

*The Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Yan*. Translated and annotated by OLIVIA MILBURN. Sinica Leidensia, vol. 128. Leiden: BRILL, 2016. Pp. xxx + 485. €161, \$193.

*The Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Yan* (Yanzi chunqiu 晏子春秋) is one of the least studied works of China's pre-imperial Masters' (zi 子) lore. Doubts about its authenticity, its bad state of preservation, a certain degree of repetitiveness among its anecdotes—all these seem to have hindered traditional and modern scholars from focusing on this text. Some of these problems have been resolved in recent decades: at the very least, the discovery of several Yanzi chunqiu-related manuscripts dating from the Former Han (206/202 BCE–9 CE) suffices to refute a suspicion that the entire text is a post-Han forgery. Yet scholars remain fundamentally divided: should we treat the text as related to its main protagonist, the major Springs-and-Autumns period (770–453 BCE) statesman Yan Ying 晏嬰 (d. ca. 500 BCE)? Or is it a Warring States period (453–221 BCE) text that just borrows Yan Ying's name but is unrelated to him and to his legacy? Unable to resolve this controversy, many scholars, especially in the West, have simply decided to shun the text altogether.

Recently this situation has begun to change. Two scholars have worked simultaneously on translating the text into English: Olivia Milburn's translation cum study was published first, while that of Yoav Ariel is due to be published in 2018 (by China Renmin Univ. Press). In addition, Scott Cook's study of the concept of loyalty in Yanzi chunqiu promises to be the first step toward a comprehensive analysis of the text's ideology (in *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China*, ed. Yuri Pines, Paul R. Goldin, and Martin Kern [Leiden: Brill, 2015], 181–210). Milburn should be particularly congratulated on her contribution to what appears to be renewed engagement with Yanzi chunqiu on the part of Western scholars. Her translation is fluid, generally accurate (aside from a few minor flaws discussed below), and richly annotated. Accompanying chapters discuss the text's history, its protagonists, its political context, and its ideology. The study will surely benefit both established scholars and, particularly, students, who may now be encouraged to engage with the text systematically. Milburn laudably introduces her readers to the research achievements of traditional and modern Chinese (and to a much lesser extent Japanese) scholars, whose studies of Yanzi chunqiu have considerably advanced our understanding of the text. All this makes Milburn's book a welcome contribution to the field.

Milburn deserves praise for her ongoing project of translating less known pre-imperial and early imperial texts into English (her previous major work was the translation of *Yuejue shu* 越絕書 [Brill, 2010]). Any translator knows how much effort is required to produce a readable English translation of a text that is partly corrupt and never merited high-quality annotations even in Chinese. Some flaws in performing such a challenging task are inevitable. In general, Milburn excels in the more general passages that state Yan Ying's political principles, but her translation becomes less accurate in sections that are rooted more deeply in the historical context of Yan Ying's life. This is particularly true in those sections that are derivative of either *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, the major early source for Yan Ying's activities, or one of the *Zuo zhuan*'s source texts. I shall illustrate some of Milburn's problems with a brief survey of mistakes and inaccuracies in a single section, which depicts Yan Ying's conversation with the Jin 晉 minister Shuxiang 叔向 (*Yanzi chunqiu* 4.17, pp. 289–91; this section parallels *Zuo zhuan* Zhao 3.3).

Shuxiang enumerates eight ministerial houses of Jin, all of whom “have fallen and are now among the menials” 降在皂隸. Milburn translates this as “have all been demoted to the ranks of junior officials” (p. 291), which is wrong: these houses were not “demoted” but fully destroyed, and their descendants did not become “junior officials” but rather unranked servitors. The term *zaoli* 皂隸 was used in the imperial period to depict the *yamen* runners, which may be the source of Milburn's “junior officials.” In the *Zuo zhuan*, however, *zaoli* are servitors, placed below peasants, merchants, and artisans (Xiang 9.4; Zhao 7.2). Milburn also fails to notice that all the ministerial lineages (“clans” in her translation), the downfall of which is lamented by Shuxiang, were related (as Shuxiang's own lineage) to the ruling house of Jin. Later, Milburn translates Shuxiang's *zheng zai jia men* 政在家門 as “The government is now in the hands of a couple of powerful individuals” (p. 291). Again this is wrong: Shuxiang means that the government is monopolized by ministerial houses (*jia* 家) and not by “individuals.” Each of these inaccuracies is minor, but coupled together they obscure Shuxiang's major point: the imminent danger to the ruling house of Jin from independent ministerial lineages. A few other inaccuracies appear in the translation of this section. Thus, when the text lists the ancestors of the Chen 陳 house who congregated in Qi 齊, Milburn renders this as “a congregation of supportive

ghosts and spirits arriving in Qi to assist the Tian [i.e., Chen, YP] family” (p. 290 n. 54). Actually, the congregation does not refer to the spirits’ assistance to the Tian 田 (Chen 陳) family, but to their expectation that the Chen lineage will soon hold power and its ancestors will enjoy sacrifices at the expense of those of the current Qi ruling house. Elsewhere, Milburn states that the Tian/Chen lineage was “selling” grain to the people (p. 289), which is again wrong. The Tian were not merchants: they did not sell but lend (*dai* 貸) grain to the people. To be sure, none of these inaccuracies is crucial for understanding the text, but their concentration in a single section is unwelcome.

Going to Milburn’s introductory chapter, overall they are good and solid. Yet it is a pity that Milburn, who repeatedly insists on the importance of understanding the political context of the *Yanzi chunqiu*, is at her weakest precisely at those points that require full understanding of this context. This pertains particularly to Chapter 3 (“The Political Context of the *Yanzi chunqiu*”), which is perhaps the weakest in the book. Among its problems are inaccurate translations, most notably from the *Zuo zhuan* (Milburn would benefit a lot from the newly published translation of this text by Stephen Durrant, Li Wai-ye, and David Schaberg [Univ. of Washington Press, 2016]); historical inaccuracies, such as attributing *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄 not to its author, Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682), but to its commentator, Huang Rucheng 黃如成 (p. 122 n. 18); and uncritical incorporation of fictitious anecdotes as reliable sources for the history of the sixth to fifth centuries BCE. I am particularly surprised by Milburn’s acceptance of an anecdote about machinations of Confucius’ disciple Zigong 子貢, who allegedly succeeded in embroiling Qi in a war with Wu 吳, as historically reliable (pp. 135–38). Both from the content of this anecdote and from its form of argumentation it is clear that it belongs to the literature of travelling persuaders who eulogized their ability to manipulate the rulers and the ministers of rival states. The historical reliability of these anecdotes in general and of Zigong’s anecdote in particular is close to nil. Most substantially of all, Milburn’s chapter tells the story of events but fails to address the fundamental social and political problems faced by the historical Yan Ying and the later contributors to *Yanzi chunqiu*. Focusing on these problems would have been immensely helpful to the author’s discussion of the book’s dating and its ideology (chapters 1.1 and 3.1).

Let us recall that the power of hereditary aristocracy reached its apogee in Yan Ying’s time. In the state of Qi in particular, local lords lost much of their political, economic, and military authority to their nominal underlings, heads of a few ministerial lineages. Yet these lineages’ greed for more power resulted in ever-escalating clashes both between the lords and rebellious ministers, and among leading ministerial lineages themselves. The historical Yan Ying, as he is presented in the *Zuo zhuan*, was a social and political conservative whose twofold goal was to protect the birthright of aristocrats and to limit the excesses of ministerial lineages. First, he hoped that strict adherence to ritual norms would restore social order in which “the nobles dare not seize the lord’s profits,” and the *shi* 士 (lowest segment of nobility) “do not overflow” (i.e., do not rise above their lowly position) (*Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 26.11). Second, he called upon the ruler and the aristocrats to exercise self-moderation, which would limit endless contest for land and riches. These remedies to social turmoil were apt but—*pace* Milburn’s estimate (p. 424)—by no means “revolutionary.” (For my analysis of Yan Ying’s thought as based on the *Zuo zhuan* accounts, see “The Search for Stability: Late Ch’un-ch’iu Thinkers,” *Asia Major* 10 [1997]: 18–31.)

*Yanzi chunqiu* duly reproduces most of Yan Ying’s sayings and speeches that are scattered throughout the *Zuo zhuan*, but overall the emphasis in the text shifts toward ideas that seem to be radically at odds with the aristocratic intellectual atmosphere depicted in the *Zuo zhuan*. Strong support for meritocratic rather than aristocratic principles of rule, valorization of *shi* 士 (by now no longer the lowest segment of nobility but men-of-service, awkwardly translated by Milburn as “knights”), the *Mengzi* 孟 子-like idea of righteous resignation when a minister is not satisfied with his employer—all these are unmistakable traits of Warring States-period thought. (For my analysis of Warring States-period ideology, see *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era* [Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 2009], esp. pp. 115–84 for the *shi* stratum and its modes of political behavior.) Therefore, despite Milburn’s insistence that many of the anecdotes in *Yanzi chunqiu* “may be extremely ancient” (p. 424), it seems that the bulk of them were produced a century or two after Yan Ying’s death.

That said, Milburn is surely right that *Yanzi chunqiu* cannot be entirely dissociated from the figure of Yan Ying. Not only do some of the text’s anecdotes parallel the *Zuo zhuan* and appear to be set in

a decidedly aristocratic context, but many of the identifiably later anecdotes are also clearly related to the life circumstances of the historical Yan Ying. For instance, Scott Cook has demonstrated that discussions of ministerial loyalty scattered in *Yanzi chunqiu* reflect the situation of a hereditary minister attached to the “altars of soil and grain” (*sheji* 社稷) of his home state rather than a Warring States-period situation in which a counselor could flexibly shift his allegiance from one employer to another. Proper contextualization of the thought of *Yanzi chunqiu* therefore requires a nuanced understanding of the dating of individual anecdotes and the ongoing tension between the original aristocratic setting of Yan Ying’s life and the new meritocratic realities of the age during which most of the anecdotes appear to have been revised or composed.

This brings me to the final observation concerning the nature of *Yanzi chunqiu*. This text epitomizes what David Schaberg has identified as a singularly important genre in pre-imperial literature: didactic anecdotes (“Chinese History and Philosophy,” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. I: *Beginnings to AD 600*, ed. Andrew Feldherr and Grant Hardy [Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011], 394–414; see also *Rhetorical Uses of Anecdotes in Early China*, ed. Paul Van Els and Sarah A. Queen [Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 2017]). The text of *Yanzi Chunqiu* in its current (Han) edition incorporates over two hundred anecdotes about Yan Ying. Some of these may be close to actual records of the historical Yan Ying’s activities; others are embellished or radically modified versions of earlier narratives; and many others were simply invented by anonymous Warring States-period (and later?) authors. Careful exploration of the anecdotes in *Yanzi chunqiu*, their filiations, possible evolution in their narrative form, the importance of the original historical context (or the lack thereof) for their authors, and so forth: all these may considerably advance our understanding of the anecdotal genre. It may be hoped that Milburn’s pioneering translation will encourage more students to study *Yanzi chunqiu* and restore its rightful place as an important locus of knowledge of pre-imperial Chinese literature, history, and thought.

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*The Gongyang Commentary on The Spring and Autumn Annals: A Full Translation.* By HARRY MILLER. New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2015. Pp. viii + 311. \$95.

The *Gongyang Commentary* (*Gōngyáng zhuàn* 公羊傳) is one of three major early interpretive traditions associated with the *Spring and Autumn* (*Chūnqiū* 春秋). *Gōngyáng* in particular exerted a profound influence on the orthodox understanding of the *Spring and Autumn*, and a complete, scholarly translation of this important work is certainly needed. But this translation falls well short of adequately filling that need.

The translator, Harry Miller, states that the translation is directed at the “general reader.” Yet this work is far more likely to be read by scholars, and even translations aimed at general readers should meet basic scholarly standards. This translation fails to meet such standards in three significant respects. First, it does not make sufficient use of traditional and contemporary scholarship on the *Gōngyáng*. Second, its format, with no Chinese characters, no bibliography, and scant historical contextualization, does not aid the reader in understanding the text. Third, it contains translation errors and inaccuracies and substantially misrepresents the style and form of *Gōngyáng*.

The source text for the translation is a single, modern edition, *Xīn yì Gōngyáng zhuàn* 新譯公羊傳, annotated and translated into modern Chinese by Xuě Kè 雪克, and edited by Zhōu Fèngwǔ 周鳳五 (Taipei: Sānmín 三民, 2008). The Sānmín editions of classics such as *Gōngyáng* are indispensable for beginning students of Classical Chinese: the primary text is annotated with *zhùyīn fúhào* 注音符號, and accompanied by notes and a modern Chinese paraphrase written at a level accessible to the average Chinese-speaking undergraduate. However, the Sānmín volumes are student editions, and as such are unsuitable as the basis for scholarly translation. (Incidentally, the translator misidentifies the source text for his translation as *Xīn shì Gongyang zhuàn*, apparently confusing *yì* 譯, ‘translate’ with *shì* 釋, ‘explain’; Introduction, p. 5.)