

edge of a thousand ages past and a thousand ages to come, is what sets the sage apart from other kinds of men.⁵¹

Naturally, the idea that foreknowledge was acquired by scrutinizing the subtle was not new or unique to the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. It can also be found in other third-century classics of statecraft, such as the *Han Feizi*.⁵² Some incarnation of the idea, moreover, had been in circulation for a long time. Certainly, there are hints of this view in the *Laozi*, where the author notes, “Seeing the small is what is called clear-sighted.”⁵³ There are also indications that such an idea derived from traditions of divination. For example, the *Xici* treats subtle or infinitesimal signs, including astrological omens, as carrying premonitions of the future.⁵⁴ Interestingly, the *Xici* depicts subtle signs as being interpretable by gentlemen, as well as sages.⁵⁵ Though less accomplished, gentlemen too could decipher clues. They “know of the minute and the obvious” (*zhi wei zhi zhang* 知微知彰) and can also “observe the traces” (*guan xiang* 觀象).⁵⁶

What perhaps was new to the *Lüshi Chunqiu* was the emphasis on

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di Miranda Brown and Uffe Bergeton

“Osservare i fenomeni” così come l’ho scritto è riportato da Wang Dongliang nel testo citato a pagina 26. I caratteri sono gli stessi.

Ho preferito quest’ultima versione più accomodante rispetto al contenuto del mio articolo.