

## INTRODUCTION

The history of the fall of the Ming and its replacement by the Qing dynasty, an agonized process that involved just about everything that took place in China during the seventeenth century, significantly affected subsequent Chinese views of their culture, society, and polity. It would be difficult to fully comprehend, for instance, any discussion of legitimacy—regarding politics, intellectual endeavor, or elite status—from the beginning of the Qing through at least the early twentieth century without understanding the participants' sense of the meaning of the Ming-Qing dynastic changeover, unvoiced as it might be. Changing views of the Ming demise and the Qing rise have deeply conditioned writings about the late-imperial era by Chinese scholars during the past one hundred years, and their work in turn has deeply conditioned that of non-Chinese inquirers. Yet we remain insufficiently aware of how our views are affected by the “politics of narratives” in the perennial Chinese contestation over how their past is represented,<sup>1</sup> particularly regarding the history of the Ming-Qing conflict. Apart from that, as the increased availability of Manchu sources leads us to ponder seriously whether the Qing culminated the *Chinese* imperial era, or whether it was the last in a series of conquest dynasties based in northern Asia, comparable to the Jin or Yuan,<sup>2</sup> familiarity with how this matter was viewed by Man and Han during the late-Ming and Qing periods is imperative.

Moreover, a careful examination of the generation and transmission of the written record of the Ming-Qing transition offers insights on the production and dissemination of information—politically sensitive information, especially—in Chinese society and intellectual culture. Herein lie some surprises, I believe, for those who may have thought about this matter but have lacked the opportunity to pursue it thoroughly: the size, diversity, and contentiousness of the primary record; the various forces at work in the early secondary record; the importance of generational succession in the transition from secondary to tertiary treatments; how the highly visible mid-Qianlong reinterpretations were prefigured in little-noted changes during late-Kangxi and Yongzheng times; the more “positive” than negative thrust of the high-Qianlong measures; the effectiveness of the Qianlong reformulation in the nineteenth century; and the multiple ways in which the Qing heritage of interpretation has been utilized in the twentieth century. Historiographical exposition of the diverse and transmuted meanings of the Ming-Qing conflict, from the seventeenth century to the present, is the more discursive aim of this monograph.

The principal aim, however, is pragmatic: to encourage scholars to incorporate the Ming-Qing transition in their plans to study the late-imperial era rather than stopping with the late Ming, beginning after the Qing consolidation, or leaping over the middle seventeenth century in treating topics that pertain to both the Ming and Qing periods. Though

some excellent recent works have striven for such integration,<sup>3</sup> they do not yet constitute a trend. Admittedly, the obstacles are great, especially for junior scholars. Written records from the Ming-Qing dynastic transition not only are formidably copious but are a disorderly bunch. And their amenability to systematic research certainly was not improved by the suppressions and distortions to which they were subjected in later centuries, which fostered more problems of authorship, authenticity, and textual integrity than is the norm among Ming and Qing writings. In my view, the chief causes of discomfort and error among researchers who are unseasoned in the vagaries of transition-period materials are: (1) historiographical (identifying the interpretive “spin” in works of various periods or provenances); and (2) bibliographical (identifying the best sources and locating the best copies or editions). Thus the division into two parts—a historiography and a guide to early sources—of this monograph, which, to effect some degree of control, focuses on the conflict between the Ming state and its adherents, on one hand, and the proto- or constituted Qing state and its adherents, on the other, from the Battles of Sarhu in 1619 through the subjugation of Taiwan in 1683.

In both parts, a general familiarity with the major events of the Ming-Qing dynastic transition is assumed,<sup>4</sup> as is facility with elementary research tools such as bibliographies of contemporary scholarship on Chinese history.<sup>5</sup>

In part one, by “Sino-Cultural Historiography” I mean that my scope is limited to Chinese (as distinct from Korean, Japanese, or European) historiography and that I have tried to probe more deeply into social, cultural, and actuarial factors than has been common in historiographies concerning China. Of course, political factors, which always have loomed large in Chinese historiography and naturally have been very important in recording and interpreting the Ming-Qing conflict, also are given their due. Outside the range of this work is the worthy subject of how the Ming-Qing conflict has been regarded in belles-lettres, drama, and popular culture—though occasional references to such are made in passing. My hope is that delineation of patterns and changes in scholarly and official historical writing will encourage study of those other spheres, to reveal more fully how various understandings of the Ming-Qing conflict have been manifested in Chinese society at large over the past four hundred years.

Part two, “The Best Early Sources,” certainly is bibliographical, but it does not strive to uphold professional bibliographical standards, necessary as the latter surely are for some purposes. Rather, it strives to present information on source materials with a degree of efficiency and thoroughness that I feel is consonant with the goal of enabling readers to enter the deep waters of research on the Ming-Qing transition without drowning, and to see the teeming life therein without despairing for lack of hook or net. This guide began simply as an intention to pass on to others what I personally had managed to figure out over many years of working with these materials. Though the project has grown much larger since then, it has not lost its idiosyncrasy: users will find what *I think* are the best primary and secondary sources and what I think are the best editions and references, presented according to what I think is a good balance between inclusiveness and utility. The annotations reflect what I have found interesting. In other words, it is more selective and subjective than a standard bibliography generally would be.

The pursuit of purity in using only “primary” sources quickly leaves one little to read in any period prior to the twentieth century, and it cuts off the inquirer’s useful nose in spite of his or her intellectually curious face. Nevertheless, I have long felt that we need

to be more abstemious about source use in studying the Ming-Qing transition, to distinguish more carefully between contemporaneous and later writings, and among the contemporaneous ones, between those based on fairly immediate experience and the ersatz accounts. I hope to augment the inquirer's sense of what it's like to "feel the ground"—not because "the ground" will yield up some positivistically determinable, absolute historical reality, but because it is that in which the hardest and most luxuriant flora of the historical field must be rooted. This aim has dictated the following basic order of entries:

Category I, "Major Primary Sources" is organized mainly by region or theater of activity in the long and wide-ranging Ming-Qing conflict. Partly, this is because a regional approach better enables us to see synchronic factors—for instance, different perspectives on the same state of affairs—and the complexity surrounding what seem to be even the most discrete occurrences. Another reason is that a limited visual range is one of the most telling characteristics of a primary source, written by someone who was on the scene in the midst of or close to the events recorded. The few cases in which an author's recorded personal knowledge of significant historical developments extends beyond a single region are cross listed. Especially prone to leap regional boundaries are collections of memorials. It should be remembered that such documents originally were written during distinct, regionally focused spates of activity; their present appearance in corpora that reflect on events in several regions usually is the result of later compilation. Also, I expect that my regional organization of materials will be found helpful among those who undertake local and regional history.

Seldom do we still have an author's own manuscript or his personally authorized edition, and even archival documents usually are bureau copies, not the true originals. Thus, almost everything in the "primary" category has been processed to some degree. But the materials do bring us as close as possible to the knowledge, opinions, feelings, and observations of persons whose past proximity to historical affairs gives them the right to speak first.

Category II, "Important Contemporaneous Secondary Sources," follows the simple alphabetical order of the *pinyin* romanization of titles. It is not regionally subdivided because a hallmark of secondary work is broad perspective, stretching beyond the horizons of the average firsthand participant. Though some works in this category do have regional, even local, foci, and some contain a considerable amount of material from the authors' own experiences, most of them reach for broad coverage by using the collected reportage of others. They are "important" sources because they preserve much information that now cannot be obtained otherwise.

I do not mean to simply dismiss secondary scholarship of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, much of which is excellent and also based to some degree on now lost primary writings. But in such works, most of which are already well known, it usually is impossible to tell which passages or remarks are derived from which sources. Though often useful for ready reference, they tend to be more significant in the study of historiographical and intellectual trends than as sources. Thus, the most notable eighteenth- and nineteenth-century secondary works on the Ming-Qing conflict are treated in part one.

Category III, "Governmental and Quasi-Governmental Compilations," includes materials compiled, usually after the seventeenth century, by Qing government agencies or by men who had access to those materials by dint of employment in such agencies. Again,

only publications the main virtue of which is the provision of indirect access to primary or high-quality secondary information are treated here. Other official compilations and histories the main significance of which, for study of the Ming-Qing conflict, is historiographical (in the contexts of Qing intellectual and political conditions) are discussed in part one.

The intended message of the ternary classification in part two is not that unincorporated works can be ignored. Rather, it is that knowledge of the basic record is essential to judging the value and utility of other writings.

No historical phenomenon can be understood well in isolation. Least of all is “the Ming-Qing conflict” separable from much of anything that occurred in seventeenth-century China. However, to control the scale of this project and the physical size of this monograph, I have had to almost ruthlessly exclude tangential topics. In some areas of closely related significance, my misgivings at this have been strong: the nascent Qing state’s bilateral relations with Korea; partisan infighting and administrative measures of the Ming and Qing governments that did not bear directly on the conflict between them (except in the case of the crucial Hongguang court); early-Qing policies and measures concerning fugitives (*taoren* 逃人) and land enclosure (*juantian* 圈田); Ming and Qing actions to deal with roving-rebel armies (*liukou* 流寇)—except for those armies that eventually or intermittently identified with the Ming cause; and the rebellion of the Three Feudatories (*sanfan* 三藩). No full study of the dynastic transition can fail to note these matters, and many of the items listed in this guide do shed light on or lead to materials about them. But to have systematically searched out and included sources for these subject areas would have made this project far too unwieldy and possibly interminable.

The plethora of writings (and different editions, corruptions, piratings, etc., thereof) on the Ming-Qing conflict often is a source of discouragement to those who are interested in seventeenth-century Chinese history. Especially for newcomers, the exhaustiveness and the traditional annotative style of Xie Guozhen’s groundbreaking bibliographies, the *Qing kaiguo shiliao kao* 清開國史料考 and the *Wan Ming shiji kao* 晚明史籍考, have been daunting. And both works, written almost entirely from knowledge garnered in the late 1920s and early 1930s, are now out of date (despite some changes and emendations to the latter, mainly to satisfy ideological requirements after “Liberation”). Not only am I incapable of emulating Xie’s achievement but I also feel that something more accessible, as well as more current, is needed by present-day users (especially in the West). This guide tries to reduce wariness of the maze and turn frustration into enthusiasm over the copiousness of conquest-period sources in a particular way—surely not the only possible way, but perhaps an effective one.

## NOTES

1. Duara 1995: 26.
2. See, for instance, Rawski 1996.
3. Among English-language works, see, for instance, Perdue 1987; Zurndorfer 1992; Brook 1993, or Ko 1994.

4. Narratives of the major events can be found in such English-language works as Wakeman 1985; Struve 1984; and the *Cambridge History of China* 1988: vol. 7, chaps. 10–11. In Chinese see Xie 1957, Gu 1997, and Fan 2003.

5. One's bases can be well covered by searching such serial publications as the *Bibliography of Asian Studies* (Ann Arbor); *Revue bibliographique de sinologie* (Paris); *Tōyōgaku bunken ruimoku* 東洋學文獻類目 (Kyoto); *Books and Articles on Oriental Subjects Published in Japan* (Tokyo); *Zhongguo lishixue nianjian* 中國歷史學年鑒 (Beijing); *Fuyin baokan ziliao suoyin* 復印報刊資料索引 (Beijing); *Zhonghua minguo qikan lunwen suoyin* 中華民國期刊論文索引 (Taipei); and *Hanxue yanjiu tongxun* 漢學研究通訊 (Taipei). For secondary scholarship on the Manchus, see Sary 1990. For introductions to research tools for premodern Chinese history, see Teng and Biggerstaff 1971 (or other printings); Wilkinson 1973 or 1998; Cole 1991; and Zurndorfer 1995.