Abstract

"Romance of the Three Kingdoms", written by Luo Guanzhong (罗贯中) of the Ming Dynasty, is a classical novel based on Chinese historical events from Eastern-Han (东汉) to the period of the Three Kingdoms (三国时期).

After the collapse of the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD), the vast empire was divided into three smaller kingdoms, namely Wei (魏), Shu (蜀) and Wu (吴), which were constantly warring for supremacy. Warfare, as well as strategies, is therefore an important theme. Besides military strategy, myriad motives behind human ambitions and all forms of human endeavours are superbly dramatised.

This thesis aims at analysing six strategists (two representatives from each of the three kingdoms). They are chosen out of the hundred strategists because they were especially drawn with literary skill and were vividly crafted. The presentation of personality, mentality and individuality of the characters, as well as their contributions to the society, are discussed. The originality of each character is examined, exploring the contradictions of historical facts and legendary tales passed down through the generations.

The image of the strategist as depicted in this novel exerts great influence on future literary works.