

Part I

Early in his account of the “rise and fall” of Xiang Yu 項羽 Sima Qian records the comments of a certain Fan Zeng 范增, a reclusive elderly figure who is said to have had a penchant for taking stock of unusual situations (*hào qí jì* 好奇計). When Xiang Liang 項梁 learned that Chen She 陳涉 (also known as Chen Sheng 陳勝) was dead he convened a meeting of his officers to plan his next move. Fan Zeng is said to have been included in this meeting and to have commented to Xiang Liang thus:

陳勝敗故當。夫秦滅六國。楚最無罪。自懷王入秦不反楚人憐之至今。故楚南公曰楚雖三戶亡秦必楚也。今陳勝首事不立楚後而自立。其勢不長。今君起江東。楚蠶午之將皆爭附君者以君世世楚將為能復立楚之後也。

Chen Sheng's defeat was, to be sure, fitting. However you look at it, of the six states that Qin extinguished Chu was the least deserving of that fate. From the time that King Huai [of Chu] entered Qin and did not return the people of Chu have never ceased feeling that loss deeply, even up to the present. In that regard Nan Gong of Chu said: “Even if there are only three families left, Chu will be the one to destroy Qin.” When Chen Sheng initiated this rebellion he did not establish an heir of the Chu house as ruler, but set himself up instead. And so his power did not last long. Now you [Xiang Liang] have arisen to the east of the Jiang, and the hornet-swarving generals of Chu in all cases vie with one another to attach themselves to you. This is because they recognize that for generations your family has served as generals in Chu and that you will be able to restore the legitimate heir as king of the Chu state.¹

* This paper was originally prepared some years ago in response to an invitation to contribute to a Festschrift to honor the scholarly career of Professor Dr. Reinhard Emmerich, to have been presented to him on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday, 06 May, 2019. Because that project has been slow to come to fruition, I have opted to publish the paper here. My desire to register my respect and admiration for Professor Emmerich's leadership and outstanding achievements in the world of sinological scholarship and teaching and to express my deep appreciation for more than three decades of close personal friendship is no less central to the publication of this paper here than it would have been had the paper been included in the Festschrift honoris causa as originally planned.

** It is a pleasure for me to acknowledge assistance and advice from David R. Knechtges, Shen Zhijia, Chen Zhinan (all in Seattle) and Sun Yingying (Portland), who have kindly

The story is of course well known, and the meaning of the text is largely unproblematic. There is all the same one phrase that presents some curious features, *viz.*, the five-character reference to the Chu generals, *chǔ fēng wǔ zhī jiàng* 楚蠭午之將, which I have here translated somewhat fancifully as “the hornet-swarming generals of Chu.” In particular it is the two-character expression *fēng wǔ* 蠭午 that repays a little analysis. The text given here is copied from the *Shiki kaichū kōshō* 史記會注考證 of Takigawa Kametarō 瀧川龜太郎 (1865–1946), one of the great Japanese sinologists of the Meiji–Taishō–Shōwa periods. A facsimile of the passage in question from the Takigawa text together with commentary is reproduced as Fig. 1. The same account, using a slightly different phrase to describe the Chu generals, is given from two other editions of the *Shiji*, the *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, Bo na, Han fen lou 百納, 涵芬樓 edition (Fig. 2) and the *Wu ying dian* 武英殿 “Palace” edition, 1884 printing by the *Tongwen shuju* 同文書局 (Fig. 3). In these two accounts the phrase describing the Chu generals is written *chǔ fēng qǐ zhī jiàng* 楚蠭起之將, which we might translate as “the Chu generals rising up like hornets,” perhaps a slightly more prosaic, somewhat less expressive phrase than “the hornet-swarming generals of Chu.” Finally, we reproduce the *Jinling shuju* 金陵書局 edition, 1866 printing, of the *Shiji* (Fig. 4), which has the phrase *fēng wǔ* 蠭午, matching the Takigawa edition.

The responsibility of the textual critic when confronted with an uncommon, obscure or rare word is to try to explain the meaning of the word and the sense of the passage as best (s)he can. Typically in the western tradition of textual criticism this is done in the *apparatus criticus* by glossing the uncommon word or phrase with a well-known, familiar word. By the same token, when confronted with a lexical variant in a second version of a text, the textual critic’s responsibility extends to trying to account for the variation, that is, to suggest how the variation might have arisen. This will often entail speculating or, ideally, showing which of the variants is likely to have been the original and which the changed. In the Chinese tradition the accumulation of “commentaries” and “sub-commentaries” incorporated *inter alia* into a transmitted text often amounts to a kind of *apparatus criticus sinensis*, with the added advantage of sometimes showing how an understanding or explanation developed over time.

and generously helped with answers to textual questions and references to scholarly works in connection with this study. Mistakes and misunderstandings are of course exclusively my responsibility.

1 *Shiji* 史記, “Xiang Yu ben ji” 項羽本紀, ed. *Shiki kaichū kōshō* 7.10–11.

勢不長。今君起江東。楚蠡午之將皆爭附君者。以君世世楚將。爲能復立楚之後也。

三戶者言其少耳。乃虛說之。辭項說爲是。若以爲地名。雖字不違。

屯聚也。故劉向傳註云。蜂午雜。凡物交橫爲午。言蠡起交橫。于僞反。

Fig. 1

不立楚後而自立其勢不長。今君起江東。楚蠡起之將皆爭附君者。以君世世楚將。爲能復立楚之後也。

如淳曰。蠡起猶言蜂午也。衆蠡飛起交橫。若午言其多也。索隱曰。凡物交橫爲午。言蜂之起交橫也。鄭玄云。一縱一橫爲午。雜。

Fig. 2

立其勢不長。今君起江東。楚蠡起之將皆爭附君者。以君世世楚將。爲能復立楚之後也。

如淳曰。蠡起猶言蜂午也。衆蠡飛起交橫。若午言其多也。凡物交橫爲午。言蠡之起交橫。屯聚也。故劉向傳註云。蜂午雜。杏也。鄭玄云。一縱一橫爲午。

Fig. 3

事不立楚後而自立其勢不長。今君起江東。楚蠡午之將皆爭附君者。以君世世楚將。爲能復立楚之後也。

如淳曰。蠡起猶言蜂午也。衆蠡飛起交橫。若午言其多也。索隱曰。凡物交橫爲午。言蠡之起交橫。屯聚也。故劉向傳註云。蜂午雜。杏也。鄭玄云。一縱一橫爲午。

Fig. 4

Fig. 1: *Shiki kaichū kōshō* 7.11 Fig. 2: *Shiji* (Sibu congkan ed.) 7.5b Fig. 3: *Shiji* (Wu ying dian ed.) 7.5a
Fig. 4: *Shiji* (Jinling shuju ed.) 7.4a.

- 2 Ru Chun is known exclusively in connection with his commentary to the *Hanshu* and those parts of it that appear cited in commentaries to the *Shiji*, *Wen Xuan* and a few other early transmitted texts. See Hu Junjun and Hu Qiong 2013. The Ru Chun *Hanshu* commentary itself seems to have been lost before the Sui; there is no record of it in the *Sui shu*, “Jing ji zhi.” It is one of the commentaries that Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645) used in compiling his notes to the *Hanshu*. He mentions it in the “Preface” (*xùlì* 敘例) to his edition of the *Hanshu*, and includes it in his list of works no longer extant but that he was able to take advantage of through citations in other texts. See Wang Xianqian’s 王先謙 (1842–1917) *Hanshu buzhu* 漢書補注, *juan shou* 卷首 29a. Apart from Yan Shigu’s mention of it, we find, somewhat unexpectedly, direct reference in the *Guang yun* 廣韻 (“shang ping” 上平 9) to Ru Chun as the compiler of a *Hanshu* commentary. The entry for the character *rú* 如 includes the identification of *rú* as a surname and gives the following passage as an example:

Of the several commentaries that typically appear together with the transmitted *Shiji* text Pei Yin's 裴駟 (fifth century) "jijie" 集解 is the earliest. It includes those parts of the Sanguo Wei 三國魏 scholar Ru Chun's 如淳 notes to the *Hanshu* where they are pertinent to a matching or corresponding *Shiji* line or passage. Ru Chun's notes thus constitute in effect the earliest commentary to the *Shiji* known, even though it was written for the *Hanshu*.² For the "hornet-swarming generals" line in the Takigawa and Jinling (T & J) editions of the *Shiji* the Ru Chun note as cited by Pei Yin in the "jijie" says:

蠭午猶言蠭起也，眾蠭飛起，交橫若午，言其多也。

fēng wǔ is similar to saying *fēng qǐ* "hornets arising," suggestive of multitudes of hornets taking to flight, criss-crossing every which-way. It refers to their great numbers.

The Ru Chun note to the corresponding line in the Bo na and Palace (B & P) editions says:

蠭起猶言蠭午也，眾蠭飛起，交橫若午，言其多也。

fēng qǐ is similar to saying *fēng wǔ* "hornet-swarming," suggestive of multitudes of hornets taking to flight, criss-crossing every which-way. It refers to their great numbers.

Inasmuch as the first task of a textual critic or analyst is to explain rare or uncommon words, the Ru Chun commentary does exactly that in the case of the T & J editions, glossing *fēng wǔ* as *fēng qǐ*. There can be little question that *fēng wǔ* is a considerably less familiar, more obscure phrase than *fēng qǐ*. What then are we to make of the odd note in the Ru Chun commentary to the line in the B & P editions, glossing *fēng qǐ*, a straightforward expression that raises no particular lexical or interpretive uncertainty, by *fēng wǔ*? The phrase *fēng qǐ* is a simple SUBJECT - VERB construction, "hornets arising"; *fēng wǔ* by contrast can only be construed that way if we understand *wǔ* as a verb, an understanding less obvious than for *qǐ*.

The second commentary to appear typically with the transmitted *Shiji* text is the "suoyin" 索隱 of the early eighth-century scholar Sima Zhen 司馬貞. His note to this line addresses the question of the meaning of *wǔ*:

晉中經部魏有陳郡丞馮翊如淳注漢書 "In the *Zhong jing bu* of the Jin it says 'in the [Sanguo] Wei state there was a certain Ru Chun of Ping-yi, who held the office of Chen Commandery Aide, who made a commentary to the *Hanshu*.'" The *Zhong jing bu* 中經部 is a reference to, or perhaps a mistake for, the *Zhong jing bu* 中經簿 *Catalogue of Palace Texts*, compiled by Xun Xu 荀勗 (ca. 217–288) in the Western Jin.

凡物交橫為午。言蠱之起交橫屯聚也。故劉向傳註云蜂午雜沓也。鄭玄云一縱一橫為午。

In general when things are criss-crossing this constitutes *wǔ*. The phrase refers to the rising up of hornets criss-crossing and massing together in swarms. Thus, a note in the “Liu Xiang *zhuan*” [of the *Hanshu*] glosses *fēng wǔ* as “scrambled and stirred up.” Zheng Xuan says that “one lengthwise (stroke) and one crosswise (stroke) constitute *wǔ*.”

The reference to the “Liu Xiang *zhuan*” in the *Hanshu* is to a gloss given in the Ru Chun commentary to a line in *Hanshu* 36, the “Chu Yuan wang *zhuan*” 楚元王傳 (which includes the “biographical” account of Liu Xiang, hence the “suoyin” reference), that says *míng fēng wǔ bìng qǐ* 螟蠱午並起 “grain-eating bugs rise up *en masse* criss-crossing like swarms of hornets.”³ The Ru Chun gloss to this phrase says 蠱午猶雜沓也 “*fēng wǔ* is similar to ‘scrambled and stirred up’.”⁴ Sima Zhen’s mention next of Zheng Xuan is a reference to a Zheng Xuan gloss to the word *wǔ* occurring in the “Da she” 大射 section of the *Yili*, descriptive of the proper set up to mark the positions of the participants in an archery contest:

工人士與梓人升自北階。兩楹之間 疏數容弓。若丹若墨 度尺而午。射正蒞之。The workmen and officials together with the measurers ascend by the north stairs. They measure the distance between the two pillars by bow-lengths. Having determined the correct unit-distance, using either red or black, they make an “X” cross. The Rector of Archery oversees them.⁵

It is to the *wǔ* 午 of this line that Zheng Xuan says 一縱一橫為午 “one lengthwise (stroke) and one crosswise (stroke) constitute *wǔ*,” adding 謂畫物也 “it refers to marking an object (with an ‘X’).”⁶

Just as Ru Chun’s note in the B & P editions is seemingly pointless, glossing as it does the straightforward phrase *fēng qǐ* with an unfamiliar one, so also Sima Zhen’s

3 *Hanshu buzhu* 36.12b.

4 The two characters 蠱 and 蠱 are graphic variants for the word *fēng* “hornet,” the former the well-known character from the *Shiji* and the latter less well known, from the *Hanshu*. See *Shuowen jiezi gulin*, 6036.

5 See Steele 1917, 166.

6 *Yili* 17.12b. The *Yili* has a second use of the word *wǔ* meaning “to make a criss-crossed mark,” in the “Te sheng” 特牲 section, describing the proper preparation and arrangement of the parts of a sacrificial beast to be presented ceremonially to the ancestors. Preparation of the heart and tongue is described as 心舌皆去本末午割之 “For both the heart and the tongue remove the base and the tip and cut them cross-wise.” See *Yili* 46.12a; Steele 1917, 154. To this Zheng Xuan notes 午割從橫割之 “*wǔ gē* means ‘to incise them lengthwise and crosswise.’”

commentary is clearly a *non sequitur* if the *Shiji* text on which he was commenting had the same *fēng qī* as it does in the B & P editions shown here. There would have been no *wǔ* in the primary text to call for a note in the first place. The explanation for both of these apparent anomalies is not far to see; the original *Shiji* text had *fēng wǔ*, which at some point was changed to *fēng qī* and the *Shiji* text was then transmitted with that phrase. This must have also been the case for the matching line in the *Hanshu*, whence the original Ru Chun note.⁷ Once *fēng wǔ* became *fēng qī*, the Ru Chun note had to be changed accordingly, if it is going to make any sense.

That *fēng wǔ* is the original reading and *fēng qī* the changed is a classic example of an inference that follows from one of the commonest “rules of thumb” in the textual critic’s toolkit, to wit, *lectio difficilior potior* “the more difficult reading is the stronger”; “stronger” meaning that it has the greater claim to being the original than the alternative easier reading has. The principle is well known and the rationale is straightforward; an editor or scribe is thought likelier to change a difficult word or phrase into an easier one than the converse, and therefore, all other things being equal, the more difficult reading is the preferred.⁸ Thus we take *fēng wǔ* as the original wording of the *Shiji* passage and *fēng qī* as the result of an editorial change intended, presumably, to clarify the meaning of the line by replacing an unfamiliar term with a more familiar one. And we can see that this decision about the original wording of the line also explains the otherwise peculiar notes in the Ru Chun and Sima Zhen commentaries to the B & P editions of the text.

7 The corresponding passage in the received text of the *Hanshu* has *fēng qī* with no extant or recorded textual variants that I know of. Yan Shigu’s note to the line says only that 讎 is an “archaic” graphic variant for 蜂 (讎古蜂字也), and that there is an alternative reading that takes 讎 as 鋒, as in *fēng ruì* 鋒銳 “pointed and sharp,” referring apparently to the (weapons >) armed strength of the Chu generals. He makes no mention of the Ru Chun note, presumably because his text had no word *wǔ* to which the note would pertain. Wang Xianqian adds (in *Hanshu buzhu* 31.11b-12a) a comment drawing attention to the *fēng wǔ* lemma in the independently circulated text of Sima Zhen’s “suoyin” and the inference that this was the original reading in the *Shiji*. He refers to Wang Niansun’s note on the phrase *fēng qī* in the *Shiji* line (on which see below) for details of the textual analysis.

8 It is important to note that the *lectio difficilior potior* guideline applies to individual words or phrases one by one; it does not suggest anything with respect to the overall relation of one manuscript or text to another, except to the extent that occasionally such individual decisions in the aggregate, when all pointing in the same direction, may be meaningful on a level beyond the single lexical item. It cannot, furthermore, be invoked mechanically at the expense of critical analysis, what in Housman 1921 is called “thought.”

Credit for recognizing this textual anomaly and for proposing an emendation goes to Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744–1832). Wang included a note on the *Shiji* phrase *fēng qǐ* in his *Du shu za zhi* 讀書雜誌 in which he argued that the original line must have had *fēng wǔ*.⁹ He based this proposal on the Ru Chun note to the *Hanshu* line and on the evidence of the independently circulated Sima Zhen “suoyin” commentary, which writes *fēng wǔ*. At the same time he pointed out that once the change from *fēng wǔ* to *fēng qǐ* had occurred, the Ru Chun line had also to be changed. Wang’s argument and conclusion follow the same reasoning that we sketched above.

念孫案：蠶起本作蠶午。集解引如淳漢書注本作蠶午猶言蠶起也。蓋蠶午二字必須訓釋。故曰蠶午猶言蠶起。又曰眾蠶飛起交橫若午。皆是釋蠶午。非釋蠶起也。若正文本作蠶起則無煩更以蠶午釋之。且不必如此詞費矣。漢書項籍傳亦本作蠶午。故如淳以交橫若午釋之而今本漢書作蠶起。

In my view the phrase *fēng qǐ* was originally written *fēng wǔ*. [Pei Yin’s] “jijie” citation of Ru Chun’s *Hanshu* note originally said “*fēng wǔ* is similar to saying *fēng qǐ*.” In all probability it was the two-character phrase *fēng wǔ* that was in need of a gloss. Therefore it must have said “*fēng wǔ* is similar to saying *fēng qǐ*,” and it said further “masses of hornets flying up criss-crossing every which-way.” In both cases these statements are glossing the phrase *fēng wǔ*, not *fēng qǐ*. If the text had originally written *fēng qǐ* then no one would have bothered to go to the trouble of glossing it, unnecessarily, as *fēng wǔ*, still less would there have been any need to be so lexically profligate as (explaining the common phrase *fēng qǐ* like) this. The “Xiang Ji” account in the *Hanshu* [HS 31] must also have originally written *fēng wǔ*, thus Ru Chun uses the phrase “criss-crossing every which-way” to gloss it. But the contemporary text of the *Hanshu* says *fēng qǐ*.

He then goes on to say:

顏師古曰蠶起如蠶之起則師古所見本已誤作蠶起。是以即據誤本為注而不用交橫若午之說。漢紀作蠶起亦後人據漢書改之。

Yan Shigu said “*fēng qǐ* is like hornets arising,” so the text that he saw already must have erroneously written *fēng qǐ*. He was simply relying on an erroneous text in making his commentary, and he therefore did not include the “criss-crossing every which-way” part of the Ru Chun note. That the *Hanji* [compiled by Xun Yue 荀悅 in A.D. 200] writes *fēng qǐ* is also the consequence of having been changed by someone later on the basis of the *Hanshu*.

He now concludes:

9 *Dushu za zhi* 2.16–17. The *Dushu za zhi* was compiled in 82 *juan*, appearing serially 1812–1831, with a 2 *juan* supplement in 1832. See Hummel 1943–1944, 829.

今考索隱單行本出蠡午二字而釋之曰凡物交橫為午。言蠡之起交橫屯聚也。故劉向傳註云蠡午雜沓也。鄭玄云一縱一橫為午。據此則小司馬本正作蠡午。故詳釋午字之義並引劉向傳之蠡午為證。裴本亦作蠡午。故引如淳交橫若午之注。是漢書雖誤而史記尚未誤也。乃後人據漢書以改史記。且改如注為蠡起猶言蠡午以就之。其失甚矣。

When we now look into (Sima Zhen's) independently circulated (*Shiji*) "suoyin" we find that it has the two-character phrase *fēng wǔ*, explained as "in general when things are criss-crossing this constitutes *wǔ*." The phrase refers to the rising up of hornets criss-crossing and massing together in swarms. Thus, a note in the "Liu Xiang *zhuan*" [of the *Hanshu*] glosses *fēng wǔ* as "scrambled and stirred up." Zheng Xuan says that "one lengthwise (stroke) and one crosswise (stroke) constitute *wǔ*." On this basis we can see that Sima Zhen's text correctly wrote *fēng wǔ* and that in order to give a precise explanation for the meaning of the word *wǔ* he cited the phrase from the *Hanshu* "Liu Xiang *zhuan*." Pei Yin's text must also have had *fēng wǔ*, wherefore he cited Ru Chun's note "criss-crossing every which-way." This means that while the *Hanshu* already had the erroneous phrase *fēng qǐ*, the *Shiji* had not yet been corrupted. But then the *Shiji* was changed later on the basis of the *Hanshu*. And at the same time the Ru Chun note had to be changed to "*fēng qǐ* is similar to saying *fēng wǔ*" in order to make it fit, a mistake of considerable magnitude.

Finally Wang Niansun adds this coda, stopping short of actually emending the texts, but acknowledging that it is justifiable to do so on the basis of what he has set out:

學者據如注以正漢書並據集解索隱以正史記可也。

Should scholars now wish to correct the *Hanshu* text on the basis of Ru Chun's note and to correct the *Shiji* text on the basis of the (Pei Yin's) "jijie" and (Sima Zhen's) "suoyin," that would be acceptable.

According to Zhang Wenhu 張文虎 (1808–1885), no extant transmitted *Shiji* text had *fēng wǔ* prior to Wang Niansun's note, with the exception of the phrase *fēng wǔ* standing by itself as a lemma in Sima Zhen's *Shiji* "suoyin," which was transmitted independently of the *Shiji* text proper.¹⁰ Takigawa Kametarō in his own *Shiji* notes and the editors of the Jinling *Shiji* (responsible for the T & J texts respectively, as we have referred to them above) have both taken the next step that Wang Niansun allowed for and have emended the text. Takigawa mentions explicitly that he has done so on the basis of Wang Niansun's exegesis (說見王氏讀書雜誌). Responsibility for

10 Zhang Wenhu 1977 [1872], 81. Curiously, the 1878 Jinling shuju print of the *Shiji* has *fēng qǐ* 蠡起, not *fēng wǔ* 蠡午. I am grateful to Dr. Ian Chapman (University of Washington) for drawing my attention to this fact.

the emendation at the Jinling shuju very likely lies with Zhang Wenhui himself, who together with such eminent textual scholars as Mo Youzhi 莫右芝 (1811–1871) played a central role in the scholarly editing of the classics and histories published under the aegis of the Jinling shuju in the 1860s.¹¹

Part II

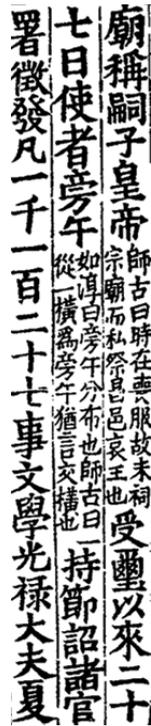


Fig. 5: *Hanshu* (Sibu congkan ed.) 68.10a

In the *Hanshu* account of the powerful Western Han court figure and regent Huo Guang 霍光 we find this phrase: *shǐ zhě páng wǔ* 使者旁午 “officials criss-crossing side-to-side” (see Fig. 5).¹²

11 Hummel 1943–1944, 581. The matching Jinling *Hanshu* passage does not have the emendation.

12 *Hanshu buzhu* 68.9a. The phrase occurs within the text of the well-known memorial condemning the notoriously improper behavior of Liu He 劉賀, who was named by Huo Guang, on the recommendation of the Empress Dowager, as the successor to Han Zhao di in 74 B.C. Liu He acted with abject disregard for the proprieties expected of an

In this case Yan Shigu's commentary includes Ru Chun's note, which says *páng wǔ fèn bù yě* 旁午分布也 “*páng wǔ* means ‘dispersed and scattered’,” to which Yan Shigu adds a now familiar line, presented here as an explanation of the phrase *páng wǔ*: 一縱一橫為旁午猶言交橫也 “one lengthwise (stroke) and one crosswise (stroke) constitute *páng wǔ*; it is similar to saying ‘criss-crossing’.”

There can be little doubt that the phrase *páng wǔ* < ***bbang-ngga-q** has the same general connotative meaning as *fēng wǔ* < ***phong-ngga-q** and is used here in the same way, *viz.*, descriptive of a mass of individuals, in this case court officials, behaving unpredictably, moving erratically, going back and forth every which-way.¹³ By the same token it is unlikely that the phonetic similarity of the two syllables *páng* (< ***bbang** 旁 “side”) and *fēng* (< ***phong** 蜂 “hornet”) with each other is purely fortuitous. The two expressions are clearly in some way variants of each other. But just as clearly, the two words *páng* “side” and *fēng* “hornet” are lexically distinct and unrelated to each other. In all of their textual usages the fundamental meaning of the phrases *fēng wǔ* and *páng wǔ* is the same, *viz.*, “criss-crossing back and forth in great numbers.” The words *páng* “side” and *fēng* “hornet” are adequately suggestive descriptive modifiers for the phenomenon referred to, but neither is central to the fundamental “criss-cross” meaning of *wǔ*, the root sense of which is simply “cross, to cross, to make an ‘X’” and by extension “to come across, meet, encounter, chance upon.” The extended “encounter” sense shows up in such related words as *wǔ / wù* < ***ngga-q/-s** 迕 “to come across, meet from opposite directions, oppose” and *nì* (irr.) < ***ngak** 逆 “to meet, encounter (especially from opposite directions).”¹⁴ The word *yíng* < ***ngang** 迎

imperial ruler, especially in regard to the conventions dictating proper respect during the mourning period for the recently deceased emperor. He took unwarranted advantage of his position, dispensing state credentials to multitudes of officials who then abused their authority in every conceivable way. Liu He was removed from power by Huo Guang after only twenty-seven days, reputedly having committed in that short period of time 1127 acts of impropriety or wantonness. See Loewe 1974, 77–78.

- 13 Old Chinese is given in asterisked **bold** print and follows the basic premises set out in Baxter and Sagart 2014, though for typographical convenience I use a geminate initial for their laryngealized initial consonant in type A syllables, and I use **-q** for the glottal stop final that gives rise to the Middle Chinese rising tone (*shang sheng* 上聲). Beyond this, I have in many cases modified their proposed reconstructions according to the data and thesis presented here in ways with which Baxter and Sagart may not agree. This is particularly so in the proposals regarding initial consonant clusters and their devolution.
- 14 The *Guang yun* enters the character 迕 in rime 11 (*mù yùn* 暮韻) of the *qu sheng* 去聲 section, thus read *wù*, defined as *yù* 遇 “to happen upon, come across.” But the *Ji yun* 集韻 enters it in rime 10 (*mù yùn* 姥韻) of the *shang sheng* 上聲 section, thus read as *wū*.

“to meet, encounter (from an opposing direction)” is the third member of the cognate set, its final **-ng** matching the **-k** and **-zero** finals of the other two.

Shiji 27, the “Tian guan shu” 天官書, lists a wide variety of natural phenomena and peculiar behaviors that the official charged with keeping track of portents and ominous atmospheric signs (*hòuzhě* 候者) must watch out for. Last given in the list is an atmospheric sound described as: 鬼哭若呼，其人逢悟 “ghostly crying like whispering; some of the people have chanced upon this.”¹⁵ The official’s responsibility was to decide if the reported phenomena in question were simply hearsay or if they genuinely were so (*é yán chéng rán* 化 [for 訛] 言誠然). Pei Yin’s “jiji” commentary glosses the *wù* 悟 of *féng wù* 逢悟 as *yíng yě* 迎也 “to meet, come across, encounter,” and Sima Zhen’s “suoyin” says 逢悟謂相逢而驚也，亦作迕音同 “the phrase *féng wù* refers to being startled when one thing encounters another; [悟] is also written 迕, same pronunciation.”¹⁶

In this case the first word *féng* of the phrase *féng wù* 逢悟, actually means “to meet, encounter, come across,” the primary sense of the two-character expression, unlike the first words of the phrases *féng wǔ* 讜午 and *páng wǔ* 旁午, “hornet” and “side,” which seem, as we said above, descriptive and suggestive, but not central to the fundamental meaning “cross, criss-crossing.” The “startled” sense (*jīng* 驚) that Sima Zhen attributes to the phrase *féng wù* likely comes from an association of *wù* 悟 with *wù* 寤 “awaken, become aware, suddenly to realize” in the well-known *Zuo zhuan*

For an extended analysis and discussion of these and other related words, and their likely word-family status, see Boltz 2009.

- 15 It is possible, of course, to read the phrase 鬼哭 as subject-verb “ghosts crying” instead of as modifier-head “ghostly crying” as I have understood it here. I have opted for the reading “ghostly crying” here because the general responsibility of the *hòuzhě* 候者 was in particular to attend to explaining atmospheric phenomena and because the 若呼 seems likelier to describe a kind of sighing of the wind than the crying of a ghost. The sense of 其人逢悟, vague as it already is, seems not to change whether the people in question are encountering “ghosts crying” or “ghostly crying.”
- 16 *Hanshu buzhu* 26.45b-46a has the line as 鬼哭若讜，與人逢還。訛言，誠然, writing 訛 instead of 化 for the word *é* “unfounded speech,” and using the allograph 讜 for 呼 *hū* and 還 for 悟 *wù*. Wang Xianqian points out in his note to this line that the character 還 is registered in the *Yu pian* 玉篇 10 (classifier 127, 辵), 240. The character 還 has also a reading *é* < MC **ngak** < ***nggak**, given in rime 19 (*duó yùn* 鐸韻) of the *ru sheng* 入聲 section of the *Guang yun*, with a meaning “to meet up with something against your expectations or preferences” (心不欲見而見), a pronunciation and a meaning not dissimilar to that of the word 迕 *wù* < ***ngga-s**.

passage describing the birth of Zhuang gong of Zheng 鄭: 壯公寤生，驚姜氏，故名曰寤生，遂惡之 “Zhuang gong was *wù*-born, startling (his mother) the Lady Jiang; based on this she named him ‘Wu-sheng’ and came to detest him.”¹⁷ The whole unhappy story and the precise meaning of *wù shēng* as “breech birth” are now of course both well known, but in the early *Zuo zhuan* exegetic tradition the sense of the phrase *wù shēng* and the precise reason whereby the Lady Jiang detested her first-born son were not clear; *wù* 寤 was often understood as “awaken” or “sudden” or “alert” or some mixture of these meanings. Du Yu 杜預 (222–284) explains the Zhuang gong line as: 寤寤而壯公已生，故驚而惡之 “when she awoke from sleeping Zhuang gong was already born; for this reason she was startled and detested him.”¹⁸

The connection between “awaken, become aware, suddenly to realize” and “breech birth” for the word *wù* < *ngga-s 寤 can be seen in the cognate words *wù* < *ngga-s 悟 “awakening, sudden realization (Jap. *satori*)” and *wǔ* < *ngga-q 悟 “refractory, contradictory.” Both words entail passing through a critical point, a “non-smooth” turning or transition point, *i.e.*, “sudden realization” and “refractory movement” respectively. The word *wǔ* 悟 “refractory, contradictory” is in fact the *Shuowen* gloss for *wú* 午. Xu Shen gives 午悟也 “*wú* 午 means *wǔ* 悟 ‘refractory’,” the paronomastic sense of which is undoubtedly deliberate.¹⁹ He then explains *wǔ* in the kind of Han cosmological terms to which he was especially predisposed, as 五月陰氣午逆陽，冒地而出 “in the fifth (*wǔ!*) month the Yin pneumas pass through a critical point and reverse direction against the Yang; prevailing over the earth, (the Yin) then begins to emerge,” using the two words *wǔ nì* < *ngga-q ngak 午逆 “pass through a critical point and reverse direction” somewhat perissologically. The *Shuowen* enters the character *wǔ* 悟 immediately following the entry for *wú* 午, glossing it simply as *nì* < *ngak 逆 “to meet, encounter from an opposite direction” and analyzing it as 从午吾聲 “derived from the graph 午, 吾 *wú* < *ngga serves as the phonophoric.”²⁰

17 *Zuozhuan* 左傳 2, 15b.

18 *ibid.*

19 *Shuowen jiezi gulin*, 6639.

20 *Shuowen jiezi gulin*, 6641. It would seem that in the language of the Han period 午 *wǔ* < *ngga-q and 吾 *wú* < *ngga were homophonous except for the final -q in the former (or, in Middle Chinese terms, except for the tone difference), and that 午 *wǔ* and 五 *wǔ*, the phonophoric in 吾 *wú*, were homophonous in every respect, both OC *ngga-q. Thus either 午 or 吾 would constitute a suitable phonophoric in 悟. Xu Shen chose to analyze it as having 吾 as the phonophoric because he saw the 午 component with its “cross” meaning as the semantic component, and an analysis that identified each component unambiguously as serving either a semantic or a phonetic role (but not both) was his ideal. At an earlier time it may have been that the two words 午 *wǔ* and 五 *wǔ* were not ho-

In its turn the *Shuowen* entry for *nì* 逆 is *yíng* < *ngang 迎也 “to meet, encounter,” phonetically the -ng variant of *nì* < *ngak 逆. This is analyzed, not surprisingly, as having *nì* < *ngak 逆 as the phonophoric (从辵夂聲).²¹ What may be a bit surprising is finding that this same graph 逆 is registered in the *Ji yun* with a Middle Chinese reading *phaek*, a reading that would give modern standard Chinese *pò*, and that implies an OC *pphrak.²² In this reading 逆 is said to be an allograph of 霸 *pò* < *pphrak “new moon” (月始生; the second or third day of the month, depending on whether the previous month was a *dà* 大 or *xiǎo* 小 month).²³ If 逆 has two readings, *nì* < *ngak and *pò* < *pphrak, both in the *Shijing duó* 鐸 rime group and both with meanings based on a “semantic common denominator” √MOVEMENT THROUGH A CRITICAL (“refractory, non-smooth”) POINT, *viz.*, “come across from an opposite direction” and “new moon” (the one point in the lunar cycle that is not “smooth,” *i.e.*, where the slope of the curve is not defined), respectively, we might then propose that the two OC pronunciations be reconciled with each other by an early OC reading along the lines of *BNG[r]ak, in one case giving *nì* < *ngak < *bngak (“come across” 逆) and in the other giving *pò* < *pphrak < *pngrak (“new moon” 逆).²⁴ And if we allow for the possibility that 逆 is *bngak, the cognate word 午 can probably be reconstructed as *bngga-q. This in turn allows us to consider the possibility that the two two-character phrases 逢午 *fēng wǔ* < *phong-ngga-q and 旁午 *páng wǔ* < *bbang-ngga-q are both the result of a process of bisyllabification and semanticization of an original *bngga-q “to move in a criss-crossing, erratic way.”

*bngga-q > b-ngga-q > b^hng-ngga-q > bə-ngga-q > bəng-ngga-q >

(i) *phong-ngga-q > *fēng wǔ* 逢午

(ii) *bbang-ngga-q > *páng wǔ* 旁午

mophonous. See Baxter and Sagart 2014, 128–130. Even so, it remains likely that they are related lexically in some way. The fundamental sense of “cross” seen in *wǔ* 午 shows up graphically in the Shang inscription form of the character 五 itself, which is simply an X, typically with horizontal strokes at the top and bottom, *viz.*, 𠄎. See Li Zongkun 李宗焯 2012, 1324.

21 *Shuowen jiezi gulin*, 751.

22 *Ji yun, ru sheng* 入聲 rime 20 (*mò yùn* 陌韻).

23 This definition ~ explanation for 逆 *pò* < *pphrak cannot fail to bring to mind the related character and word *shuò* < *snggrak 朔 “first day of a lunar cycle,” also with 逆 *nì* < *ngak as the phonophoric. See Boltz 2009.

24 The majuscular notation BNG- is intended to represent an initial consonant cluster with any bilabial consonant followed by a velar nasal. Given the nature of the data and a still imperfect understanding of the details of Old Chinese phonology, a “fuzzy” representation of the initials in a set such as this is the best approximation possible at present.

The syllable **bəng-** in origin is the result of an excrescent protomic semi-syllable **b³-** from an original ***bng-**. If the resulting sesquisyllabic form **b³-ngga-q** had equal stress on both syllables, or perhaps had simply iambic stress, the protomic **b³-** would become fully syllabic **bə-**, in this case assuming a final consonant **-ng** homorganic with the initial of the second syllable, thus **bəng-**. The syllabic **bəng-**, in origin with no associated meaning, hence not morphemic, then, because of the predominantly (but not exclusively) monosyllabic structure of the language and the demands of the writing system which did not “allow” syllables or characters that had no meaning, became invested with a meaning, *i.e.*, semanticized or “folk-etymologized,” through identification with a phonetically similar, independently existing word that had a meaning compatible with the sense of the passage in question. The end result of this process gives us *fēng wǔ* 蜂午 “hornet-swarming” in one case and *páng wǔ* 旁午 “criss-crossing side-to-side” in the other. A trochaic stress pattern on **bə-ngga-q** by contrast would give **bə-ng-** > **bəng** with a loss of the second syllable altogether. This syllable **bəng** then may be the source of the monosyllabic word *fēng* < ***brong** 逢 “encounter, come across, meet.”²⁵

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25 My use of iambic and trochaic stress patterns is slightly different from that of Sagart 1999, though in principle invoking these kinds of stress patterns to account for the development of initial consonant clusters (what Sagart typically calls “prefixes”), sesquisyllabic and bisyllabified forms is similar to what he proposes. See Sagart 1999, 16-19.

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