹⁶ This dozen “provinces” is depicted in the “Map of demarcation between the Nine Provinces and the Twelve Provinces of Tang (= Yao 堯) and Yu1 (=Shun 舜)” (*Tang Yu jiuzhou shier zhou fenjie tu* 唐虞九州十二州分界圖) from the *Yue shi yue1 shu* 閱史約書 (“Reviewing History, Weighing Books”) by Wang Guanglu 王光魯 (fl. In mid. 17th century) in 5 juan, published in 1643, see **Map 3**.⁹⁷ In this map, the north-eastern extension is distinguished by means of special cartographic symbols:

- in contrast with all the other sides of the mapped territory, the North-East is not circumscribed by a continuous boundary, thus staying open for further extension;

⁹⁶ For comparison between the “Nine Provinces” sets of the “Yu gong” group of transmitted texts, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009], pp. 608-611, tables 1-4.

⁹⁷ These maps have many topographic characteristics of Ming cartography, e.g., the course of the Yellow River differs from that found on Song maps and the Yellow River source is identified with the Xingxiuhai 星宿海 (Star Lodges Lake), see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2012.

- “provinces” missing in the “Yu gong” set are delineated from each other by double borderlines.

From the point of view of its landmarks, the *Rong Cheng shi* set of the “Nine Provinces” follows the same tendency: it is characterised by a surprisingly large extension to the North-East, and contrary to expectations, does not include any specifically southern landmarks.⁹⁸

Map 3. “Map of demarcation between the Nine Provinces and the Twelve Provinces of Tang (= Yao 堯) and Yu1 (=Shun 舜)” (*Tang Yu jiuzhou shier zhou fenjie tu* – 唐虞九州十二州分界圖), in: *Yue shi yue1 shu* (閱史約書 “Reviewing History, Weighing Books”) by Wang Guanglu 王光魯 in 5 *juan* (published in 1643). National Library of China (Beijing) 中國國家圖書館. [Reproduced from Yan Ping 1998, p. 155]. Printed on two pages in a block-printed book, precise dimensions unavailable.

In sum, from the point of view of textual parallels between transmitted descriptions of the “Nine Provinces” and that in the *Rong Cheng shi* version, and the areas that both the transmitted and the *Rong Cheng shi* sets of “provinces” fill out by

⁹⁸ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 31-33.

landmarks, one can find no specifically Chu spatial concepts in the *Rong Cheng shi*. This conclusion matches the general impression of the manuscript of Yuri Pines, who notes “a curious lack of any Chu-related trait in the *Rong Cheng shi*” and its “absence of Chu flavour”.⁹⁹ Even if one may question considering the “Nine Provinces” as a “northern” view of the core Chinese territories,¹⁰⁰ it is still a view that includes a modest share of the southern territories in the Yangzi River basin and an expanding predominance of the “provinces” that belong to the basin of the Yellow River and further North-East.

2.3. Totals of landscape features as a means of measuring space

Let us now return to the division of terrestrial space into the southern and the northern clusters of waterways by the Han River, beginning with the quantitative implication with respect to the “Nine Provinces”. The use of quantitative topographical summaries *per se* is one of the distinguishing features of early Chinese descriptions of terrestrial space, specifically, the total numbers of waterways found in several Warring States – Former Han texts. Especially interesting is the passage from the “Tianxia” (天下 – “The Under-heavens”) chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 citing the philosopher Mozi 墨子 (ca 470 – ca 391 B.C.E.). The passage is not found in the transmitted version of the *Mozi* treatise, and belongs to the latest layer (“Miscellaneous Chapters” *zapan* 雜篇) of the *Zhuangzi*, which consists of thirty-three chapters composed from the 4th through the 2nd century BC. “Tianxia” is the last – the thirty-third – in the list of chapters and was apparently composed by Zhuangzi’s followers. Yet, the concept referred to in the passage may be dated to the end of Mozi’s lifetime that overlaps with the upper chronological limit of the *Zhuangzi* – the early 4th century BC. Translations of this passage vary considerably in interpretation.¹⁰¹ The detailed description in the *Rong Cheng shi* of how Yu established the “Nine Provinces” through “releasing” *jue* 決 and “communicating/linking” *tong* 通 waterways seems to provide the missing details for a better understanding of this passage.¹⁰² In it the excess waters are drained through a

⁹⁹ Pines 2010, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰⁰ I regard the “Nine Provinces” as a “northern” view, so does Yuri Pines 2010, pp. 11 and 26. This interpretation is criticised by Allan 2015, pp. 205-206. The Flowing Sand, which works as the western limit only for the Yellow River basin, is, however, a strong argument in favour of the “northern” view.

¹⁰¹ *Zhuangzi jishi* 1974, p. 1077; Chen Guying 1983, p. 863; Legge, trans. 1959 [repr. 1885], pp. 659-660; Giles, trans. 1926 [repr. 1889], pp. 441-442; Pozdneeva, trans. 1994 [repr. 1967], p. 357; Watson, trans. 1968, p. 366; Liou, 1969, p. 90; Graham, trans. 1991 [repr. 1981], p. 276; Mair, trans. 1994, p. 337; Malyavin, trans. 2002 [rev. 1995], p. 307.

¹⁰² I discuss the passage from this angle in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, esp. pp. 40-43 in the context of the concept of “making communicate/linking up” when determining the system of waterways described in the *Rong Cheng shi*.

hierarchical system of rivers – **300 big rivers, 3000 of their tributaries and countless small rivers:**

[“Tianxia” chapter of the *Zhuangzi* citing Mozi:]

墨子稱道曰：

昔禹之堙洪水，

決江河而通四夷九州也。

名川三百，

支川三千，

小者無數。

禹親自操橐耜而九雜天下之川...

Mozi cheng dao yu:

Xi Yu zhi yan Hongshui,

Jue Jiang He er tong Siyi Jiuzhou ye.

Mingchuan sanbai,

Zhichuan sanqian,

Xiaozhe wushu.

Yu qin zi cao tuosi er jiu za Tianxia zhi chuan...

Mozi, praising [his] teaching, said:

In former times when Yu was draining off the floodwaters,¹⁰³

[he] released the Jiang and He [rivers]

and made communicate [via waterways the territories of]

the barbarians of the four [cardinal directions] and the Nine Provinces.

The [number of resulted] named rivers is 300;

The [number of their] tributary rivers is 3000;

Small [rivers] are countless.

Yu personally himself operated the sack/basket [for collecting soil] and ploughshare

and [thus within] the Nine [Provinces] interlaced the rivers of the Under-heaven...

A more complete hierarchy of waterways is provided in the “Youshi lan” 有始覽 chapter of the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂始春秋 (compiled by 239 BC).¹⁰⁴ Here there are **6 magistral [river] valleys, 600 main rivers, 3000 tributaries and more than 10000**

¹⁰³ A similar phrase is found in the *Hong fan* 洪範 (“The Great Model”) chapter of the *Shang shu*, but it refers to Yu’s father, Gun 鯀, who was appointed first by Yao to fight the Flood : ...昔鯀堙洪水 “...in former times Gun dammed up Floodwaters”, see *Shangshu zhengyi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 12/2a; Legge, trans. 1865, p. 323 (§3); Couvreur, trans. 1897, p. 195 (§ 3); Karlgren, trans. 1950, pp. 28-29 (§ 3); see also a study focused on *Hong fan* by Nylan 1992, p. 112. The same idea is developed in the concluding paragraph of the *Shanhai jing*: 鯀竊帝之息壤以堙洪水 “Gun has stolen alluvial(?) soil belonging to the Emperor in order to dam up the Flood”, see *Shanhai jing jianshu*, *Sibu beiyao* ed. 18/8b; Yanshina, trans. 1977, p. 129; an annotated translation is by Mathieu, trans. 1983, vol.1, pp. 651-652. Gun’s method failed and he was executed. Yu did the opposite and succeeded – he released excess waters. In the citation from *Mozi*, instead of 堙 *yin* (to dike, to block up; mound, blockage) appears *yin* 湮 with the “water” radical, which means “to spread, to blot [as ink]”. However, taking into consideration the irregular use of radicals in early China, the phrase attributed to Mozi is not very clear.

¹⁰⁴ *Lüshi chunqiu*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 13/3a; Wilhelm, trans. 1928, p. 159; Kamenarovic, trans. 1998, p. 195; Knoblock and Riegel, trans. 2000, p. 281 (§§ 13/1.9-10); Tkachenko, trans. 2001, p. 182.

small rivers.¹⁰⁵ These totals are not strictly related to Yu's ordering of terrestrial space, but are part of the “fundamental structural principles (literally: “beginnings” *shi* 始)” of the Universe (Heavens and Earth) listed at the beginning of this chapter. Except for the mention of the Heavens at the head of the list, all other attributes are of ordered terrestrial space:

[*Lüshi chunqiu*, ch. 13 “Youshi lan”, § 1 “You shi” 有始:]

天有九野,	<i>Tian you Jiuye</i>	Heavens have Nine Fields,
地有九州,	<i>di you Jiuzhou,</i>	Earth has Nine Provinces,
土有九山,	<i>tu you Jiushan,</i>	Soil has Nine Mountains,
山有九塞,	<i>shan you Jiusai,</i>	Mountains have Nine Block-stations,
澤有九藪,	<i>ze you Jiusou,</i>	Marshes have Nine Swamps,
風有八等,	<i>feng you Badeng,</i>	Winds have Eight Degrees (Directions),
水有六川.	<i>shui you Liuchuan</i>	Water(way)s have Six [Main] Rivers.

Each of these total numbers of attributes is further elucidated by names of their constituent elements, e.g. names of each “province”, mountain etc. The “Six [Main] Rivers” include the He 河, the Chi (=Red) 赤, the Liao 遼, the Hei (=Black) 黑, the Jiang 江 and the Huai 淮 rivers, but not the Han River, which is featured so prominently in the *Rong Cheng shi*. The list of rivers is followed by dimensions of the earth surface “Inside the Seas” (*Hainei* 海內) and the totals of its waterways:

[*Lüshi chunqiu*, ch. 13 “Youshi lan”, § 1 “You shi” 有始:]

...
 何謂六川？河水，赤水，遼水，黑水，江水，淮水。
 凡四海之內，東西二萬八千里，南北二萬六千里，
 水道八千里，受水者亦八千里，
 通谷六，
 名川六百，
 陸注三千，
 小水萬數。¹⁰⁶

He wei Liuchuan? Heshui, Chishui, Liaoshui, Heishui, Jiangshui, Huaishui.

Fan Sihai zhi nei, dongxi erwan baqian li, nanbei erwan liuqian li,

Shuidao baqian li, shoushui zhe yi ba qianli.

Tong gu liu

Ming chuan liubai

Lu zhu sanqian

Xiaoshui wanshu

¹⁰⁵ The term *tong gu* 通谷 is translated hereafter as “magistral [river] valley”, in the sense of a water artery that accumulates the flows of medium and small water courses with their tributaries and channels them further, in this case into the sea.

¹⁰⁶ Here *wanshu* 萬數 paraphrases *wushu* 無數 “countless” in the counterpart passage in the *Zhuangzi* and should be therefore be translated as “counted in their 10000’s”. The totals of waterways are followed by huge dimensions of the universe between its four ultimate cardinaly-oriented points 極 *ji*.

What is meant by the “Six [Main] Rivers”? The He River, the Red River, the Liao River, the Black River, the Huai River.

In sum, the inside the four [cardinally-oriented] seas is

28000 li long from the East to the West,

26000 li long from the South to the North.

River itineraries are 800 li long; rivers receiving confluents [= big rivers] are also 800 li long.

There are 6 magistral [river] valleys,

600 named rivers,

3000 pouring from the [high]lands,

small waterways are counted in their 10000's.

The 6 magistral [river] valleys apparently correspond to the six main rivers, as specified above, which gives a clear “point of entrance” into the waterway system. The “Youshi lan” totals are reproduced in a simplified way in the “Dixing xun” 隆形訓 chapter of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (compiled by 139 BC), and explicitly in the context of Yu’s ordering of terrestrial space. The “Dixing xun” copies much of the “Youshi lan” passage, except for the names of the “Nine Provinces” and the detailed hierarchy of waterways. It only refers to unnumbered “magistral [river] valleys” *tong gu* 通谷 and 600 big rivers. However, the total length of “land itineraries” *lu jing* 陸徑 of 3000 *li* is an interpretation of the ambiguous “land(?) confluents” *lu zhu* 陸注 listed in the “Youshi lan” and indirectly continues the decimal sequence of totals of waterways:¹⁰⁷

[*Huainanzi*, ch. 4 “Dixing xun”]

闔四海之內，東西二萬八千里，南北二萬六千里，

水道八千里，

通谷其名川六百，

陸徑三千里。

Gai Sihai zhi nei, dongxi erwan baqian li, nanbei erwan liuqian li,

Shuidao baqian li,

Tonggu qi mingchuan liubai,

Lujing sanqian li.

To sum up, the inside the four [cardinally-oriented] seas is

28000 *li* long from the East to the West,

26000 *li* long from the South to the North.

River itineraries are 800 *li* long,

As far as the magistral [river] valleys [are concerned],

its named river flows are 600,

The land itineraries are 3000 *li* long.

A list of distances totals, in its turn, derived from the “Dixing xun” is found in the conclusion to the first part of the *Shanhai jing*, the “Shan jing” or the “Wuzang

¹⁰⁷ *Huainan honglie jijie* 1989, p. 132; Major 1993, pp. 147-150 (Section II); Le Blanc and Mathieu, trans. 2003), pp. 163-164; Major et al. 2010, p. 155 (§4.2). As in the “Youshi lan”, the total numbers also conclude with huge dimensions of the universe between its four ultimate points.

Shanjing” 五臧山經 (“Five Treasuries: the Itineraries of Mountains”).¹⁰⁸ By definition, the “Shan jing” privileges total numbers related to mountains, and develops on the lengths of itineraries by land and by rivers, but total numbers of waterways are not included:

[“Shan jing”, conclusion:]

禹曰：

天下名山，經五千三百七十山，六萬四千五百六十里，居地也。

言其五臧，蓋其餘小山甚衆，不足記云。

天地之東西二萬八千里，南北二萬六千里，

出水之山者八千里，受水者八千里，

出銅之山四百六十七，出鐵之山三千六百九十。

Yu yue:

Tianxia mingshan, jing wuqian sanbai qishi shan, liuwang siqian wushiliu li, ju di ye.

Yan qi Wuzang, gai qi yu xiaoshan shenzhong, bu zu ji yun.

Tiandi zhi dongxi baqianli, nanbei erwan liuqian li,

Chu shui zhi shan zhe baqian li, shou shui zhe baqian li,

Chu tong zhi shan sibai liushiqi, chutie zhi shan sanqian liubai jiushi.

Yu said: [as far as] the named mountains of the Under-heavens [are concerned],

[I] passed through and thus linked by itineraries¹⁰⁹ 5370 mountains,

[the established itineraries are] 64056 *li* [long],

[these are the dimensions of] dwelling/inhabitable land.

They are called the “Five Treasuries”,

In sum, the other smaller mountains are extremely numerous, cannot even be recorded.

Heavens and Earth are 28000 *li* [long] from the East to the West,

26000 *li* [long] from the South to the North.

Mountains being sources of rivers, [these rivers are] 800 *li* long,

Rivers receiving confluents (= big rivers) are 800 *li* long,

There are 467 mountains producing copper, 3690 mountains producing iron.

The series of passages discussed above manifest a chain of filiations from the Mozi citation in the *Zhuangzi* to the “Youshi lan”, then the “Dixing xun” and, finally, the conclusion to the “Shan jing”, as summarised in **Table 1**.¹¹⁰ The most structurally complete four-level system of waterways appears in the “Youshi lan”. It is typologically similar to the drainage systems described in the “Yi [and Hou] Ji” (Karlgren: “Gao Yao mo 2”, § 9) and the “Shi shui” chapter of the *Er ya* discussed in **Part 1.3** above, with the difference that the focus is not on the drainage aspect, but on the number of different

¹⁰⁸ See *Shanhai jing jianshu* 5/44b-45b; Yanshina, trans. 1977, pp. 93-94; Mathieu, trans. 1983, pp. 371-372. For some of these totals, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2007, pp. 254-255.

¹⁰⁹ For the meaning of the character *jing* 經 in this passage, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2007, pp. 253-259.

¹¹⁰ The filiation line “Youshi lan” → “Dixing xun” → “Shan jing” does not raise any doubts. One could argue that the Mozi in the *Zhuangzi* was rather inspired by the “Youshi lan”, but according to the juxtaposition of classifications of waterways in **Table 1** it seems more likely that the idea advanced by Mozi was developed in the *Lüshi chunqiu* and then concisely cited in the *Huainanzi*.

types of waterways. In the “Youshi lan” the system of waterways also becomes supplemented by dimensions of inhabitable space and total lengths of river itineraries. The “Shan jing” develops the same template, having replaced rivers by mountains. The reference to the arrangement of waterways with respect to the Han River in *Rong Cheng shi* is a congener, but from an apparently different branch.

Table 1. Text filiations

	“Tianxia,” <i>Zhuangzi</i> 4 th -2 nd cc. B.C.E. (citation of Mozi, ca 470 – ca 391 B.C.E.)	“Youshi lan,” <i>Lushi chungiu</i> shortly before 239 B.C.E.	“Dixing xun,” <i>Huainanzi</i> shortly before 139 B.C.E.	“Shan jing” (conclusion) compiled about the 1 st c. B.C.E.	<i>Rong Cheng shi</i> late 4 th c. B.C.E.
Text filiation with respect to totals of distances
Text filiation with respect to totals of landmarks		totals of waterways		totals of mountains
Totals of mountains and total length of land itineraries				天下名山，經五千三百七十山， 六萬四千五百六里， 居地也。言其臧。 蓋其餘小山甚衆， 不足記云。 [As far as] the named mountains of the Under- heavens [are concerned], [Yu] passed through and thus linked by itineraries 5370 mountains, [the established itineraries are] 64056 <i>li</i> [long], [these are the dimensions of] dwelling/inhabitable land. They are called the “Five Treasuries.” In sum, the other smaller mountains are extremely numerous, cannot even be recorded.	
Length&width of inhabitable space		凡四海之內， 東西二萬八千里， 南北二萬六千里， In sum, the inside the four [cardinally- oriented] seas is 28000 <i>li</i> long from the East to the West, 26000 <i>li</i> long from the South to the North.	闔四海之內， 東西二萬八千里， 南北二萬六千里， To sum up, the inside the four [cardinally- oriented] seas is 28000 <i>li</i> long from the East to the West, 26000 <i>li</i> long from the South to the North.	天地之 東西二萬八千里， 南北二萬六千里， Heavens and Earth are 28000 <i>li</i> [long] from the East to the West, 26000 <i>li</i> [long] from the South to the North.	

Length of river itineraries		水道八千里， 受水者亦八千里， River itineraries are 800 li long; rivers receiving confluents [= big rivers] are also 800 li long.	水道八千里。 River itineraries are 800 li long,	出水之山者八千里， 受水者八千里， Mountains being sources of rivers, [these rivers are] 800 li long, Rivers receiving confluents (= big rivers) are 800 li long.	
Totals of waterways max. 4 levels of waterways: I. 通谷 magistral [river] valleys II. 名川 named rivers III. secondary rivers IV. small rivers	名川三百， 支川三千， 小者無數。 The [number of resulted] named rivers is 300 ; the [number of their] tributary rivers is 3000 ; small [rivers] are countless .	通谷六， 名川六百， 陸注三千， 小水萬數 There are 6 magistral [river] valleys , 600 named rivers , 3000 pouring from the [high]lands, small waterways are counted in their 10000's .	通谷 其名川六百， 陸徑三千里。 As far as the magistral [river] valleys [are concerned], its named rivers are 600 , the <i>land itineraries</i> are 3000 li long (error for 陸注?)		
					禹乃 從漢以南 為名浴(=谷)五百， 從漢以北 為名浴(=谷)五百。 Yu then to the South from the Han [River] created 500 named river-valleys, to the North from the Han [River] created 500 named river-valleys. The dwelling places of people through the Under-Heavens [thus] became settled.
Totals of mountains				出銅之山四百六十七， 出鐵之山三千六百九十。 There are 467 mountains producing copper, 3690 mountains producing iron.	

The common feature of all these totals is the adjective *ming* 名 to the higher types of landmarks. It is usually translated as “famous”, but I suggest that they may rather mean “important landmarks with fixed names” versus smaller landmarks of no importance. Some evidence for this suggestion is found in the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1, where the

naming of landscape features is a means for putting them in order, possibly by the Emperor Yu, who may be mentioned just before (Chu Silk Manuscript, inner short text, column 2, character 26). The character *ming* 名 is replaced here by its homophone *ming*¹ 命:

[Chu Silk Manuscript, inner short text, column 3, characters 5-14:]

山陵不斌, 乃命山川四海 *shanling bu bin, nai ming¹ shanchuan sihai*

Mountains and hills were not refined, then named mountains and rivers, the four seas.¹¹¹

At the same time, the total numbers of waterways in the *Rong Cheng shi* differ in several interesting respects from those found in the *Zhuangzi*, *Lüshi chunqiu* and *Huainanzi*:

- 1) The *Rong Cheng shi* provides the total of “named” (*ming* 名) river-valleys designated by the character *yu* 浴, which consists of the radical “water” 水 *shui* and the semantic element “valley” 谷 *gu*, the radical accentuating its relation to waterways. The same vocabulary is found in the Chu Silk Manuscript no.1 (*shanchuan*, *wanyu* 山川萬浴 “mountains [and] rivers, 10000 rivulets(?) [and] river-valleys”).¹¹²
- 2) The “named river-valleys” *ming yu* 名浴 is a fusion of the “magistral [river] valleys” *tong gu* 通谷 and the “named rivers” *ming chuan* 名川, distinguished in the *Lüshi chunqiu* and the *Huainanzi*, as the two higher levels of waterways.
- 3) In contrast to the transmitted texts, in the *Rong Cheng shi* there is no hierarchy of waterways. Instead they are arranged into two *quantitatively* equal cardinally-oriented parts: 500 “named river-valleys” in the South and 500 “named river-valleys” in the North. This spatial arrangement of the total numbers of waterways is nowhere in evidence in transmitted texts. The equality of the southern and northern parts is accentuated by the term, which appears in the phrase, which immediately follows: 天下民居奠 *Tianxia min ju dian* “The dwelling places of people through the Under-Heavens [thus] became settled”. 奠 depicts a ritual vessel on an altar and implies something being perfectly balanced.
- 4) The total number of 300 “named rivers” in the *Zhuangzi* is doubled to 600 in the “Youshi lan”, which also adds a matching upper hierarchical level of 6

¹¹¹ Li Ling 2013, plate 8; 2017, vol. II, p. 61.

¹¹² See footnote 70 above.

“magistral [river] valleys”.¹¹³ The southern and northern “river-valleys” in the *Rong Cheng shi* altogether make up a considerably larger total number of 1000.

I believe that the numerical rise in the total numbers of landscape features conveys an idea of territorial expansion. In the case of the “Youshi lan” it may correspond to the extension of this set of the “Nine Provinces” to the North-East. The 1000 “named river-valleys” have to be seen in the context of the spatial implication of the South-North division along the Han River.

2.4. The Han River in Chinese cosmography and cartography

To begin with, a territorial division into two equal halves along the Han River does not match the area encompassed by the transmitted and the *Rong Cheng shi* sets of the “Nine Provinces”.

In transmitted descriptions of the “Nine Provinces”, the Han River is used as a boundary marker between “provinces” twice – in the “Youshi lan” and the “Shi di”. According the “Youshi lan”, the Han River together with He delimit Yu 豫 “province”.¹¹⁴

[*Lüshi chunqiu*, ch. 13 “Youshi lan”, § 1 “You shi” 有始:]

河漢之間為豫 *He Han zhi jian wei Yu*

Between the He and the Han [rivers] there is Yu [“province”].

Yu “province” is found in all transmitted sets. In the *Rong Cheng shi*, Yu corresponds to Xu 敘 “province”.¹¹⁵ Yu covers the region of Luoyang, the Centre of the ideal picture of the world under the Zhou dynasty. In representations of the “Nine Provinces” within the framework of the 3x3 grid, Yu occupies the central square.¹¹⁶ The He and Han rivers, seen as boundaries of the central square of the 3x3 grid, divide the territory of the “Nine Provinces” into *three equal thirds*: the He River delimits the Centre from the North, and the Han River from the South (see **Figure 3**). In the “Shi di”, the Han River is referred to from the other side, as the northern boundary of Jing “province” (another name of the Chu Kingdom), which occupies the southern square of the grid.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ The next level down in the hierarchy stays the same with the value of 3000.

¹¹⁴ *Lüshi chunqiu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 13/2a.

¹¹⁵ See Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, p. 29. According to the “Shi yan” 釋言 chapter of the *Er ya*, Yu 豫 and Xu 敘 are synonyms.

¹¹⁶ For locations of “provinces”, as given in the transmitted accounts, and the 3x3 grid, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009], pp. 607-618.

¹¹⁷ *Er ya Guo zhu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 6/1b.

[*Er ya*, ch.9 “Shi di”]

漢南曰荊州 *Han nan yue: Jing zhou*

[The territory] to the South of the Han River: Jing “province”.

In the “Yu gong”, the Han River is not used as a “province” boundary, but twice is mentioned in the description of Jing “province”. If we accept that the Han River conventionally divides the mapped territory into equal northern and southern sections, then one must add another line of squares at the bottom or the South of the 3x3 grid:

	He 河 River	
	Central “Province” Yu 豫	
	Han 漢 River Jing 荆 “Province” = Chu 楚	

Figure 3: Positions of Yu and Jing “provinces” within the 3x3 grid representation of the “Nine Provinces” (delimited by a triple line)

This simple scheme demonstrates the great impact of the South-North division along the Han River. It implies the extension of the “civilised world” to the South and *shifts its centre to the northern border of Chu*. The scheme also demonstrates a 3x3 scheme for the “Nine Provinces”, which by definition cannot be divided into two halves by rivers as boundaries between the “provinces”. Rivers as boundaries between the squares of the 3x3 grid are described in the “Wang zhi”, where they complement the cardinal limits of the “Nine Provinces”:¹¹⁸

[*Li ji*, chapter “Wang zhi”]

North → South

自恆山至於南河, 千里而近; *Zi Hengshan zhi yu Nanhe, qianli er jin;*

自南河至於江, 千里而近; *Zi Nanhe zhi yu Jiang, qianli er jin;*

自江至於衡山, 千里而遙. *Zi Jiang zhi yu Hengshan, qianli er yao.*

From Heng Mountain to the Southern He River, it is as close as 1000 *li*;

From the Southern He to the Jiang River, it is as close as 1000 *li*;

From the Jiang River to the Heng Mountain, it is as far as 1000 *li*.

¹¹⁸ This passage precedes the description of the cardinally-oriented border-marks of the “Nine Provinces” in the “Wang zhi”, discussed above and belongs to the same paragraph, see **footnote 87 above**.

East → West

自東河至於東海, 千里而遙; *Zi Donghe zhi yu Donghai, qianli er yao;*

自東河至於西河, 千里而近; *Zi Donghe zhi yu Xihe, qianli er jin;*

自西河至於流沙, 千里而遙. *Zi Xihe zhi yu Liusha, qianli er yao.*

From the Eastern He to the Eastern Sea it is as far as 1000 *li*;

From the Eastern He to the Western He, it is as close as 1000 *li*;

From the Western He to the Flowing Sand, it is as far as 1000 *li*.

In the derived scheme the Jiang River takes the place of its confluent Han River, but the conveyed image is the same: a river or rivers in no way can divide the “Nine Provinces” into equal southern and northern parts (see **Figure 4**).

Figure 4: Borderlines and dimensions of the “Nine Provinces”, according to the “Wang zhi” chapter of the *Li ji*

Figure 3 and **4** are reconstructions derived from texts, but similar dispositions of the boundary marks with respect to each other can be observed in authentic maps showing the topography of the “Nine Provinces”, beginning from the earliest specimens drawn as commentaries to the “Yu gong”. Since these maps include the whole set of landmarks related to the “Nine Provinces”, they have a more complex configuration, but this configuration is still shaped by relative locations. The depiction of rivers in these maps mostly relies on the nine river routes, which, together with the nine land routes, supplement the description of the “Nine Provinces” in the “Yu gong”. The delineation of rivers in the “Yu gong” has an interesting characteristic – parts of the same river may have different names. Thus, the Han River belongs to the fourth river route, which consists of the Jiang River with its northern tributary. Han is the name of the middle

course of this northern tributary. The description of this northern tributary of the Jiang River, which constitutes the first part of the fourth river route, is as follows:¹¹⁹

[*Shang shu*, “Yu gong”, Karlgren § 24:]

蟠冢導漾，東流為漢，又東為滄浪之水，過三澨，至于大別，南入于江...

[Starting from] Bozhong [Mountain Yu] a way was made along the Yang, which flowing eastward became the Han [River], farther to the East became the Canglang River, passing through the Three Dykes, reached Dabie [Mountain], [and flowing] southward poured into the Jiang...

In **Map 1**, which is limited to the “Nine Provinces”, depiction of the northern tribute of the Jiang River closely follows the “Yu gong”, Han designating the middle course of the tributary. It is depicted closer to the bottom of the mapped area, and, therefore, does not work as a boundary between the southern and the northern halves. In **Map 3**, where the “provinces” are inscribed into a larger cartographical context, Han becomes the name of the entire northern tributary of the Jiang River. Here one can see that the Han River does indeed cut the mapped territory into approximately equal parts, but only by including territories to the South of the “Nine Provinces”. One of the most interesting maps in this respect is the “Map of the Nine Provinces, the [nine itineraries marked by] mountains and the [nine] river [itineraries] of the Yu’s [system of] Tribute” (*Yugong jiuzhou shanchuan zhi tu* 禹貢九州山川之圖) from the encyclopaedia on statecraft *Diwang jingshi tupu* 帝王經世圖譜 in 16 *juan*, by Tang Zhongyou 唐仲友 (1136–1188), see **Map 4**. This map shows thick borderlines between the “Yugong” “provinces”, and adds a tenth similarly delimited region to the South of the “Nine Provinces” designated Southern Yue (*Nan Yue* 南越). Originally referring to a conglomerate of the southern Yue tribes, with the foundation of the Han dynasty Nan Yue became a name of a short-lived kingdom (204-111 BC) located to the South of the Nanling mountain range. In this map, the depiction of the northern tribute of the Jiang River deviates in some details from the “Yu gong”, but its middle course still bears the name Han. It cuts the mapped territory into northern and southern halves, but only with this additional southern element. Curiously, in contrast to the “provinces” filled out by mountains and rivers, the Nan Yue is a blank territory. In this respect it is similar to the implied southern extension in the *Rong Cheng shi*, which is also devoid of any landmarks.

¹¹⁹ *Shangshu zhengyi* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 6/15a-b. Translation is my own, cf. Legge, trans., 1865, pp. 136-137 (§ 8); Couvreur, trans. 1897, p. 83 (§ 24); Karlgren, trans. 1950, pp. 16-17, § 24. The Han River occurs in the “Yu gong” two other times, in the description of the southern Jing “province” and both cases in relation to the Jiang River, see Legge, trans., 1865, pp. 112-116 (§ 46-53); Couvreur, trans., 1897, pp. 72-73 (§§ 12-13); Karlgren, trans. 1950, pp. 13 and 15 (§§ 13-14).

Map 4. “Map of the Nine Provinces, the [nine itineraries marked by] mountains and the [nine] river [itineraries] of the ‘Yu’s [system of] Tribute’” (*Yugong jiuzhou shanchuan zhi tu* – 禹貢九州山川之圖), in: encyclopaedia on statecraft *Diwang jingshi tupu* 帝王經世圖譜 in 16 juan, by Tang Zhongyou 唐仲友 (1136–1188). National Library of China (Beijing) 中國國家圖書館. [Reproduced from Yan Ping et al., 1998, p. 84]. Printed on two pages in a block-printed book, precise dimensions unavailable.

In modern Western maps, the Han River falls diagonally into the Jiang River from the North-West, but in the Song maps it is depicted more horizontally. In some traditional Chinese maps, the Han River forms an almost horizontal line with the Jiang River. This is the case with maps of China found in the so-called Sino-Korean atlases. Maps of China are overlooked in scholarly literature on the Sino-Korean atlases. The atlases are mostly known by their eye-catching first sheets, often referred to as the “wheel” maps.¹²⁰ Although the atlases originate from the 16th century, at the earliest, and

¹²⁰ For reference studies of these atlases and the “wheel” maps in English, see Nakamura Hiroshi 1947, Ledyard 1994, Oh Sang-Hak 2008, Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019. The name “wheel map” was introduced by

their numerous extant copies were made during the 18th-19th centuries, they are composed of strangely archaic maps. For reasons beyond the scope of this paper, the maps of China in the Sino-Korean atlases follow the patterns of the “Yu gong” maps from the Song dynasty.¹²¹ The maps also show the fifteen Ming provinces (*sheng* 省) curiously drawn over the “Yu gong” topography. The “Nine Provinces” and the fifteen Ming provinces are often distinguished by contrasting colours, which allow one to immediately grasp the difference in the areas they cover. The “Nine Provinces” keep to their traditional limits, the Ming provinces descend towards the sea in the South, see **Map 5**. The horizontally delineated Han-Jiang, Han here being the name of the entire tributary of Jiang, divides the mapped territory into equal southern and northern parts, if one takes into consideration the extended area in the South covered by the Ming provinces.

the famous Korean scholar Yi Ch’an in 1976, whose work became known to historians of cartography due to reference to it by Ledyard..

¹²¹ I briefly discuss the maps of China in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019, pp. 164-166. An indication of the late origins of these maps is the delineation of the lower part of the Yellow River: it flows South-East and pours into the sea below the Shandong Peninsula, having taken over the Huai River valley. This reflects the confluence of these two rivers, which existed between 1289 and 1853 (the schematic character of the map does not allow one to propose a more precise dating). In comparison, in Song dynasty maps the Yellow River flows North-East and pours into the Bohai Sea.

Map 5. Map of China, Sino-Korean Atlas [manuscript, coloured],

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München, Germany

Shelfmark: Cod. cor. 72

<https://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/0006/bsb00061455/images/index.html?id=00061455&groesser=&fip=eayayztsewqsdasqrssdaswxdsyden eaya&no=10&seite=12>

Printed on two pages in a block-printed book, precise dimensions unavailable.

Titles of the “Nine Provinces” (*Jiuzhou* 九州) are coloured in clear blue;

titles of the 15 Ming provinces (*sheng* 省) are coloured in faded red;

in both cases the titles are inscribed inside circles

Few early Chinese texts describe southern territories beyond the Chu Kingdom, one of them is the *Shanhai jing*. This text was compiled by the end of the Former Han dynasty and conveyed the idea of terrestrial space of the united empire, the territory of

which now extended towards the sea in the South. The *Shanhai jing* conveys an *ideal* organisation of terrestrial space characterised by a complex, yet regular structure. The nucleus of this structure is the arrangement of 447 mountains into 26 itineraries, each delineated as moving from mountain to mountain. The 26 itineraries are orderly distributed between the cardinal directions and the centre (3 itineraries in the North and the South, 4 in the East and the West, 12 in the Centre).¹²² The description of the 3rd Itinerary of the Southern Mountains, in particular the directions and destinations of its rivers, reveals an extension of the mapped territory towards the sea in the South: the 3rd itinerary of the Southern Mountains is delineated from the West to the East – parallel to the southern coast; the three rivers, which pour from the mountains of this itinerary (mountains N°2, N°9 and N° 13, out of the total number of 13 mountains in this itinerary) flow to the South or to the South-East in the last case and pour into the sea.

The Han River is mentioned 5 times in the *Shanhai jing*:

- twice in the 1st Itinerary of the Western Mountains (N° 13 and N°14 of the total number of 19 mountains in this itinerary); the river, which pours from mountain N°13, flows to the South and pours into the Han River, and mountain N°14 is the source of the Han River, which flows South-East and falls into the Mian 汭 River;¹²³
- once in the 4th Itinerary of the Western Mountains (N° 18 of the total number of 19 mountains of this itinerary); the river of this mountain flows to the West and eventually pours into the Han River);
- twice in the 11th Itinerary of the Central Mountains, which belongs to the southern group of the central itineraries (from the 8th to the 12th of the total of 12 central itineraries). The river which starts from mountain N° 1 of its 48 mountains flows to the South-East, and the river which starts from mountain N° 10 flows to the South; both rivers pour into the Han River.

No authentic maps or schemes of the system of the 26 itineraries have survived, and it is doubtful they ever existed.¹²⁴ Wang Chengzu attempted to reconstruct a survey

¹²² I have discussed the representation of space according to the *Shanhai jing* in a series of articles, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 1995, 2003a, 2003b, 2007. For a brief summary of this conception of space, see *idem*, 2015, pp. 103-112.

¹²³ The location of the Mian River is not clear. In the “Yu gong” it occurs only once – among water landmarks of the south-western Liang “province”, where the Han River is not mentioned, see *Shangshu zhengyi* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.) 6/11a; Legge, trans., 1865, p. 123 (§ 40); Couvreur, trans. 1897, pp. 77 (§ 17); Karlgren, trans., 1950, pp. 15-16 (§ 17). In the “Yu gong” there is no evidence of any relation between the Mian and the Han, which is reported in the *Shanhai jing*. However, in the *Shanhai jing* the Mian River occurs only one other time, as a river into which falls the Motu 末塗 River, which pours from mountain N° 10 of the 1st Itinerary of the Eastern Mountains. There is no other information about the Mian River in the *Shanhai jing*. Yet, in the maps showing the “Yu gong” topography, the Mian River is depicted in relation to the Han, but in different ways. E.g. in **Map 1a** the Mian and the Han are successive parts of the same waterway; in **Map 4** the Mian River is the southern tributary of the Han.

¹²⁴ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2007.

cartographical representation of the itineraries further developed by Richard Strassberg and myself, see **Map 6**.¹²⁵ In addition to putting in evidence spatial arrangement of the itineraries, the map also allows one to see that the relational topography of the *Shanhai jing* has interesting differences from that of the “Yu gong”. For instance, Heng Mountain, the marker of the southern limits of the “Nine Provinces” is duplicated; Heng1 恒 Mountain, the marker of the northern limit of the “Nine Provinces”, is mentioned once as “being observed from distance” (*wang* 望) in the East from mountain N° 7 of the 3rd Itinerary of the Western Mountain, where it precedes Kunlun Mountain, but is missing in the itineraries of the Northern Mountains or anywhere else in the text, even under its alternative name Chang 常.

¹²⁵ Wang Chengzu 1988 [rev. 1982], p. 19 (Map 2). Strassberg translates and completes Wang’s reconstruction 2002, p. 37 (fig. 10). I have proposed some amendments, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2003a, pp. 38 and 43; 2005-2006, p. 82. In **Map 6** I have further corrected the source and the flow of the Han River.

Map 6. The Han River in the system of itineraries of the “Shan jing” 山經

System of 26 itineraries in the “Shan jing”, according to its sequence of cardinal directions:

1. SOUTH	3 itineraries directed eastward
2. WEST	4 itineraries directed westward
3. NORTH	3 itineraries directed northward
4. EAST	4 itineraries directed southward
5. CENTER	12 itineraries directed eastward or westward, which constitute two clusters:
	CENTER A 7 itineraries in the Yellow River basin
	CENTER B 5 itineraries in the Yangzi River basin

Reconstruction in the form of a topographical map by Wang Chengzu 王成組 1988 [rpt. 1982]), 19, Map 2, redrawn and completed by Strassberg, 2002, 37, fig. 10, amended by myself, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, 2007, 38 and 43; 2005-2006, 82. In **Map 6** I have made additional corrections of the source and the flow of the Han River, according to data derived from the text.

Although the reconstruction of the system of relational topography of the *Shanhai jing* needs to be elaborated on further, it does reveal that in the *Shanhai jing* the Han River plays only a modest role.¹²⁶ It does not work as a demarcation line that cuts the mapped territory into two equal halves: only five itineraries of the total number of twenty-six are located to the South of the Han River. In effect, the position of the Han River in the system of itineraries is quite similar to its position in the “Yu gong” family of the “Nine Provinces” – it delimits one third of the mapped territory in the South.

Nevertheless, a division of terrestrial space into northern and southern halves is implicate in the arrangement of the twelve itineraries of the Central Mountains into two clearly distinguishable clusters. As one can see from **Map 5**, the first seven itineraries of the Central Mountains form a structurally complete group around the central part of the Yellow River; the last five itineraries belong to the Yangzi River basin.¹²⁷ However, the survey of terrestrial space in the *Shanhai jing* aims to attenuate the opposition between the North and the South, and not to emphasise it.

The division of terrestrial space into the North and the South does not seem to play an important role in the corpus of pre-Han early texts. One can rather speak of a predominance of the North, as is the case in the transmitted descriptions of the “Nine Provinces” of the “Yu gong” group. An earlier example of this northern predominance is the representation of terrestrial space mapped out by the “Guo feng” 國風 chapter (literally “The Airs of Principalities”, ca. 8th-6th centuries) of the *Shi jing* 詩經 (“The Book of Songs”). The structure of the “Guo feng” is underlied by an ideal scheme of Zhou principalities. It starts with positioning the South: its first two groups of songs share a common name including “South”, the “Zhou nan” (周南) and the “Shao nan” (召南). In this respect they formally differ from the other thirteen groups of songs, which constitute the main part of the “Guofeng”, each named *feng* 風 (“air”). The “Airs” bear the names of Zhou principalities, all located in the Yellow River basin.¹²⁸ Their positioning as the North is signaled by the name of the first “Air” – Bei 邶, which includes the phonetic “North” (*bei* 北), and which in the manuscript version of the *Shi jing*, discovered at Shuanggudui (雙古堆) near Fuyang 阜陽, is written simply as “North”.

¹²⁶ In comparison, the Jiang 江 River(s) is mentioned 15 times, in the 1st itinerary of the Eastern Mountains, 9th and 12th itineraries of the Central Mountains.

¹²⁷ The reference to the Yellow or the Yangzi rivers basins is determined by the destination of rivers, which pour from the mountains along the itineraries. The “northern” cluster of the Central Mountains contains seven itineraries and the “southern”, five itineraries, but their inequality in the number of itineraries is compensated for by a greater number of mountains in the southern group of itineraries, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 1995, 91, table 2.

¹²⁸ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 1991.

An interesting phrase, *fen bei sanmiao* 分北三苗 (“demarcated the North from the Three Miao”), concludes Shun’s deeds in the “Shun dian” (Karlgrén: “Yaodian 2”).¹²⁹ However, no details about this spatial arrangement are provided, apart from a reference shortly before that the Three Miao were transferred to the Three Wei 三危, which in the “Yu gong” topography is located to the West of the “Nine Provinces”.¹³⁰ One can suggest, that, in this case, the territories governed by Shun are understood as being under the term the “North”, the demarcation thus rather means “distinguishing the North”, and not drawing a borderline between North and South.

In sum, from the perspective of the early Chinese written tradition, the statement on the division of terrestrial space into two equal halves along the Han River, concluding the description of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi*, is absolutely revolutionary. The Han River is a landmark that plays a secondary role in transmitted descriptions of the “Nine Provinces” and was firmly associated with Chu territory. In the *Rong Cheng shi*, the Han River becomes the central axis and radically changes the picture of terrestrial space mapped out by the “Nine Provinces”: *the centre is shifted to the northern border of the Chu Kingdom, and the southern limits are thus pushed farther to the South*. The northern extension of territories covered by the “provinces” becomes outbalanced by the implied extension to the South.

The Han River, however, may play a role of a demarcation line, or, according to David W. Pankenier, a “cosmographic divide”, not on the terrestrial surface, but in its projection onto celestial space: the toponym Han occurs in two of three names of the Milky Way used in early Chinese texts – literally the “Heavenly Han” (*Tian Han* 天漢) and the “Han [Beyond] Clouds” (*Yun Han* 雲漢).¹³¹ The Milky Way roughly divides celestial space into two halves. The earliest surviving celestial map clearly showing the Milky Way is drawn on the ceiling of a Northern Wei (386-534 AD) tomb in Luoyang’s

¹²⁹ *Shangshu zhengyi* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 3/17a. Cf. interpretation by Legge, trans. 1865, p. 50 (§ 27), Couvreur, trans. 1897, p. 31 (§ 27); Karlgrén, trans. 1950, pp. 6 and 8 (§ 38).

¹³⁰ *Shangshu zhengyi* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 3/8b; Legge, trans. 1865, pp. 39-40 (§ 12); Couvreur, trans. 1897, p. 22 (§ 12), Karlgrén, trans. 1950, pp. 5-6 (§ 23). In the “Yu gong” the Three Wei are mentioned together with the Three Miao in the description of the western “province” Yong 雍 (*Shangshu zhengyi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 6/12a, Legge, trans. 1865, pp. 123-127 (§ 10); Couvreur, trans. 1897, pp. 78-81 (§ 18-19); Karlgrén, trans. 1950, pp. 15-17 (§ 18-19)), while only the Three Wei are mentioned in the description of the Black River, which corresponds to the second river route (*Shangshu zhengyi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 6/14b; Legge, trans. 1865, p. 132 (§ 2); Couvreur, trans. 1897, p. 82 (§ 22); Karlgrén, trans. 1950, pp. 16-17 (§ 22)). In maps of the “Yu gong” topography the Three Wei are depicted at the western border of Yong, e.g. in **Map 1a** it appears as a toponym without any cartographic image, while in **Map 4**, a rare case showing borders between “provinces”, the Three Wei are depicted as an outstanding mountain with three summits along the Black River course and located outside the western border of the “Nine Provinces”.

¹³¹ References to the Milky Way in early Chinese sources and their representations in celestial cartography are discussed throughout the book by Pankenier 2013.

洛陽 Mengjing 孟津 county. This coloured mural map depicts the Milky Way as a wide river tinted in blue and filled out with wavy lines imitating flowing water. It divides the celestial circle along its diameter from North to South, so that the celestial space becomes divided into the eastern and the western halves, see **Map 7 a,b.**¹³²

Map 7a. Celestial map on the ceiling of a Northern Wei (386-514) tomb from Luoyang's Mengjing county. [Reproduced from: Yan Ping et al., 1998, 34-35]. The mural covers the entire 9.5-meter-high vaulted ceiling built on a rectangular chamber ca. 7.5 by 7.0 meters.

¹³² For a study of this map in the context of Chinese cosmology, see Lilian Lan-ying Tseng 曾藍瑩 (2003). The map contains clearly depicted graphic symbols – recognisable constellations, single stars and the Milky Way dominating the entire picture, but no text, so it is not possible to determine which term may have been used to designate the Milky Way. This map is not discussed by Pankenier; in later maps discussed in his study the depiction of the Milky Way becomes more refined and crosses celestial space from the North-West to the South-East.

Map 7b. Redrawing of the celestial map on the ceiling of a Northern Wei (386-514) tomb from Luoyang's Mengjing county with added names of constellations. North is on top, West is on the right (view from the Earth). Redrawing made at the National Museum of China (Beijing). Dimensions of the original unavailable. [Reproduced from: Yan Ping et al., 1998, 34-35]

Although, according to Pankenier, the Milky Way is assumed to be “functionally identical in astrological terms” to the Yellow River, which indeed appears in the third possible name of the Milky Way – the Silverly He (= Yellow River, *Yin He* 銀河), the usage of the toponym Han in its name still links it closely with the Han River, and this link cannot be ignored.¹³³ Moreover, the name Silverly He becomes current after the fall

¹³³ Pankenier 2013, pp. 276-279 (“The Sky River as cosmographic divide”), especially note 35 on page 276. Despite the pertinence of Pankenier’s study, he misleadingly does not distinguish these two different

of the Han dynasty, while earlier transmitted texts more commonly use Han when referring to the Milky Way. For instance, in the *Shi jing*, the Milky Way is mentioned three times, once as the Heavenly Han (“There is the Han [River] in the Sky” – *wei tian you Han* 維天有漢) in the poem “The Great East” (*Da dong* 大東, no. 203) of the “Xiao ya” 小雅 section, and twice the Han [Beyond] Clouds in a poem under the same name *Yun Han* (no. 258) and in the “Oak-wood unworked” (*Yu pu* 棫樸, no. 238), both from the “Da ya” 大雅 section.¹³⁴ It is possible then to suggest that the division of mapped territory into two halves along the Han River in the *Rong Cheng shi* may evoke or even be inspired by celestial topography, as an application of the principle of the Heaven-Earth correlation.¹³⁵ Since no celestial issues are discussed in this manuscript, however, the only argument in favour of this hypothesis is the structural similarity between celestial and terrestrial spaces cut in two by a Han River.

3. Yu’s handling of tools and wearing out of his body

The immediate context of description of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* includes one more point, which at first sight does not have direct relation to conceptualising terrestrial space – Yu’s personal and exhausting physical engagement in hard work. It follows the passage on Yu’s appointment for regulating disordered landscape and becomes interwoven with the description of the first pair of “provinces” (slips 23-15=24-25). Although slips 15 and 24 (most likely pieces of a single slip) are considerably damaged, the main idea of the introduction is clear: Yu’s extraordinary austerity and exceptional diligence.¹³⁶

river toponyms for designating the Milky Way and translates both as simply “river”:– the Sky River (*Tian Han*), the River of Clouds (*Yun Han*) and the Silvery River (*Yin He*), see *ibid*, p. 396.

¹³⁴ Apart from these occurrences, the terrestrial Han River appears in four other poems, always together with Jiang: 4 occurrences in the poem “Han is broad” (*Han guang* 漢廣, no. 9) of the “Zhou nan” 周南 group, the “Guo feng” 國風 section), one in the “4th Month” (*Si yue* 四月, no. 204) of the “Xiao ya” section, 3 occurrences in “Jiang [and] Han” 江漢 (no. 262) and the “Ever-Martial” (*Chang Wu* 常武, no. 263), both the “Da ya” section. As in the case of the *Shanhai jing*, occurrences of the rivers He and Jiang are much more frequent. For the variation in the mountain name, see Nienhauser, ed., 1994, pp. 23-24, footnote 27.

¹³⁵ Correlation between celestial and terrestrial space – *Fen ye* 分野 - is not a simple projection of one surface on another, but a complex system of correspondences, see the “Principles of field-allocation astrology” and “Derivation of relevant astrological correspondences” in Pankenier 2013, pp. 268-273 and pp. 273-276, respectively.

¹³⁶ Translations of this considerably damaged part of the manuscript by Pines, 2010, pp. 9-10, and Allan, 2015, pp. 203-204 and pp. 239-241, differ in some details, but not in general sense. Yu’s modesty in clothing, which can be made out from slip 15, is difficult to explore due to its damaged state. Yu’s austerity is also described in the much better preserved slips 20-21, see Pines, 2010, p. 13, and the extensively commented translation by Allan, 2015, pp. 207-211 and pp. 247-248.

[*Rong Cheng shi*, slips 23-15=24-25:]

...禹既已 [end of slip 23; beginning of slip 15:] 受命。

乃卉(=草)服箬箬帽。Pines: 芙□□足□... / Allan: 芙蕖□足□...)

[break of slip 15; break of slip 24, now considered to be parts of a single slip]

Pines: □面乾粗, 脛不生之毛¹³⁷ / Allan: 面乾, 蹠垢, 不生肢毛。

Pines: □ / Allan: 剗漚(=開塞)漚流。

禹親執粉(=耒 Li Ling, Qiu Dexiu/ 耒 Chen Jian et al.)耜(=耜);

以波(=陂)明者(=都)之澤;

決九河 [end of slip 24; beginning of slip 25:] 之滌(=阻 Li Ling et al. ; =泄 Xu Quansheng).

於是虜(=乎)夾州, 滌(=涂)州始可¹³⁸(=冗=處)。

Yu ji yi shou ming,

nai hui fu, pei(?) ruo mao, Pines: fu X X zu X / Allan: fu zhi X zu X Pines: X mian gancu, jing bu sheng zhi mao/

Allan: *Miangan, zhihou, bu sheng zhi mao.*

Kai qin(?) jie liu.

Yu qin zhi fensi;

Yi bo Mingdu zhi ze;

Jue Jiuhe zhi(?)

Yushihu Jiazhou, Tuzhou shi ke chu.

Once Yu had received the appointment,

[he] then dressed in clothing made of grass/bamboo leaves, a bamboo hat, and plant footwear on his feet (?)

[break of slip 15 ; break of slip 24]

Pines: His face became dry and coarse, his shin was that of not producing hair. /

Allan: His face was chapped, his footsoles filthy, did not produce limb hair.

[he] opened the blocked [ways] and drained the water.

Yu personally held the plough handle (Li Ling)/bamboo or wicker scoop (Chen Jian) and the ploughshare;

In order to dike the Mingdu Marsh;

[and] released the blockage (Li Ling et al.)/(leak - Xu Quansheng) of the Nine He [rivers];

Thereupon Jia “province” [and] Tu (=Xu) “province” first became habitable.

The concept of Yu’s employment of agricultural tools in order to regulate waters, sometimes to the extent of exhausting his body, is found in a series of late Warring States – Former Han texts. To begin with, according to the quotation of Mozi in the “Tianxia” chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, referred to above, Yu’s regulation of waterways is the direct outcome of his personal use of tools:

[“Tianxia” chapter of the *Zhuangzi* citing the *Mozi*:]

禹親自操橐耜而九雜天下之川... *Yu qin zi cao tuosi er jiu za Tianxia zhi chuan...*

Yu personally himself operated the sack/basket [for collecting soil] and ploughshare and [thus within] the Nine [Provinces] interlaced the rivers of the Under-heaven...

¹³⁷ Pines refers to Su Jianzhou, 2003, p. 136 (§§ 28-29).

Similar passages are found in the “Wu du” 五蠹 (“Five Vermin”) chapter of the *Han Feizi* 韓非子, the “Lüe yao” 略要 (“An Overview of the Essentials”) chapter of the *Huainanzi* and in the “Sima Xiangru liezhuan” 司馬相如列傳 (“Memoir on Sima Xiangru”) of the *Shi ji* 史記. The passage from the “Wu du” chapter is distinguished by the listing of notable attributes of the worn-out state of Yu’s body due to his personal use of tools – emaciated thighs and hairless shins – as well as pointing out the extreme strenuousness and the seemingly low status of his physical work. There is also another interesting nuance – it was this personal wielding of the tools that enabled Yu to become the ruler.¹³⁸

[*Hanfeizi*, “Wu du”:]

中古之世, 天下大水,
而鯀、禹決瀆。

.....

禹之王天下也,
身執耒耜, 以為民先,
股無胈, 脛不生毛, 雖臣虜之勞, 不苦於此矣!

Zhonggu zhi shi, Tianxia dashui,
Er Gun, Yu jue du.

...

Yu zhi wang Tianxia ye,
Shen zhi lei bei, yi wei minxian,
Gu wu ba, jing bu sheng mao,
Sui chenlu zhi lao, bu ku yu ci yi!

During the middle ancient epoch,
the Under-heaven [was covered] by the Great Waters,
and Gun and Yu released and ditched [the waters].¹³⁹

...

When Yu ruled the Under-heaven,
[he] himself held the plough handle and bamboo or wicker scoop,
by means of this became the leader of people.
Thighs did not have flesh, shin did not produce hair.
Although [he] was doing the work [usually done by] servants or war prisoners,
did [he] have bitter feelings about this!

The passage from the “Lüe yao” chapter, with a slight difference in specific tools applied by Yu, copies the point about the role of his personal handling of tools for becoming the ruler. The passage omits details about damages to his body and exceptional hardship of his work, but instead develops on attributes of regularity of the main waterways put in order by means of the tools:¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ *Hanfeizi jishi* 韓非子集釋 1974, p. 1041; Wen-kwei Liao, tr., 1959, p. 277; Burton Watson, tr., 1964, pp. 97-98. My translation differs in some details.

¹³⁹ This passage mentions Gun and Yu together “releasing” (*jue* 決) the Floodwaters. Compare with n. 99 above.

¹⁴⁰ *Huainan honglie jijie*, 709; Major et al., *The Huainanzi*, 864. My translation differs in some details.

[*Huainanzi*, ch. 21 “Lüe yao”:]

禹之時，天下大水，

禹身執殳垂，以為民先，

剔河而道九岐，

鑿江而通九路，

辟五湖而定東海。

Yu zhi shi, Tianxia dashui,

Yu shen shi lei1chui, yi wei minxian,

Ti He er dao jiuzhi,

Zao Jiang er tong Jiulu,

Bi Wuhu er ding Donghai.

In the times of Yu, the Under-heaven [was covered] by the Great Waters,

Yu himself held a dirt-basket and a bob,

by means of this became the leader of people.

Picked [a way] for the He River

and made a way for [its] nine branches (the Nine He Rivers),

Chiselled [a way] for the Jiang River

and made communicate for [its] nine watercourses (the Nine Jiang Rivers),

Dispelled the Five Lakes and established the Eastern Sea.

The attributes of the regularity of the system of waterways in the “Lüe yao” evoke three water landmarks of the “Nine Provinces” – the Nine [branches of the] He River, the Nine Jiang rivers, and the Five Lakes, which are quantitatively arranged by numerologically significant numbers conveying the idea of order.¹⁴¹ In the *Lüshi chungiu*, in the “Zhongxia ji” 仲夏紀 (“Middle Summer Records”) chapter of the “Shier ji” section and the “Kai chun” (“Beginning of Spring”) chapter of the “Six Discourses” section, one finds less structurally perfect, but still quite similar summaries of Yu’s re-arrangement of the major waterways, and also references to his exceptional diligence in draining the excess waters, but without naming specific tools or attributes of the worn-out state of his body:¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ For the Nine [branches] of the He River and and Nine Jiang Rivers, see **footnote 82 above**. The Five Lakes are either identified with Taihu Lake or with the system of lakes along the lower and middle parts of the Yangzi.

¹⁴² *Lüshi chungiu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 5.9b-10a; Wilhelm, tr., 1928, p. 65; Kamenarovic, tr., 1998, p. 95; Knoblock and Riegel, tr., 2000, pp. 149-150 (§ 5/5.10), Tkachenko, tr., 2001, p. 116; and *Lüshi chungiu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 21.8a; Wilhelm, tr., 1928, p. 383; Kamenarovic, tr., 1998, pp. 423-424; Knoblock and Riegel, tr., 2000, p. 561 (§ 21/5.3), Tkachenko, tr., 2001, pp. 364-365, respectively. A similar passage on Yu’s managing waterways, but without mentioning his physical exhaustion is found further, in the “Eight Observations” (*Ba Lan* 覽) section, ch. 15 “Shen da lan” 慎大覽 (“Observations on Being Careful about the Great”), § 7 “Gui yin” 貴因 (“Valuing the Moment”): 禹通三江、五湖，決伊闕，溝迴陸，注之東海，因水之力也 “Yu made communicate the Three Jiang and the Five Lakes, released jams and congestions, [made] drainage ditches to circumnavigate the pieces of land, and poured them into the Eastern Sea, [only] relying on the [natural] force of the water [to flow down]”, see *Lüshi chungiu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 15.15b; Wilhelm, tr., 1928, p. 227; Kamenarovic, tr., 1998, p. 269; Knoblock and Riegel, tr., 2000, p. 364 (§ 15/7.1); Tkachenko, tr., 2001, p. 235.

[*Lüshi chunqiu*, ch. 5 “Zhongxia ji”, § 5 “Gu yue” 古樂 (“Music of the Ancients”):]

禹立，勤勞天下，日夜不懈，

通大川，決壅塞，鑿龍門，降通澗水以導河，疏三江、五湖，注之東海。

Yu li, qinlao Tianxia, riye bu xie,

tong da chuan, jue yongsai, zao Longmen, jiang tong liao(?) shui yi dao He, shu Sanjiang Wuhu, zhu zhi Donghai.

When Yu took the position of the ruler, he diligently tired [himself] for the Under-heaven, day and night did not relax, made communicate big rivers, released obstructions and blockages,¹⁴³ descended and made communicate unruly(?) waterways in order to make the way of the He [River], separated the Three Jiang and the Five Hu, made them pour into the Eastern Sea.

[*Lüshi chunqiu*, ch. 21 “Kai chun”, § 5 “Ai lei” 愛類 (“Appreciating the Same Class”):]

昔上古龍門未開，呂梁未發，河出孟門，大溢逆流，無有丘陵沃衍、平原高阜，盡皆滅之，名曰鴻水。禹於是疏河決江，為彭蠡之障，乾東土，所活者千八百國，此禹之功也。勤勞為民，無苦乎禹者矣。

Xi shang gu Longmen wei kai, Lüliang wie fa, He chu Mengmen, da yi ni liu, wu you qiu ling wo yan, ping yuan gao fu, jin jie mie zhi, ming yue hong shui. Yu yushi shu he jue jiang, wei Pengli zhi zhang, gan dongtu, suo huo zhe qian ba bai guo, ci Yu zhi gong ye. Qin lao wei min, wei ku yu Yu zhe yi!

Long ago, in high antiquity, when Longmen (Dragon’s Gate) had not yet been opened and Lüliang had not yet been made to flow freely, the He River flowed out of the Meng Gate, greatly flooded [the territory] and flowed in the opposite direction; there were no peaks and hills, wet lowlands, flat plains, high mounds [left] that were not be all and entirely inundated; this is called the Flood. In consequence of this, Yu sparsed [the nine branches of] of the He River and released the Jiang River, built the Pengli dike [and thus] dried the eastern lands; the very survival of the 1800 polities, this is Yu’s work! But there were no bitter feelings in Yu from diligently tiring [himself] for the people!

One of the latest passages in this series, is found in the “Sima Xiangru liezhuan”, is an interesting summary of all the aspects of Yu’s works discussed above. It mentions in passing the drainage system established by Yu, points out his exhausting personal engagement in physical work, without, however, reference to specific tools, and lays a special emphasis on the wearing out of his body:¹⁴⁴

[*Shi ji*; ch. 177 “Sima Xiangru liezhuan”]

昔者鴻水浚出，汜濫衍溢，

民人登降移徙，崎嶇而不安。

夏后氏戚之，乃堙鴻水，決江疏河，漉沈澹菑，東歸之於海，而天下永寧。

¹⁴³ Cf. footnote 102 above.

¹⁴⁴ *Shi ji* 史記, *Ershisi shi* 二十四史 ed., 1972, p. 3050. I took notice of this passage thanks to the opportunity to attend text-reading seminars on the *Shi ji* chapters (April-July 2011 and July 2012, München) in the framework of the translation project of this text directed by William H. Nienhauser and Hans van Ess. With slight differences I rely on translation of this passage by Hans van Ess in William H., Jr. Nienhauser, ed., 2016, p. 130; see also Anatoly R. Vyatkin, ed., 2010, p. 115.

當斯之勤, 豈唯民哉!

心煩於慮而身親其勞, 躬胝無胝, 膚不生毛.

故休烈顯乎無窮, 聲稱浹乎于茲.

Xi zhe hongshui bo chu, fan lan yan yi,

Minren deng jiang yi tu, jijiao er bu an.

Xiahoushi qi zhi, nai yin hongshui, jue Jiang shu He, lu shen shan zai,

Dong gui zhi yu hai, er Tianxia yong ning.

Dang si zhi qin, qi wei min zai!

Xin fan yu lu er shen qin qi lao, gong zhi wu ba, fu bu sheng mao.

Gu xiu lie xian hu wu qiong, sheng cheng jia hu yu zi.

In former times when the great Flood poured out, bubbling forth and swelling vastly so that the people had to climb [mountains] and descend [the slopes] in order to change their settlements, they had to go on rough roads but did not find peace. Lord Xia-hou (夏侯氏 = the legendary Emperor Yu) pitied them and then began to stem the Flood, releasing the Jiang River and sparsing [the nine branches of] the He River,¹⁴⁵ dividing and deepening them in order to smoothen the effects of disasters. He led [the excess water] to the East into the sea and the Under-heaven became peaceful for ageless times. Such care was certainly not accomplished by just the [common] people! [His] heart burned with thoughts and [he] himself personally was doing the hard work. His body was covered by callouses (or: his body and backside) did not have flesh, and on his skin [there] grew no hair. Therefore his achievements shine gloriously for eternity and his name has been praised until today.

To sum up, references to Yu's personal handling of agricultural tools are found in a series of transmitted late Warring States – early Han texts in an almost standardised form, differing only in the specific tools mentioned, see **Table 2**. Exploring the specific tools behind each occurrence would be an interesting study in the history of Chinese technology. Here it is important to determine that all the tools share the same functional and conceptual applications. All were used in early China for agriculture and related soil-based construction, and all appear in the textual tradition as instruments that served Yu in his management of waterways. Finally, Yu's wielding of the tools has a clear affinity with the references to the Son of Heaven's ritual ploughing, as described in the first month *Meng chun* 孟春 in the “Yue ling” chapter, and throughout the *Li ji*, for

¹⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that in the “Sima Xiangru liezhuan” managing waterways by Yu proceeds from the Jiang to the He, that is from the south to the north. The sequence is inverted, if compared to the *Lüshi chunqiu*, which uses the same wording for Yu's managing rivers, in particular “sparsing [the nine branches of] of the He River” (*shu He* 疏河) and “releasing Jiang” (*jue Jiang* 決江), but follows the spatial sequence of Yu's labours in the “Yu gong”, where description of the He [River] and its basin precedes the Jiang [River] and its basin, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, 1995, pp. 77-78 and 100 (fig. 10). The same spatial sequence is also respected in the *Shanhai jing*, in the “Itineraries of the Central Mountains” (*Zhongshan jing* 中山經) chapter of the “Shan jing”, which roughly encompasses the central area of the Chinese territory: the “Central Mountains” begin from the He River cluster of itineraries and are followed by the Jiang River cluster (itineraries 15-21 and 22-26, respectively, see **Map 6**). The inversed sequence in the “Sima Xiangru liezhuan”, therefore, conveys a view from the South. At the same time, *jiang he* 江河 appears to be a current binom throughout early Chinese texts, most probably due to phonetic harmony, and does not seem to convey a spatial statement, as it is the case, for instance, in the passage from the *Zhuanzi* cited in this article. I am grateful for this observation to one of the anonymous reviewers.

instance, in the “Ji tong” 祭統 (Sacrifices United) chapter, where royal ploughing in the Southern Outskirts is mentioned.¹⁴⁶ This affinity reveals the typological similarity of Yu’s labours with the concept of the ritual initiation of seasonal agricultural works by the ruler. This simultaneously highlights the agricultural and ritual implications of Yu’s ordering of terrestrial space.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ *Liji Zheng zhu* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 5.3a; Legge, tr., 1985 (vol. 28), pp. 254-255 (§ 13). Couvreur, tr., 1913 (vol. 2), p. 322 (§ 5).

¹⁴⁷ For the ritual dimension of Yu’s ordering of terrestrial space, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2009 (repr. in 2019).

Table 2. Yu's personal engagement in hard physical work

Written source	Citation	Tools	Notes
<i>Rong Cheng shi</i>	禹親執粉(= 耒 Li Ling, Qiu Dexiu/ 畚 Chen Jian et al.)距(=耜)... <i>Yu qin zhi fen (= lei/ben) si...</i> Yu personally held the plough handle (Li Ling)/bamboo or wicker scoop (Chen Jian) and the ploughshare...	粉 <i>fen</i> (= 耒 <i>lei</i> / 畚 <i>ben</i>) plough handle/bamboo or wicker scoop; ¹⁴⁸ (=耜) <i>si</i> ploughshare	agricultural tools
“Tianxia” <i>Zhuangzi</i>	禹親自操橐耜... <i>Yu qinzi cao tuo si</i> Yu personally himself operated the sack/basket [for collecting soil] and ploughshare...	橐 <i>tuo</i> sack/basket [for collecting soil] 耜 <i>si</i> ploughshare	
“Wu du” <i>Han Feizi</i>	禹之王天下也， 身執耒耜，以為民先。 <i>Yu zhi wang Tianxie ye,</i> <i>Shen zhi lei ben, yi wei min xian.</i> When Yu ruled the Under-heaven, [he] himself held the plough handle and bamboo or wicker scoop, by means of this became the leader of people.	耒 <i>lei</i> plough handle 耜 <i>ben</i> bamboo or wicker scoop	
“Lüe yao” <i>Huainanzi</i> ¹⁴⁹	禹身執蓐垂，以為民先。 <i>Yu shen zhi lei1 chui, yi wei min xian.</i> Yu himself held a dirt-basket and a bob, by means of this became the leader of people.	蓐 <i>lei1</i> dirt-basket 垂 <i>chui</i> bob	Agricultural and measuring tools
“Yu benji” <i>Shi ji</i>	...禹...乃勞身焦思... 左準繩，右規矩... ... <i>Yu...nai lao shen jiao si...</i> <i>zuo runsheng, you gui ju...</i> Yu... then was tiring his body by hard physical work and was burning his mind... ...in the left hand was holding the level and the rope bob, in the right hand the compass and the set square...	準繩 <i>zhun sheng</i> level and rope bob 規矩 <i>gui ju</i> compass and set square	measuring tools
“Yue ling” <i>Li ji</i>	天子親載耒耜... <i>Tianzi qin zai lei si...</i> The Son of Heaven personally launched into action the plough handle and the ploughshare...	耒耜 <i>lei si</i> plough handle/ ploughshare	Ritual royal ploughing
“Ji tong” <i>Li ji</i>	天子親耕於南郊... <i>Tianzi qin geng yu nanjiao...</i> The Son of Heaven personally ploughed in the Southern outskirts...	_____	
“Zhongxia ji”	禹立，勤勞天下，日夜不懈...	_____	Yu's hard

¹⁴⁸ Li Ling supposes that 粉 could have been mistakenly written instead of 枋 *li*, which he reads as 耒 *lei* “plough handles, wooden part of the plough”, see Ma Chengyuan, ed., p. 268. Indeed, in texts dating from the late Warring States through the early Han period 耒 often forms a pair with the next character 耜 *si* “ploughshare, iron part of a plough”, as in the “Yue ling”. However, Chen Jian suggests that 粉 may stand for 畚 *ben* “bamboo or wicker scoop, dustpan”, see Chen Jian 2004, p. 329. Liu Lexian, Su Jianzhou and Yan Shixuan (Yen Shih-Hsuan) support Chen Jian's suggestion with further arguments. Liu and Su refer to *Zhuangzi*, *Han Feizi*, *Huainanzi* and its citation in the *Taiping Yulan* 太平御覽, also occurrences of 畚 in the *Guo yu* 國語, *Zhou Yu zhong* 周語中 and its definition in *Guang ya* 廣雅, *Shi qi* 釋器, see Liu Lexian 31.01.2003 (§ 2); Su Jianzhou 2003, pp. 137-138 (§ 33). Yan Shixuan points out the possibility of using 粉 and 畚 as loan characters, see Yan Shixuan (Yen Shih-Hsuan) 20.02.2003, last paragraph, see also *idem* 2012. Yan Changgui, Chen Wei, and Zhu Yuanqing accept these arguments and use 畚 in their citations of the *Rong Cheng shi*, see Yan Changgui 2004a, p. 506; Chen Wei 2003, p. 42; Zhu Yuanqing 2004, p. 412.

¹⁴⁹ One can see that the “Wu du” of the *Han Feizi* and the “Lüe yao” of the *Huainanzi* contain almost identical phrases.

Lüshi chunqiu	Yu li, qin lao Tianxia, ri ye bu xie... When Yu took the position of the ruler, he diligently tired [himself] for the Under-heavens, day and night did not relax...		physical work without references to tools
“Kai chun” Lüshi chunqiu	勤勞為民，無苦乎禹者矣。 <i>Qin lao wei min, wu ku hu Yu zhe yi!</i> But there were no bitter feelings in Yu from diligently tiring [himself] for the people!	_____	
“Sima Xiangru liezhuan” Shi ji	心煩於慮而身親其勞。 <i>Xin fan yu lü er shen qin qi lao.</i> [His] heart burned with thoughts and [he] himself personally was doing the hard work.	_____	

References to the worn-out state of Yu’s body are much less common in early Chinese texts, and the special interest of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript is that it provides a new example of this attribute of the image of Yu, even if this part of the manuscript is considerably damaged. All the occurrences report the two notable attributes of weariness – emaciated thighs and hairless shins – which due to their peculiarity became firmly associated with Yu, see **Table 3**.

Table 3. Visible manifestation of Yu’s worn-out state and austerity

Written source	Citation	No flesh, no hair and other body damages	Mental Burn-out	Modest clothes and other modest living habits
<i>Rong Cheng shi</i>	...乃卉(=草)服箬箬帽。 Pines: 芙□足□□... / Allan: 芙蕖足□□... [break of slip 15; break of slip 24, now considered to be parts of a single slip] Pines: □面乾粗，脛不生之毛 ¹⁵⁰ / Allan: 面乾，蹠垢，不生肢毛。 <i>nai huifu, pei(?)ruo mao, Pines: fu X X zu X/Allan: fu zhi X zu X Pines: X mian gancu, jing bu sheng zhi mao/ Allan: Miangan, zhihou, bu sheng zhi mao.</i> ...[he] then dressed in clothing made of grass/bamboo leaves, a bamboo hat, and plant footwear on his feet (?) Pines: His face became dry and coarse, his shin was that of not producing hair. / Allan: His face was chapped, his footsoles filthy, did not produce limb hair.	+		+
“Wu du” <i>Han Feizi</i>	股無胈，脛不生毛... <i>Gu wu ba, jing bu sheng mao...</i> <i>Thighs did not have flesh, shin did not produce hair...</i>	+		
“Yu benji” <i>Shi ji</i>	...禹...乃勞身焦思...薄衣食...卑宮室... <i>Yu... nai lao shen jiao si... bo yi shi... bei gongshi...</i> Yu... then was tiring his body by hard physical work and was burning his mind... Saved on clothes and food... Kept low on palaces and chambers...		+	+
“Sima Xiangru liezhuan” <i>Shi ji</i>	心煩於慮而身親其勞，躬胝無胈，膚不生毛。 <i>Xin fan yu lü er shen qin qi lao, gong zhi wu ba, fu bu sheng mao.</i> [His] heart burned with thoughts and [he] himself personally was doing the hard work. His body was covered by callouses (or: his body and backside) did not have flesh, and on his skin there grew no hair.	+	+	

The issue of Yu’s working with exceptional dedication is developed in the introduction to the complete citation of the “Yu gong” in the “Xia benji” 夏本紀 chapter

¹⁵⁰ Pines relies on Su Jianzhou 2003, p. 136 (§§ 28-29).

of the *Shi ji*. Sima Qian assembles various details illustrating Yu's outstanding diligence from a broad range of sources, but adds new features and changes the emphasis. The physical exhaustion of Yu's body is supplemented with mental burn-out (*lao shen jiao si* 勞身焦思 – “tiring the body by hard physical work and burning the mind”), also found in the “Sima Xiangru liezhuan”. Much attention is given to extreme austerity in his personal life (food, clothes, housing). Especially interesting here is the austerity in clothes, which is also described in detail in the *Rong Cheng shi*, unfortunately in a damaged part of the manuscript, but not in other transmitted texts. At the same time, the attributes of Yu's worn out body are not mentioned, and the agricultural implication of his labours is completely erased. Yet, tools still play a highly important role in Yu's labours, but now they are tools of measurement not of agricultural work: *zhun sheng* 準繩 (“level and rope bob”) and *gui ju* 規矩 (“compass and set square”).¹⁵¹

[*Shi ji*, ch. 2 “Yu benji”]

禹...乃勞身焦思, 居外十三年, 過家門不敢入。薄衣食, 致孝于鬼神。卑宮室, 致費於溝洫...
左準繩, 右規矩...

Yu... nai lao shen jiao si, ju wai shisan nian, guo jiamen bu ganru. Bo yi shi, zhi xiao yu guishen. Bei gongshi, zhi fei yu gouyu... ... zuo zhunsheng, you gui ju...

Yu... then was tiring his body by hard physical work and was burning his mind, lived outside [his home] during 13 years, passing by the doors of his home did not dare to enter. Saved on clothes and food in order to perform filial piety to ghosts and spirits. Kept low on palaces and chambers in order to use all the means for drainage ditches and ravines... ...in the left hand was holding the level and the rope bob, in the right hand the compass and the set square...

The only case of a partial overlapping with the earlier references to Yu's tools is the occurrence in the “Yao lue” of one agricultural and soil-construction and one measuring tool – *lei l chui* 藁垂 (“dirt-basket and bob”). The consequences of this change of emphasis are quite considerable for the image presented of Yu—his body from that of a worn-out cripple becomes a perfect gauge for measurements: *sheng wei lü, shen wei du* 聲為律, 身為度 (“voice provided a [twelve-]pitch scale, body provided measurement gauges”), as it is stated in the passage preceding the description of his diligence in the “Xia benji”.¹⁵² This image of Yu keeps to the letter of the canonical description of Yu's deeds in the *Shang shu*, where neither Yu's personal handling of agricultural tools nor his wearing out of his body is in evidence, and apparently was selected as most appropriate for imperial historiography. Elsewhere I advanced a hypothesis that the similarity between the beginning of the “Yu gong” and the short passage on drainage for tillage in the “Yi [and] Ji” (“Gao Yao mo 2” in Karlgren, § 9), which were discussed in

¹⁵¹ *Shi ji, Ershier shi*, 2.52-78, for the “Nine Provinces”, see pp. 52-66; for the introduction by Sima Qian, see p. 51 and its translations by Chavannes, tr., 1967 [repr. of 1895] (vol. 1), pp. 99-102; Vyatkin and Taskin, tr., 1972, pp. 151-152; Nienhauser, ed., 1994, p. 22.

¹⁵² Cf. with the character *sheng* 聲 in slip 31.

Part I, allows one to suppose that drainage and establishing an orderly division of terrestrial space may be seen as alternative conceptions of terrestrial space.¹⁵³ This study provides additional arguments in favour of this supposition. In the *Shang shu* the conception of drainage related to tillage plays a marginal role, and is described separately from its central conception of terrestrial space – the “Nine Provinces”. Here, both mountains and rivers play an important role, but do not occupy an equal place – managing landscape according to the “Yu gong” proceeds from mountains to rivers, and in addition rivers are described as ways of communication and not as elements of a drainage system. A more extreme case of the predominance of mountains in the conception of space is the *Shanhai jing*, where there is no place for Yu’s personal involvement in any hard physical work. His role is that of a foreman, the head of a team doing proper listing (*ji* 紀) of mountains and their properties, including rivers emanating from them, determining distances from mountain to mountain and thus paving land itineraries that map out terrestrial space.¹⁵⁴ The *Rong Cheng shi* version of the “Nine Provinces”, on the other hand, builds on waterways and is focused on drainage. It draws a direct connection between establishing the “Nine Provinces” and the procedure of draining excess waters through Yu’s personal handling of agricultural tools and wearing out of his body. The *Rong Cheng shi*, therefore, successfully combines concepts related to Yu’s labours, which then became separated in transmitted textual tradition.

To sum up, Yu’s personal involvement in hard physical work and using agricultural tools in early Chinese texts correlates with a concept of his tailoring terrestrial space, which builds on waterways. The choice to opt for the predominance of waterways in the *Rong Cheng shi* was most likely influenced by its provenance from the Yangzi River basin, where complex managing of multiple waterways played an especially important role in communication and agriculture.

Conclusions

Investigation of terrestrial descriptions by landmarks combining philological analysis with exploration of relational mapping in traditional historical cartography shows that

¹⁵³ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, 2010, pp. 38-43. Elsewhere I have pointed out another important difference between the *Shang shu* version of Yu’s labours recognised in the dynastic histories, and alternative versions, the *Shanhai jing* in particular. This is Yu’s link to spirits, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, 2009 [repr. In 2019]. Spirits are nowhere in evidence in relation to Yu in the *Shang shu*. Sima Qian makes an attempt to reconcile the *Shang shu* and the alternative versions in his introduction and also in the conclusion to the complete citation of the “Yu gong” in the “Yu Benji” chapter, but this link is then radically cut out in the *Han shu* 漢書, *Ershisi shi* 二十四史 ed., 1975, ch. 28 (“Dili zhi” 地理志 – “Treatise on Terrestrial Organisation”), pp. 1524-1538, for the “Nine Provinces”, see pp. 1524-1532, for the introduction by Ban Gu, see p. 1523.

¹⁵⁴ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2007, p. 231.

the description of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* has close affinity to their description in the “Yu gong” and its four derivations – the “You shi lan”, the “Shi di” and the “Zhi fang shi”, both in wording and the areas covered. Landmarks found in all these five congener versions never transgress the southern border of the Yangzi River basin – Nanling and Wuyi mountain ranges. Yet, the extension of the spatial area covered by the “Nine Provinces” described in the *Rong Cheng shi* radically changes in the conclusion to their description, standing out with respect to the transmitted descriptions. It introduces into the scene the Han River as a demarcation line between the southern and northern halves of the mapped territories. The equality of South and North is expressed quantitatively – through the equal numbers of waterways comprised by each part. Positioning the Han River as the central axis is nowhere in evidence in any of the early Chinese descriptions of terrestrial space. In transmitted descriptions of the “Nine Provinces” the Han River delimits an area with two thirds to the North of it and one third to the South. If the Han River becomes the central axis dividing the mapped territory into equal southern and northern parts, it implies incorporating into the mapped area the territories extending far to the South all the way to the sea. Such positioning of the Han River appears in Chinese cartography showing the entire imperial realm, which includes the southern territories adjacent to the sea, and thus helps us to grasp the point of the spatial conception conveyed in the *Rong Cheng shi*. While formally faithful to the letter of the “Yu gong” group of the “Nine Provinces”, the *Rong Cheng shi* introduces a cardinal new idea of terrestrial space, one in which Centre is shifted to the South. The southern territories are only implied and are not filled out by any landmarks, and this disposition may have seemed too speculative, if such a graphic image – the ‘Nine Provinces’ filled out by landmarks and an empty, but still included into the picture, southern territories – had not been found in one of the earliest maps of the “Yu gong” topography (**Map 4**). The enlargement of the mapped area through implicitly including into it the southern territories is also expressed quantitatively: the total number of waterways – five hundred in the South and five hundred in the North – make up one thousand, considerably larger than in similar totals of waterways in transmitted texts – three hundred in the *Zhuangzi* or six hundred in the *Lüshi chunqiu*.

Another characteristic of the representation of terrestrial space in the *Rong Cheng shi* is the general predominance of waterways over the noticeably sparse references to mountains, and especially managing landscape features, beginning from waters, as stated in slip 31. The view of a landscape focused on waterways is the inverse of that in the “Yu gong”, and also in the *Er ya* and the *Shanhai jing*, where mountains predominate over rivers and regulation or description of terrestrial space begins from mountains. If not a predominance, an outstandingly rich vocabulary for waterways is found in the Chu Manuscript no.1. This focus on waterways may not be an exclusively Chu feature of conceptualising space, but prioritising waters in texts of Chu provenance may well have been influenced by the natural features of Chu territory.

A certain correlation can be detected in transmitted early texts between the idea of the draining of the floodwaters by Yu and his personal usage of tools, many of them for agricultural purposes. The description of the *Rong cheng shi* provides a clear illustration of this correlation. It primarily builds on the idea of drainage and includes reference to Yu's personal usage of tools, intertwined into the description.

The canonical version of putting in order terrestrial space disordered by the Flood in the *Shang shu* distinguishes two actors and two phases. Regulation of terrestrial space is initiated by Shun, who performed the ritual tour of inspection according to a twelve-fold tempo-spatial model, and is completed by Yu, who established the ideal model of territorial division into the "Nine Provinces". Slip 31 describes a ritual performed according to a twelve-fold spatial model, and I suggest that the *Rong Cheng shi* may also credit regulation of terrestrial space to Shun and to Yu, allowing one to place this controversial slip prior to the set of slips describing Yu's activities.

In sum, the conception of terrestrial space that can be derived from the *Rong Cheng shi* shares many points in common with the canonical version of the *Shang shu*, but also includes spatial concepts from other transmitted texts that did not become included in the Confucian canon. Still, while sharing these common spatial concepts, due to shifting the Centre and the implied territorial expansion to the South, the *Rong Cheng shi* provides a view from a Chu perspective.

Postface: The Afterlife of a Spatial Concept

The predominance of waters in the *Rong Cheng shi* description of the "Nine Provinces" calls our attention to a concept of "provinces" as a set of pieces of "habitable" land amidst waters. In transmitted early Chinese texts this concept not only plays a marginal role, but also appears relatively late, by the end of the Western Han dynasty. It is briefly formulated in the definition of *zhou* 州 in the *Shuowen jiezi* ("Explaining Graphs and Dissecting Characters", compiled by 100 AD by Xu Shen 許慎, ca. 58 – ca. 147 AD) dictionary.¹⁵⁵ The definition of *zhou* in the *Shuowen jiezi* elaborates on the definition of *zhou* 洲 ("river island") in the *Er ya*.¹⁵⁶ The concept is further developed in the opening section of the *Dili zhi* 地理志 chapter of the *Han shu* 漢書 ("History of the [Former] Han dynasty") by Ban Gu 班固 (AD 32–92),¹⁵⁷ thus giving the impression of being a Han innovation, one that although it relied on the description of the Flood in the *Shang shu*, as a concept did not exist earlier and did not receive broader diffusion

¹⁵⁵ *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (1986), p. 569.

¹⁵⁶ *Er ya Guo zhu* (Sibu beiyao ed.), 7/10a.

¹⁵⁷ *Han shu*, *Ershisi shi* 二十四史 ed., 1975, ch. 28 ("Dili zhi"), p. 1523.

later.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, in the cluster of written sources on the “Nine Provinces” dating from the late Warring States to the early Western Han periods this concept is nowhere in evidence.¹⁵⁹ The description of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* as pieces of “habitable” land emerging from drained waters pushes the origins of this spatial concept back to the late 4th century BC.¹⁶⁰

A visual image of the core Chinese territories represented as pieces of land encompassed by rivers appears in maps of the Ming Empire included in popular encyclopaedia. One such map entitled “The comprehensive general map of the *fenye* correlation between the 28 logdes with the ‘provinces’-*sheng* of the Imperial Ming” (*Ershiba xiu fenye huang Ming gesheng di yu zong tu* 二十八宿分野皇明各省地輿總圖) is found in the encyclopaedia *Bianyong Xuehai qunyu* 便用學海群玉 (“Convenient to Use: Seas of Knowledge, Mines of Jade,” printed in 1607).¹⁶¹ “Provinces”-*zhou* are listed here among other toponyms, thus showing the link with a “provinces” concept, see **Map 8**. The set of “provinces” names borrowed from the “Yu gong” has in this map an interesting mistake: Xu 徐 province appears twice, the second time erroneously instead of the central province Yu 豫. It is noteworthy that in the *Rong Cheng shi* the central “province” is designated by a homophone of Xu – 敘, which is synonym of Yu.¹⁶² This map and a version of such a map incorporated into the Selden Map (ca. 1619) are briefly discussed by Robert Batchelor.¹⁶³ Such specimens of popular cartography, which I refer to as “cosmographic maps”, continued to successfully co-exist with Western-style maps resulting from the diffusion of Western cartography up to the end of the imperial China.¹⁶⁴ The cosmographic representations of the Chinese Empire under the Ming and

¹⁵⁸ Modes of tailoring terrestrial space into “provinces”, indeed, continued to occupy the Han mind and sometimes brought forward original concepts, see, for instance, the one by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (AD 127-2000), as reconstructed by Hans van Ess 1993, pp. 141-144.

¹⁵⁹ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2019 [rev. 2009]. A shadow of this concept can be seen in the *Er ya* version of the “Nine Provinces”, which “provinces” are delimited exclusively by rivers, but it is not explicitly formulated.

¹⁶⁰ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 39-40.

¹⁶¹ For the correlative cosmology, see Henderson 1984, 1994; Pankenier 2013.

¹⁶² Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 29-30.

¹⁶³ Batchelor 2013, pp. 43-45; 2014, pp. 290, footnotes 130 and 131.

¹⁶⁴ Two versions of such cosmographic maps of the Qing Empire in the form of a wall-map were recently acquired by the Max-Planck-Institute für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, see <https://vzlbs3.gbv.de/DB=12.1/XMLPRS=N/PPN?PPN=1025141180>, <https://vzlbs3.gbv.de/DB=12.1/XMLPRS=N/PPN?PPN=1030255865>. Both were drawn between 1899-1902. The date of the two maps was determined by Yang Yulei, Zhejiang University and Visiting Fellow of the Max-Planck Institute for the History of Science in 2018 and 2019 by a meticulous analysis of all the administrative units in the maps. Neither these two maps nor their close congeners have been described in scholarly literature yet.

the Qing dynasties has up to now received modest scholarly attention in studies of the history of cartography in late imperial China, and their place seems to have been underestimated. These maps can, indeed, be only comprehended if seen with respect to their foundations in the early Chinese cosmography. The description of the “Nine Provinces” in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript together with the definition of “province” in the *Shuowen jiezi* dictionary may be considered among the early source texts for these maps. The route from a spatial concept as described in early texts to late imperial cosmographic maps is complex. Along the way some features of the initial concept may be transformed or some added to.¹⁶⁵ This requires a special study, but the undeniable link between them illustrates the concept’s longevity.

¹⁶⁵ For an example of two interrelated spatial concepts with a long history from the early Chinese textual tradition through to late imperial cartography as well as Western maps of China – the Yellow River source and Kunlun Mountain, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2012.

Map 8

“The comprehensive general map of the *fenye* correlation between the 28 logdes with the ‘provinces’-*sheng* of the Imperial Ming”

(*Ershiba xiu fenye huang Ming gesheng di yu zong tu* 二十八宿分野皇明各省地輿總圖), in: *Bianyong Xuehai qunyu* 便用學海群玉 (“Convenient to Use: Seas of Knowledge, Mines of Jade”), revised by Wu Weizi 武緯子 from Jingnan, published in 1607, juan 2, 1b-2a.

Approx. 22 x 24 cm. This sole surviving copy is in Leiden University, shelfmark: Acad. 226

Names of “provinces” from the “Yu gong” set are marked by circles and numbered, according to their sequence in this text:

1. Ji 冀	2. Yan 兗	3. Qing 青	4. Xu 徐	5. Yang 楊
6. Jing 荆	7. Xu 徐 (error, instead of Yu 豫)	8. Liang 梁	9. Yong 雍	

The concept of “provinces” as pieces of “habitable” land amidst waters both in the early written tradition and in the later cartographical tradition has been largely overshadowed by the “Yu gong” version of the “Nine Provinces”, which became officially recognised since Han dynasty historiography. In the written tradition this concept is barely mentioned in transmitted texts and its detailed description became known only due to the discovery of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript. The earliest surviving representations of the Chinese Empire known from the Southern Song dynasty are largely based on the “Yu gong” version of the “Nine Provinces”. Beginning from the Ming dynasty, the “Yu gong”-related maps fade out of imperial cartography and become

historical maps.¹⁶⁶ Examples of popular cosmography emerge together with general maps less oriented to the classical texts and primarily aimed at mapping the contemporary territorial divisions of the Empire as part of the imperial enterprise. It is of special interest that these specimens are based on the marginal concept of “provinces” as pieces of “habitable” land, and, therefore, show that this concept continued to co-exist with the officially recognised “Yu gong” version in the same way as the *Rong Cheng shi* co-existed with it in the early written tradition.

¹⁶⁶ Considerable changes in Chinese cartography are attested since the Yuan dynasty, and can be judged from the Ming dynasty cartography. Such changes include a cardinal new concept and respective cartographical image of the source of the Yellow River and the introduction of a new dominant cartographical symbol - the desert zone Shamo 沙漠, which become distinctive features of these maps and their dating criteria, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2012.

APPENDIX

Yu's establishment of the "Nine Provinces" in the <i>Rong Cheng shi</i> : from uninhabitable terrestrial space to perfectly structured dwelling places (slips 31 and the sequence 23-15=24-25-26-27-28-29)	
slip 31, beginning from character N° 3	<p>方爲三僇, 救聲之紀: 東方爲三僇, 西方爲三僇, 南方爲三僇, 北方爲三僇, 以甕(越)於溪浴, 濟於廣川, 高山陞, 蓁林...[end of slip 31] <i>fang wei san gao, qiu sheng zhi ji:</i> <i>dong fang wei san gao, xi fang wei san gao,</i> <i>nan fang wei san gao, bei fang wei san gao,</i> <i>yi wei (yue) yu xi yu, ji yu guang chuan,</i> <i>gao shan sheng, zhen lin...</i> At/to every cardinal direction [he] performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies, seeking the proper order of the sounds: in/to the East performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies, in/to the West performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies, in/to the South performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies, in/to the North performed three <i>gao</i> ceremonies. This enabled [him] to traverse brooks and river-valleys, cross broad rivers; high mountains became ascendable, dense forests....</p>
Uninhabitable terrestrial space and Yu's appointment as the Master of Public Works [slip 23]	<p>[slip 23, beginning broken off:] 𠄎¹⁶⁷舜聽政三年, 山陞(=陵)不𠄎(=厓=處; =序 Li Ling; =疏 Chen Jian), 水滌(=潦)不𠄎(?), 乃立禹¹⁶⁸以為司工. <i>Shun ting zheng sannian,</i> <i>Shanling buchū,</i> <i>Shuilao bujie,</i> <i>Nai li Yu yi wei sigong.</i> Shun administered the government for three years. [During this time] mountains and hills were uninhabitable, waterways and rainwaters did not flow, [Shun] then established Yu as the Master of Public Works.</p>

¹⁶⁷ 𠄎 - broken end of a slip.¹⁶⁸ In the *Rong Cheng shi* Yu's name is written with the radical "soil" below, as is often the case in Chu

<p>Yu's austerity and worn-out body [slips 23-15- 24]</p>	<p>禹既已 [end of slip 23; beginning of slip 15:] 受命。 乃卉(=草)服箬箬帽。 Pines: 芙□□足□□... / Allan: 芙蕖□足□□...) [slip 15, end broken off; slip 24, beginning broken off:]¹⁶⁹ Pines: □面乾粗, 脛不生之毛¹⁷⁰ / Allan: 面乾, 臄垢, 不生肢毛。 Pines: □ / Allan: 剗 潏(=開塞)潜流。 <i>Yu ji yi shou ming,</i> <i>nai huifu, pei(?)ruo mao, Pines: fu X X zu X/Allan: fu zhi X zu X</i> Pines: X mian gancu, jing bu sheng zhi mao/ Allan: Miangan, zhihou, bu sheng zhi mao. <i>Kai qin(?) jie liu.</i> Once Yu had received the appointment, he then dressed in clothing made of grass/bamboo leaves, a bamboo hat, and plant footwear on his feet (?) Pines: His face became dry and coarse, his shin was that of not producing hair. / Allan: His face was chapped, his footsoles filthy, did not produce limb hair. he opened the blocked [ways] and drained the water.</p>
	<p>Establishment of the “provinces” as pieces of habitable land [slips 24-27]</p>
<p>1. Jia and Tu pair of “provinces” (North-East)</p>	<p>禹親執粉(=耒 Li Ling, Qiu Dexiu/ 耒 Chen Jian et al.)距(=耜) ; 以波(=陂) 明者(=都) 之澤 ; 決九河 [end of slip 24 ; slip 25:] 之渚 (=阻 Li Ling et al. ; =泄 Xu Quansheng) 於是庠(=乎)夾州, 滄 (=涂) 州始可 (=厖=處 Li Ling et al.).¹⁷¹ <i>Yu qin zhi fen (=lei/=ben) si;</i> <i>Yi bo (=bei) Mingdu zhi ze;</i> <i>Jue Jiu He zhi zuo (=zu/=xie);</i> <i>Yushi hu Jia zhou, Tu zhou shi ke chu.</i> Yu personally held the plough handle (Li Ling)/bamboo or wicker scoop (Chen Jian) and the ploughshare; In order to dike the Mingdu Marsh; [and] released the blockage (Li Ling et al.)/(leak - Xu Quansheng) of the Nine He [rivers]; Thereupon Jia “province” [and] Tu (=Xu) “province” first became habitable.</p>
<p>2. Jing1 and Fu “provinces” (East)</p>	<p>禹通淮與沂(=沂) ; 東 (=豉=注)¹⁷²之海 ; 於是庠(=乎)競州, 簫(=莒) 州始可 (=厖=處)也。 <i>Yu tong Huai yu Xin (= Yi) ;</i> <i>Dong gu (=zhu) yu hai;</i> <i>Yushi hu Jing1 zhou, Fu (=Ju) zhou shi ke chu ye.</i> Yu made communicate the Huai and the Yi [rivers]; Made them pour eastward into the Sea; Thereupon Jing1 “province” [and] Fu (=Ju) “province” first became habitable.</p>

¹⁶⁹ Slips 15 and 24 are now considered to be parts of a single slip.

¹⁷⁰ Pines refers to Su Jianzhou (2003), p. 136, §§ 28-29.

¹⁷¹ Xu Quansheng 14.01.2003 and Qiu Dexiu 2003, pp. 403-434, identify the character (厖) here and in the following parallel passages with 居, This identification is, however, erroneous, as a clearly written occurs in slip 28.

¹⁷² For the reasons of identification of (variant of 豉) with 注, here and in the following parallel passages, see Qiu Dexiu 2003, p. 412.

<p>3. Luo/Ou “province” (North)</p>	<p>禹乃通婁與湯 (=易) ; 東啟 (=啟=注) 之 [end of slip 25; beginning of slip 26] 海 ; 於是 庠 (=乎) 毓 (Li Ling, Chen Jian; =藕 – Chen Wei, Yan Changgui, Zhu Yuanqing, = 并 Qiu Dexiu) 州始可 𡩺 (=厯=處 Li Ling et al.) 也。 <i>Yu nai tong Lou yu Yi ;</i> <i>Dong gu (=zhu) zhi hai ;</i> <i>Yushi hu Luo (=Ou/=Bing) zhou shi ke chu ye.</i> Yu then made communicate the Lou and the Yi1 [rivers]; Made them pour eastward into the Sea; Thereupon Luo (Li Ling, Chen Jian; =Ou – Chen Wei, Yan Changgui, Zhu Yuanqing) “province” first became habitable.</p>
<p>4. Jing and Yang “provinces” (South)</p>	<p>禹乃通三江、五 沽 (=湖) ; 東啟 (=啟=注) 之海 ; 於是 庠 (=乎) 𡩺 (=荊) 州，鄒 (=揚/楊) 州始可 𡩺 (=厯=處 Li Ling et al.) 也。 <i>Yu nai tong San Jian, Wu Hu;</i> <i>Dong gu (=zhu) zhi hai;</i> <i>Yushi hu Jing zhou, Yang zhou shi ke chu ye.</i> Yu then made communicate the Three Jiang [rivers] and the Five Lakes; Made them pour eastward into the Sea; Thereupon Jing “province” [and] Yang “province” first became habitable.</p>
<p>5. Xu1 “province” (Centre)</p>	<p>禹乃通洧 (=伊)、洛，并里 (=灋)、干 (=澗) ; 東 [end of slip 26; beginning of slip 27] 啟 (=啟=注) 之河 ; 於是 於 庠 (=乎) 斂 (=敘=豫) 州始可 𡩺 (=厯=處 Li Ling et al.) 也。 <i>Yu nai tong Si (=Yi), Luo, bing Li (=Chan), Gan (=Jian) ;</i> <i>Dong gu (=zhu) zhi he ;</i> <i>Yushi hu Xu zhou shi ke chu ye.</i> Yu then made communicate the Yi2 [and] the Luo [rivers], connected [to the latter a pair of parallel rivers,] the Chan [and] the Jian; Made them pour eastward into the River; Thereupon Xu1 (=Yu) “province” first became habitable.</p>
<p>6. Ju1 “province” (West)</p>	<p>禹乃通經 (=涇) 與渭 ; 北啟 (=啟=注) 之河 ; 于是 乎 虞 (=且=沮) 州始可 𡩺 (=厯=處 Li Ling et al.) 也。 <i>Yu nai tong Jing yu Wei;</i> <i>Bei gu (=zhu) zhi he;</i> <i>Yushi hu Ju1(?) zhou shi ke chu ye.</i> Yu then made communicate the Jing and the Wei Rivers; Made them pour northward into the River; Thereupon Ju1(?) “province” first became habitable.</p>
<p>South-North demarcation along the Han River</p>	<p>禹乃從灘 (=灘=漢) 以南為名浴 (=谷) 五百， 從 [end of slip 27; beginning of slip 28] 灘 (=灘=漢) 以北為名浴 (=谷) 五百。 <i>Yu nai cong Han yu nan wei ming yu wu bai,</i> <i>cong Han yi bei wei ming yu wu bai.</i> Yu then to the South from the Han [River] created 500 named river-valleys,</p>

	to the North from the Han [River] created 500 named river-valleys.
Dwelling places settled	<p>天下之民^也(=居)奠。¹⁷³</p> <p><i>Tianxia zhi min ju dian.</i></p> <p>The dwelling places of people through the Under-Heavens [thus] became settled.</p>

¹⁷³ The follow-up to Yu's spatial stabilisation, as described in the *Rong Cheng shi* (slips 28-29), is similar to the impact of draining the waters of the Flood, as described in the "Yi [and] Ji" (Karlgren: "Gao Yao mo 2", § 9) referred to above: development of agriculture under the guidance of Houji 后稷, which ensured an abundance of food for the people, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann 2010, pp. 38-39. At the end of this paragraph in the "Yi [and] Ji" there is a reference to "changing dwelling places" (化居 *huaju*), which could provide another interesting parallel with the *Rong Cheng shi*, but its context is difficult to grasp.

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