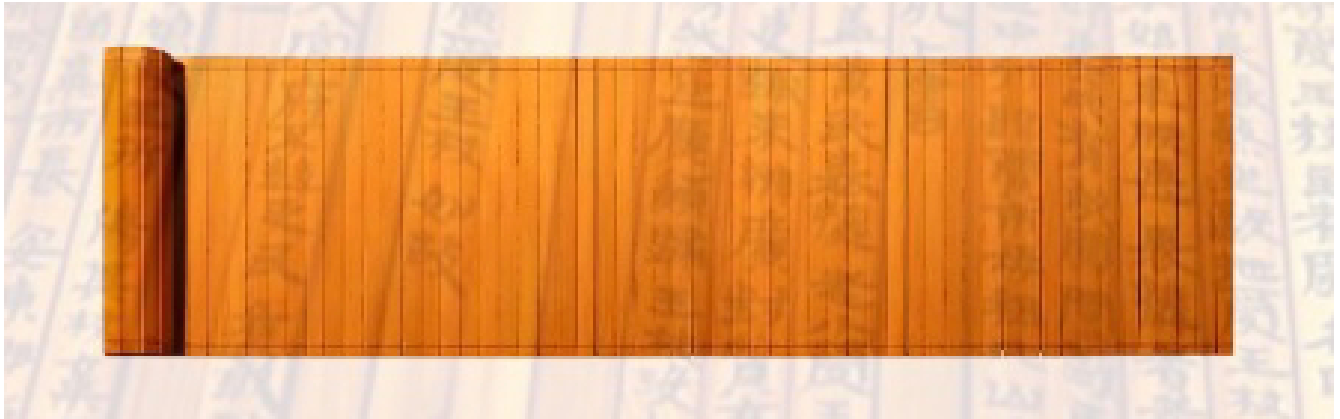




EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
LECTURE SERIES

History and Lore: Interpretive Emplotment and “Empty Writing” in the “Hereditary House of Zhao”

Amelia Ying Qin · California State University, Sacramento



This study identifies two textual strata in the “Zhao shijia” of the *Shi ji*: the “wo 我 stratum” and the “legendary stratum.” While the “wo stratum” points to the existence of Zhao local historical records, the “legendary stratum” reveals an interpretive framework that guides the chapter's presentation of the Zhao history toward the central concern and anxiety over the succession of lineage and power. The series of prophetic dreams and supernatural encounters that were emplotted in the narrative of Zhao history comprise this “legendary stratum” and point toward a key figure, King Wuling of Zhao, during whose time the Zhao state reached its pinnacle of power and prosperity. Accounts that are clearly fabrications, such as the story of the orphan of Zhao and later prophecies of the decline of the Zhao, show hidden connections to the personal experience of Sima Qian and to possible political dissent and discourses criticizing Emperor Wu of Han. In identifying such fabricated “empty writing” hidden in the chapter's framework of interpretive emplotment, this article aims to offer one way to read the *Shi ji*'s account for the hereditary house of Zhao that follows a coherent pattern on the meta-level of historical narrative.

September 27, 2024, 4:30–6:30 pm

Faculty House, 64 Morningside Drive, Columbia University

*Please check the announcement board in the first-floor lobby for room information

Registration required. Please RSVP at www.tangcenter-columbia.org by September 22

Seminar Co-Chairs:

Glenda Chao, Ursinus College

Ethan Harkness, New York University

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