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會稽: Guaiji? Guiji? Huiji? Kuaiji? Some Remarks on an Ancient Chinese Place-Name

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會稽: Guaiji? Guiji? Huiji? Kuaiji?

Some Remarks on an Ancient Chinese Place-Name

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First, some choice quotations selected to introduce the main issues addressed in this communication (note especially the terms I have put in **bold print**). These are followed by some brief observations and critical remarks from me (also in **bold**).

"In [the spring of] his 8th year, he [the sage-emperor Yu 禹] assembled the princes at **Hwuy-k'e**,"

(八年春,會諸侯于會稽....)

Source: James Legge et al., trans., *The Annals of the Bamboo Books* (*Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年), in *The Chinese Classics*, *The Shoo King* (second ed., revised, 1935; rpt., Taibei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1971), 3:118.

"The viscount of Yueh, with 5000 men armed with buff coats and shields, maintained himself on [the hill of] **Kwei-k·e**"

(越子以甲楯五千保於會稽 ...)

Source: James Legge et al., The Chinese Classics, The Ch'un Ts'ew with The Tso Chuen, 5:794.

Same team of translators (Legge et al.), two different transliterations of the same place-name 會稽: Hwuy-k'e [Pinyin = Huiji] and Kwei-k·e [Pinyin = Guiji].

"Note that the character 會 in the place-name 會稽, often erroneously read *K'uai* [Pinyin = Kuai] (cf. Zürcher, Conquest, and A. F. Wright's "Hui-chiao's 'Lives of Eminent Monks'", passim), is correctly read *Kuei* [Pinyin = Gui]. See Karlgren (4), series 321 and *Gwoyeu Tsyrdean* [= *Guoyu cidian* 國語辭典], vol. 3, p. 1388. For an explanation of the reading see TH [= *Tz'u hai* = *Cihai* 辭海], which gives however the spurious reading *Kuai* [Pinyin = *Guai*]"

Source: J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream: The Life and Works of Hsieh Ling-yün* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), 2:2, n. 12.

Frodsham neglects to mention that 會 has several pronunciations, each with a different meaning; he also fails to explain how the *gui* reading relates to 會 in the place-name (nor does Bernhard Karlgren explain this in his *Grammata Serica Rencensa*). Caveat lector: glosses on the origins and meanings of ancient place-names in modern dictionaries like the *Gwoyeu Tsyrdean*, *Ciyuan* 辭源, *Cihai*, *Dai Kan-Wa jiten* 大漢和辭典, *Zhongwen da cidian* 中文大辭典, and *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 are often unreliable and almost always incomplete.

"[The Fang-chu [Pinyin = Fangzhu 方諸] Palace ... lies 70,000 *li* southeast of **Kuai-chi** [Pinyin = Guaiji], that is, from the coast of Chekiang [Pinyin = Zhejiang 浙江]."

Source: Edward H. Schafer, *Mirages on the Sea of Time: The Taoist Poetry of Ts'ao T'ang* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985). 112.

Professor Schafer's "Kuai-chi" [= Guaiji] transliteration for 會稽 is correct; well, sort of

"With a long history, Shaoxing 紹興 is a famous cultural city in China. Legend has it that after Yu the Great brought the flood under control, he met [t]here the feudal lords who were rewarded according to their contributions. By then Yu died and was buried on the spot. The place was named 'Kuaiji' after that event, for *kuaiji* 會稽 in Chinese means 'reward people according to their merits'."

Source: Zhejiang Online, at http://www.zjol.com.cn/ehzzj/hdlxe/sx.htm (accessed 10 December 2012).

The transliteration "Kuaiji" is "sort of correct" as well, but the definition of the place-name 會稽 in this passage is not accurate.

Abstract

Uncertainty and disagreement in traditional Chinese sources concerning the meaning and "proper" pronunciation of the ancient place-name 會稽 has carried over into modern scholarship in China and into modern Western-language publications on China. Just *some* of the ways in which 會稽 has been transliterated into English include "Guaiji," "Guiji," "Huiji," and "Kuaiji." This essay seeks to explicate the semantic evolution and phonological history of the place-name 會稽 and thereby help to eliminate confusion about its source, meaning, and transliteration.

Most students of Chinese history and literature at some time or another have probably encountered the ancient place-name 會稽.¹ It appears in several well-known texts that pre-date the Han 漢 dynasty (206 BCE – CE 220), including the *Bamboo Annals (Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年), *Mountains and Seas Treatise* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經), *Dialogues of the States* (*Guoyu* 國語), *Han Feizi* 韓非子, *Mozi* 墨子, and *Mr. Lü's Spring and Autumn* [*Annals*] (*Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋),² among others, as well as numerous poems and prose works composed during the Six Dynasties period (220–581) and thereafter. The writer-calligrapher Wang Xizhi's 王羲之 (*ca.* 303 – *ca.* 361) famous "Orchid Pavilion" (Lanting 蘭亭) drinking party was held in 會稽 in 353, while the distinguished poet Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) composed some of his best landscape (*shanshui* 山水) verse while living there in the fifth century. But the earliest textual citations to 會稽 (mainly, those dating from the Han period and before) all relate to the sageruler Yu 禹 (also called Da Yu 大禹, or Yu the Great), tamer of the great floods in remote antiquity and legendary founder of the Xia 夏 dynasty (traditional dates, *ca.* 2200–1760 BCE). Most of these sources agree on two general points:

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^{*}I would like to express thanks to the following friends and colleagues in the field, all of whom read and commented on earlier versions of this essay: David P. Branner, W. South Coblin, Charles Hartman, Victor H. Mair, Axel Schuessler, Xu Yongming 徐永明, and Yan Zheng 嚴正.

¹ For reasons that will soon become apparent, I will not suggest how to transliterate or "romanize" the place-name 會稽 until the conclusion of this essay.

² The dating of the various ancient texts listed here is a complicated issue and far beyond the scope of this brief discussion. Suffice it to say that most China scholars today believe that these works (or parts of them) were composed in the pre-Han period. For reliable information on the dating of individual titles on this list, see the relevant entries in Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts*: *A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, 1993). Most pre-Han textual references to 會稽 are conveniently assembled by Zhang Zhongqing 張仲清 in his useful article "會稽' xinshi" 會稽新釋, *Shaoxing wenli xuevuan xuebao* 紹興文理學院學報 23.2 (April 2003): 16.

- 會稽 is the name of a hill or mountain (shan 山).3
- Yu visited 會稽 during his reign as first emperor of the Xia dynasty.

Some of these same texts provide additional details:

• In the eighth year of his reign (traditional date, 2198 BCE) Yu met with his feudal lords⁴ in the 會稽 Hills.⁵

³ One prominent exception to this first point appears in Zuo's Tradition (Zuozhuan 左傳), which reports that the mountain in question (discussed below) was instead named Mount Tu (Tushan 涂[嵞]山). See Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi 春秋左傳正義 (Shisanjing zhushu 十三經注疏 ed.), 2:58.2163 shang; translated in James Legge et al., The Chinese Classics, 5:814. This single reference has led to much speculation concerning how Mount Tu relates to the sage-emperor Yu and to 會稽. For additional information on this issue, which in my view is not directly related to the discussion that follows below, see Liu Junnan 劉俊男, "Jiujiang, Tushan, 會稽 kao" 九江, 涂山, 會稽考, Yunmeng xuekan 雲夢學刊 23.1 (Jan. 2002): 50–51. Note: places designated as shan 山 ("hill" or "mountain") in traditional Chinese texts sometimes constitute a single, more or less confined landmass, such as Mount Tai (Taishan 泰山) in Shandong 山東. At other times, however, shan indicates a stretch of mountainous terrain spread over a large area, comprised of several different peaks or hills, all with individual names. Just one well-known example is Mount Lu (Lushan 盧山) in northern Jiangxi 江西. References to 會稽 in the primary sources cited in this essay sometimes refer to that place as "會稽山" ("Mount 會稽" or "會稽 Mountain"), while on other occasions we instead find the formulation "會稽之山." The latter construction means "the mountains (or hills) of 會稽." Hereafter, references in Chinese sources to "會稽山" and "會稽之山" will both be translated into English as "the 會稽 Hills." The reason for this decision will emerge in the discussion that follows.

⁴ The term *zhuhou* 諸侯 (lit., "all the various marquises"), usually rendered in English as "feudal lords," is a Zhou 周 dynasty (*ca.* 1046–221 BCE) term that, in this context, refers to independent or semi-independent regional political leaders.

⁵ The earliest mention of this legendary meeting at 會稽 occurs in the "Luyu" 魯語 ("Conversations of the State of Lu") chapter of the *Guoyu* (*Siku quanshu* ed.), 5.17a, which Wei Juxian 衛聚賢 dates to between 884 and 336 BCE. See Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 264. Tradition says that Yu gathered his regional political leaders at 會稽 in order to reinforce control over them and hence over the Xia state (nowhere, however, is it explained why 會稽 was chosen as the site of this famous gathering). This meeting, as we have already seen in the set of quotations that open this article, is also reported and dated in the *Bamboo Annals* (Legge's *Annals of the Bamboo Books*). The complete citation reads: "In the spring of his eighth [reign] year [Yu] convened the feudal lords at 會稽, where he had Fangfengshi killed" (八年春,會諸侯于會稽,殺防風氏.). Here I follow the Chinese text of the *Bamboo Annals* in

• The Mountains and Seas Treatise mentions 會稽 in its opening chapter "Treatise on the Southern Mountains" ("Nanshan jing" 南山經): "[The heights] five hundred li further east are called the '會稽 Hills.' They are square in shape. Upon them is much gold and jade, while below them (that is, at their base) is much fu-stone (又東五百里,曰: 會稽之山.四方.其上多金玉,其下多砆[玞])石)." Although this reference does not mention Yu and his association with the 會稽 Hills, Guo Pu 郭璞 (276–324) — the famous polymath who wrote an important commentary to the Mountains and Seas Treatise — mentions that Yu's "tomb and well" (zhong ji jing 冢及井) are in the 會稽 Hills. The Mozi and Mr. Lü's Spring and Autumn [Annals] explain the "tomb" reference: while on a hunting trip along the southern frontier of his realm, Yu got sick and died and was subsequently buried in the 會稽 Hills.

As for Han dynasty sources that mention 會稽, two references in the *Shiji* provide important additional information. The first appears in Sima Qian's "Chapter on the Feng and Shan Sacrifices" ("Fengshan shu" 封禪書): "Yu carried out the *feng* sacrifices on Mount Tai; the *shan* sacrifices in [the] 會稽 [Hills]" (禹封泰山;禪會稽.). The second *Shiji* reference comes from the "Basic Annals of Qin Shihuang" ("Qin Shihuang benji" 秦始皇本紀): "In the thirty-seventh year [of his reign Qin Shihuang] undertook a personal inspection tour of the empire.

Legge et al., *The Chinese Classics*, 3:118. Cf. *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu* 韓非子新校注, commentary by Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), 19.359, which also mentions that Yu held court with the feudal lords in the 會稽 Hills, and that at that assembly Fangfengshi was put to death because he arrived late for the meeting. These various reports played a crucial role in establishing Yu as a deity associated with the *south*.

⁶ Yuan Ke 袁珂, ed., *Shanhai jing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 (1980; rpt., Taibei: Liren shuju, 1982), 1.12. *Fu*-stone (*fushi* 砆[玞])石) probably refers to *wufu* 珷玞, a jade-like stone similar to agate.

⁷ Shanhai jing jiaozhu, 1.12, n. 1. Guo Pu's source for the "tomb and well" comment is probably the "Jidi zhuan" 記 地傳 chapter in the Yuejue shu 越絕書 (Congshu jicheng ed.) 8.39 (110:199xia).

⁸ See *Lüshi Chunqiu xin jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋新校釋, commentary by Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2002), 10.543. Yu's death and burial in the 會稽 Hills is also reported by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–ca. 86 BCE) in the *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 2.83.

⁹ Shiii. 28.1361.

While surveying the distant quarters on his circuit, he climbed 會稽" (三十有七年,親巡天下,周覽遠方,遂登會稽。). ¹⁰ Sima Qian also mentions that while at 會稽 the First Emperor "sacrificed to Yu the Great" (祭大禹), ¹¹ and this event occurred in 210 BCE (that is, the thirty-seventh year of his reign and last year of his life), during the Qin Shihuang's fifth and final inspection tour of his short-lived empire.

Although the various references cited so far establish an irrefutable connection between Yu and a stretch of (as yet) unspecified hills known as "會稽," they do so on two levels: mythic and historic. The first *Shiji* reference concerning Yu and his carrying out of the *shan* sacrifice, along with accounts of his assembling the feudal lords in the 會稽 Hills, his later death and burial there, and so on, are all "mythic" (or "legendary") in the sense that they cannot be corroborated in historical and/or archaeological sources. As is well known, many historians have expressed doubt that Yu and his so-called Xia dynasty ever existed at all, although recent archeological discoveries in China are beginning to alter this view. But the historicity of these details and events need not unduly concern us. More relevant to our discussion is the second *Shiji* reference, for not only is there historical confirmation that Qin Shihuang actually ascended the hills of a *real place* named 會稽 in order to offer sacrifices to Yu; there is also reliable evidence that locates these hills in what is now Zhejiang province. A key point, then, is this: the First

¹⁰ Shiji, 6.261.

¹¹ Shiii. 6.260.

¹² For an overview of the scholarship on this issue, see Sarah Allan, "The Myth of the Xia Dynasty," *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1984): 242–56. Cf. also the remarks by Kwang-chih Zhang [Zhang Guangzhi 張光直] in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 71–73. According to Zhang, archeological remains discovered near Luoyang 洛陽 in Henan 河南 and at other sites over the last half-century "suggest that there indeed was a Xia dynasty" (73).

¹³ Sima Qian's detailed account of Qin Shihuang's travel itinerary (*Shiji*, 6.260), in which he mentions the First Emperor reaching Qiantang 錢塘 (modern Hangzhou 杭州), crossing the Zhe River (Zhejiang 浙江; the modern province name "Zhejiang" takes its name from this waterway, which is now called the Qiantang jiang 錢塘江), and so on, indicates clearly that the 會稽 Hills are somewhere in modern Zhejiang. After visiting 會稽, the First Emperor erected a stone monument on the nearby coast commemorating his achievements as ruler. The stele bearing

Emperor's visit confirms that by the third century BCE the 會稽 Hills had already achieved a reputation as one of China's *mingshan* 名山, or "famous mountains." This status was based on 會稽's traditional association with Yu and the fact that the First Emperor sacrificed to the sage-emperor during his visit there in 210 BCE.¹⁴

Now a brief but necessary digression to address two related questions: first, who lived in Zhejiang during the centuries *before* Qin Shihuang's visit? And second, assuming that use of the toponym 會稽 in reference to a real place in Zhejiang predates the Qin unification in 221 BCE— and it certainly does, probably by several centuries— then what can be said about the provenance of the name, if anything? Before the Qin war machine vanquished the last of its political and military rivals in the north and nominally unified China, Zhejiang was populated by *non-Chinese* peoples and states. Among its earliest residents were groups of coastal dwellers whom the Chinese collectively designated the "Bai Yue" 百越, or "Hundred Yue [tribes]." The early history of the Yue tribes and their cultures is sketchy, and this in part is because it is difficult to separate legend from fact in the two earliest and most important extant sources on the Yue: *Yuejue shu* 越絕書 (*Exemplary Achievements of Yue*) and *Wu Yue Chunqiu* 吳越春秋 (*Spring and Autumn [Annals] of Wu and Yue*). While several scholars have argued that both of these texts date from around the first century CE, ¹⁵ the modern scholar Zhou Shengchun 周生春

this inscription has not survived, but the text that was inscribed on it is preserved in *Shiji*, 6.261–62 (the report cited earlier about the First Emperor "climbing 會稽" also comes from this inscription). See also the remarks on the First Emperor's fifth and final circuit in Denis Twitchett and Michael Lowe, eds. *The Cambridge History of China*, *Volume 1*, *The Ch'in and Han Empires*, 221 B.C. – A.D. 220 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 68.

¹⁴ The well-known dictionary-thesaurus *Erya* 爾雅, which probably dates from the third-century BCE, mentions that 會稽 was famous for another reason: "Among the most outstanding products in the southeast are bamboo arrows from 會稽" (東南之美者有會稽之竹箭焉.). See Zhou Zumo 周祖謨, *Erya jiaojian* 爾雅校箋 (Nanjing?: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1984), 90.

¹⁵ Descriptive abstracts of these works appear in Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 473–76 and 490–93, respectively. See also the useful critical remarks on these texts in Eric Henry, "The Submerged History of the Yuè," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 176 (May 2007): 28–33, 34–35, respectively. Note: the Yue kingdom described in the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu* was actually called Yuyue 於越, but this name is shortened to "Yue" in most Chinese sources because Chinese historians preferred single-syllable names for foreign, "barbarian" states. See the remarks on this in Henry,

has demonstrated that some sections of the *Yueju shu* date from a much earlier period. Among other claims, these works assert that the Yue people shared a common ancestry with the Xia dynasty. As for the history (some describe as "quasi-history") related in the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, much of it chronicles events during the life of Yue's most famous ruler, Goujian 句 [勾]踐 (r. 496–465 BCE) and his state's protracted military struggle with Wu 吳, its major rival state to the north (based in modern Jiangsu 江蘇). But more important for our purposes here, these same sources also confirm that (1) the name "會稽" was in general use during the reign of Goujian in the fifth century BCE (and likely well before that time); and (2) in addition to designating a stretch of hills in Zhejiang, the same name was also used to identify a Yue "gathering" or "activity" *site* in those same hills. It was around this time or slightly later, however, that a shift took place whereby the Yue moved from temporary "gathering" sites (or "retreats") in the 會稽 Hills to *fixed* locations along the alluvial plain just north of those hills, in

[&]quot;Submerged History," 2. On the etymology of the place-name Yuyue, see the comments in n. 27 below.

¹⁶ Zhou's findings are summarized in his article "*Yuejue shu* chengshu niandai ji zuozhe xintan" 越絕書成書年代及作者新探, in *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢, ed. Qian Bocheng 錢伯成 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), 47:121–39.

¹⁷ The historical geographer Zou Yilin 鄒逸麟 of Fudan University has written a brief but illuminating essay that surveys various Yue "activity centers" (huodong zhongxin 活動中心). These sites, Zou convincingly argues, at first were not fortified, permanent cities or capitals (du 都) with protective walls (cheng 城) designed to serve as administrative centers, but rather — especially during Goujian's reign — as retreats where Yue kings and their subordinates would periodically gather for defensive (no doubt the hills there provided water, food sources, and natural protection from attack) and other purposes. For instance, after Goujian's army was defeated by Wu in 494 BCE at Fujiao 夫椒 (north of modern Shaoxing), the king and his remnant troops retreated to the 會稽 Hills, only to be surrounded and defeated by Wu forces a second time. This incident, reported in the Bamboo Annals (Legge et al., The Chinese Classics, 3:118) and the Shiji (41.1740), is especially important because it is the earliest dated historical reference to "會稽." See the remarks on this and related matters in Zou Yilin, "Goujian guodu Goucheng shan xian yi" 句踐國都句乘山獻疑," at http://www.yw.gov.cn/glb/dfzj/ywfz/2007jk2 /sljk1/200708/t20070809_74555.html (accessed 22 June 2010); see also Fang Jie 方杰, ed., Yueguo wenhua 越國文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui kexue yuan chubanshe), 150, who marks Goujian's retreat site in the 會稽 Hills as a place called Pingyang 平陽 (in the foothills south-southwest of modern Shaoxing).

the general vicinity of the modern cities of Shaoxing 紹興 and Zhuji 諸暨. 18 The Wu Yue Chunqiu mentions a xiaocheng 小城 (that is, a smaller walled-city or fortified enclosure) measuring 1,120 bu 步 or "double-paces" (roughly, 1 mi) in circumference that formed a "single perimeter" (yiyuan 一圓) with "[just] three sides" (sanfang 三方). 19 This city, supposedly designed by Goujian's famous advisor Fan Li 范蠡, was actually a fortress (baolei 堡壘) built just after Goujian's return from three years of captivity as a prisoner-of-war in Wu (493–490 BCE). Numerous cities have stood on this same site over the last 2,500 years, including modern Shaoxing. 21 So, when the First Emperor later organized the Qin empire into thirty-six administrative areas and adopted the name "會稽" for one of his largest commanderies (jun 郡) — one that encompassed the southern part of modern Jiangsu and most of Zhejiang — he was drawing on an already ancient toponym. 22 Later, following the fall of Qin Shihuang's regime

¹⁸ Che Yueqiao 車越喬 and Chen Qiaoyi 陳橋驛 discuss this shift in great detail in their *Shaoxing lishi dili* 紹興歷 史地理 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2001), 83–98.

¹⁹ Wu Yue Chunqiu (Congshu jicheng ed.), 5.165 (110:180shang). See also Xu Jianchun 徐建春, Zhejiang tongshi 浙江通史, Dier juan 第二卷, Xian-Qin juan 先秦卷 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2006), 2:218–19.

²⁰ See Che and Chen, Shaoxing lishi dili, 97, who describe this fortification as Yue's "national capital" (guodu 國都) and "political center" (zhengzhi zhongxin 政治中心). Yuejue shu (Congshu jicheng ed.), 40 (110:200shang), also mentions Goujian's xiaocheng 小城, and gives roughly the same measurement as the Wu Yue Chunqiu for its circumference: 2 li 里, 223 bu 步 (roughly, 1 mi). This same source also describes an adjacent dacheng 大城, measuring 20 li, 72 bu in circumference (roughly, 6 mi). According to Che and Chen (97), this dacheng served as the economic and production center for Yue. The expression "three sides" in reference to the wall of Goujian's capital probably refers to a provision of the agreement that Goujian had with the state of Wu after his release from captivity: the northwestern side of his capital, which faced Wu, was to be left open in order to demonstrate that Yue remained subordinate to Wu and had not constructed the new wall for defensive purposes. For more information, see the remarks on this in Paul A. Cohen, Speaking to History: The Story of King Goujian in the Twentieth Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), esp. 7–8.

²¹ The argument that Goujian's fortress stood on the site of what today is modern Shaoxing is presented convincingly in Zhang Zhongqing, "'會稽' xin shi," 18–20, and is accepted by most scholars who have written on the subject.

²² Under the Qin, the administrative seat of 會稽 commandery was at Wu 吳 (modern Suzhou, Jiangsu), while the old Yue city at 會稽 was renamed "Shanyin" 山陰 (lit., north [yin] of the [會稽] Hills") and made into a xian 縣, or

in the third century BCE, and with just a few interruptions, the name 會稽 was used to designate a long series of commanderies, counties (zhou 州), and towns on this same site until 1131, when the Song dynasty county situated there (during the Tang and Song this county was called Yuezhou 越州) was elevated to municipality (fu 府) status and given a new name: Shaoxing municipality (Shaoxing fu 紹興府). The expression "Shaoxing" (lit., "continued ascendancy") was taken from a new reign title (nianhao 年號) proclaimed by the emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1127–1162) in 1131 (the Shaoxing reign lasted until 1163). Although a few scholars have argued (unsuccessfully, in my view) that the name 會稽 refers to a mountain in Shandong, 23 most historians who have addressed the location issue agree that 會稽, as it was used beginning in about the fifth century BCE, refers to a stretch of hills in Zhejiang and a city on the site of what is now Shaoxing. Later, during the Six Dynasties period, 會稽 was also used as a general, geographic designation for the northern part of Zhejiang.

Since the hills and fortress/city name 會稽 both have their origin in Yue, a region that had its own distinct culture and language (according to many scholars, the ancient Yue language, along with Vietnamese, Khmer, Cambodian, and several other Southeast Asian languages, belonged to the Austroasiatic language family), it seems almost certain that the name 會稽 is of non-Chinese origin. That is to say, it probably falls into the category of what some scholars call

town. In 129, during the Later Han, the old Qin commandery of 會稽 was divided into two new ones: Wu jun 吳郡 and 會稽 jun (the capital of this commandery was at Shanyin). For these and later government-administrative reorganization activities in the 會稽 region, see Gu Zuyu 顧祖禹 (1631–1692), comp., Dushi fangyu jiyao 讀史方輿 紀要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1955), 92.4205–08.

²³ See, for instance, Yang Xiangkui 楊向奎, "'Xia Benji' 'Yuewang Goujian shijia' dili kaoshi" 夏本紀越王勾踐世家地理攷實, Yugong banyuekan 禹貢半月刊 3.1 (1935): 4, n. 6, and more recently, Dong Chuping 董楚平, Wu Yue wenhua xintan 吳越文化新探 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1988), esp. 51–53. Yang Xiangkui's essay may have been inspired in part by an article written by the eminent historical-geographer Zhang Gongliang 張公量 and published a year earlier in the same journal, in which Zhang argues that "會稽" in the various accounts about Yu refers to a mountain near Pengcheng 彭城 (modern Xuzhou 徐州) in Jiangsu. See "Gu 會稽 kao" 古會稽考, Yugong banyuekan 1.7 (1934): 219–24. One modern scholar in China has even gone so far as to identify 會稽山 as Mount Haoli (Haoli shan 蒿里山), which is near Mount Tai. See Nie Lishen 聶立申, "會稽 shan xinkao" 會稽山新考, Taishan xueyuan xuebao 泰山學院學報 26. 2 (Mar. 2004): 50–52. The most detailed and convincing defense of the Zhejiang location appears in Xu Jianchun, Zhejiang tongzhi, 2:50–56.

"place-names resulting from linguistic transfer."²⁴ In the case of China, this refers to a local or regional *non-Chinese* toponym that is almost always associated with places in peripheral or border areas, which at one time hosted mainly non-Chinese populations.²⁵ Such names originally did not have a written form in Chinese characters, but later, because of Chinese cultural or political influence, was "fitted with" or "transcribed into" Chinese graphs. This same process also occurs with personal names. "Goujian," for instance, was originally a Yue name that was later "assigned" the characters "句[勾]踐." Why or how someone would devise this particular combination of characters, which make no sense in Chinese, is not clear, but the choice seems to be based on the *sound* of the original Yue name. Another famous height in China, Mount Emei (Emei Shan 峨眉山) in Sichuan, also has a name that seems to be based on the *sound* of its ancient local or regional non-Chinese moniker.²⁶ Regardless of a place-name's origin, however, if it is a "famous mountain" or some other well-known landmark, there are always written accounts available (usually in geographical works and gazetteers) that attempt to explain the *meaning* of the (Chinese) written form of the name and how it relates to the history of the place

This variety of place-name is discussed by George R. Stewart in the "Introduction" to his *American Place-Names*: A Concise and Selective Dictionary for the Continental United States of America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), xxii. Many American place-names were crafted in the same way. My home state of "Connecticut," for instance, was originally an Algonquian (some say Mohegan) name meaning "long-(tidal) river-at." The second "c" sound in "Connecticut" was not part of the original name, but was probably added later by some English scribe in order to draw an analogy on the English word "connect." This is a good example of how folk-etymologies (the English scribe's "connect" later spawned a host of tales about how the Connecticut River connected so many places) are created for place-names to explain their "origin" or "history." 會稽, with its various ties to Yu the Great, certainly fits into this same category.

²⁵ Peter A. Boodberg has written about local non-Chinese place-names on the northern borders of the Chinese empire that "can be identified as transcriptions of Turco-Monglian words." See his "An Early Mongolian Toponym," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 19 (1956): 407–08.

²⁶ See the remarks on this in my "Where Are the Moth-Eyebrows? – On the Origin of the Toponym 'Omei shan' 峨眉山," *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 2.1 (June 1994): 335–48.

in question. Sometimes these explanations are based on reliable sources, but more often than not their origin is a legend purposely created and crafted to achieve a specific purpose.²⁷

Anne Birrel, in the "Notes on Chinese Names and Terms" appended to her translation of the *Mountains and Seas Treatise*, remarks that the place-name 會稽 "is mythical." This observation, I think, requires some adjustment or clarification: the toponym 會稽 certainly appears in accounts about Yu and the Xia dynasty that are regarded by many scholars as legendary, including the tale about Yu's famous gathering of the feudal lords. But the place 會稽 itself — as I have already demonstrated — was/is indeed very real. We will probably never know if the location mentioned in the legend was *later* bestowed upon or "fitted" to this real place, or if this ancient locale's name came first and was later conveniently "adjusted" to match the legend. Whatever the case, by Goujian's reign in the fifth century BCE we have hills and a specific, fortified site in Zhejiang identified by the Chinese name 會稽, and the existence of the hills and site are confirmed and corroborated in reliable historical sources.

As for the location of the 會稽 Hills, a Southern Song (1127-1279) gazetteer, compiled

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²⁷ On how legend and lore was devised and manipulated in order to "transform" Mount Emei into a "Buddhist mountain," see the discussion in my Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), esp.141–47. Cf. also the remarks of Lothar von Falkenhausen, in Loewe and Shaughnessy, The Cambridge History of China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C., who says that "Yue" 越 means "The Beyond." Professor von Falkenhausen does not cite a source for this gloss, but it seems like a Chinese explanation of a name that originally meant something else in the Yue language. Here is yet another creative gloss on the origin of the name from the well-known Tang dynasty commentator Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648): "As for [the place-name] Yue, this is the surname of Si (that is, Yu the Great). The Yue people's ancestors are the progeny of his (that is, Yu's) son by a concubine, Shaokang, who lived after the Xia (he supposedly restored the dynasty) and who was ennobled in 會稽. He referred to his state as 'Yuyue.' As for 'Yu,' this is a sound from the barbarian [Yuyue] language"(越,姒姓.其先夏后少康之庶子也.封於會稽,自號於越。於者,夷言發聲 也, .). Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi, 2:22.1874shang. Eric Henry, "The Submerged History of the Yuè," 21–22, suggests a very different and more plausible explanation, noting that the graph for vue "includes (and in early times consisted entirely of) a representation of a distinctive, culture-marking hooked axe or halberd" (that is, 戊), and that the character yu appears to have meant "to have" or "to possess." "Thus," he concludes, "if applied to a person, the syllables (yu and yue) might mean "the one who possesses the axe of authority."

²⁸ The Classic of Mountains and Seas (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 222.

by an official named Shi Su 施宿 (1150?–1213) and dating from 1201, marks them "12 *li* (roughly, 4 mi) southeast of 會稽 town (*xian* 縣)."²⁹ This same source, quoting an unidentified "former gazetteer" (*jiujing* 舊經), also mentions that the 會稽 Hills measure 350 *li* (roughly, 116 mi) in circumference.³⁰ The 會稽 Hills in fact encompass a much larger area, stretching about 50 km/31 mi east-to-west (at their widest point), and about 150 km/92 mi northwest to southeast (at their lengthiest point). The highest among these hills are just a few miles southeast of Shaoxing, and they all have individual names. The main peak, Goose Beak Hill (Ebi Shan 鵝鼻山), stands 788 ft above sea level.³¹ This may not seem especially high when compared to some other mountains in China, but in Zhejiang, where about 70% of the topography is characterized by low-lying hills, a landmass of this height stands out.

To be sure, the information presented so far in this communication raises many issues and begs several questions. Two, however, seem to stand out: first, as a toponym, what do the individual and combined graphs 會 + 稽 mean in reference to the hills or city of that name? In other words, how does the *meaning* of 會稽 (if it can be determined) relate to the place(s) of that same name, if at all? And second, if we can isolate the *semantic value* of the name 會稽, will this help us to determine its *phonetic properties*? That is to say, if we know what it means, will this tell us how to say it?

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²⁹ Jiatai 會稽 zhi 嘉泰會稽志, rpt. in Song-Yuan fangzhi congkan 宋元方志叢刊 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 7:9.6a. During the Southern Song, 會稽 was one of eight xian, or towns, under the jurisdiction of Yue county, and it served as government seat of the county.

^{30 [}Jiatai] 會稽 zhi, 9.7a. Numerous geographical works (diji 地記) (or gazetteers) concerning the Shaoxing area were compiled during the Six Dynasties period, and all of them included the name 會稽 in their titles. Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) collected and edited these various works and published them together under the title 會稽 jun gushu zaji 會稽郡故書雜集. See Lu Xun sanshi nian ji 魯迅三十年集 (Hong Kong: Xinyi chubanshe, 1970), 1:5–115. These texts are discussed in Wei Qiao 魏橋 et al., Zhejiang fangzhi yuanliu 浙江方志源流 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1988), 18–27. Unfortunately, only one of these works — Kong Ye's 孔曄 (died 465; also known as Kong Lingfu 孔靈符) 會稽 ji 會稽記 — has survived, and this only in fragment form.

³¹ My source for this figure and the dimensions of the 會稽 Hills cited above is Che and Chen, *Shaoxing lishi dili*, 30. Cf. Chen Qiaoyi 陳橋驛, chief ed., *Zhejiang gujin diming cidian* 浙江古今地名詞典 (Jiaxing: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991), 276, which gives smaller dimensions: 90 km/56 mi in length; 30 km/19 mi in width.

Now, I am certainly not the first person to address these questions. Many theories have emerged, especially from modern scholars in China, but these have not in my view produced definitive answers. The main reason for this, I would argue, is over-reliance on glosses and Pinyin readings given in modern reference works, especially dictionaries such as the *Cihai*. Some explanations have been suggested for the meaning of the name 會稽, but there is no consensus on this issue (the reasons for this are explained below). As for the second question concerning the "correct" reading of the place-name 會稽, there is no agreement whatsoever, and this in part is because over the centuries commentators and scholars have (incorrectly, in my view) assumed there can only be one, single, and "proper" received pronunciation of the name.

Semantic Matters

The earliest gloss on the place-name 會稽 appears in the Shiji:

"Some people say Yu *convened an assembly* (會) of the feudal lords in Jiangnan to *assess* (計) their merits and then he died. For this reason he is buried there. It was named 會稽. 會稽 means '*convene* and *assess*" (或言禹會諸侯江南,計功而崩. 因葬焉. 命曰: 會稽. 會稽者, 會計也.).³²

Although the expression "Some people say …." suggests, in an indirect way, that there might be others who are skeptical about the veracity of legends concerning Yu and his alleged gathering of the feudal lords in Jiangnan (that is, the general area of northern Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu), we know that Sima Qian believed these reports to be historical, for he himself "climbed [the hills of] 會稽 and searched for the grave of Yu" (shang 會稽 tan Yu xue 上會稽探 禹穴).³³ His explanation is clear: 會稽 means the same as 會計, or "convene and assess." One important implication of this Shiji passage is that the place-name 會稽 is pronounced the same as

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³² Shiji, 2.89.

³³ This occurred during Sima Qian's "study tour" of the south, undertaken when he was twenty years old. See *Shiji*, 130.3293.

the verb form 會計, in which 會 means "to convene [an assembly]" and 計 means "to assess."³⁴ Two additional matters worth noting are the following: first, we do not know the source of Sima Qian's explanation of the place-name (perhaps a local informant encountered during his visit to Yue?); and second, the verb 會計, with the specific meaning "convene and assess," does not appear in any text that pre-dates the *Shiji*.

There are two other explanations of 會稽, also dating from the Han period, but written approximately a century or so *after* Sima Qian completed the *Shiji*. These appear in the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, and concern how an apparently earlier name for our stretch of hills in Zhejiang was later changed to "會稽." Not surprisingly, these designations relate to legends

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³⁴ Among Western translators of the *Shiji*, both Édouard Chavannes (1865–1918) and William H. Nienhauser, Jr., understand 會稽 / 會計 in Sima Qian's line to mean "convene and assess." Chavannes says: "... Koei-ki [Pinyin = Gueiji] signifie runiré et faire le compte" ("Koei-ki means gather and make an evaluation"), while Nienhauser writes "K'uai-chi [Pinyin = Kuaiji] means 'gather together and evaluate'." See Chavannes, Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien (1895–1905; rpt., Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1967), 1:171, note, and Nienhauser et al., The Grand Scribe's Records, Volume 1: The Basic Annals of Pre-Han China (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1:38. Cf. Bernhard Karlgren, Legends and Cults in Ancient China (Stockholm: The Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1946), 307–08, who has a different understanding of the Shiji passage under discussion: "... Yü went to the south of the Kiang (=Jiang 江) and assembled the feudal lords in order to make them give accounts of their merits, and then he died and was buried there: the mountain hence was called Kuei-ki ("the Rendering of accounts")" Karlgren obviously understood that 會 means "to assemble" in the Shiji passage. It is less clear, however, why he would then go on to translate 會稽 / 會計 as "the Rendering of accounts."

Schina's most ancient and venerable mountains all have *primary* names such as Tai Shan, Hua Shan 華山, Song Shan 嵩山, Wutai Shan 五臺山, and so on. What is perhaps less well known is that China's "famous mountains" also have *secondary* or *alternate* names, sometimes several of them, all of which are associated with some special attribute of, or story associated with, the mountain in question. Mount Wutai in Shanxi 山西, for instance, is also known as Mount Clear and Cold (Qingliang Shan 清涼山) because this name appears in a Buddhist sūtra that describes the mountain abode (in India) of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Chinese: Wenshu 文殊), who also serves as the resident deity of Mount Wutai. The 會稽 Hills of Zhejiang have several alternate names as well, both collectively and individually. The numerous alternate names for the 會稽 Hills are listed in *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 (1897; rpt. Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1985), 40.11b–12a. See also Yang Guojun 楊國軍, "Shi lun 會稽山 de lishi yuanyuan ji pinpai neihan" 試論會稽山的歷史淵源及品牌內涵, in *2006 Diliu jie Guoji jiu wenhua xueshu yantao hui lunwen ji 2006* 第六屆國際酒文化學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: N.p., 2006), 253, who lists these names and explains the

about the sage-emperor Yu. This earlier name is of particular interest to us because it relates to how the 會稽 Hills acquired the designation "會稽" and what that name means. The following account appears in the *Yuejue shu*:

"[Yu] reached Da Yue, ascended Thatch Mountain,³⁶ carried out a large-scale *calculation and assessment*, and bestowed rank on those who were virtuous and ennobled those who were meritorious. [Yu then] changed the name of Thatch Mountain to read: '會稽'" ([禹]到大越,³⁷上茅山,大會計,爵有德,封有功,更名茅山曰: 會稽。).³⁸

And here is a similar but more detailed report from the Wu Yue Chunqiu:

origins of many of them.

36 Thatch (mao 茅; also called "cogon" or "floss-grass" in English) is Imperata cylindrical, an invasive weed that grows almost everywhere in China, including Zhejiang. Note: the only contemporary scholars who have attempted to explain the etymology of 會稽 as a Yue place-name are Dong Chuping 董楚平 and Jin Yongping 金永平. Their explanation runs briefly as follows: the name 茅山 (Thatch Mountain) was originally written as 矛山 (Lance Mountain) and this, they say, is a synonym for 會稽. Dong and Jin also contend that 會稽 is a transliteration from the Yue language, and based on a passage in the Yuejue shu (3.19; 110:194) concerning Goujian's famous order to "bind the armor" (weijia 維甲), they further argue that 稽 in the ancient language of Yue meant "lance" (maoqiang 矛槍). According to this explanation, then, 會稽 would mean something like "assembled lances." Dong and Jin even propose that the name 會稽 has origins in the Tai language, and when pronounced in Tai it sounds something like "khood-crii," which they say means "lance mountain." Dong and Jin cite no evidence to support any of these claims. See their Wu Yue wenhua zhi 吳越文化志 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1988), 271.

³⁷ The term "Da Yue," used here and in the passage from the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* that follows below, is another name for the state of Yue.

³⁸ Yuejue shu, 8.39 (110:199). Zhou Shengchun, in his article "Yuejue shu chengshu niandai ji zuozhe xintan," does not attempt to date the chapter in which this passage occurs, though he does mention that the essential content of "outer chapters on geography" (waizhuan jidi zhuan 外傳記地傳) in the Yuejue shu "must have been completed in the Qin or early Han" (128). Since there is no way to tell if the passage translated here is part of the "essential content" mentioned by Zhou, I date it to the first century CE (in other words, it was written after Sima Qian completed the Shiji) — the customary dating of the Yuejue shu followed by most scholars today.

"Yu returned home after touring the realm and [later?] went back to Da Yue. There he climbed Thatch Mountain in order to hold court with the assembled lords from the four quarters and set an example³⁹ for the feudal lords from the Central Counties (that is, China). [Yu] thereupon carried out great *calculation and assessment* in order to manage the ways (or affairs) of the state and then changed the name of Thatch Mountain to read: '會稽 Hills'"

([禹]周行天下歸,還大越. 登茅山,以朝四方群臣,觀示中州諸侯 乃大會計[以]治國之道 遂更名茅山曰: 會稽之山 .).⁴⁰

The term 會計, which appears in both of these passages, is critical in the discussion that follows because it is used in a way that *differs* from the manner in which Sima Qian employed it earlier. In the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu* passages, 會計 is utilized (as it was in the *Shiji*) grammatically as a bisyllabic verb. Common in Classical Chinese, such verb forms are comprised of two synonyms or near synonyms. This is the case here: 會 and 計 both mean "to figure," "to assess," or "to calculate." Other texts dating from the Han and pre-Han confirm that 會計 was used often in this way. As an example, consider the following lines from the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮): "At the close of the year one *calculates* his expenditures and income" (歲終 則會其出入。) and "At the close of the year one *calculates and assesses* his [advances in]

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³⁹ The expression *guanshi* 觀示, translated here as "set an example," in this context also suggests the idea of "make a show of his power to rule."

⁴⁰ Wu Yue Chunqiu, 4.132 (110.176). Cf. Werner Eichhorn, trans., Heldensagen aus dem Unteren Yangtse-Tal (Wu-Yüeh Ch'un-Ch'iu) (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969), 87, who translates 會稽之山 in this passage as "Berg der Rechnungslegung" ("Hills of Rendering Accounts"). Eichhorn appears to be drawing upon Karlgren's English translation of 會稽山, for which see n. 34.

⁴¹ Since portions of the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and *Yuejue shu* are based on accounts in the *Shiji*, we can be reasonably sure that the authors of those texts were aware of Sima Qian's gloss on 會稽. The reason these authors favored the "calculate and assess" explanation over the *Shiji* "convene and assess" gloss, however, is unclear.

governing" (歲終則會計其政 .).⁴² There seems to be little doubt, then, that 會 and 計 could (and indeed were often) joined together to form a bisyllabic verb comprised of two synonyms.

As for the relationship between 稽 and 計, while these characters share the same pronunciation ("ji" in modern Chinese), 43 their tone values are different. 稽 has always been pronounced in the "level tone" (pingsheng 平聲), while 計 is read in the "departing tone" (qusheng 去聲). 44 More importantly, however, they can function as synonyms meaning "to assess" or "to calculate," and this is certainly how they have been understood since at least the Han dynasty. 45

Phonological Matters

Now that we have assessed the semantic implications of the toponym 會稽, we can turn to phonological matters. How should we pronounce (and accordingly transliterate) the name? This

⁴² Zhouli (Shisanjing zhushu ed.), 1:7.683 shang and 1:16.750 shang, respectively. Sometimes in pre-Han texts making partial (or monthly) calculations involving numbers, accounts, and so on, is indicated by the verb 計, while the activity of making overall (or annual) computations is described by employing the verb 會. See, for instance, Mengzi 孟子, in Legge et al., The Chinese Classics, The Works of Mencius, 1–2:383–84. During the Zhou dynasty, government officials who conducted monthly and annual audits of fiscal records in government agencies were called 司會 (sikuai in modern Chinese).

⁴³ Note: based on the *fanqie* 反切 reading 康禮切 provided in the *Guangyun*, 廣韻, a Song dynasty (960–1279) rime dictionary, the modern reference work *Hanyu da cidian* says that 稽 in the place-name 會稽 reads *qǐ*. No source for this reading (as it relates to the place-name) is cited. When 稽 is read *qǐ*, it usually means "kowtow" (*ketou* 磕頭; lit., "knock the head on the ground"), and this does not relate to the etymology of our toponym in any way.

⁴⁴ Cf. Schuessler, *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese*, 39, which says that 計 in fact represents 稽 with an added Old Chinese suffix *-s, and presumably this difference explains why 計 is read in the departing tone.

⁴⁵ For instance, in the biography of Sima Qian in the *Hanshu* we find the following line: "[Relying on] the guiding net of the Underheaven, he (that is, Sima Qian) abandoned old-style learning, and [instead] investigated behavior and actions, and *assessed* the principles behind success and failure, ascendance and decay" (綱羅天下放失舊聞, 考之行事, 稽其成敗興衰之理). See Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), comp., *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 62.2735. To this line Yan Shigu 顏師古, the well-known Tang dynasty commentator on the *Shiji*, adds the following gloss: 稽, 計也 (62.2735, n. 7).

question immediately raises other, related issues, the most important of which are the following: how should sinologists deal with ancient place-names when it comes to phonology and romanization? If we accept the premise that all place-names in China, real or imagined, like everywhere else, mean something, then on what source or foundation should our understanding of that name be based? Does a one-line gloss — say in the Shiji — establish sufficient authority? Or how about an old Sichuan folktale that says that Mount Emei is called "Emei" because its two main peaks in outline resemble the twin-antennae "eyebrows" of a moth (emei 蛾眉)? And is there any benefit to non-specialist, modern readers if China scholars reconstruct the ancient pronunciation of old place-names? Or should we just transliterate them into Pinyin (or some other system of romanization) and be done with it? Most sinologists (including myself) usually follow the last of these approaches, and it almost always suffices. Of course, how much the China scholar needs to research the etymology and pronunciation of ancient place-names (if at all) is a matter of personal choice, and this decision, I suspect, will be guided largely by how the old toponym relates to his/her research agenda. It is undeniable, however, that there are at least some cases in which the etymology of the place-name is unclear, and this has led to misunderstanding and confusion. 會稽 certainly falls into this category. Did you notice earlier (in n. 34) that Chavannes and Nienhauser — both sinologists of distinguished reputation transliterate 會稽 in different ways?

By now it is probably apparent to most readers that the main "issue" or "problem" regarding our place-name is the following: we have reputable early sources — the *Shiji* on the one hand, and the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu* on the other — that explain the meaning of 會稽 in different ways. More specifically, the authors of these sources differ in their understanding of the character 會 in the place-name. Sima Qian understood 會稽/會計 to mean "convene and assess," while the compilers of the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu* took these same terms to mean "calculate and assess." It is precisely this difference in interpretation that is the ultimate source of confusion about 會稽, what it means, and how we should say it. If you own a dictionary or reference work that includes ancient Chinese place-names, you might want to check it. If it romanizes 會稽 as "Hueiji" (lit., "convene and assess"), the authority for that transliteration is Sima Qian. But if your dictionary gives "Kuaiji," one might reasonably

conclude that this reading derives from the "calculate and assess" glosses in the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, and this relates directly to the fact that when 會 is pronounced *kuài* in modern Chinese and combined with certain other characters it produces words related to making calculations and keeping accounts, as in *kuàijì* 會計 ("accounting"), *kuài zhǔrèn* 會主任 ("chief accountant"), and so on. Now, if the "confusion" about our toponym was limited to these two readings, it would easily be resolved by a choice between two viable alternatives. But placename etymologies are rarely so simple. Moreover, it is possible, even likely, that your placename dictionary (or some other source you may have consulted) yielded a reading that is different from "Hueiji" and "Kuaiji." Remember Chavannes' "Gueiji" transliteration? We need to discuss this reading because it relates directly to an important and relevant phonological matter: pre-modern pronunciations of 會.

The most influential linguist in the West who has worked on the reconstruction of old Chinese phonology is the Swedish sinologist Bernhard Karlgren (1889–1978; Chinese name: Gao Benhan 高本漢). His *Grammata Serica Recensa*, published in 1957, includes reconstructions that fall into three categories that Karlgren calls "Archaic Chinese" (early Zhou dynasty), "Ancient Chinese" (the language of the Tang dynasty capital at Chang'an *ca*. 600 CE), and modern Mandarin (based on Beijing dialect). A check of Karlgren's dictionary reveals two reconstructions for the graph 會.

Karlgren's English	Archaic Chinese	Ancient Chinese	Modern Mandarin
gloss			
adding up; calculation;	*kwâd	kwâi-	$kuei [Pinyin = guei]^{46}$
account			
collect; unite; assemble	*g 'wâd	γwâi-	$huei [Pinyin = huei]^{47}$

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⁴⁶ In Hanyu Pinyin when initial consonants "h," "g," "k" are combined with the final "uei," the result is usually spelled "hui," "gui," and "kui, respectively. These spellings are actually abbreviations or short forms of "huei," "guei," and "kuei." To avoid confusion, hereafter I will use the latter, full forms.

⁴⁷ Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 29 (1957): 96 (no. 321a). I am well aware the Karlgren's reconstructions have come under attack from some of his successors in the

Although it often difficult for the non-specialist to read aloud, understand, and track historicalphonological changes in reconstructions like this — and now, to complicate matters further, there are many additional reconstructions available that modify, change, and/or update those of Karlgren⁴⁸ — the careful reader has probably already noticed that, among the set of glosses for 會 in Grammata Serica Recensa, when 會 means "collect; unite; assemble" it accords with Sima Qian's understanding of 會 in our place-name (hueì in modern Mandarin), but when 會 means "calculation; account" it corresponds with the Yuejue shu and Wu Yue Chunqiu reading (kuài in modern Mandarin). What may be surprising, however, is the change that Karlgren traces for \(\exists \) ("calculation; account") from Ancient Chinese kwâi- to modern Chinese "guei." The modern reader, I suspect, might be confused by the "guei" reading and reasonably ask: "As for Kalgren's ca. 600 'kwâi-' reconstruction, did that not later develop into 'kuai' in modern Chinese, as in 'kuàijì,' or 'accounting'"? According to Karlgren, it did not; instead, he says, it evolved into "guei" (from a linguistic standpoint, Kalgren's kwâi should probably yield modern guài, not aspirated $ku\dot{a}i^{49}$). But if that is the case, then three questions come to mind: first, what is the source of the modern kuài reading for finiterms such as kuàijì? Second, what is the source of Kalgren's modern "guei" reading (for 會)? And lastly, how does any of this relate to the placename 會稽?

field of historical phonology. See, for instance, the remarks in the Introduction to William H. Baxter's *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992; *Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs*, 64), 3–4. Issues concerning the sources and reliability of Karlgren's reconstructions cannot and will not be addressed here. Suffice it to say, however, that in my view, Karlgren's reconstructions are still valuable for reference purposes, and they more than adequately serve the purposes of this article.

⁴⁸ Here I refer mainly to the reconstructions in Axel Schuessler, *A Dictionary of Early Zhou Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), and more recently in his *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese: A Companion to* Grammata Serica Recensa (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009); Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese*, and *Early Mandarin* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991); Baxter's *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*; and Li Zhenhua 李珍華 and Zhou Changji 周長輯, *Hanzi gujin yinbiao* 漢字古今音表 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993).

⁴⁹ Email communication with Professor Axel Schuessler. 16 March 2010.

The earliest reference I have found for the *kuài* reading of 會 appears in the 1915 edition of the Ciyuan, which does not cite an authority or source for the reading. And yet, according to Karlgren's Ancient Chinese reconstructions, when meant "to calculate" it was read with a velar (yayin 牙音) "k-" (g- in Mandarin), and this reading he traces back to the early Zhou dynasty (in his Archaic Chinese reading). Karlgren's reconstructions further suggest that at some point after ca. 600 the 'kwâi-' reading was dropped and replaced with "guei" (this pronunciation, it will be recalled, is followed by Chavannes). The *Ciyuan* entry indicates this happened before 1915, at least in the case of the word *kuàijì*, or "accounting." When exactly this occurred is not clear. What is especially important to note here is that there is no reliable pre-twentieth century attestation for the kuài pronunciation of 會 in any context. But since we know that 會稽 and 會 計 were originally homophonous, and in modern Chinese 會 in the combination 會計 is read "kuài," it makes sense to call our place-name "Kuaiji" (Nienhauser, it will be recalled, follows this reading). And, as mentioned earlier, this reading accords nicely with the glosses in the Yuejue shu and Wu Yue Chunqiu. As for Kalgren's ywâi reconstruction for 會 (meaning "collect; unite; assemble"), from a historical linguistics perspective this should have eventually yielded huài in Mandarin, not huei. According to Grammata Serica Recensa, however, both of the ca. 600 readings for \underset had \underset i finals, and these evolved into "uei" finals at some later time. But again, we are not told when this might have happened.

Admittedly, all this is a bit confusing, and one major reason for the confusion is that it is often difficult for non-experts to figure out the source or reasoning behind the reconstruction of old Chinese graphs by Karlgren and others in the field of historical phonology. This is certainly the case with Chavannes' "Gueiji" reading for 會稽, which he came up with decades *before* Karlgren published his *Grammata Serica Recensa*. In all fairness to Chavannes, however, he does attempt to provide readers with an explanation for the "Gueiji" transliteration, but his notes on this are inconclusive and downright confusing. ⁵⁰ We need to look elsewhere for possible origins of the "guei" pronunciation for 會.

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⁵⁰ Chavannes says specifically that 會 in the place-name 會稽 is read "Koei" (Pinyin = Guei) and not "Hoei" (Pinyin = Huei). But then he adds: "... cependant on verra plus loin que l'étymologie dont *Se-ma Ts'ien* fait dériver le nom de cette montagne conserve au mot 會 son sens de 'réunir'" ("However, we will see later on that the etymology that

A clue that may help to explain the guei pronunciation for 會 in the place-name 會稽 is found in a fangie 反切 reading provided by Lu Deming 陸德明 (556-627) in his Jingdian shiwen 經典釋文 (Textual Explanations of Classics and Canons), an influential Tang exegetical work on phonology. Lu's *fangie* gloss for 會, specifically as it relates to our place-name, is given as 古外切.51 Now, just to remind readers, from a modern perspective, old fanqie readings have two limitations: (1) they are designed to serve only as a relative system of pronunciation, through references to homophones or near-homophones with which the then-contemporary reader was familiar; and (2) both the initial (in this case, 古) and rime group (外) indicators relate to the sound system current when Lu Deming compiled the Jingdian shiwen (that is, the early seventh century). In other words, ancient fangie spellings do not indicate modern pronunciations, and so we cannot be sure how characters with a 古 initial and 外 final may have sounded in the early seventh century. Especially important for our purposes here, however, is the rime category 泰 in the early Tang, which included both 外 and 會. As it turns out, graphs in this rime group are "irregular" in modern Mandarin in the sense that they did not develop over time in such a way so as to yield one single, standard, or "correct" reading. That is to say, characters in this category evolved in such a way that they have different, received pronunciations in modern Chinese (會 is sometimes read hui, while at other times it is read kuai, and so on). Another important point is this: Zhou Fagao 周法高, a well-known authority on historical phonology, along with several other scholars, have demonstrated that, in addition to 會, several other graphs in the 泰 rime category with a k-initial (g- in Mandarin) such as 襘, 檜, and 劊 and so on, are all read gueì in

Se-ma Ts'ien [=Sima Qian] derives for the name of this mountain preserves the word $ext{ } ext{ } e$

⁵¹ Jingdian shiwen (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1985), 2:1165. Lu Deming's fanqie gloss, as it relates to the place-name 會稽, is cited in Paul Rakita Goldin, The Culture of Sex in Ancient China (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 163, n. 17. Goldin mentions that the name is "commonly pronounced as 'K'uai-chi' (= Kuaiji)" and "it is possible that this reading is superior," but does not explain why. He also identifies the Shiji as "the first appearance of the name," but this is wrong. The earliest, datable reference to 會稽 (as a place-name) appears in the fifth century BCE (see n. 17 above). This of course predates the Shiji by several centuries.

modern Chinese. At the same time, many other characters in this same rime group, such as 貝, 沛, 類, 最, and 銳, today all share the same "uei" final/rime. This, I submit, strongly suggests that by Lu Deming's time (roughly, the early seventh century), the 會 component of our toponym was pronounced something like "guei" in modern Chinese. Kalgren's "Ancient Chinese" reconstruction for 會 (meaning "adding up; calculation; account"), which very well might be based in Lu Deming's 古外切 reading, seems to indicate that, during the late Sui dynasty (581–618), early Tang 會 in our place name was pronounced something like "guai" (Lu's gloss

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As for the initial appearance of the "guei" (actually, it was probably closer to "guai"), see the discussion that follows below) reading for fin our place-name, I have found some evidence that traces this reading back to the early decades of the fourth century. The evidence I reference appears in the Jinshu 晉書 (History of the Jin) biography of an official named Wang Shu 王舒 (ca. 266-330), who in 325 was named Metropolitan Governor (Neishi 內史) of 會稽 commandery. Upon hearing the news of this new posting, Wang immediately sought to decline the appointment because his father's given name (ming 名) was 會. Assuming office in an administrative district with a name that included the character 會 (as in 會稽) would thus violate the Chinese taboo of avoiding (and never writing out) the given name of one's deceased father (this custom is known as bihui 避諱). The Court responded by saying that if Wang Shu took the post in 會稽 commandery it would not violate the name taboo because the pronunciation of the character fin his father's given name (which almost certainly was "huei") was different than fa as it is read in the commandery name (that is, "guei"). Thus, the Court argued, "no violation of rites (regarding taboo names) would occur" (於禮無嫌). Nevertheless, Wang Shu still insisted on taking up office elsewhere, and so to placate him the Court changed the name of 會稽 commandery to 鄶稽. Wang then had no choice but to assume the governor's post in 鄶稽, where he served for two years. See Jinshu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 76.2000. Presumably, after Wang Shu left office there the name of the commandery was changed back to 會稽. Note: Most dictionaries in circulation today that include the character 鄶 give its modern pronunciation as kuài, and associate it with an ancient state in Henan of that name. This same character also functions as a surname, and a cursory investigation on my part revealed that most people in China today with this family name read it as gueì (and not as kuài). Since Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (died 991), the well-known commentator on the Shuowen jizi, provided the same fangie reading (that is, 古外切) for 鄶 as Lu Deming did for 會 during the early Tang, it seems very likely that the historical phonology of both characters is the same or similar. In other words, both characters eventually developed the sound "guei."

⁵² Zhang Risheng 張日昇 and Lin Jieming 林潔明, eds., *Zhou Fagao Shanggu yinyun biao* 周法高上古音韻表 (Taibei: Sanmin shuju, 1973), 143. See also *Hanzi gujin yinbiao*, 149 (entry for 儈).

⁵³ I say "something like" because how 古外切 was pronounced in Lu Deming's time would depend on what sort of language ("standard" northwestern Chinese? a southern dialect?) was used to say it.

suggests this reading), but at some later point the "uai" final evolved into an "uei," resulting in "Gueiji." The influential eleventh-century rime dictionary *Guangyun* mentioned earlier, repeats the 古外切 fangie reading with specific reference to our place-name. This same source also gives a second or alternate (you 又) fangie spelling for 會: 黃外切, which suggests a "huai" pronunciation, but we know it eventually evolved into "huei." This means that by the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127) there were at least two ways to say 會稽. We know that the "古外切" reading was still current in the thirteenth century because Hu Sanxing 胡三省 (1230-1287), in his commentary to a line that mentions "會稽 commandery" in Sima Guang's 司馬光 (1019-1086) Zizhi tongian 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid Government), provides the same fanqie spelling. 56 As for the alternate 黃外切 reading, this was in general circulation by the time the Zhongyuan vinyun 中原音韻 (Sounds and Rimes of the Central Plain) was compiled by Zhou Deqing 周德清 (fl. 1314-1324) in 1324.⁵⁷ In fact, the phonetic 'Phags-pa Chinese transcriptions of the Yuan dynasty studied by W. South Coblin and others confirm that the "uei" finals for "guei" and "huei" were in general circulation in the latter half of the thirteenth century, before the compilation of the *Zhongyuan yinyun*. ⁵⁸ These readings are further documented in the work of the influential Ming dynasty philologist Mei Yingzuo 梅膺祚 (fl. 1570-1615), as well as other phonological works of the succeeding Qing period (1644–1911).⁵⁹

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⁵⁴ The linguistic phenomenon described here, whereby "*uai*" evolved into "*uei*," is not unusual at all and even has a name: morphological leveling. It seems to be present in most graphs subsumed under the 秦 rime group. These are listed in *Zhou Fagao Shanggu vinyun biao*, 143.

⁵⁵ *Guangyun* (Taibei: Guangwen shuju youxian gongsi, 1974), 362. Also see *Zhou Fagao Shanggu yinyun biao*, 143, which lists **a** and several characters with the*g/γ initial (h- in Mandarin), such as **a**, which are read *huei*.

⁵⁶ Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956), 7:232. Cf. 114.3585, where Hu Sanxing gives a slightly different *fanqie* spelling: 工外翻.

⁵⁷ Zhongyuan yinyun (1922 ed.), 6a (under qiwei 齊微 rime, qusheng 去聲). See also Yang Naisi 楊耐思, Zhongyuan yinyun yinxi 中原音韻音系 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan chubanshe, 1981), 102.

⁵⁸ See W. South Coblin, *A Handbook of 'Phags pa Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), no. 203 (p. 125) and no. 226 (p. 127), respectively.

⁵⁹ Mei Yingzuo et al., Zihui Zihui bu 字彙字彙補 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1991), 204shang. See also

By the early twentieth century (when Chavannes was working on his *Shiji* translation), then, "guei" had more or less developed into the "standard" Mandarin pronunciation for 會 in 會 稽. ⁶⁰ This same reading is also favored in the influential *Guoyu cidian*, published in the late 1930s, and today is still given in the on-line version of that same reference work. ⁶¹ Finally, the "Gueiji" reading also appears in the authoritative *Zhongguo diming lu: Zhonghua renmin gongheguo dituji diming suoyin* 中國地名錄: 中華人民共和國地圖集地名索引, published in 1983, ⁶² and in the more recent *Grand dictionnaire Ricci de la langue chinoise*. ⁶³

Several scholars in China, most notably, Zheng Yin 鄭茵, speculate that the "Gueiji" reading *derives* from the local pronunciation of "會稽" in Shaoxing dialect. This, he says, is because syllables with a final "*uai*" in Mandarin often change to a "*uei*" final in Shaoxing dialect. This, Zheng contends, explains the shift from what was originally "Guaiji" to "Gueiji." ⁶⁴ I have confirmed the "Gueiji" reading with several native speakers of modern Shaoxing dialect, but Zheng Yin's hypothesis (as far as I know) remains unproven (morphological leveling is certainly not restricted to Shaoxing dialect). Based on the evidence presented earlier in this essay, it seems more accurate to say that Shaoxing dialect *reflects* or *preserves* the "*guei*" reading that was in

Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744–1832), *Boya yin* 博雅音, 5.2a, in *Erya*, *Guangya*, *Fangyan*, *Shiming*, *Qingshu sizhong hekan* 爾雅廣雅方言釋名清疏四種合刊 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 740.

⁶⁰ This development is discussed in two recent and informative articles: Zhou Jiancheng 周建成, "'會稽' duyin yizhu bushuo — jian yu Zheng Yin xiansheng shangque" "會稽"讀音異注補說 — 兼與鄭茵先生商権 *Hanzi wenhua* 漢字文化 3 (2001): 59, and Li Lingling 李玲玲, "Ye tan '會稽' zhi '會' de duyin" 也談"會稽"之"會"的讀音, *Yuwen yanjiu* 語文研究 1 (2009): 9–10.

⁶¹ See http://dict.revised.moe.edu.tw/cgi-bin/newDict (accessed 29 September 2009).

⁶² Zhongguo diming lu: Zhonghua renmin gongheguo dituji diming suoyin (Beijing: Ditu chubanshe, 1983), 78. Note: 會稽 is the only place-name in contemporary China listed in this important reference work in which the character 會 is read "Guei." Also: the graph 會 (sometimes written 匯), as it is used in many Chinese place-names, ancient and modern, typically means either (1) "dwelling place" or "site" (example: Xujiahuei 徐家匯 in Shanghai), or (2) indicating a place where two or more rivers join (example: Lijiahuei 劉家會 in Shanxi).

⁶³ Grand dictionnaire Ricci de la langue chinoise (Paris and Taibei: Instituts Ricci, 2001), 3:5075d.

⁶⁴ Zheng's theory seems to be based on reading Lu Deming's *fanqie* gloss 古外切 as "*guai*" rather than "*guei*." Zheng Yin, "'會稽山'的'會' 以讀 kuài 爲官," *Yaowen juezi* 咬文嚼字 10 (1997): 21–23.

place by the thirteenth century (and probably well before then), which is now given in reference works such as the *Cihai*, *Hanyu da cidian*, and *Grand dictionnaire Ricci de la langue chinoise*. Some sinologists in the West, including J. D. Frodsham and David R. Knechtges (in his on-going translation of the *Wenxuan* 文選), favor the "Gueiji" reading, along with several scholars in China.⁶⁵

Choices

If nothing else, this essay has demonstrated that tracing the etymology and historical phonology of an old place-name can be complicated and downright tricky, and it does not always produce singular, conclusive results. This seems to be especially the case with (originally) non-Chinese toponyms like 會稽, of whose true origin today we know nothing. As we have seen, after (or during the course of) absorption into the Chinese written language, these names sometimes become enmeshed in reports about persons and events that may have never existed. And while the sources of these legends are often a mystery (Where did Sima Qian get his information on 會 稽? Why would the authors of the Yuejue shu and Wu Yue Chungiu not follow the Shiji explanation of the name?), their purpose is clear: they seek to define a particular place as it relates to a well-known event or series of events. One motivation behind this sort of storytelling, I would argue, is to build historical legitimacy for places and the legendary figures (like Yu) and events associated with them. When locations in legends turn out (or are "made") real, this adds credibility to the tale. Historians then write (or repeat) accounts related to these characters and events that are historical (think of Qin Shihuang's visit to the 會稽 Hills in 210 BCE), and while doing so explain and interpret such events, where and when they took place, who was involved, and so on. Separating what is historical and what is legendary in these accounts then becomes more difficult ("Some have argued that") and this, in part, is by design. When one reads through the surviving geographical works and gazetteers on 會稽 compiled during the Six

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⁶⁵ For instance, see Lu Xiujun 陸秀峻, "'會稽'的'會' 宜讀 guì," *Yuwen xinpu* 語文新圃 2 (2008): 42. Lu also observes in his essay that natives of Shaoxing could never read 會稽 as "Huiji" because it would then sound very similar to 晦氣, which means "bad luck."

Dynasties and thereafter, never once do their authors even suggest that Yu's convening of the feudal lords at 會稽, his later death and burial there, and so on, are anything but historical fact.

As for the meaning and implications of the Chinese written form of the place-name 會稽, the main problem, described earlier, is that we have two different explanations of the name's meaning, and both derive from reliable and authoritative sources. Sima Tan 司馬談 (ca. 165–110 BCE) and his son Sima Qian produced what is universally regarded as the most important early history of China, while the author of the Yuejue shu was praised for his accuracy by the philosopher and skeptic Wang Chong 王充 (27 – ca. 100 CE) — himself a native of 會稽. As for the Wu Yue Chunqiu, its compiler Zhao Ye 趙曄 (ca. 40 - ca. 100 CE) also hailed from 會稽 and for a time served as a government official there. In my view, there are no grounds on which one could discount either the "convene or assess" gloss in the Shiji or the "calculate and assess" reading in the Yuejue shu and Wu Yue Chunqiu. Sinologists concerned about such matters, or whose research is related to 會稽, must then make a choice between the two interpretations.⁶⁶ This is essential, of course, because how one understands the meaning of 會稽 / 會計 will determine how the place-name is read aloud. Strictly speaking, Sima Qian's reading would yield "Hueiji" in modern Chinese (for reasons explained earlier, however, it would probably be best to not use this pronunciation in the presence of native speakers of Shaoxing dialect), while the Yuejue shu and Wu Yue Chunqiu glosses (reflected in Kalgren's reconstructions) would produce "Gueiji." I have argued that the leveling from the "uai" to "uei" was certainly in place by the thirteenth century, and may have occurred well before that time. It remained in place until the final years of the Qing dynasty.

The Peking Syllabary compiled by Thomas F. Wade (1818–1895) in 1859, as well as Herbert A. Giles' (1845–1935) widely circulated A Chinese–English Dictionary (1892), only provide huei and guei readings for \(\extreme{\text{chinese}} \) (it seems likely that Chavannes got his guei reading from one of these dictionaries). But if one checks Mathews' Chinese–English Dictionary (1931; revised and expanded in 1943), the entry for \(\extreme{\text{chinese}} \)—when it means "to calculate" — reads "k'uai4"

說並存). By this I think he means to say "they equally carry weight." See "會稽' duyin yizhu bushuo," 60.

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⁶⁶ Zhou Jiancheng argues that we do not have to choose because the "two different readings exist side-by-side" (兩

or *kuei*⁴" (that is, "*kuài* or *gueì*").⁶⁷ The *kuài* reading here tallies with the gloss for 會 in modern bisyllabic terms such as 會計, and so we can be sure that the *kuài* reading for 會 in vocabulary is related to accounting dates from the early decades of twentieth-century or perhaps a little earlier. But where did it come from?

The precise origin of the *kuài* reading, as I have said, is obscure. However, as several modern scholars have correctly pointed out, the word 會計 in modern Chinese was borrowed — probably sometime late in the second half of the nineteenth century — from the *Japanese term* for "accounting," read "*kaikei*" and using the same Chinese characters. ⁶⁸ And so, since its meaning is in accord with the gloss for 會 in the *Yuejue shu* and *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, several modern scholars prefer to read 會稽 as "Kuaiji," though it seems unlikely that anyone in China ever said

⁶⁷ R. H. Mathews, *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary*, revised American edition (Cambridge: Harvard University

Press, 1979), no. 2345d.

⁶⁸ See Liu Zhengtan 劉正埮, Gao Mingkai 高名凱, et al., comps., *Hanyu wailai ci cidian* 漢語外來詞詞典 (A Dictionary of Loan Words and Hybrid Words in Chinese) (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu chubanshe, 1984), 193, who specifically identify the modern Chinese term kuàijì ("accounting") as deriving from the Japanese kaikei. Lydia H. Liu, in her Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity: China, 1900-1937 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 302, confirms the Chinese borrowing of kaikei and categorizes such transfers (of which there are many in modern Chinese from Japanese) as "return graphic loans." As correctly pointed out by Liu, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when China needed words for modern terms such as "accounting," "administration," "agency," "alliance," and so on, it adopted "classical Chinese-character compounds that were used by the Japanese to translate modern European words" and "reintroduced them into modern Chinese" (italics mine). Liu cites several "classical Chinese-character compounds" as possible sources of the modern Japanese term kaikei, one of which turns out to be the Shiji passage that glosses our place-name "會稽者, 會計也" (see p. 21 above). Note: according to the authoritative dictionary Nihon Kokugo Daijiten 日本国語大辞典 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2000-2002), 3:144, in pre-Meiji texts 會計 was read kuwai-kei. Although this reading seems to reflect literary custom rather than actual usage, it does bring up a relevant question: is it possible that when 會計 was imported to China to satisfy the modern need for a character compound meaning "accounting," it not only led to the adoption of the "Japanese" character combination 會計 but borrowed the "kuwai" pronunciation for 會 as well? Admittedly, this is a complicated historical-phonological question, and one that is far beyond my expertise. But it certainly deserves further research by experts in the field. Of course, it may also be possible that the ultimate source of the old Japanese "kuwai" reading may have been an ancient Chinese pronunciation, one that might even be reflected in Lu Deming's 古外切 gloss (?).

it that way before about 1900. According to several modern reference works, like the *Hanyu da cidian*, and to scholars such as Lu Xiujun 陸秀峻 and Jin Huafeng 金華鋒, ⁶⁹ "Gueiji" represents the now "standard" (*biaozhun* 標準) pronunciation of the place-name. This view, of course, raises questions about what exactly constitutes a "standard" reading. Having said that, colleagues in the field who prefer, as I now do, to follow a 入鄉隨俗 approach when transliterating placenames (after all, all place-names, by definition, are "local"), will thus likely favor transliterating 會稽 as "Gueiji."

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⁶⁹ See for instance, Lu Xiujun, "'會稽'的'會'宜讀 guì," 42, and Jin Huafeng, "'會稽'的'會'字讀法之我見, at http://www.hf.zscas.edu.cn/xb/news (accessed 22 September 2009). Both Lu and Jin support the "Gueiji" reading mainly because (1) this reading is given in the 1945 edition of the *Guoyu cidian* (and 1989 edition of the *Cihai*), and (2) "Gueiji" is the preferred pronunciation in Shaoxing, so outsiders (*waidiren* 外地人) should follow this "local" reading.

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