

The Almanacs (*jih-shu*) from Shui-hu-ti: A Preliminary Survey

From a wealth and variety of literary evidence it is now recognized that divination and the consultation of oracles played a far greater part in Ch'in and Han life than has always been appreciated. This conclusion is drawn from records of a number of incidents and named practitioners, the extent of the criticism leveled against mantic methods, and the provision of established officials charged with the responsibility for these technical matters. In addition there survive a few material objects used in some of the processes, and works such as the *I-li* and *Shih-chi* incorporate prescriptive rules for their conduct. Divination in Han times took the traditional forms of producing cracks on bones or shells, and in casting stalks in order to construct one of the hexagrams.¹ Consultation of oracles was intended to seek existing signs in the world of nature whose pattern could be expected to give clear advice. The forms of such consultations were varied, including, for example, *feng-chiao* 風角 (observation of the direction and strength of winds, of the shapes of clouds or types of comet), *hou-ch'i* 候氣 (observation of the ethers), and *wang-ch'i* 望氣 (observation of the vapors).² In addition, decisions could be based on the readings of the *shih* 式, an instrument that presented the inquirer with the combination of his own personal circumstances, and the situation in space of the earth and sun and their relationship.

Emphasis on the choice of an auspicious time for initiating activity is noticeable in most, if not all, aspects of divination and the consultation of oracles. The hope of coordinating an action with an appropriate stage of a major universal system, and of thus integrating such action in that system, is understandable enough as an expression of man's desire to link his destiny with something more permanent than his own life. The search for per-

I wish to record my thanks to Professor Hulswé, whose comments have, as usual, been of the greatest assistance.

¹For this practice, see my forthcoming article in *TP*, "Divination by Shells, Bones, and Stalks during the Han Period."

²See Derk Bodde, "The Chinese Cosmic Magic Known as Watching for the Ethers," in Søren Egerod and Else Glahn, eds., *Studia Serica Bernhard Karlgren Dedicata* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1959), pp. 14-35; and A.F.P. Hulswé, "Watching the Vapours: An Ancient Chinese Technique of Prognostication," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, Hamburg* 125 (1979), pp. 40-49.

maneuver in this way led to the attention paid to the movements of the heavenly bodies and to cycles and sequences such as those of the sixty-four hexagrams. It is within this context that attention is due to certain documents found recently in central China.

DISCOVERY, FORM, AND CONTENT OF THE MATERIAL

Toward the end of 1975 excavation began on a site at Shui-hu-ti 睡虎地, Yün-meng 雲夢, in the province of Hupei. As has happened frequently in the case of major discoveries, this followed the accidental find of the remains of a tomb; subsequently it appeared that there were no less than twelve tombs at the site.³ All of these included artifacts or possessed characteristics of interest, but attention has fastened mainly on no. 11, which is one of the seven tombs orientated in an east-west direction. The rich store of material found in tomb no. 11 included a total of 1,155 complete bamboo strips carrying a manuscript text, as well as 80 fragments of such material.⁴ The strips derived from documents prepared and rolled up in the manner that may now be termed standard, before being placed at various points within the coffin.⁵ Because the cords that had held the strips together had all rotted, archaeologists were faced with the usual problem of fitting together in the correct order the many elements that had formed complete documents. It has been possible to distinguish a total of ten groups of strips, which carried historical records, legal material, and mantic texts. The mantic texts, which form the subject of this study, were found in two of the ten groups and are referred to below as Groups A and B.

From the historical material it is possible to identify the deceased person who was buried in tomb no. 11 as a man named Hsi 喜. He was born in 262 B.C.⁶ and lived to hold a number of official posts in the kingdom of

³The discovery was made in the course of work on drainage installations, and excavation was conducted by local authorities with the help of Hupei Provincial Museum. For a report on this site, see "Yün-meng Shui-hu-ti Ch'in mu pien hsieh tsu" 雲夢睡虎地秦墓編寫組, in *Yün-meng Shui-hu-ti Ch'in mu* (Peking: Wen-wu, 1981); hereafter cited as *Report*. For preliminary articles on the site, see Chi Hsün 季勳, "Yün-meng Shui-hu-ti Ch'in chien kai-shu" 簡概述, *WW* 1976.5, pp. 1-6; and Hsiao-kan ti-ch'ü ti-erh ch'i i-kung i-nung wen-wu k'ao-ku hsün lien pan 孝感地區第二期亦工亦農文物考古訓練班, comp., "Hu-pei Yün-meng Shui-hu-ti shih-i-hao Ch'in mu fa-chüeh chien-pao" 湖北雲夢睡虎地十一號秦墓發掘簡報, *WW* 1976.6, pp. 1-10. See also A.F.P. Hulswé's "The Ch'in Documents Discovered in Hu-pei in 1975," *TP* 64 (1978), pp. 175-217, 338.

⁴*Report*, pp. 72, 73-102 (a catalogue of strips), and 103 (fragments).

⁵*Report*, p. 13, fig. 15.

⁶See *WW* 1976.6, pp. 6 and 12 for the statement of Hsi's birth in the 45th year of Chao-hsiang, king of Ch'in.

Ch'in and then under the First Emperor (r. 221-210). The final date to be mentioned in one of the historical documents is 217 B.C., and at that time Hsi would have been about forty-five; the skeletal remains in the tomb are believed to be those of a forty- to fifty-year-old male. For these reasons, 217 B.C. may be accepted as the year in which the tomb was sealed.

Originally the area had formed part of the territory of Ch'u, but following the campaign started in 279, it had been incorporated within the expanding kingdom, and later the empire, of Ch'in. In some of the documents other than the mantic texts, care was taken to avoid infringing the taboos placed on Cheng 正, given name of the king of Ch'in from 246, and First Emperor from 221. No such care was taken to avoid the ban on writing the name of the first of the Han emperors. It may be concluded that such of the documents as were of a type where the taboos were observed were written during the second half of the third century B.C.; it is likely that the mantic texts, which are of a popular type of writing wherein the taboos were not necessarily observed, date from the same period.

The discovery of these strips is of major importance, constituting as it does the first find of written material of the Ch'in period. Transcriptions of many of the strips have already been published, and scholastic effort has hitherto been devoted mainly to the legal texts, of which a full-scale study has been published by A.F.P. Hulswé.⁷ Complete transcriptions and photographs of the two groups of mantic texts are included in the report on Shui-hu-ti,⁸ along with full archaeological details of the site. In addition, these strips are treated in a special monograph, with the support of introductory essays by Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 and Tseng Hsien-t'ung 曾憲通.⁹

Considerable evidence now exists to demonstrate the regular methods of using wooden stationery.¹⁰ For lengthy documents, the wood or bamboo was cut to form thin narrow strips of even size, and, as in Group B of the

⁷For transcriptions, see Yün-meng Ch'in mu chu-chien cheng-li hsiao-tsu 雲夢秦墓竹簡整理小組, comp., "Yün-meng Ch'in chien shih-wen" 雲夢秦簡釋文, *WW* 1976.6, pp. 11-14; 1976.7, pp. 1-10; and 1976.8, pp. 27-37. For an annotated translation, see A.F.P. Hulswé, *Remnants of Ch'in Law: An Annotated Translation of the Ch'in Legal and Administrative Rules of the 3rd Century B.C. Discovered in Yün-meng Prefecture, Hu-pei Province in 1975* (Leiden: Brill, 1985).

⁸See n. 3, above.

⁹See *Report*, plates L-CLXVI for photographs and transcriptions, the mantic texts appearing as plates CXXVI-CLXVI. These plates are reproduced in Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 and Tseng Hsien-t'ung 曾憲通, *Yün-meng Ch'in chien jih-shu yen-chiu* 雲夢秦簡日書研究 (Hong Kong: Chinese U. of Hong Kong P., 1982), where they are to be read from right to left and are thus easier to handle than in the *Report*.

¹⁰See Michael Loewe, *Records of Han Administration* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1967) 1, p. 26; 2, pp. 418ff.; and idem, "Han Administrative Documents: Recent Finds from the North-West," *TP* 72 (1986), pp. 291-314.

material that is considered here, the text was written on one surface only. The strips were then fastened together by means of tapes which passed alternately over and under them successively. Sometimes serial numbers were added at the foot of the strips, to ensure that they could be assembled in the correct order. As the whole document, which could carry text set out in tabular form, was flexible, it could then be rolled up as a scroll, or volume, or *chüan* 卷. Alternatively, stationery of a different type could be used. Three or more surfaces of a comparatively thick rod were planed smooth, so that each one could accommodate one, or perhaps two columns, of writing. The texts on each surface could then be taken in succession, and a hole could be drilled at the head of the rod to attach it to others; possibly this type of stationery was originally known as a *p'ien* 篇, or fascicle. For special purposes, wood could be cut to other sizes or shapes (for example with broader widths), to carry the six or so parallel columns that formed a complete document; or to form a ledger, to whose headings individual entries could be added as required.

The *Report* designates the two groups of mantic strips as *Jih-shu chia* 日書甲 and *Jih-shu i* 日書乙; this study retains that distinction in the form of Group A and Group B, respectively. Group A consists of 166 strips which were placed on the right side of the skull. They are slightly longer than the usual, measuring 25 cm as against the more usual 23 cm of the Han period (that is, one foot in Han measurement). However, some of the legal documents from this site are on even longer strips, measuring 27 cm. Somewhat unusually, and possibly uniquely, both sides of the strips of this group carry inscriptions. Group B consists of 257 strips, measuring 23 cm in length, which were placed at the feet of one corpse. Only one side of these strips is inscribed, except for one which is believed to be the penultimate strip of the whole document. This carries the short inscription *Jih-shu*, which may be identified as the title of the work, although the expression is not seen elsewhere at this time.¹¹ In the published transcriptions of the whole corpus of material from Shui-hu-ti, Group A appears as nos. 730-895, and Group B as 896-1155. There is also a supplementary series (numbered 1-12) for the fragmentary material, which is not considered here. Reference below is made to strips by these numbers, with the reverse sides of Group A being numbered 895R to 730R.

¹¹ For a further example of the inscription of the title on the reverse side of a strip, see copies of the *l-li* 儀禮 found at Mo-tsu-tzu 磨咀子, where the titles and names of chapters are treated in this way. See Kan-su sheng po-wu-kuan 甘肅省博物館 and Chung-kuo k'o-hsüeh-yüan k'ao-ku yen-chiu-so 中國科學院考古研究所, *Wu-wei Han chien* 武威漢簡 (Peking: Wen-wu, 1964), plates 1, II, IVf.

The Chinese editors of the *Report* state that in general the writing on the strips is "very clear,"¹² and there are indeed very few passages where transcription has not been attempted. As is not uncommon with the use of narrow wooden strips made to be rolled together to form a complete document, small triangular grooves or notches were cut at regular intervals at the sides, to hold the binding cords in position; provision was made here for three such cords.¹³ Each strip carries a single column of writing, which is often to be read consecutively from head to foot. In some cases, however, successive strips were divided into several horizontal bands, or registers; in each register the strips are read in consecutive columns, before those of the next register are taken, in the same manner. On some occasions the text is divided in this way into as many as six registers (for example, nos. 869-78). Sometimes a table or diagram has been incorporated on successive strips (for example, nos. 776-86, 843-55, 813R-806R). Punctuation marks are included in the text somewhat sparingly.

The script is of the early form of *li-shu* 隸書, sometimes termed "proto-*li-shu*." Even from the blurred images of the published photographs it is possible to discern differences in the handwriting of the strips, and these are only to be expected, as neither Group A nor Group B should be regarded as a unitary document. Each group includes a number of independent texts which may have been, or almost certainly were, written at different times. Some of these texts were short enough to be carried on one or two strips, but in most cases more were necessary, and some texts extend to twenty or more strips (as in nos. 922-41, 1052-75, 1096-1132). It is not always certain where one unit of text ends and another begins. It has been suggested that the strips of Group B are somewhat earlier than those of Group A.¹⁴

The texts of Group A and B were compiled for the same purpose, that of prescribing appropriate times for taking certain actions and specifying those actions that are inauspicious for certain times. For some of the texts, particularly those that are not set out in tabular form and which are to be read from one strip to another consecutively, a title stands at the head of a column identifying such subjects as dreams, robbers, journeys, and building projects. In some cases this title appears at the head of the second rather than the initial strip of a text.¹⁵

¹² *Report*, p. 12.

¹³ This statement derives from *Report*, p. 12; the grooves are only rarely discernible in the published photographs.

¹⁴ This opinion has been expressed verbally by Professor Li Hsüeh-ch'in.

¹⁵ See, for example, nos. 943, 1134, 1145, and 1149 in the series 942-47, 1133-43, 1144-47, and 1148-54, respectively.

of days are defined by a character that forms one of a series of twelve, or less usually eight, terms, and a number of variations may be noticed in one such series of terms, which runs as follows: 建除盈平定執被危成收開閉.¹⁹ It is shown below that the first two characters of this series, *ch'ien-ch'u*, are used as a term to define a specific type of oracular practice and means of designating days as fortunate or unfortunate.

Nos. 730-42, the first series of strips in Group A, may be taken as an example of one of these tables (see figure 1). A guide strip on the right (no. 730) shows how the twelve entries in the upper register of each strip apply to successive months. A character at the head of each strip, which is taken from a series of twelve, denotes the category within which all days designated on that strip fall. In the lower register the quality of those days is further identified by an expression taken from a similar series, and further information is then specified. A glance at the strips will show how these categories proceed by means of a regular cycle, as may be seen in the following examples:

Strip 741		Strip 742		Strip 741		Strip 742	
Category		Category		Category		Category	
<i>ch'eng</i>		<i>yung</i>		<i>ch'eng</i>		<i>yung</i>	
Falls on:		Falls on:		Falls on:		Falls on:	
MONTH	DAYS	DAYS	MONTH	DAYS	DAYS	DAYS	DAYS
11	<i>hsü</i>	<i>hai</i>	5	<i>ch'en</i>	<i>ssu</i>		
12	<i>hai</i>	<i>tzu</i>	6	<i>ssu</i>	<i>wu</i>		
1	<i>tzu</i>	<i>ch'ou</i>	7	<i>wu</i>	<i>wei</i>		
2	<i>ch'ou</i>	<i>yin</i>	8	<i>wei</i>	<i>shen</i>		
3	<i>yin</i>	<i>mao</i>	9	<i>shen</i>	<i>yu</i>		
4	<i>mao</i>	<i>ch'en</i>	10	<i>yu</i>	<i>hsü</i>		

The lower register gives the further information in respect of days in category *ch'eng* (no. 741; rendering tentative):

Their quality is *ch'ieh kang* 夫光. These days are advantageous for climbing heights, drinking, eating, hunting. Beyond the wilds, in all directions, for those abiding there will be a fixed residence, for those journeying there will be achievement; if the days are taken for the

procreation of children, whether male or female they will beyond doubt be beautiful.

A great proportion of the material in Groups A and B is repetitive, but it does not seem that duplicate copies of the same text are included. The following are examples of the subjects and activities with which the strips are concerned:

1. Religious activities
Sacrifice to holy spirits (nos. 732, 1015); divination by shells or stalks (nos. 830, 1021); demons, and exorcism with peachwood (no. 872R).
2. Human destinies
Procreation of children (nos. 869-78; 1133ff.); marriage (nos. 884, 895R, 1012); illness (no. 1083); dreams (nos. 883R, 1085); removal, encoffing, and burial of the dead (nos. 759, 1096).
3. Behavior, projects, and events
Regulation of clothing (no. 777R); attendance by officials at audience (no. 886); assemblies (no. 860); slaughter of animals (no. 794R); hunting (no. 737); incidence of robberies (nos. 827R, 1148); journeys in particular directions, through particular gates (nos. 856, 789R-88R, 1037, 1052); construction of earthworks (nos. 831, 833, 836, 839, 767R, 1005); gates and their suitability for various uses (nos. 844, 753R, 1091); agricultural works (nos. 746, 747, 753).

THE CHIEN-CH'U SYSTEM OF ORACLES

The term *ch'ien-ch'u* 建除 does not appear in the titles of any of the works on mantic subjects that are listed in chapter thirty of the *Han shu*, and it is absent from a list of oracular methods that is given in one passage of the *Hou Han shu*.²⁰ However, there is at least one reference in Han literature that supports the conclusion that *ch'ien-ch'u* was the name of a recognized and specific method of consulting oracles. This occurs in the supplementary passages added to chapter 127 of the *Shih-chi* by Ch'u Shao-sun 褚少孫, toward the beginning of the Christian era.²¹ The text relates how Wu-ti

²⁰ *HSPC* 30, pp. 65a ff.; Wang Hsien-ch'ien, *Hou-Han-shu chi-chieh* 後漢書集解 (Changsha, 1923; hereafter *HHSCG*), ch. 82A (biography 72A), p. 1b.

²¹ References to *Shih-chi* cite Takigawa Kametarō 滝川龜太郎, comp., *Shiki kaichū kōshō* 史記會注考證 (Tokyo: Tōhō bunka gakuin Tōkyō kenkyūjo, 1932-1934; hereafter abbreviated as *SC*); see ch. 127, p. 14. Ch'u Shao-sun's dates, ?104-130 B.C., are suggested by Timoteus Pokora, "Ch'u Shao-sun: Narrator of Stories in the *Shih-chi*," in *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 41 (1981), pp. 403-30.

(Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1938-1955; hereafter *HFHD*) 3, p. 346; Liu Wen-tien 劉文典, comp., *Huai-nan hung-lich chi-chieh* 淮南鴻烈集解 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926; hereafter *HNT*), ch. 5, p. 3a; and Shih Sheng-han 石聲漢, comp., *Ssu-min yüeh-ling chiao-chu* 四民月令校注 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1965; hereafter *SMYL*), p. 6 (sect. 1.2).

¹⁹ For variations, see table 1, below, columns a-e.

Table 1. Variant Terms Used in the Chien-ch'u Series

Nos:	(e) 730-742	(d) 896-921	(c) 730-742	(b) 922-941	(a) 743-754	
	結	宥結	濡			子
	陽	羸陽	羸			丑
	交	建交	建	建	建	寅
	害	宥羅	陷	徐	除	卯
	陰	作陰	彼	吉	盈	辰
	達	平達	平	實	平	巳
	外陽	成外	寧	宥	定	午
	外害	空外	空	敦	執	未
	外陰	駐外	坐	衝	絞	申
	口口	盍絕	蓋	剽	危	酉
	夫光	成決	成	虛	成	戌
	秀	復秀	甬	吉	收	亥
				實	開	子
				開	閉	丑

NOTE: This table shows the variants that appear in the different versions of the *chien-ch'u* series found in the documents. It will be seen that although there is no complete identity, there is sufficient correspondence to establish the relationship of the various series, provided that they are set to start at the appropriate position in the cycle of the Twelve Branches. In this table the series *chien, ch'u* is set to start with *yin, mao*, as in *HNT* 3, p. 24b; *ju 濡* is set against *tsu 子*, as in strip no. 731. According to the T'ang commentator's note to *HHSCC* 25 (biog. 15), p. 8b, in Hsia usage *chien* was set against *yin*; in Yin usage it was set against *ch'ou*; and in Chou usage it was set against *tsu*.

In column a the *HNT* has the following variants: for 盈 it reads 滿 (to avoid the personal name of Han Hui-ti); for 絞 it reads 破. See also Mare Kalinowski, "Les traités de Shuihudi et l'hémérologie chinoise à la fin des Royaumes-combattants," *TP* 72 (1986), pp. 197ff.

wished to ascertain whether a particular day would be suitable for taking a wife, and how advice of various sorts was proffered by the representatives of various schools. Among these, the expert in *chien-ch'u* pronounced that the day would not be fortunate: this verdict agreed with that of the master of *k'an-yü* 堪輿, but it was in opposition to that of the specialist in *wu-hsing* 五行, who advised that the proposed action would be appropriate. History does not relate the outcome of this exercise in oracular consultation.

The following is submitted as a tentative explanation of the *chien-ch'u* system as it is believed to have operated in Han times, in the absence of a detailed explanation that dates from the time. The evidence upon which these suggestions are based is presented below.

The *chien-ch'u* system depended on the belief that different qualities, powers, or virtues pertain to successive periods of time, which are enumer-

ated in a major cycle of twelve years and a minor cycle of twelve days. Each member of the cycle is classified or defined by means of a term that is one of a series of twelve characters, beginning *chien, ch'u*. It is possible that originally a number of different series of characters was in use for this purpose; and it is perhaps conceivable that different series were used to denote the qualities of the years and the days. However, by the time that the strips from Shui-hu-ti were being inscribed, such distinctions, if they had existed, seem to have become blurred. The different versions that were in use in these documents are set out below (see table 1, columns a and b).

While the characters in the series just mentioned define the position of the year or day in the cycle of twelve, the qualities and virtues of each one may be further spelled out by means of a different, but partly corresponding series. Such series comprised twelve terms (see table 1, columns c-e).

The system depended on the existence of a complete almanac, which carried entries for every day of the year.²² In theory it would be possible to draw up a very large number of such almanacs, and it was therefore necessary to choose one of many, so as to conform with the particular circumstances of the individual concerned. The almanac indicated the type of year in question, the circumstances pertaining to its months, and the qualities of each day in the month. The documents from Shui-hu-ti include several ways of setting out this information, and it is possible that not all details are necessarily included in all the examples of tables to be found in the corpus of material discovered. Strips 730-42 seem to provide all the necessary information, as follows (see figure 1):

1. The year is defined as the *ch'u* year in the series of twelve (no. 730).
2. Each month is defined in terms of its position in the Twenty-eight Lodges (no. 730).
3. Each day of the month, as enumerated in the Twelve Earthly Branches, is classified in the terms of the series *ju, ying 濡, 羸*, and so on (nos. 731-42 in figure 1; see also table 1, column c).
4. The qualities attendant on days specified as *ju, ying*, etc., are identified by means of a further series *chieh, yang, chiao 結, 陽, 交*, etc., and details are given of the actions that are auspicious or inauspicious for those particular days (nos. 731-42).

Examples of almanacs where the year is classified by one of these terms may be seen in nos. 730-42 (*ch'u* 除); 743-54 (Ch'in *ch'u* 秦除); and 921-32

²² Entries are given for a total of 144 days (the twelve days notated *tsu, ch'ou*, etc. for each of the twelve months).

(*Hsü* 徐). A somewhat different term is used for the series beginning with no. 755 (*chi ch'en* 履辰); nos. 942-47 are entitled *Ch'in* 秦. It would seem that nos. 730-42 form an almanac for the *ch'u* year according to the calendar of *Ch'u* 楚, starting in the eleventh month, and nos. 743-54 are an almanac for the *ch'u* year according to the *Ch'in* calendar, beginning with the first (*cheng* 正) month. It may be suggested, by way of hypothesis, that tables for the *ch'u* year were included in the material buried in tomb no. 11, Shui-hu-ti, as they were of direct application to the deceased person, Hsi, probably because he was born, but possibly because he died, in a *ch'u* year. In this way the statements of the *ch'ien-ch'u* system were related specifically to the individual circumstances of the man concerned. It could well be that these were the very tables whereby he had guided the choices and decisions of his life and that for this reason they were buried with him. If such were the case, the tables for the *ch'u* year would have been those that fitted the circumstances of his birth.

The definition of the twelve months in no. 730 according to the appropriate position of the Twenty-eight Lodges is of interest and importance. The months are defined according to the same system, and usually according to the same constellations, in the two extant versions of the *Yüeh ling* 月令, and a similar system is adopted in the corresponding passages of the *Huai-nan-tzu*.²³ The importance lies in the linkage that is effected between the passage of time and its appropriate activities and the march of the heavenly bodies in their cycles. Later mantic practice suggests that a system of horoscopy must take account of three situations — those of the heavens, of earth, and of the individual himself. It would seem that the *ch'ien-ch'u* system provided for these three considerations.

The evidence on which the foregoing suggestions are based may be summarized as follows.

1. Ch'ien T'ang 錢塘 (see item 8, below) has suggested that the earliest allusions to some of the terms of the *ch'ien-ch'u* series can be found in the *Liu p'ao* 六韜 and *Yüeh-chüeh shu* 越絕書.
2. The most informative statement for *Ch'in* and Han times is to be found in the *Huai-nan-tzu*'s chapter on astronomy.²⁴ The passage sets out the twelve terms in sequence, linking *ch'ien* with *yin* 寅 (third of the Twelve Earthly Branches), and adding a brief note on their qualities as follows:

²³ *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* 呂氏春秋 (SPPY edn.; hereafter *LSCC*), ch. 1, p. 1a; *Li-chi* 禮記 (SPTK edn.; hereafter *LC*), ch. 5 ("Yüeh-ling"), p. 1a; *HNT* 5, p. 1a.

²⁴ *HNT* 3, pp. 24a ff.

TERM	DESCRIBED AS
<i>ch'ien, ch'u, man, p'ing</i> 建除滿平	主生
<i>ting, chih</i> 定執	主陷
<i>p'o</i> 破	主衡
<i>wei</i> 危	主杓
<i>ch'eng</i> 成	主少德
<i>shou</i> 收	主大德
<i>k'ai</i> 開	主太歲
<i>pi</i> 閉	主太陰

It may be noted that in this description, the twelve members are distributed unevenly, being assigned to a total of eight categories.

3. In the *Han shu* there are at least two references to the system and the evident faith that it evoked, both in connection with Wang Mang 王莽:²⁵
 - a. The arrival of the stone ox from Pa, one of the omens that was taken as a portent for Wang Mang's rule, was dated on "the day *jen-tzu* 壬子 of the eleventh month, on which *ch'ien* fell, being the winter solstice";
 - b. Wang Mang stated his intention of donning the imperial hat and assuming the substantive position of Son of Heaven "on the day *mou-ch'en* 戊辰 on which *ting* falls";
4. In one of the many passages where he argues the case for the spontaneity of natural processes as against a determinate interpretation of events, Wang Ch'ung 王充 cites the operation of the *ch'ien-ch'u* system, mentioning the terms *ch'ien* and *p'o*.²⁶
5. It is stated that when Wei Wen-ti received the instrument of abdication, that is, the twenty-ninth day of the tenth month (220), on which *ch'eng* fell, this was regarded as an auspicious day.²⁷
6. Some of the terms of the *ch'ien-ch'u* series appear on parts of Han calendars found at Tun-huang and Chü-yen. Perhaps the best example may be seen in nos. 9-24 of Chavannes's edition of the

²⁵ *HSPC* 99A, p. 34b (*HFHD* 3, p. 250); *HSPC* 99A, p. 36a (*HFHD* 3, pp. 255-56). See also *Sui shu* (Peking: Chung-hua, 1973) 16, p. 411, for the presentation to the throne in 500-503 of an inscribed weight carrying a similar reference to a day on which *ting* fell, and believed to date from the period of Wang Mang. Other references to the *ch'ien-ch'u* system will be found in *HSPC* 75, pp. 13b, 17a.

²⁶ See Huang Hui 黃暉, comp., *Lun-heng chiao-shih* 論衡校釋 (Changsha: Shang-wu, 1938; hereafter *LH*), ch. 3 ("Ou-hui"), p. 94 (trans. A. Forke, *Lun Heng: Philosophical Essays of Wang Ch'ung* [Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1907, 1911] 2, p. 3). See also *LH* 23 ("Lan-shih"), p. 978 (Forke, *Lun Heng* 2, p. 387).

²⁷ *HSPC* 99A, p. 36a; see the note of Ch'ien Ta-chao 錢大昭.

material from Tun-huang, which derived from a calendar for the year 63 B.C.²⁸ Here the entries are set out in tabular fashion, with one strip assigned to each of the thirty days of the month. The number of the day in question is inscribed at the head of the strip, and the sexagenary signs of that numbered day in each one of the months follow regularly down the strip. Had it survived in toto, the document would have included, in order, the sexagenary signs for all the days of the year. On some of the surviving pieces of the calendar the character *chien* is inserted at intervals of twelve days, to indicate the point at which the *chien-ch'u* cycle was commencing.

This feature does not appear on strips 25–35 in the same collection, which may together be identified as parts of a calendar for 59 B.C. But on strip no. 537, which derives from a calendar for 94 A.D., Chavannes's reading of *chien* in two entries may now be supplemented by recognition of the terms *ch'u*, *p'ing*, *ting*, and *chih* in their appropriate positions. In the material from Chü-yen, *chien* may be seen on the following fragments of calendars: 111.6, 176.53, 309.15, and 506.18.

7. For the Ch'ing period, considerable attention is given to the *chien-ch'u* system in *Ch'in-ting hsieh-chi pien-fang shu* 欽定協紀辨方書.²⁹ The twelve terms are set out with their various connotations and correspondences, together with a series of diagrams and citations from a number of sources.
8. In commenting on the passage from *Huai-nan-tzu* 3, mentioned in item 2, above, Ch'ien T'ang (1735–1790) notes the references in the *Shih-chi* and *Han shu*, and the two short passages in the *Liu t'ao* and *Yüeh-chüeh shu*. He includes the statement, "It appears that there were two systems of *chien-ch'u*; the *Yüeh-chüeh shu* follows the enumeration of the year (*sui* 歲); the *Huai-nan-tzu* and the *Han shu* follow the count of the moon. Only that of the moon was used later."³⁰
9. It will be seen below that criticism was voiced in Han times against the inconsistencies involved in certain mantic practices and beliefs;

possibly these were of concern in *chien-ch'u* interpretation, but there is no evidence to support such a suggestion.³¹ According to a source named *k'ao-yüan* 考原, cited in *Hsieh-chi pien-fang shu*,³² days on which *ch'u*, *wei*, *ting*, *chih*, *ch'eng*, and *k'ai* fall are fortunate, while *chien*, *p'o*, *p'ing*, *shou*, *man*, and *pi* are unfortunate. In a comment to *Han shu pu-chu*,³³ Chou Shou-ch'ang 周壽昌 (1814–1884) observed that the operation of the *chien-ch'u* system of the *Huai-nan-tzu* varied from that of his own time. He stated that *ch'u*, *wei*, *ting*, and *chih* are fortunate; *chien*, *man*, *p'ing*, and *shou* are next; *ch'eng* and *k'ai* are likewise fortunate; and *pi* and *p'o* are unfortunate.

10. It may be remarked that the *chien-ch'u* terms appear today in some contemporary almanacs published in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, with a specification of activities that are regarded as appropriate or not for each term of the cycle.

PRINCIPLES OF THE ALMANACS AND THEIR PLACE IN MANTIC PRACTICE AND LITERATURE

The almanacs take their place among a number of methods and formulations designed to ensure that human decisions would be in accord with the universal sequences of astrocalendrical science. However, there is no means of ascertaining the criteria whereby particular activities and their auspicious or inauspicious natures were related to specific days in the cycle. In effect, the tabulated presentation of the necessary guidance amounted to a set of dogmatic and irrefutable statements, and in this way the almanacs constituted an established authority. They are by no means the only case where prescriptive rules may have displaced the utterances of a seer as part of a mantic process; other examples are seen in the scriptural interpretations of the hexagrams, or the *Shih-chi*'s definitive interpretations of cracks formed on turtle shells.³⁴

It has been suggested, above, how a connection may have been forged between the established advice of the almanacs and the circumstances of the individual consultant. The matters for which advice was sought may be classified as concerning religious activities, human destinies, and behavior

²⁸ Edouard Chavannes, *Les documents chinois découverts par Aurel Stein dans les sables du Turkestan Oriental* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1913), pp. 10–14.

²⁹ Compiled by Chuang Ch'in 莊親 and Wang Yün-lu 王允祿 (pref. 1741); rpt. in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen wu-chi* 四庫全書珍本五集 (Taipei: Shang-wu, 1974), vols. 220–29. See ch. 4, p. 12; 10, p. 172; 20, p. 22, and subsequent chapters for each of the months.

³⁰ Ch'ien T'ang, *Huai-nan t'ien-wen-hsün pu-chu* 淮南天文訓補注 (pref. 1788; rpt. Wu-ch'ang chü ts'ung-shu 武昌局叢書 edn.) B, p. 35b. Further references to the system appear in pp. 48b–50a.

³¹ LH 24 ("Chi jih"), pp. 985ff. (Forke, *Lun Hêng* 2, pp. 393ff.). For an attempt by Wang Ching 王景 to sort out some of the inconsistencies, see HHSKC 76 (biography 66), pp. 6b, 7a.

³² Ch. 4, p. 4b.

³³ HSPC 99A, p. 36a.

³⁴ SC 128.

and projects. These same subjects feature in other types of documents that may or may not derive from mantic considerations, and that form the context in which the almanacs should be considered.

While the term *jih-shu* forms the title of one of the rolls of strips found at Shui-hu-ti, it does not appear in the bibliographical treatise (chapter 30) of the *Han shu*. However, that chapter includes considerable reference to material that is of a comparable type, listed under six categories. Entries appear as follows (figures in parentheses are from the supplementary lists of Yao Chen-tsung 姚振宗):³⁵

CATEGORY OF TEXT	NUMBER OF AUTHORS	NUMBER OF CHÜAN
<i>l'ien-wen</i> 天文	21 (11)	445 (11)
<i>li-p'u</i> 歷譜	18 (16)	606 (16)
<i>wu-hsing</i> 五行	31 (2)	652 (3)
<i>shih kwei</i> 著龜	15 (8)	401 (16)
<i>tsa chan</i> 雜占	18 (5)	313 (8)
<i>hsing fa</i> 形法	6 (20)	122 (20)

Collectively, these categories are known as *shu-shu* 數術, and at the outset of the treatise we are informed that Yin Hsien 尹咸, the *l'ai-shih ling* 太史令, had been ordered to collate this material. Other references speak of the interest that Tan, king of Yen 燕王旦, and Ts'ai Yung 蔡邕 entertained for these texts.³⁶ In describing the second category of writings included in *shu-shu*, that is, *li-p'u*, the *Han shu* notes their concern with the heavenly bodies and with the calculation of time, and observes that the means of ascertaining the catastrophes of ill fortune and the joys of good fortune derive therefrom. The titles of a number of works that the *Han shu* includes under *li-p'u* suggest that they may have been calendars of many varieties, with which the almanacs of Shui-hu-ti would readily fit.³⁷

Extant examples of texts or fragments that may be compared with the material from Shui-hu-ti are as follows.

1. *Ta Tai li-chi* 大戴禮記 47 (*Hsia hsiao cheng* 夏小正)

Derk Bodde has expressed the view that "this text may just possibly belong to the fifth or early fourth century B.C., which would make it by far the earliest example of its genre."³⁸ The text in fact does not

³⁵ *HSPC* 30, pp. 65a-78b; Yao's supplement is reprinted in *Erh-shih-wu shih pu-pien* 二十五史補編 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1956) 2, pp. 1499ff.

³⁶ *HSPC* 30, p. 1b, and 63, p. 8b for Tan; for Ts'ai, see *HHSCC* 60b (biography 50b), p. 1b; for Wang Ching's compendium of these matters, see *HHSCC* 76 (biography 66), p. 7a.

³⁷ *HSPC* 30, pp. 66b-69b.

³⁸ Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1975), p. 15.

entirely take the form of consecutive prose, much of it being set out in the form of a comment or explanation of select words or phrases; many of these occur in identical or near identical form in the *Yüeh ling*. For example,

	<i>Ta Tai li-chi</i> (ch. 2) ³⁹	<i>Lü-shih</i> <i>ch'un-ch'iu</i> ⁴⁰	<i>Li-chi</i> (ch. 5) ⁴¹	<i>Huai-nan-tzu</i> (ch. 5) ⁴²
鷹北鄉	p. 13	12, p. 1a	p. 23b	p. 16b
魚陟負冰獺獻魚	pp. 13-14	1, p. 1b	p. 1b	p. 1b
田鼠化爲鴛	p. 18	3, p. 1a	p. 6a	p. 4a
鷹始摯	p. 20	6, p. 1a	p. 12a	p. 8b
雀入于海爲蛤	p. 23	9, p. 1a	p. 17b	p. 12b
玄雉入于淮爲蜃	p. 23	10, p. 1b	p. 19b	p. 14a

The chapter also includes material that cannot be traced in this way, but it is possible that much of the *Hsia hsiao cheng* should be regarded as a series of notes intended to explain difficulties in a text that no longer survives, but which may well have been comparable with the *Yüeh ling* of our three extant versions, or even a source from which they were drawn.⁴³

2. The *Yüeh ling* 月令

The *yüeh-ling* of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* and the *Li-chi* may be regarded as authentic pre-Han texts.⁴⁴ The chapters are based on the *wu-hsing*, or Five Phases theory of being, and it is of considerable importance to observe how far the process of standardization and regularization had reached by the time that the *Yüeh ling* was compiled. Much of the text is duplicated again, in the fifth chapter of the *Huai-nan-tzu* ("Shih tse hsün" 時則訓), where some details are omitted and others are inserted. On the whole, the text of the *Huai-nan-tzu* may fit imperial Han times slightly better than that of the other two versions.

The *Yüeh ling* sets out the characteristics of each of the twelve months in terms of the movements of the heavenly bodies and the position of the months in the Five Phases cycle.⁴⁵ Details are specified

³⁹ Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng edn.

⁴⁰ SPPY edn.

⁴¹ SPTK edn.

⁴² Liu wen-tien edn.

⁴³ See Herbert Chatley, "The Date of the Hsia Calendar *Hsia hsiao cheng*," *JRAS* (1938), pp. 523-33.

⁴⁴ Bodde, *Festivals*, p. 16. The *yüeh-ling* appear as the initial *p'ien* in 1-12 of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*. In the *Li-chi* these passages are assembled as *p'ien* 6 (ch. 5).

⁴⁵ In *LSCC* and *LC* the position is given in terms of the Twenty-eight Lodges; in *HNT* 5 as the region to which the star Chao-yao (see n. 81, below) points.

of their appropriate or characteristic features in terms of such things as musical notes, the reactions of the pitch pipes, number, taste, or smell. There is a description of the natural phenomena that can be expected to occur during the month among the flora and fauna of earth, including the transformation of living creatures from one type to another. The chapter also prescribes the correct behavior for the ruler of man, the types of orders that should be given so as to correspond with the seasons, and the working tasks that are appropriate thereto. Finally, the chapter lays down the dire consequences that may be expected if, notwithstanding the provisions that are specified, orders that suit the other seasons of the year are implemented. Such consequences may take the form of peculiarities of climate, disturbances such as flood, drought, famine, crop failure, or plague, or the incidence of robbers, or insecurity at the borders.

3. *Fan Sheng-chih-shu* 汜勝之書

This work, which was probably compiled toward the end of the first century B.C., is set out in the form of instructions for the regulation of agricultural work.⁴⁶ Insofar as its outlook and purpose are strictly practical, the text may be compared with the *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* 四民月令, and it is for this reason that it is brought to attention here, although it does not take the form of an almanac.

In at least one section the *Fan Sheng-chih-shu* carries instructions that are somewhat out of character with the rest of the work and which are reminiscent of the strips from Shui-hu-ti. These instructions advise against planting crops on particular days in the cycle of twelve; for example, for lesser beans, avoid *mao* 卯 days, for rice and hemp, avoid *ch'en* 辰 days. This instructions ends, "All the nine types of field crop have their days of avoidance; if they are planted without avoiding such days, there will be considerable damage and failure." The instruction that follows actually specifies that days on which *ch'u* 除 falls, in the *chien-ch'u* cycle, are not suitable for planting.⁴⁷

4. *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* 四民月令

The *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* of Ts'ui Shih 崔寔 (ca. 110-ca. 170) consists of a set of monthly ordinances that are of a very different type from those of the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, *Li-chi*, and *Huai-nan-tzu*. The text

concentrates on the practical and realistic problems faced in maintaining the working life of the countryside. In addition, it is a guide for the religious rites and dues deemed necessary for a successful life on the farm. In at least one passage the book refers to the *chien-ch'u* system.⁴⁸ There are also a few injunctions to rely on divination, by means of yarrow stalks, in order to choose days that are suitable for certain activities. Whereas the *jih-shu* from Shui-hu-ti identify with great care the days that are or are not suitable for marriage,⁴⁹ the *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* states, much more simply, that "the eighth month is suitable."⁵⁰ By contrast with the references to certain days in the cycle of earthly branches that are included in the *Fan Sheng-chih shu*, the *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* simply states that planting of a whole variety of crops (which are named) may be undertaken from a date in the first month until the end of the second month.⁵¹

5. Manuscript material with a mantic content has been identified as follows at sites other than that of Shui-hu-ti.

a. Tomb no. 6, Mo-tsu-tzu 磨咀子 (Wu-wei), which may be dated in the period of Wang Mang, included six complete strips and several fragments that are of interest to the subject under discussion. Some of the texts are of much the same type as those from Shui-hu-ti, being prescriptions for and prohibitions against activities on days denoted by the terms of the sexagenary cycle.⁵²

b. Chavannes's edition of the strips from Tun-huang includes one piece (no. 59) that comments on the results of obtaining the hexagram *lü* 旅. No. 448 recounts the likely destiny of children, in accordance with the direction in which their heads face at the time of birth. The surviving three characters on no. 638 foretell a happy outcome, from circumstances that cannot now be ascertained.

c. Maspero identifies five fragments from Tun-huang (nos. 20-24) as deriving from mantic material; their text is comparable with that on some of the material from Shui-hu-ti.⁵³

⁴⁶SMYL, p. 8 (sect. 1.4); Hsu, *Han Agriculture*, p. 216. For the *Ssu-min yüeh-ling*, see Patricia Ebrey, "Estate and Family Management in the Later Han as Seen in the *Monthly Instructions for the Four Classes of People*," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17 (1974), pp. 173-205.

⁴⁷See, for example, nos. 895R-84R.

⁴⁸SMYL, p. 61 (sect. 8.4); Hsu, *Han Agriculture*, p. 224.

⁴⁹SMYL, p. 13 (sect. 1.8); Hsu, *Han Agriculture*, p. 217.

⁵⁰See *Wu-wei Han chien*, plate 21 (figs. 22-23 for the tracings; pp. 136ff. for transcription and interpretative comment).

⁵¹Henri Maspero, *Les documents chinois de la troisième expédition de Sir Aurel Stein en Asie centrale* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1953), pp. 21-22.

⁴⁴The most convenient edition is Shih Sheng-han 石聲漢, ed., *Fan Sheng-chih shu chin-shih* (*ch'u-ka'o*) 汜勝之書今釋 (初稿) (Peking: K'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1956; hereafter cited as *FSCS*). For an English translation, see Cho-yun Hsu, *Han Agriculture* (Seattle: U. of Washington P., 1980), pp. 280ff.

⁴⁷FSCS, pp. 9-10 (sect. 2.1-2); Hsu, *Han Agriculture*, p. 282.

d. Tomb no. 1, Yin-ch'üeh-shan 銀雀山, Lin-i 臨沂 (Shantung) is best known as the site that included manuscript copies of military texts, including some that had not been seen previously. There were also four groups of mantic material, identified as: *Ts'ao shih yin-yang shu* 曹氏陰陽書 (24 pieces), *Feng-chiao chan* 風角占 (51 pieces), *Tsai-i chan* 災異占 (53 pieces), and unclassified 雜占 (82 pieces). This tomb may be dated between 140 and 118 B.C., and when the finds were first reported in 1974 it was stated that much of the text had yet to be interpreted. However, it was possible to note the presence of references to military subjects, and it was suggested that the texts may have derived from military writings that were concerned with divination.⁵⁴

e. Several items among the rich hoard of manuscripts from tomb no. 3, Ma-wang-tui 馬王堆 (ca. 168 B.C.), bear titles that suggest they were concerned with divination or oracles; details will doubtless be forthcoming when the texts are published. These documents include *wu-hsing chan* 五行占, *mu jen chan* 木人占, and *t'ien-wen ch'i-hsiang chan* 天文氣象占. Part of the last document, which depicts diagrams of no less than twenty-nine types of comet, includes notes of the events that they were believed to foretell. Another part is concerned with predictions from the shapes of clouds.⁵⁵

It may thus be seen that there is a considerable difference in the forms and aims of all these documents. They range from the tabulated provisions of Shui-hu-ti to the schematic statements, almost of scientific or philosophical theory, of the *Yüeh ling*, and the highly practical instructions assembled by Ts'ui Shih. Nevertheless, there is a certain amount of overlap in the subjects treated by the various sources, as may be seen in a few examples.

For the last of the three months of summer (*chi hsia* 季夏), the *Yüeh ling* states that orders are given for the observance of a whole host of religious rites and services.⁵⁶ In addition, according to the version in the *Huai-nan-tzu*, acts of deliberate kindness are performed; condolences are proffered for the loss of the dead, and inquiries are made regarding the health or state of well-being of the elderly and sick. There is also a negative injunction for the month:

⁵⁴ *WW* 1974.2, pp. 18, 32, 35. See also *WW* 1983.2, p. 23; and *WW* 1985.1, p. 14, for references to fragments of comparable material from Fu-yang 阜陽 and Chiang-ling 江陵.

⁵⁵ See Michael Loewe, "The Han View of Comets," *BMFEA* 52 (1980), pp. 1-31; and "The Oracles of the Clouds and the Winds," *BSOAS* 51.3 (1988), pp. 500-520.

⁵⁶ Cf. *LSCC* 6, p. 12; *LC* 5 (6), p. 12a; *HNT* 5, p. 8a.

It is in this month that trees are in a flourishing state; do not dare to cut them down. It is not suitable to assemble the leaders of the land or to initiate earth works. If large numbers of persons are mobilised or armed men are raised, undoubtedly there will be a calamity of heaven (天殃).

Similar injunctions may be observed elsewhere. The *Huai-nan-tzu* itself imposes a further ban on felling trees and initiating building in the first month of summer.⁵⁷ On Shui-hu-ti strip no. 838 we are instructed, "On *wai* days do not chop down large trees; there will undoubtedly be a great calamity."⁵⁸ Strips 833-35, which are entitled *Tu chi* 土忌 (Days on which earthworks are to be avoided), name days on which "it is not suitable to perform earthwork projects." According to nos. 756R-55R, if advice to refrain from building a house is ignored, "there will be great misfortune and undoubtedly a case of death." Cutting down bamboo and trees is banned by the *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* during the first month for purely practical reasons, to avoid breeding insects. There is no connection stated with the *wu-hsing* cycle. Elsewhere the same text permits felling bamboo and timber during the eleventh month.⁵⁹

The *Huai-nan-tzu*'s interest in the care of the needy and their welfare is paralleled by the injunction of the *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* for the ninth month.⁶⁰ That text also bans sexual activity at times during the fifth and eleventh months, that is, before and after the summer and winter solstices, owing to the prevailing struggle between *yin* and *yang*.⁶¹ It imposes the same prohibition for the second month, at the midpoint of spring, during the season when thunder is about to be heard. The *Huai-nan-tzu* carries precisely the same warning, again for the second month, when attempts to procreate children will incur disaster.⁶² However, the same precaution is not ordered by the *Huai-nan-tzu* at the other reference to the thundery season, in the eighth month.⁶³ The subject is treated somewhat differently in the material from Shui-hu-ti, which includes statements of the destiny or character of children procreated on each one of the sixty days of the cycle.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ *HNT* 5, p. 6b. For the inclusion of a ban on unseasonal tree felling in the Ch'in statutes, see Hulswé, *Remnants of Ch'in Law*, p. 22.

⁵⁸ I.e., 大殃; cf. *HNT* 5, p. 9a, 天殃.

⁵⁹ *SMYL*, p. 17 (sect. 1.12) and p. 72 (sect. 11.4).

⁶⁰ *SMYL*, p. 65 (sect. 9.1).

⁶¹ *SMYL*, p. 44 (sect. 5.6) and p. 71 (sect. 11.2).

⁶² *SMYL*, p. 20 (sect. 2.5); *HNT* 5, p. 3a; *LSCC* 2, p. 2a; and *LC* 5 (6), p. 5a.

⁶³ *HNT* 5, p. 12a; *LSCC* 8, p. 2a; *LC* 5 (6), p. 17a.

⁶⁴ Nos. 869-78 and 1133-43. The term 生子, taken here to mean procreation, occurs also in *HNT* 5, p. 3a, with apparently the same meaning. For the importance attached to the timing

A further example wherein different types of text refer to the same subject concerns schooling, for which the *Huai-nan-tzu* provides in the ninth month.⁶⁵ The *Ssu-min yüeh-ling* allows schooling in the first, eighth, tenth, and eleventh months,⁶⁶ for highly practical reasons. For it is timed to occur before the onset of agricultural work (first month), when the heat of summer is abating (eighth month), or when work has been completed (tenth month). For the eleventh month, "when water on the inkstones freezes, young boys are ordered to read the *Hsiao ching* 孝經 and the *Lun-yü* 論語 and to enter the elementary schools." References to schooling have yet to be found in the strips from Shui-hu-ti.

Finally, the reference to auspicious days for climbing mountains in strip no. 741 may be compared with similar references in the *Huai-nan-tzu*. At a somewhat later period, the *Pao-p'u-tzu* 抱朴子 included a general admonition to the effect that those intending to climb mountains, for mystical reasons or as part of a pilgrimage, should take good care to select an appropriate day.⁶⁷ It is also worth noting that a number of the subjects mentioned in the *jih-shu* fragments may be seen in a much later document.⁶⁸

CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM

A number of early writings criticize the principle of the almanacs and protest against the faith that was placed in a choice of the right day before embarking on a project. Such references suggest that the strength of these beliefs was not necessarily limited to popular levels and that they attracted attention in the higher reaches of society. This conclusion is supported by the establishment of officials who were concerned with the consultation of oracles, as the identification of auspicious and inauspicious days was included among the duties of the director of astrology (*Pai-shih ling*) or his subordinates.⁶⁹

of a child's conception, see Joseph Needham, Wang Ling, and Derek J. de Solla Price, *Heavenly Clockwork*, 2d edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1986), pp. 170-72.

⁶⁵ *HNT* 5, p. 13a; *LSCC* 9, p. 1b; *LC* 5 (6), p. 18a.

⁶⁶ *SMYL*, pp. 9, 60, 68, 71 (sects. 1.5, 8.2, 10.3, 11.3).

⁶⁷ *HNT* 5, p. 8a; *Pao-p'u-tzu* (Nei-p'ien) 17, p. 1a (SPPY edn.). According to this text the third and the ninth months are those when the mountains are open; a fortunate day and an auspicious hour should be chosen therein.

⁶⁸ These are seen in fragments of a Mongol translation of a Chinese calendar datable probably to 1324. See Herbert Franke, "Mittelmongolische Kalenderfragmente aus Turfan," *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte*, 1964.2, pp. 1-45.

⁶⁹ *HHSCC*, treatise 25, p. 1b; *Han kuan* 漢官, in *Han kuan liu chung* 漢官六種 (SPPY edn.), p. 1a; and Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1980), p. 19.

The subject is mentioned in general terms in a chapter of the *Han-fei-tzu* that specifies the conditions and practices that can lead to the ruin of a state.⁷⁰ Such conditions include "attention to seasons [or hours] and days, service to spirits and holy beings, trust in divination by shell and stalk, devotion to prayer and sacrifice." Belief in the efficacy of choosing days also features in the long and detailed protest against contemporary practices that forms the twenty-ninth *p'ien* of the *Yen-t'ieh lun* 鹽鐵論. The writer contrasts past practice, that is, the care and attention paid to moral conduct and the sparing resort to divination, with the recent irresponsible habit of neglecting ethical ideals and simply trusting to the luck of the day.⁷¹

Perhaps the most direct and forthright critique of mantic practice is to be found in books of the Later Han period, principally those of Wang Ch'ung (27-ca. 100 A.D.) and Wang Fu 王符 (ca. 90-165 A.D.).⁷² Both these writers voiced protests against the way of life that they saw around them, but their approach and motives were somewhat different. Wang Ch'ung had lived through the restoration of the Han empire and had witnessed the consolidation and extension of its power and the success of some of its achievements. His protests were leveled against the easy intellectual assumptions of the day and the false reasoning and self-deception that were all too evident. In rejecting theories, such as those of heavenly warnings, the force of portents, or the efficacy of divination, he was striving to demonstrate their weakness on intellectual grounds.

Wang Fu, however, lived at a time when the conduct of imperial government was by no means as successful as might have been hoped or as praiseworthy as some might have claimed. It was a time when the political and social scene was marked by injustice, corruption, and the abuse of power. Wang Fu's protests were directed against such a decline and its causes, in the hope that the standards of public life could be restored to a higher plane with a deeper moral tone. Thus, in his discussion of such subjects as fate and divination, he is anxious to expose the weakness of evading responsibility or taking decisions in the belief that mantic methods form a substitute for moral scruple and judgment.

⁷⁰ Liang Ch'i-hsiung 梁啓雄, *Han-tzu ch'ien-chieh* 韓子淺解 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1960), "Wang cheng 亡徵," p. 113.

⁷¹ Wang Li-ch'i 王利器, *Yen-t'ieh lun chiao-chu* 鹽鐵論校注 (Shanghai: Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1958), p. 204.

⁷² *LH* 23 ("Ssu hui") and 24 ("Chi jih," "Pu shih," "Pien sui," and "Nan sui"); Huang Hui, *Lun-heng chiao-shih*, pp. 964ff., 985ff., 994ff., 1004ff., and 1012ff. (Forker, *Lun Heng* 2, pp. 376ff., 393ff.; 1, pp. 182ff., 525ff.; and 2, pp. 402ff.); P'eng To 彭鐸, *Ch'ien-fu lun chien* 潛夫論箋 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1979) 6 ("Pu-lich," "Wu-lich," "Hsiang-lich") and 7 ("Meng-lich"), pp. 291-324.

It has been shown above that Wang Ch'ung was ready to refer to some of the terms of the *chien-ch'u* system in the course of his arguments regarding creation or the spontaneity of natural processes. In one chapter ("Pu shih" 卜筮) he attacks the general principle of divination by means of shells and stalks. In another ("Chi jih" 讖日) he rejects the choice of days or temporal conjunctions on the grounds that such measures cannot in fact ensure successful results, and that the principle was being applied inconsistently. As examples worthy of criticism, he singles out a number of activities that were subject to the avoidance of particular days, and some of these duly feature in the material from Shui-hu-ti. These included regulation of days for burial; sacrifice to the *kuei* 鬼 and choice of days for shedding blood for sacrificial purposes; tailoring clothes; and building projects.⁷³ Other activities Wang Ch'ung mentions, such as the effects of washing the head on *tzu* or *mao* days, do not apparently occur in the almanacs, but some of the subjects recur elsewhere in other parts of the *Lun-heng*,⁷⁴ such as the *p'ien* entitled *Pien sui* 辨崇 and *Nan sui* 難歲. Some passages mention technical terms for the categories or qualities of certain days that are comparable with terms seen in the almanacs from Shui-hu-ti.⁷⁵

In the four principal chapters that concern the subject, Wang Fu directs attention to the need to attain moral or spiritual improvement regardless of divination, the intermediacy of shamans, or dependence on *hsiang* 相 (assessing an action by reference to the bodily features of the individual concerned); and he distinguishes ten types of dream, with their different subjects and relations to the world around us. As he mentions a number of activities and types of decision that form subjects of the almanacs,⁷⁶ it is evident that he had much the same beliefs in mind; but he does not apparently refer specifically to the principle of *chi* 忌.

SELECT POINTS OF INTEREST

Several problems and technical matters that arise from the strips are considered in detail in the highly valuable contribution of Jao Tsung-i and

⁷³ For burial, see strip no. 759; for *kuei* and other sacrifices, see nos. 732, 827R, 1010; for clothes, see no. 777R; for building, see variously throughout.

⁷⁴ *LH* 24 ("Chi-jih"), p. 986 for burial; p. 988 for sacrifice and shedding of blood; p. 990 for washing the head; p. 991 for tailoring clothes; p. 992 for building projects. For mention of traveling (Shui-hu-ti strips 860ff.), see *LH* 24 ("Nan sui"), pp. 1012ff.

⁷⁵ See *LH*, pp. 1010-13 for references to Wang-wang 往亡, *Kuei-chi* 歸忌, *Sui-p'o* 歲破, and *Chih-fu* 直符.

⁷⁶ E.g., *Ch'ien-fu lun* ("P'u-lich"), p. 296; see also *ch.* 4 ("Ai jih"), p. 221, for mention of avoidance of certain actions on account of the principle of *fan-chih* 反支 (strips 743R, 742R).

Tseng Hsien-t'ung.⁷⁷ In the following pages attention is drawn to a few points whose implications lie far beyond the almanacs and their concerns.

1. The identification and calculation of time

As has been noticed, some of the documents begin a calendar with the eleventh and some with the first (*cheng* 正) month; in one case at least, a series of strips starts with the tenth month (nos. 776ff.). From this and other evidence considerable information is now available for the reconstruction of these early calendars and their relationship, and for determining the names that were assigned to the months in the pre-imperial kingdom of Ch'u.⁷⁸

Days are defined in the almanacs in terms of the Twelve Branches or the Ten Stems, and sometimes by their combination as terms of the sexagenary cycle. On some occasions, days are identified by enumeration, for example, as "seven days from the beginning of the month" (see no. 836). On at least one strip (no. 789R) days are denoted by number. There are not many examples of referring to the days of the month in this way before Later Han.⁷⁹ In no. 1003, *tzu*, *mao*, *jin*, and *yu* days are defined as male; *wu*, *wei*, *shen*, *ch'ou*, and *hai* days as female. In no. 759 the assignment is not quite identical. The appearance of names for ten, out of a total of twelve, hours (no. 1051) testifies to the early use of a system of twelve hours at a popular level. The assignment of twelve animals to the Twelve Earthly Branches (see the series beginning no. 827R) is probably the earliest reference to animals in this way; they are next seen, with a slightly different selection, in the *Lun-heng*.⁸⁰

2. *Wu-hsing*

There are a number of references to the *wu-hsing* cycle in the strips, but there is by no means the same degree of emphasis on the theory as there is in the *Yüeh-ling*. The clearest references may be seen in nos. 813R to 804R, which include a tabular presentation of the relationship of the Five Phases with each other. Both here and in nos.

⁷⁷ See n. 9, above.

⁷⁸ See Yü Hao-liang 于豪亮, "Ch'in chien jih-shu chi shih chi yüeh chu wen-t'i" 秦簡日書記時月諸問題, in Chung-hua shu-chü pien-chi-pu 中華書局編輯部, ed., *Yün-meng Ch'in chien yen-chiu* 雲夢秦簡研究 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1981) pp. 351-57.

⁷⁹ See Michael Loewe, "Some Notes on Han-time Documents from Chü-yen," *TP* 47:3-5 (1959), pp. 308ff.

⁸⁰ For these terms see Jao and Tseng, *Yün-meng Ch'in chien jih-shu yen-chiu*, pp. 33ff.; and strips 961ff.

974–82 the assumption is that the phases succeed one another by conquest and not in the order of mutual production.

3. Astronomy

Considerable attention is placed on the movements and behavior of the heavenly bodies, whose names sometimes occur as the headings or titles of a series of strips (for example, nos. 776–92, 793–96, 797–824). The series 776–92, which includes a diagram on the lowest register, sets out the twelve months, beginning with the tenth. Each one is identified in terms of the Twenty-eight Lodges, and each entry includes a note of the position in the heavens “struck” by the stars Chao-yao 招搖 and Hsüan-ko 玄戈.⁸¹ The positions that are “struck” are defined in one case by one of the Twelve Branches, and in the other by one of the Twenty-eight Lodges. The same system appears in the *Yüeh ling*, where the positions of the twelve months are likewise defined in terms of the lodges to which Chao-yao “points.” Nos. 797–824 and 975–1002 are headed by the names of the twenty-eight in succession; in the latter case a direct identification is drawn with the months.

4. Mythology

At least two strips (nos. 884 and 893R) refer to a subject that recurs in mythology, that is, the wedding or meeting of the two constellations Ch'ien-niu 牽牛 (herd boy) and Chih-nü 織女 (weaving maid).

5. Hungry ghosts

The expression *o kuei* 餓鬼, hungry ghost, is seen in strip no. 843R, and this is probably its earliest known occurrence. Later it appears in a Buddhist context as a rendering of the Sanskrit *Preta*, meaning either a deceased person or the form taken by a deceased person as a revenant.

⁸¹ For the identification of Chao-yao as γ Bootis, see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1959) 3, p. 250; and Jao and Tseng, *Yün-meng Ch'in chien jih-shu yen-chiu*, pp. 13ff. In the strips the characters Chao-yao are written with 木 and not with 才.

LG	<i>Li-chi</i> 禮記
LH	<i>Lun-heng chiao-shih</i> 論衡校釋
LSCC	<i>Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu</i> 呂氏春秋
Report	<i>Yün-meng Shui-hu-ti Ch'in mu</i> 雲夢睡虎地秦墓
SC	<i>Shih-chi</i> 史記
SMYL	<i>Ssu-min yüeh-ling</i> 四民月令

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FSCS	<i>Fan Sheng-chih shu chin-shih</i> 汜勝之書今釋
HFHD	<i>The History of the Former Han Dynasty</i>
HHSCC	<i>Hou-Han-shu chi-chieh</i> 後漢書集解
HNT	<i>Huai-nan hung-lieh chi-chieh</i> 淮南鴻烈集解
HSPC	<i>Han-shu pu-chu</i> 漢書補注