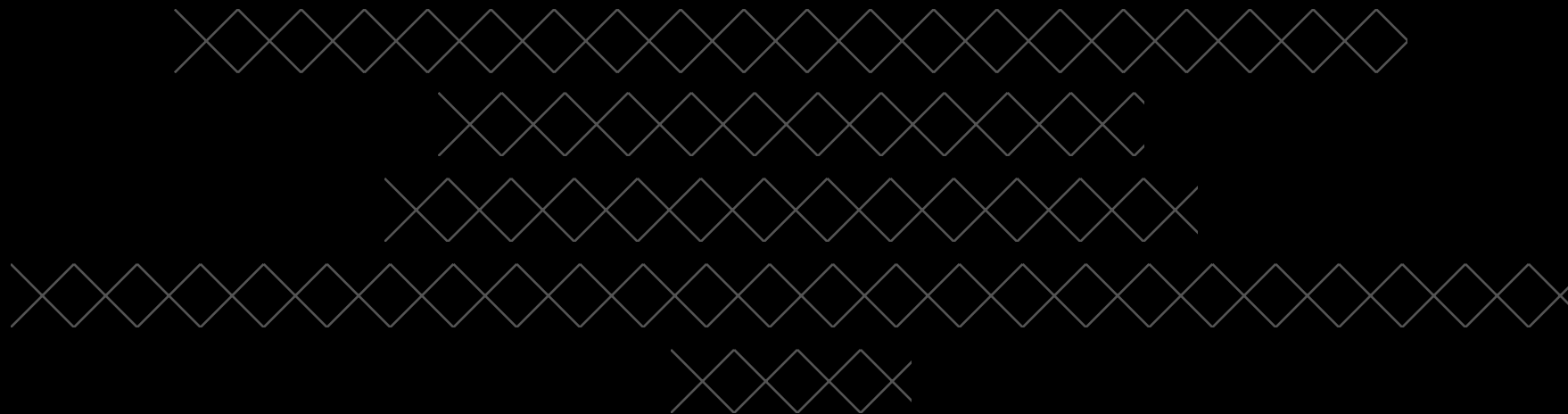# Short History of the Romanization of Chinese

Outline

- Part I: General Introduction of Romanization
  - Definition of Romanization
  - Methods and Examples for Romanization

- Part II: Romanization of Chinese before the ROC
  - Missionary System
  - Wade-Giles System
  - Postal Romanization

- Part III: Romanization of Chinese after the ROC
  - Gwoyeu Romatzyh
  - Latinxua Sinwenz
  - Hanyu Pinyin

General Introduction of Romanization

- Romanization
  - Etymology: Roman + -iza- + -tion
  - Conversion of text from a different language system to the Roman (Latin) script

- Examples for Romanization

中国   Ελληνικὴ Δημοκρατία   Россия

↓   ↓   ↓

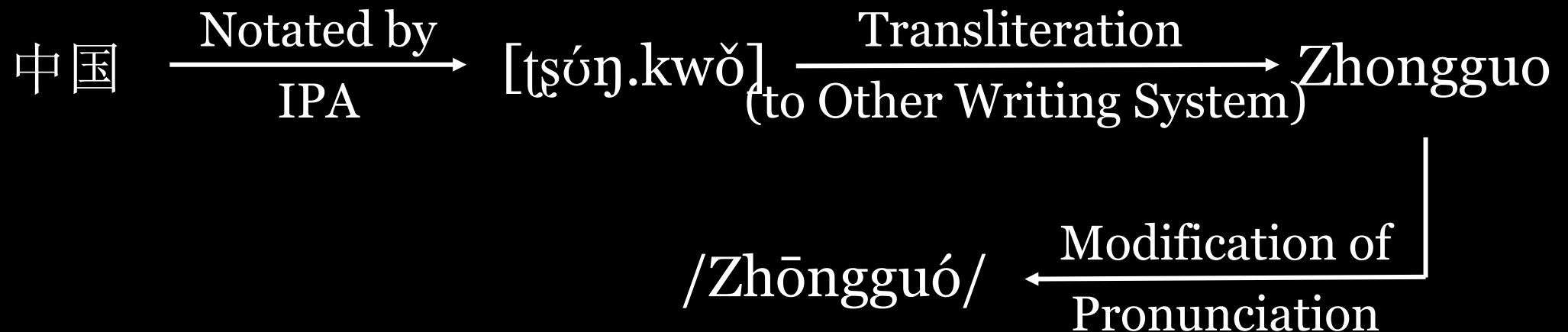/Zhōngguó/   ⟨Ellēnikḗ Dēmokratía⟩   ⟨Rossiya⟩
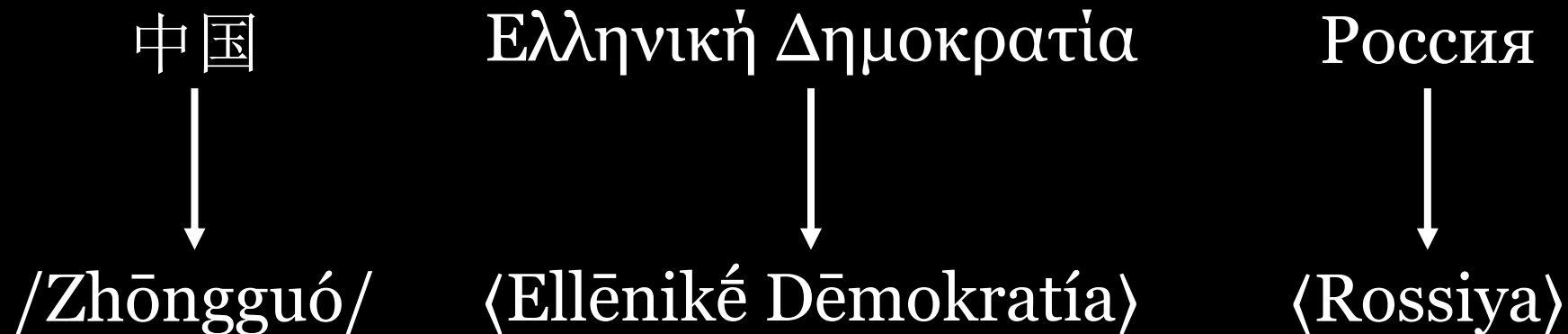
General Introduction of Romanization

- Method of Romanization
  - Transliteration — Representing text from one script to another that involves swapping letters in certain ways
  - Example for transliteration

Ε	⟨(H)e⟩
λλ	⟨ll⟩
η	⟨e⟩
ν	⟨n⟩
ι	⟨i⟩
κ	⟨k⟩
ἠ	⟨e⟩

Ελληνικἠ —Transliteration→ ⟨(H)e⟩⟨ll⟩⟨e⟩⟨n⟩⟨i⟩⟨k⟩⟨e⟩ —Modification of Pronunciation→ ⟨Ellēnikḗ⟩

General Introduction of Romanization

- Method of Romanization
  - Transcription — Recording the speech sounds with precision or the phonemesor units of semantic meaning in speech
  - Example for phonetic transcription

中国 $\xrightarrow[\text{IPA}]{\text{Notated by}}$ [tʂʊ́ŋ.kwǒ] $\xrightarrow[\text{(to Other Writing System)}]{\text{Transliteration}}$ Zhongguo

/Zhōngguó/ $\xleftarrow[\text{Pronunciation}]{\text{Modification of}}$

Romanization of Chinese before the ROC

- Missionary System (Ming & Tsing Dynasty)
- In the previous work *Xizi Qiji* made by Mateo Ricci and Lazzaro Cattaneo (based on Latin)
- Which was revised and became more systematical in Nicolas Trigault's work *Xiru Ermu Zi*
  - ✓ First systematical attempt for Romanization of Chinese
  - ✓ The romanizations were intended more for Westerners than for the Chinese
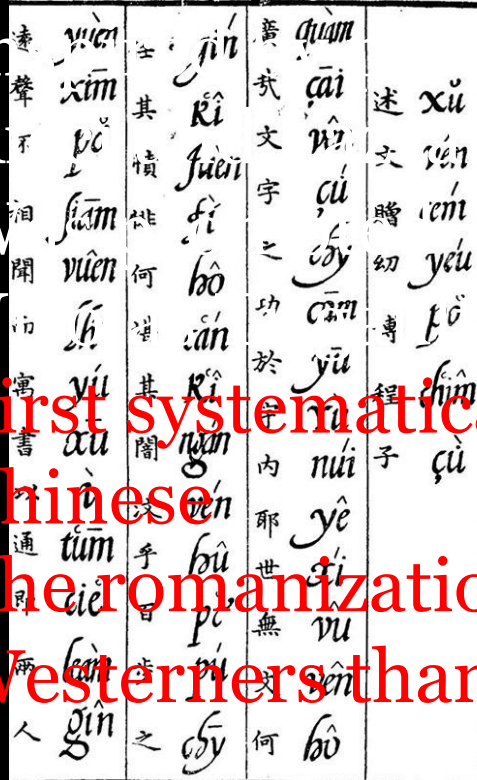
Xizi Qiji
'Miracle of Western Letters'

Xiru Ermu Zi
'Aid to the Eyes and Ears of Western Literati'

Romanization of Chinese before the ROC

- Wade-Giles System (Late Tsing Dynasty)

✓ Too hard to study due to the complexity of the notations of consonants and vowels
✓ Prototype of modern Hanyu Pinyin

Yuyan Zi'er Ji
'A Book Set of Self-Studying Chinese'

Romanization of Chinese before the ROC

- Postal System (Late Tsing Dynasty)
  - Derivation of Wade-Giles system
  - Was simplified based on more phonetic Nanjing dialect
  - Throwed away diacritics to make the spelling much easier
  - ✓ Some names are based on local dialect (hard to memorize)
  - ✓ Ignore the variation of tones in Chinese
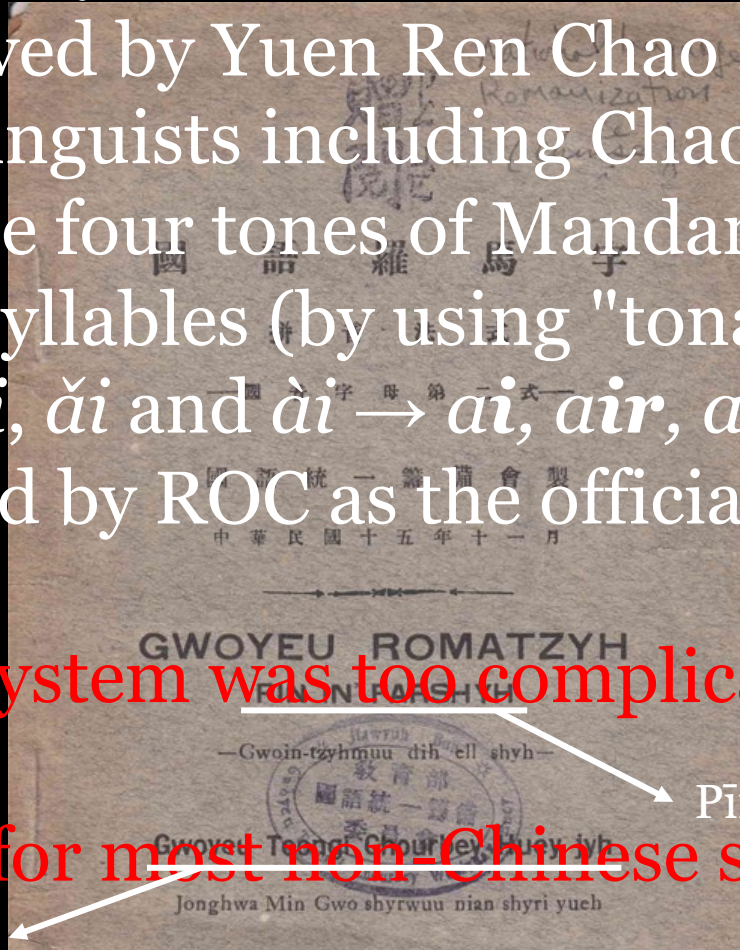
"Kilung" for 基隆

"Kwangchow" for 广州

"Jannkiang" for 湛江

Romanization of Chinese after the ROC

- Gwoyeu Romatzyh
  - Was conceived by Yuen Ren Chao and developed by a group of linguists including Chao and Lin Yutang
  - Indicates the four tones of Mandarin by varying the spelling of syllables (by using "tonal spelling")
    - e.g. *āi, ái, ǎi* and *ài → ai, air, ae and ay*
  - Was adopted by ROC as the official Romanization system
  - ✓ The vowel system was too complicate for beginners to learn
  - ✓ Not legible for most non-Chinese speakers

Pīnyīn Fǎshì

Guóyǔ Tǒngyī Chóubèihuì Zhì

Romanization of Chinese after the ROC

- Latinxua Sinwenz
  - First romanization system used in placing of Chinese characters by native Chinese speakers
  - A radical attempt to erase the Chinese characters in order to raise literacy rate (promoted by Lu Xun and several scholars)
  - Much of Sin Wenz is similar to Pinyin in its orthography
  - ✓ Once again, ignored the tones in Chinese
  - ✓ Blueprint for Hanyu Pinyin

"mao" for 猫

"loto" for 骆驼

"Womn zsi uzli" for
我们在屋子里
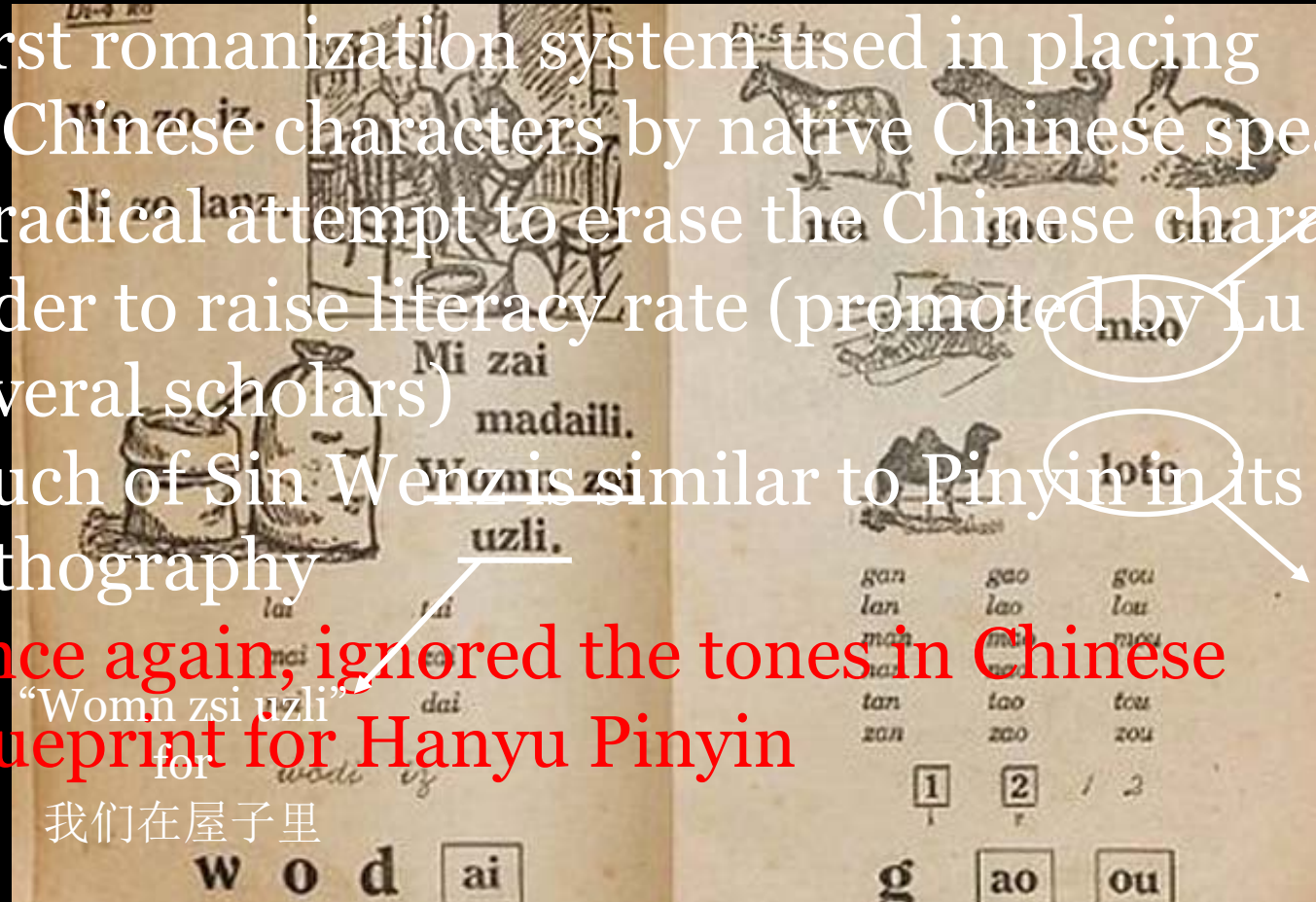
Romanization of Chinese after the ROC

- Hanyu Pinyin
  - Proposed by the PRC and is adopted as an ISO
  - Identify the conception of Initials (声母) and Finals (韵母)
  - Uses diacritics to mark the four tones of Mandarin. The diacritic is placed over the letter that represents the syllable nucleus
  - Native speakers of English will decode Pinyin spellings to fairly close approximations of Mandarin
  - ✓ May cause many homonyms in English writing system (like 陕西 and 山西)

给

给我!
Gěi wǒ
Give it to me!

把剑给我。
Bǎ jiàn gěi wǒ
Give me the sword.

"Bǎ jiàn gěi wǒ" for 把剑给我

给，给你！
Gěi, gěi nǐ!
Here, this is for you!

我给你钱。
Wǒ gěi nǐ qián.
I'll give you money.

你投给谁?
Nǐ tóu gěi shéi?
Who are you voting for?

请给我钱。
Qǐng gěi wǒ qián.
Please give me money.

"Qǐng gěi wǒ qián" for 请给我钱

HSK 2 REWIND

Thanks for Your Attention!