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**Abstract:** *Questo contributo esplora gli sforzi del pedagogo confuciano di epoca Qing Lu Longqi 陸隴其 (1630–1692) nel “purificare” la raccolta Han Zhanguo ce 戰國策 (Stratagemmi degli Stati Combattenti), che a suo dire rischiava di corrompere la gioventù del suo tempo. Al fine di permettere ai giovani impressionabili di “gustarne il sapore senza essere colpiti dal suo veleno”, Lu e i suoi collaboratori redassero un’elaborata pubblicazione che metteva in contrasto le azioni degli uomini del periodo degli Stati Combattenti (475–221 a.C.) con quelle del loro più virtuoso contemporaneo, Mencio.*

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### *Introduction and Background*

In the long history of Chinese thought, the Warring States period (trad. 475–221 BCE)<sup>1</sup> has been ascribed a position that is arguably more formative than any other. Importantly for this paper, this was the age in which Mencius (Meng Ke 孟軻, 372–289 BCE), the Confucian sage later regarded as successor to Confucius (Kong Qiu 孔丘, 551–479 BCE) himself, laid down various ideological frameworks that would be upheld to differing extents as social and institutional standards and norms in China for millennia to come. But Mencius was far from alone on the Warring States scene, surrounded as he was by the many constituents of what would become collectively known as the Hundred Schools of Thought (zhu-zij baijia 諸子百家).

This intellectual ferment was in many ways a product of the realities of the volatile multi-state system of the times, as those in charge of these ‘warring’ states placed great value on thinkers who could offer expert advice on governance, interstate relations and warfare. This gave rise to a class of ‘consultant scholars’ (*ceshi* 策士) or ‘wandering persuaders’ (*youshui zhi shi* 游說之士), who would travel from court to court advising monarchs, much like mobile consultancy

firms, with the successful among them attracting a following of disciples keen to learn their art. There were also some attempts to keep talent within state borders through patronage systems like the Jixia 稷下 Academy in the State of Qi 齊, meanwhile landed nobles would likewise maintain such individuals as part of their retinue for advisory purposes.

Synonymous with the way this period was imagined in later times was the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (*Stratagems of the Warring States*; hereafter *Stratagems*), a text whose compilation was attributed to Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–08 BCE) of the Western Han (206 BCE–24 CE). Indeed, this text is even thought to have been how the period got its name, just as the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) lent its name to the period which preceded it (trad. 722–476 BCE).<sup>2</sup> The text is a collection of 497 dialogues, speeches and anecdotes from the period,<sup>3</sup> many of which find their setting at the courts of Warring States kings. In 1149, it was re-organised into a state-by-state format – *Qin ce* 秦策 (*Stratagems of Qin*), *Chu ce* 楚策 (*Stratagems of Chu*), and so forth – by Bao Biao 鮑彪 (b. 1091), at which point it took the form most familiar to readers today, as well as to readers in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the period upon which this article will focus.<sup>4</sup>

While the *Stratagems* seems to have been well-known throughout the subsequent centuries, the content of the text was not entirely uncontroversial. The words and actions of the figures it describes drew regular criticism on moral grounds. For example, in the Northern Song period (960–1127), scholar-official Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019–1083) composed a fairly damning preface (*xu* 序) to the *Stratagems*, which declared:

夫孔孟之時，去周之初，已數百歲，其舊法已亡、其舊俗已熄，久矣。二子乃獨明先王之道 [...] 戰國之游士則不然，不知道之可信，而樂於說之易合。[...] 論詐之便而諱其敗，言戰之善而蔽其患。 [...] <sup>5</sup>

Now in the times of Confucius and Men-

cius, several centuries had already passed since the beginnings of the Zhou dynasty. Long had it been since the models of old were lost and the customs of old had perished. These two men alone knew the Way of the Former Kings [...] But this was not so for the wandering scholars of the Warring States. They did not know the reliability of the Way [of the Former Kings], and instead took pleasure in their persuasions being easily met with [a ruler's] agreement [...] they discoursed on the convenience of deceit while concealing the damage it does, spoke of the advantages to making war while masking the calamities it causes. [...]

The singling out of Confucius and Mencius as inheritors, upholders and transmitters of a moral and correct Way amid swathes of self-serving and immoral contemporaries is thus an idea with a long history. And the *Stratagems*, with its detailed descriptions of the allegedly unscrupulous actions of certain Mencian contemporaries is presented by Zeng Gong as supporting evidence for this point. As we shall see, the idea – with the advantage of its sheer simplicity – would remain influential for centuries to come.

The focus of this paper falls upon a much later textual production called *Zhanguo ce qudu* 戰國策去毒 (*Stratagems of the Warring States with the Poison Extracted*; hereafter *Poison Extracted*) from the Qing dynasty Kangxi 康熙 period (1661–1722). The book applies the sentiment expressed by Zeng Gong here into a practical pedagogical strategy which takes the form of an annotated guide to the *Stratagems* with the explicit purpose of contrasting the Warring States consultants' actions to those of their more virtuous contemporary, Mencius. In contrast to Zeng Gong, whose minor concerns – housed as they are in a preface to the text itself – can be seen as a caveated form of approval, the compiler of *Poison Extracted* expresses heartfelt concern that the youth of his day might fall under the spell of these immoral “wandering scholars” and replicate their actions in the real world. To this Qing scholar, the issue seems to have

been of such gravity as to warrant pouring considerable energy and resources into a publication of this nature. Clearly, then, times had changed. But in what ways? Why had the immorality of these figures from a bygone age come to be perceived as a tangible threat which demanded an educational publication through which to counteract them? This paper seeks to answer this question by exploring the educational impetus behind the guide and the specifics of its pedagogical approach, all the while situating the *Poison Extracted* enterprise within its early-to-mid-Qing historical context.

#### *Text, Compiler and Impetus*

The main architect behind the *Poison Extracted* project was Lu Longqi 陸隴其 (1630–1692), a Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianist from Danghu 當湖, about seventy kilometres southwest of today's Shanghai. Lu had authored a number of writings on Confucianist doctrine and morality, including *Du Zhu suibi* 讀朱隨筆 (*Jottings upon Reading Zhu Xi*) and *Xueshu bian* 學術辨 (*On Scholarship*). The *Stratagems* extracts were selected and appraised (*pingxuan* 評選) by Lu himself, who had assembled a team of at least twelve named students tasked with checking and proofreading (*jiading* 較訂). The reproduction referenced in this paper is of the 1694 Sanyu Tang 三魚堂 imprint, which is currently held in Shanghai Library.<sup>6</sup>

The book is two fascicles (*juan* 卷) in length. The main body of the text is comprised of a selection of 41 episodes from the *Stratagems*. These are flanked by regular explanatory annotations in the margins, and each of the episodes is followed by a passage of discussion by Lu Longqi.

Lu Longqi made the editorial decision to open *Poison Extracted* with the aforementioned Song preface by Zeng Gong. As he later explains, he has chosen to defer this prominent space to a preface written over half a millennium prior because it “speaks to [the

Warring States men’s] defects in the most detail” (*yan qi bing zui xiang* 言其病最詳). This is followed by a Table of Contents section (*mulu* 目錄) listing the *Stratagems* extracts covered in the book, and finally an introduction by the compiler himself – Lu Longqi’s ‘authorial note’ (*ziji* 自記). Prior to the *Stratagems* episodes themselves, we find a timeline of Warring States events together with a brief explanation of the historical context.

Lu Longqi’s introductory ‘note’ discusses his motivations to put together a pedagogical production of this nature and states its envisioned goals. As such, it offers the historian a valuable window not merely unto the late imperial reception of the *Stratagems*, but also more broadly unto perceptions of textual materials as a potential corruptive force, and the self-assigned duty of the Neo-Confucian pedagogue to take action to counter heterodox and immoral ideas in early-to-mid-Qing society. The following will take a detailed look at the note, which I have translated in full.

右《戰國策》一書，大抵皆縱橫家言也。其文章之奇，足以悅人耳目，而其機變之巧，足以壞人心術。子弟識見未定而讀之，其不為漸染者鮮也。 [...] <sup>7</sup>

This book, *Stratagems of the Warring States*, is mostly comprised of the speech of the ‘Coalition Advisors’. While the marvels of their diction are such that can delight people’s ears and eyes, the craftiness of their fickle plots is such that can bring ruin to their heart’s designs. When read by members of the younger generation whose knowledge and experience have not yet been established, few do not become gradually tainted by it. [...]

Lu Longqi starts off by describing the hypothetical or real-life social issue which has motivated him to compile this book. Namely, he has observed a phenomenon whereby Qing youths pick up the *Stratagems* for entertainment purposes. However, doing so inevitably brings them into contact with the

(negative) examples of Warring States consultants – described here as “the Coalition Advisors” (*zonghengjia* 縱橫家)<sup>8</sup> – who were notorious for advising for the immediate advantage to the state rather than for what is good and moral (see Zeng Gong’s preface), as well as for being fickle in their loyalties and frequently switching between states. Lu claims that the fact that this tends to happen during a very formative period before young readers have had the chance to establish their own “knowledge and experience” (*shijian* 識見) in the outside world leaves this section of the readership particularly susceptible to the (im)moral examples in the *Stratagems*. Clearly, it is at this impressionable, vulnerable stage that Lu Longqi hopes to intervene with his new pedagogical production.

[...] 當時惟孟子一人卓然於波流之中。直以為是妾婦之道，而大丈夫之所不為。蓋其視秦儀輩不啻如厚味之中有大毒焉。惟恐學者陷溺其中而不能出也。 [...] <sup>9</sup>

[...] In those times, only that one man, Mencius, stood eminent amid the sweep of the waves. Frankly, [the Advisors’ behaviour] was the way of concubines and wives, not how a decent gentleman would conduct himself. [Mencius] probably viewed the likes of [Su] Qin and [Zhang] Yi (i.e. two prominent Coalition Advisors) as no less than flavourful delicacies which contained a grave poison within. I am just afraid that students will be swept up and submerged in [the waves], unable to get out...

Lu now turns to introduce the metaphor which summarises his view of *Stratagems* and the figures it describes: the eponymous “poison” of the title. While Lu has already conceded that the text does indeed make for enjoyable reading, he now moves beyond that to point out how the “marvels of their diction” (*wenzhang zhi qi* 文章之奇) provide the Warring States men’s persuasive speeches with a disguise for something more insidious, likening them to “flavourful delicacies (*houwei* 厚

味) which contain a grave poison (*dadu* 大毒) within". This permits us to make further inferences about what Lu meant by the "knowledge and experience" that young readers are yet to establish. To him, this has much to do with overcoming the naivety of youth; that is, developing the ability to distinguish between outer appearances and actual substance in the face of the often-dissonant relationship between the two. *Poison Extracted* is a book that hopes to teach them something of such skills.

This passage is also where Lu introduces a second central concept of his pedagogical enterprise: "In those times, that one man Mencius stood eminent amid the sweep of the waves". This line paints a vivid image of Mencius standing upright and unswayed by the swathes of unscrupulous Warring States men by whom he is surrounded. The statement is an obvious and deliberate echo of Zeng Gong's assertion that, "Those two men (Confucius and Mencius) alone knew the Way of the Former Kings". But this reiteration is by no means lip service. On the contrary, in producing *Poison Extracted* Lu has taken his lead from this very notion and meticulously applied it as a practical pedagogical strategy. The next part of Lu's note introduces his approach:

[...] 今之讀戰國策者多也。亦曾以孟子之道權衡之乎？余懼其毒中於人矣。故取今文士所共讀指其得失，使學者知其所以異於孟子者。庶幾濟其味而不中其毒也。 [...] <sup>10</sup>

[...] Nowadays, there are many who read the *Stratagems of the Warring States*. Did they ever even weigh them up according to the Way of Mencius? I have come to fear the poison taking hold of people. Therefore, I made a selection of what today's literary scholars all read and identified the pluses and minuses, to enable students to understand in which ways [the *Stratagems* figures] differed from Mencius, in the hope that they may savour the flavour without being stricken by the poison. [...]


Finally, then, Lu Longqi reaches what he plans to do about the situation at hand. Lu's answer of how to sanitise the *Stratagems* – or how to "extract the poison", to use his own metaphor – is a straightforward one: the sage Mencius. By providing a contrasting, positive example from the words or life of Mencius whenever readers are faced with a negative Warring States example, Lu hopes to counterbalance the negative impact of this encounter. The specifics of this strategy and its uses of Mencius and the *Mencius* will be explored in the "Pedagogical Approach" section. The preface ends as follows:

[...] 夫南豐一序言其病最詳，故並附焉。又此書原本各繫於其國，讀者輒迷其先後。今一以通鑑編年為次。康熙壬申秋抄。當湖陸隴其書於虞山道中。 <sup>11</sup>

[...] The preface by Nanfeng 南豐 (i.e. Zeng Gong) speaks to their defects in the most detail, so I have appended it together [with this book's contents]. In addition, the original version of this book is organised into separate states, so readers constantly get muddled over the chronological sequence. So what follows next is an annalistic arrangement of events in accordance with the *Comprehensive Mirror*.<sup>12</sup>

Transcribed in the Autumn of the thirty-first year of Kangxi (1692) by Lu Longqi of Danghu, on the road up Mount Yu 虞.

Faced with this Warring States "poison", then, Lu Longqi's approach could be described as chiefly preventative rather than remedial in nature, in that instead of providing a textual antidote explaining why the behaviour of the Warring States men is incorrect after the poison has already been absorbed with something like a general essay on the topic, he is aiming to prevent the impressionable youth from being corrupted by the *Stratagems* in the first place. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that in practice, the annotative strategy he has put in place could



achieve its desired result whether read before or after a reader's first contact with the *Stratagems* figures. Indeed, while Lu mentions the timeline of events only briefly at the end of his preface, the timeline itself is no perfunctory appendage. It is twenty-five pages long, accompanied by a six-page investigation of the Eastern Zhou context. This fits in with the surge of interest in chronological matters that has been observed in publications of the early Qing.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps, then, *Poison Extracted* was also intended to appeal to another kind of reader: one who had enjoyed the *Stratagems* so much as to desire a handy resource for straightening out the timing and dates of the states and events it recounts.

Pragmatism on Lu Longqi's part permeates his pedagogical strategy as a whole. Certainly, considering the specific concern he has expressed – that there is a certain text in circulation with insidious corruptive powers – the method he has chosen to counteract it could be said to be milder than other possible alternatives, such as advocating that the *Stratagems* readership be limited to adults whose “knowledge and experience” has already been set in place, or even that it be removed from circulation entirely. Of course, that would be a fairly radical suggestion given the text's long history, widely accepted aesthetic, literary and historiographical value and the fact it had been discussed and vouched for by many respectable men of former eras. These arguably even included Zeng Gong, whose aforementioned preface may at first glance seem disapproving, but its nature as a preface to the *Stratagems* can conversely be read as a form of approval *within* circumscribed limits – that is, somewhat akin to the content advisory warning labels of today.<sup>14</sup> So *Poison Extracted* is also a creative example of an attempt to resolve a late imperial conundrum of how to approach those classical texts that had, for whatever reason, in recent times come to be viewed in a less-than positive light.

These reasons aside, there is also a particular pedagogical logic at play here. After

all, how to reach those less inclined towards reading material which wore the moral guidance they purveyed in a more overt manner? Allegedly damaging books like the *Stratagems* in fact presented the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian pedagogue with an opportunity: instead of decrying them outright, he could take advantage of them to access an otherwise difficult-to-reach group of ears.<sup>15</sup> The lenient Lu Longqi thus invites readers – or perhaps, gives them permission – to “savour the flavour” of its literary merit, so long as he can use it as a launchpad to supply guidance along the way in the hope of leading them to the correct path. Thus, there lies a certain shrewdness behind his ostensible openness towards the *Stratagems*. Along with this, there is also the simple fact that this made an enjoyable experience out of moral education, enjoyment being a well-known pedagogical asset emphasised by several other papers in this volume.

Pragmatic tactics like these were perhaps the order of the day for an early-to-mid-Qing Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianist such as Lu Longqi. Writing his preface in 1692, it was getting towards a century since a publishing boom in the late Ming had made a diverse, often market-determined pool of texts more widely accessible and affordable than ever before, profoundly altering China's relationship with books and information in the process. This was a time in which commercial publishers strove to outdo each other by repackaging and reinventing the textual tradition they had inherited, often resulting in a shift in the emphasis onto leisure and entertainment. I have demonstrated elsewhere how the literary merits of the *Stratagems* had risen to the fore in the eyes of publishers and readers, likely at the expense of moralistic warnings like that of Zeng Gong.<sup>16</sup> A concurrent phenomenon had been the emergence and popularisation of various alternative Confucianisms to the self-perceived orthodoxy of the Cheng-Zhu branch. Proponents of the latter, like Lu Longqi, were still reeling from this assault.

It is important to situate the *Poison Extracted* enterprise within these two intersecting phenomena, because it is this context more than anything that had given rise to that sense of realistic urgency in Lu Longqi's Qing note which is entirely absent from Zeng Gong's Northern Song preface. The overall approach and strategy of *Poison Extracted* betrays a self-awareness that is no glorious moment in the history of his convictions. Times like these meant the onus had fallen onto Lu Longqi to stoop to meet his competitors on the same playing field of the publishing world, borrowing some of its own modes and norms in the name of his pedagogical objectives.

#### *Pedagogical Approach*

The above section has explored Lu Longqi's professed strategy and intentions, but how well do these line up with their actual implementation? Here we shall take a closer look at the annotations and appraisals which Lu has included for the sake of educating his readers.

The 41 *Stratagems* extracts have been helpfully punctuated, with additional emphasis marks to divert the reader's attention to the lines that Lu would have them notice. Short annotations are a consistent presence in the margins, and each extract is followed by an appraisal composed by Lu Longqi. These can range from a few lines to several pages in length.

The annotations exist chiefly to aid basic comprehension of the text. Most have been borrowed from previous annotators, like the aforementioned Bao Biao and Wu Shidao 吳師道 (1283–1344) of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). Many of these are straightforward explanatory notes on the historical background, figures or timing. For example: “Bao annotates that this is the name of a Chu official” (*Bao zhu Chu guan ming* 鮑注楚官名)<sup>17</sup> or “Bao annotates that this is a place upstream” (*Bao zhu shangliu zhi di* 鮑注上流

之地).<sup>18</sup> Such annotations help the reader follow the goings-on in the *Stratagems* episodes; after all, if young readers were to fully grasp Lu's appraisal of the immoral conduct of the characters, it was of vital importance that they had understood what happened in the first place. Some do, however, carry moral critique or guidance of some sort. For example “Bao annotates that by looking at his [choice of] ministers, one can know the monarch” (鮑注觀其臣知其主),<sup>19</sup> or “Bao annotates that killing [Yue] Yi [樂]毅 despite his innocence would not be righteous” (鮑注無罪而殺毅非義也),<sup>20</sup> or “Bao annotates that these three are treating states like goods for sale” (鮑注三者於國如人之有資貨).<sup>21</sup> Lu Longqi often repeats such annotations and reiterates his agreement with them in his appraisals.

The Bao and Wu annotations also include guidance of a philological or linguistic nature, informing readers of the pronunciation and/or correct interpretation of particular words or characters.<sup>22</sup> For instance, “Wu annotates that here *chi* 池 [pool] stands for *ta* 他 [him]” (吳注池卽他),<sup>23</sup> to notify readers of a character variant which might not have been expected to appear at the time of reading. It is of note to this paper that Lu Longqi and his team have evidently paid particular attention to annotations of this variety and have significantly expanded the amount of linguistic pointers. For example, “Here *gong* 宮 refers to where the beauties live” (宮此言美人之所處也)<sup>24</sup> to prevent confusion with other meanings of the word. The addition of such annotations was no doubt a consciously performed adaptation to update the existing set of annotations to cover what was required for the reading abilities of a much later Qing readership, and likely also with the youthful nature of his target readership in mind. Again, these serve to aid the reader's comprehension of the following moral appraisal. The *gong* example appears in a *Stratagems* persuasion which claims some consultants aim to live the high life in service of a monarch but would happily abandon him for another

er state if circumstances changed. Only this reading of *gong* would drive home the sexual side of the pleasures enjoyed by such men, a facet that readers would miss if they interpreted the character otherwise.

As for the all-important appraisals of the *Stratagems* episodes, Lu Longqi stays true to his prefatory note in that they make frequent references to the *Mencius*, as well as discussions of the *Mencius* by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). One appraisal opens, “Not only is this [argument] built around profit and loss, but it shows absolutely no consideration for reason and righteousness. Hence, it is of the utmost petty variety of such profit-and-loss discourses. To compare this to the two passages on attacking Yan in the ‘King Hui of Liang’ chapter of the *Mencius* [...]” (不但從利害上見，絕不知有理義。即就利害論，亦只說得最淺一層。以孟子梁惠王篇伐燕兩章較之，[...]).<sup>25</sup> Another ends with, “[...] viewing this alongside the ‘agent of Heaven’ (*tianli* 天吏) Mencius spoke of, could the difference be any more extreme?” ([...]以孟子所謂天吏者觀之，何啻霄壤?)<sup>26</sup> The comparative element is explicitly performed with direct quotes and explanations. While study of the *Mencius* is not one of the book’s professed aims, we should note that there is a dual pedagogical process at play here. Lu’s contrastive strategy not only shows the reader what is ‘wrong’ with the Warring States men’s ideas and arguments as promised, but by that same token refines their understandings of Mencian ideas and quotes in a deductive manner by showing them what would *not* be a correct implementation of them, as well as more directly through the explanations Lu must make to enact the comparison in the first place.

For an example of an appraisal in full:


「寧為雞口，無為牛後。」此妙喻也。但無「發政施仁」之本領，而徒恃區區合從。欲免牛後之差，孟子所謂「人役而恥為役，由弓人而恥為弓，矢人而恥為矢也。」<sup>27</sup>

“Better to be the beak of the chicken than the ox’s behind”. This is a marvellous analogy. But it is not rooted in the concept of “proclaiming policies that are governed by benevolence” and is only concerned with uniting the alliance. The desire to avoid the shame of being the ox’s behind is what Mencius was speaking about with “To be the servant of men yet ashamed of one’s servitude is like a bow-maker being ashamed of making bows or an arrow-maker being ashamed of making arrows”.

This appraisal is emblematic of the *Poison Extracted* production as a whole and stays true to the sentiment we have observed in the preface. First of all, Lu Longqi praises the catchy and vivid analogy, for a moment standing side-by-side with his reader-students to relish in the text’s surface-level merit. But soon enough, he pivots to discuss the sentiment that lurks behind this expression, and in doing so implicitly encourages readers to follow him beyond the amusement sparked by the phrase to explore its deeper implications. To demonstrate precisely what is immoral about this remark, Lu drops two quotations from the *Mencius*. These have been judiciously selected for their similar theme to facilitate convenient, direct comparison. Beyond the specifics of this case, the skills practised in this example, and indeed throughout *Poison Extracted*, are of much broader applicability. The book equips them with an awareness that just because something sounds good does not mean it is right or true,<sup>28</sup> and guides them in exercises in the skills of critical assessment required to identify and decode instances of this. In fact, the Warring States scenario could even be said to provide a practice simulation for the kinds of situations Lu Longqi expected his young readers to encounter in real life. This facet will be discussed in the conclusions.

### Conclusions

Some time after his death, Lu Longqi



found himself described by a contemporary using the same cliché he himself had used for Mencius: “[Lu Longqi] stood eminent as a great Confucian of the entire age” (卓然為一代大儒).<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, just as Mencius is swept up amid but does not get carried away by the Warring States consultant-waves of Lu’s own metaphor, it was noted that Lu Longqi had hailed “from [Wang] Yangming’s heartland yet was not tainted by the fashions of the times and the views of the masses” (於陽明之鄉而不為時風眾勢所染).<sup>30</sup> For all their proponents’ self-proclaimed orthodoxy, at this point in time the primacy of Cheng-Zhu Confucianist ideals was under threat from alternative interpretations, particularly those which sprung out of the thought of Wang Shouren 王守仁 (better known by his *hao* Yangming 陽明; 1472–1529). This context is why Lu Longqi was praised so highly for sticking to the correct path irrespective of his surroundings.

Yet, the parallels here are inescapable. Still reeling from the Ming onslaught of Yangming thought and the publishing boom, for Lu Longqi the Warring States situation probably felt like a closer personal reality. The overall reading experience of *Poison Extracted* is one that equips young readers with skills of critical assessment; it is an exercise that trains them to pick out the correct moral way of doing things in an environment in which the majority of people are acting differently. In this way, the Warring States world functions as a practice simulation of these skills, which were readily transferable to the parallel situation of their Qing reality. Just as he had himself, and Mencius had done before him, Lu Longqi hoped to prepare a new generation of budding Confucians for a life of standing alone and eminent amid the sweep of the waves.

Considering the historical context that it had often been Confucius and Mencius who had been jointly held up in contrast to the likes of the Coalition Advisors, as we have seen in Zeng Gong’s preface, one interest-

ing and pragmatic aspect of Lu’s approach is his editorial decision to whittle the targets of comparison down to focus on Mencius alone. Mencius was a contemporary of many of the *Stratagems* men – even appearing once in the transmitted *Stratagems* – while Confucius predates them by far. This refinement was likely done with pedagogical concerns in mind; it simplifies the concept and creates a clearer point of comparison, which aids both the ease of absorption and memorability of the points he hopes to teach students. For example, Lu makes much use of the fact that Mencius interacted with many of the same kings that appear in the *Stratagems*, which, needless to say, would be impossible in the case of Confucius. Beyond this, the deeper point that it was possible for a paragon of virtue to co-exist in the exact same world and interact in the exact same social environment as less-moral others, and that this was likewise possible for his Qing readers, could only be demonstrated and proven through use of a precise contemporary. And for that, only Mencius would do.

Behind the book of seemingly distant Warring States persuasions and the abstract simulation that was *Poison Extracted* lay some very genuine fears of what had become of the world and a great deal of anxiety over how things would progress in the future. Was society going to slip further into Warring States levels of immorality, despite the best efforts of Mencius and all those through the intervening ages, whose mission had now fallen to Lu Longqi? Certainly, from a Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian standpoint, such fears could be said to be well-grounded given the socio-historical context discussed above. The stakes were high; not just in the world at large, but also on a personal level. Lu himself was at this point entering his later years and—whether he had reason to suspect so or not—would die mere months after composing the prefatory note we have examined here. It is very much in keeping with the spirit of this volume, then, that with Lu Longqi



likely mindful of the fact that the time that remained for him to exert influence in society and ameliorate the world's predicament was ever limited, he set his sights even more firmly on the youth of his day. The future of society was -as it ever is- in the hands of young people, and for Lu, the most effective way to ensure a desirable future was to shape how the youth viewed and engaged with the world through pedagogical means. *Stratagems of the Warring States with the Poison Extracted* therefore serves as a further demonstration of the crucial role ascribed to pedagogy in Chinese history.

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### Note

<sup>1</sup> The Eastern Zhou dynasty has traditionally been split into the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period. The two periods were anachronistically applied, and the point at which one became the other has been debated for centuries. Here I

use the traditional dates from Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji 史記* (*Records of the Grand Historian*).

<sup>2</sup> Tsuen-hsüin Tsien, "Chan-kuo ts'e", in M. Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Figure taken from the Bao Biao edition.

<sup>4</sup> The "rival" Yao Hong 姚宏 edition, dated 1146, did not rise to prominence until after 1756. Tsien, "Chan-kuo ts'e", pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> For the preface, see Lu Longqi 陸隴其, "Zhanguo ce qudu 戰國策去毒" (Stratagems of the Warring States with the Poison Extracted), in *Shibu 史部* (History), vol. 44 of *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu 四庫全書存目叢書* (Complete Corpus of the Four Treasuries) (Jinan, Qilu shushe, 1996), p. 512.

<sup>6</sup> It is unclear whether part of the project was completed in the two years between Lu Longqi's death and its printing in 1694, or if other editions were printed in the meantime. Regardless, Lu's introduction to the work, ostensibly written in 1692, provides us with a living connection to the man himself.

<sup>7</sup> Lu, "Zhanguo ce qudu", p. 514.

<sup>8</sup> *Zonghengjia* has been translated in a multitude of ways. More literally it is "Vertical and Horizontal Alliance Strategists", which refers to two different kinds of overall diplomatic strategy for which states could opt. These figures were chiefly rhetoricians who would advise kings on their diplomatic approach. Not always bound by loyalty to any given state or monarch, it was normal for a Coalition Advisor to provide his services to two or more states over the course of his career.

<sup>9</sup> Lu, "Zhanguo ce qudu", p. 514.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 514-515.

<sup>11</sup> I.e., Song literatus Sima Guang's 司馬光 *Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑* (*Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*). For more on the wide-ranging historiographical influence of

this work in late imperial China, see Nicolas Standaert, “Comprehensive Histories in Late Ming and Early Qing and the Genealogy of the *Gangjian* 綱鑑 Texts”, in *The Intercultural Weaving of Historical Texts: Chinese and European Stories about Emperor Ku and His Concubines* (Leiden, Brill, 2016), pp. 15-93.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 515.

<sup>13</sup> Standaert, “Comprehensive Histories in Late Ming and Early Qing”, p. 79.

<sup>14</sup> This is not something we can always assume. The preface (*xu* 序) as a literary form moved on to have its own life beyond its prefatory attachment to a text, and were even written without any such text in mind, as illustrated in a recent article by Xiaojing Miao, “Self-Display and Farewell Counsel: The Occasional Preface in the Early and High Tang”, *Tang Studies*, 37, 1 (2019), pp. 1-29.

<sup>15</sup> One is reminded of the preface to the 1657 novel *Roupu tuan* 肉蒲團 (*The Carnal Prayer Mat*), which makes an (albeit tongue-in-cheek) declaration that since sexual profligates could not be reasonably expected to pick up moralistic books and reform their behaviour, he had no choice but to turn to the covert tactic of sneaking Buddhist morals into erotic fiction. Li Yu (attrib.), Patrick Hanan (trans.), *The Carnal Prayer Mat* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Smith Rosser, “Good Wood on Crowdpleasers?: Humour Publications in the Ming Wanli Period” (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2021), Chapter 3.

<sup>17</sup> Lu, “Zhanguo ce qudu”, p. 540.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 550.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 566.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 567.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 544.

<sup>22</sup> It should be pointed out that pro-

nunciation and interpretation are often one and the same in literary – and indeed modern – Chinese, because when a single character has two or more possible pronunciations, these are usually indicative of different meanings. Hence, to inform readers how to pronounce a word is to tell them how to understand it.

<sup>23</sup> Lu, “Zhanguo ce qudu”, p. 559.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 532.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 539.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 545. The *Stratagems* quote is adapted from James I. Crump, *Legends of the Warring States: Persuasions, Romances, and Stories from Chan-kuo ts’u* (Ann Arbor, Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1998). The “agent of Heaven” translation is adapted from Robert Eno, “Mencius: An Online Teaching Translation”, available at <<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/23421/Mengzi.pdf>>, accessed October 09, 2021.

<sup>27</sup> Lu, “Zhanguo ce qudu”, p. 536. First *Mencius* quote translation adapted from Robert Eno, “Mencius”, p. 24. The second is adapted from James Legge. The Chinese Text Project, “Gongsun Chou shang 公孫丑上”, available at <<https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=gb&id=1635&remap=gb#s10029619>>, accessed 09 October 2021.

<sup>28</sup> “Right” or “true” according to Lu Longqi’s worldview, of course.

<sup>29</sup> These two descriptions are found in a preface to a collection of Lu’s writings on Zhu Xi’s thought by Zhang Boxing 張伯行 (1651–1725), another Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianist. Lu Longqi 陸隴其, *Du Zhu suibi* 讀朱隨筆 (*Jottings upon Reading Zhu Xi*) (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*