

## Fāng Bāu 方苞 on the Shǐ Jì

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**Abstract.** The first suggestions as to the contribution of Sǐmǎ Tán 司馬談 to the Shǐ Jì 史記 (SJ), seem to have been made by Fāng Bāu (1668-1749), in two of his notes on the Shǐ Jì (probably written in 1739, when he was in charge of the Wǔ-yīng Dyèn 武英殿 project to print authoritative texts of the classics and histories). He notes that some statements in the SJ Tables (Byǎu 表) section say “I have read” 余讀, while others say “His Excellency the Tàishǐ has read” 太史公讀; there are also Tàishǐ-gūng (TSG) statements of the usual type. Of the two, “Tàishǐ-gūng” probably refers to Tán, and “I” to Chyēn. Then SJ 14, 15, 16, and 19 are by Tán, and the “I” of SJ 13 and 18 derive from Chyēn, as does SJ 17, whose preface ends “Your servant Chyēn has carefully recorded . . .” 臣遷謹記. I here explore the consequences of this suggestion for the Tables chapters, SJ 13-22, and find that they are valid.

**Fāng Bāu’s Idea.** The sequence of certain elements in SJ 13-16 and 18-19 is:

- SJ 13. (1) Tàishǐ-gūng ywē 太史公曰 (TSG) paragraph. (2) Paragraph beginning with “I have read” 余讀. (3) The table in question.
- SJ 14. (1) Tàishǐ-gūng dú 太史公讀 (TSD) “The Grand Astrologer has read” paragraph. (2) TSG paragraph. (3) The table in question.
- SJ 15. (1) and (3) as in SJ 14 above.
- SJ 16. (1) and (3) as in SJ 14 above.
- SJ 18. (1), (2), and (3) as in SJ 13 above.
- SJ 19. (1) and (3) as in SJ 14 above.

With the slight variant of a concluding TSG paragraph in SJ 14 which is not present in SJ 15-16 and 19, there are two patterns here: that of SJ 13 and that of SJ 14. Fāng Bāu’s proposal amounts to saying that the TSD statements are by Sǐmǎ Tán while the less official “I have read” statements are instead by his son and successor Sǐmǎ Chyēn.

It is possible that Chyēn, on taking over the SJ project from his father, hesitated to use the TSD formula of himself, whence the more modest “I.” This is more plausible if at that time he had undertaken responsibility for the SJ but had not yet succeeded to his father’s title of Grand Astrologer. This was the case during the period 0110-0108. It would follow that the initial TSG statements in SJ 13 and 18 are by Tán, and were left by him in place of a finished table. We then have the following implied scenario:

- Tan writes SJ 14-16 and 19, prefacing each of them with a TSD statement,
- Tán writes TSG summaries for the unwritten tables SJ 13 and 18.
- Chyēn later supplies the tables for SJ 13 and 18, adding his own “I have read” statements to supplement the initial TSG statement.

In what follows, I will attempt to extend this hypothesis to the rest of the Tables.

**Text Criticism.** Before proceeding, we need to take account of apparent later extensions in the Tables chapters. The extension by Chǔ Shào-sūn 褚少孫 to SJ 20, which takes it from its original latest date of 0103 to the first year of Ywǎn-dì (048), is signed by him and is thus not problematic. More subtle are the following cases:

- SJ 18 seems to go down to 後元 2 = 087, the last year of Hàn Wǔ-dì. There is no indication that Chyēn lived that long, and there is evidence that the table has been extended by a later hand. Each of its rows (see 2/879) has a label giving the reign or period, and the number of enfiefments in that period. The bottom row [omitting a commentator's zone at the end] has more than one label, each with its separate total of enfiefments, which is contrary to precedent. The first label specifies "to Ywǎn-fǎng 6 = 0105, the year before Tâi-chū. This observes the Tâi-chū cutoff which Chyēn states at the end of the chapter list in SJ 130. It is presumably his original chapter, composed in or shortly after 0104. To this label has been added, in the same row, the cutoff point 087. This must be a later addition, designed to bring the Hàn Wǔ-dì story tidily to a close.
- SJ 19 labels its Wǔ-dì row as for years from 0140 to 0105. A row below that is labeled "from Tâi-chū [0104] on." That row is anomalous; the original table, like SJ 18, was surely meant to have the Tâi-chū era as an endpoint.
- SJ 20 and 21. Again, a dubious bottom row for Tâi-chū events.
- SJ 22 seems to go down to 020. Jāng Dà-kǎ notes that there is a change in the format of the entries, and that it comes between 090 (the last in the old format) and 089 (the first in the new format); he italicizes the text from that point.<sup>1</sup> This and the three above extensions are to be ascribed to Fǎng Shāng, who was commissioned to extend the Shǐ Jì, and completed seven such extensions; he died in c020.<sup>2</sup>

**Dates.** It will be best to work with the latest date given on a table. The ones for the SJ 13-22 Tables, ignoring material above identified as extensions, are as follows:

- SJ 13: to 0841
- SJ 14: to 0476
- SJ 15: to 0207
- SJ 16: to 0202
- SJ 17: to 0101
- SJ 18: to 0105
- SJ 19: to 0105 (with Tâi-chū extension)
- SJ 20: to 0105 (with Tâi-chū extension)
- SJ 21: to 0105 (with Tâi-chū extension)
- SJ 22: latest date 090

<sup>1</sup>Jāng Syīn-jù 4/2215f.

<sup>2</sup>The contribution of Fǎng Shāng 馮商 to the Shǐ Jì is listed in its proper sequence after the SJ (there called 太史公書) in the HS 30 Palace Library catalogue. Jāng ascribes the extension to Chǔ Shào-sūn, which is chronologically unlikely given Chǔ's probable death date of c030, and stylistically unlikely given Chǔ's scrupulous labeling of the ten SJ additions which are his safe corpus. Fǎng's extensions, by contrast, are structured as though by the authors of the SJ; the SJ 22 extension adds insult to injury by ending in a TSG statement which is not only patently meretricious, but written in a very inferior style.

**Mode of Work.** These dates are suggestive, and what they suggest is a scenario for Chyēn's work on these chapters. Ignoring extensions by Chǔ Shàu-sūn (to SJ 20) and Fǎng Shāng (to SJ 18 and 22), the following seem to be indicated.

- Tán wrote SJ 14, 15, and 16, and then for some reason skipped to SJ 19.
- Tán, nearing his death, wrote TSG summaries for the SJ 13 and 18 (but not for SJ 17 or 20-22), and left them at the head of the unwritten chapters.
- Chyēn, on assuming responsibility for the work, completed SJ 13 within the mourning period (say, c109), and thus not using TSG of himself.
- Chyēn's next two chapters were SJ 18 (endpoint 0105) and 20 (endpoint 104).
- Chyēn then wrote SJ 17 and 21 (both with endpoint 0101)
- Chyēn finally wrote SJ 22, the last of the Byǎu (endpoint 090).

**Chyēn's Motives.** These dates suggest four phases of Chyēn's work on the Tables, and the phases themselves seem to have plausible initiating causes.

- Tán's dying injunction, together with an indication that SJ 13 and 18 were of special interest to him. Chyēn promptly completed SJ 13, during his period of mourning and thus while he still did not have the TSG title (0109). He then put the project aside, perhaps to pursue his new duties as Tàì-shǐ (from 0108 on).
- The acceptance of the Tàì-chū calendar in 0104 was a posthumous triumph for Tán, and inspired Chyēn to revisit Tán's work. He finished the other chapter which had been of special importance to Tán (SJ 18, 0105), in somewhat the same style he had used earlier for SJ 13; he then went on to do SJ 20 in a somewhat different style, in the following year (0104). He then left the matter for some years, again presumably because of other work.
- A suggestion from the Emperor produced two tables with the endpoint, 0101. These were SJ 17 (filling up the only lacuna in the previous series) and 21 (the next chapter in sequence), both in more or less the same year. He then again dropped the matter for almost a decade.
- Impending death may well have reminded Chyēn of his promise to complete the work. SJ 22, the only remaining undone Table, was probably finished in the last months of Chyēn's life.

**Conclusion.** Fāng Bāu's suggestion seems to work. It does not attribute to Tán anything that later investigation finds reason to ascribe to Chyēn, and it singles out as Chyēn's the two chapters which seem likely to be, in fact, the first Byǎu chapters which Chyēn himself wrote. It leaves, as a residue, chapters which seem to be later work by Chyēn. That is, Fāng Bāu implicitly divides the Byǎu series into three, and those divisions appear to be meaningful. It may then be that Fāng Bāu deserved the literary reputation which he seems to have enjoyed among his contemporaries.

It will be useful to see what these results add to the previous list of solved Tán and Chyēn chapters. That list is updated as an Appendix, following.

### *Works Cited*

- E Bruce Brooks. Sǐmǎ Tán and the Shǐ Jì. WSP v2 (2011) 225-238  
 Fāng Bāu 方苞. 書史記十表後 and 書史記六國年表序後; in 望溪先生文集  
 Jāng Dà-kǐ 張大可. 史記新注. 4v 華文 2000

## Appendix

## Tán and Chyēn in the Shǐ Jì

As so far identified. T = initial Tán TSG only; F = Fǎng Shāng supplement

Annals 本記	Rulers 世家	Accounts 列傳	
001	031	061 Chyēn	101
002	032 Chyēn?	062 Tán	102 Tán
003	033	063 Tán, Chyēn	103 Tán, Chyēn
004 Tán	034	064	104 Tán, Chyēn
005	035 Tán	065	105 Tán
006 Tán, Chyēn	036	066	106
007	037	067 Tán	107
008	038	068	108 Tán, Chyēn
009 Tán	039 Tán	069	109
010	040	070 Tán	110
011	041	071	111
012 Tán, Chyēn	042	072	112
	043 Chyēn	073	113
Tables 表	044 Chyēn?	074 Tán	114
013 T, Chyēn, F	045 Tán	075 Chyēn?	115
014 Tán	046 Chyēn	076 Chyēn	116
015 Tán	047 Tán, Chyēn	077 Chyēn	117 Tán
016 Tán	048	078 Chyēn?	118
017 Chyēn	049	079 Tán	119
018 T, Chyēn, F	050	080 Tán	120
019 Tán, F	051	081	121 Chyēn
020 Chyēn, F	052	082	122
021 Chyēn, F	053	083 Tán	123
022 Chyēn, F	054 Tán	084 Chyēn?	124 Tán
	055 Tán	085	125
Treatises 書	056 Tán	086 Tán	126 TSG Tán
023	057	087 Tán	127 Tán
024	058	088	128
025	059	089	129 Tán
026	060	090	130 Tán, Chyēn
027 Tán		091	
028 Chyēn		092 Chyēn?	
029 Chyēn?		093	
030		094	
		095 Tán	
		096	
		097 Tán	
		098	
		099	
		100 Chyēn	