

Confucius and the *Analects* Revisited

*New Perspectives on Composition, Dating,
and Authorship*

Edited by

Michael Hunter
Martin Kern



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Contents

List of Figures and Tables VII

Notes on Contributors VIII

Introduction 1

Michael Hunter and Martin Kern

- 1 **A Critical Overview of Some Contemporary Chinese Perspectives on the Composition and Date of *Lunyu*** 17
John Makeham
- 2 **The *Lunyu* as an Accretion Text** 39
Robert Eno
- 3 **The *Lunyu* as a Western Han Text** 67
Michael Hunter
- 4 **Confucius and His Disciples in the *Lunyu*: The Basis for the Traditional View** 92
Paul R. Goldin
- 5 **The *Lunyu*, a Homeless Dog in Intellectual History: On the Dating of Discourses on Confucius's Success and Failure** 116
Joachim Gentz
- 6 **Confucius's Sayings Entombed: On Two Han Dynasty Bamboo *Lunyu* Manuscripts** 152
Paul van Els
- 7 **Manuscript Formats and Textual Structure in Early China** 187
Matthias L. Richter
- 8 **Interlocutor Collections, the *Lunyu*, and Proto-*Lunyu* Texts** 218
Mark Csikszentmihalyi
- 9 **Sima Qian's Kongzi and the Western Han *Lunyu*** 241
Esther Sunkyung Klein

10	Kongzi as Author in the Han	268
	<i>Martin Kern</i>	
	Index	309

Introduction

Michael Hunter and Martin Kern

For more than two millennia, readers have turned to the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects* or the *Selected Sayings*) as an authoritative guide to the teachings of Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius; trad. 551–479 BCE), the most important figure in the East Asian tradition. Insofar as Kongzi has stood for certain foundational values and practices, including learning (*xue* 學), reverence for the past (*gu* 古), ritual propriety (*li* 禮), the nobility of official service (*shi* 仕 / *shi* 士), and the interdependence of family virtues like filial piety (*xiao* 孝) with official virtues like loyalty (*zhong* 忠), the *Lunyu* has been a potent “initiation text” into that tradition, to borrow a phrase from Robert Eno—or, to quote one early witness, it is “the linchpin of the Five Classics and the mouthpiece of the Six Arts” (五經之鎔鑄，六藝之喉衿也).¹ To this day, the practice of introducing traditional China via the *Lunyu* continues in classrooms around the world.

The *Lunyu* certainly lends itself to the role of gatekeeper text. As a guide to the quotable Kongzi, it is short (ca. 16,000 characters) and divided into five hundred or so bite-sized, easily memorized bons mots. Even its challenges are conducive to reader engagement. The text does not present Kongzi’s teachings in ways that a modern academic philosopher would recognize as rigorous. Logical connections between and across entries are implicit at best. Contradictions abound. Entries of various formats (sayings, comments, dialogues, anecdotes, testimonia) are strung together indiscriminately with little or no context.² The *Lunyu* is not disorganized so much as unconstructed, the overall effect of which is to invite, even demand, the active participation of readers in ways that few other classical texts do. The text also facilitates this process by tempting readers with the promise of “a single thread tying [Kongzi’s Way] together” (一以貫之; 4/15 and 15/3) or the challenge of reconstructing the “three [unexpressed] corners” (*san yu* 三隅) for every “single corner” (*yi yu* 一隅; 7/8) in the text itself.

The *Lunyu* has played an especially important role in the development of early China studies in the modern era. Surveys of early Chinese thought or philosophy typically open with a chapter or section on the *Lunyu* as a foundational stage in the development of Warring States (453–221 BCE) thought.

¹ Jiao 1987: 14.

² On the challenges involved in recovering the “historical meaning” of the *Lunyu*, see Makeham 2002.

Likewise, a conventional algorithm for the intellectual historical analysis of early terms and concepts is to consider their use (or absence) in the *Lunyu* before turning to other, ostensibly later, sources. As a record of the teachings of the figure widely considered the earliest philosopher and “first teacher” (*xian-shi* 先師), the *Lunyu* continues to anchor the contemporary imagination of the Warring States “Masters” (*zhuzi* 諸子). In the last century or so, many of the most important voices in the field of classical Chinese philosophy have done a great deal of “thinking through Confucius” and the *Lunyu*, to quote David Hall and Roger Ames.³ Within the history of philology, the *Lunyu* has provided fertile ground for the development of various critical methodologies. Whenever philologists set out to reorder a text’s *juan* 卷 (fascicles, chapters) or *zhang* 章 (paragraphs, entries) with the aim of sequencing its layers chronologically, wittingly or not they are following a path paved centuries earlier by Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 (1627–1705), Cui Shu 崔述 (1740–1816), and others who sought to identify Kongzi’s original teachings amid the *Lunyu*’s miscellanies.⁴

The Continuing Currency of the *Lunyu*

Nearly two decades into the twenty-first century, the field of *Lunyu* studies is as vibrant as ever. Since 2000, publications in English have included new translations by Edward Slingerland (2003), Pan Fu’en and Wen Shaoxia (2005), and Ann-ping Chin (2014); reprints of older translations by Arthur Waley (2000), Burton Watson (2007), Simon Leys (2014), and David Hinton (2014); collections of essays edited by Bryan W. Van Norden (*Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*; 2002), David Jones (*Confucius Now: Contemporary Encounters with the Analects*; 2008), Amy Olberding (*Dao Companion to the Analects*; 2014), and Michael Nylan (*The Analects [Norton Critical Edition]*; 2014); monographs by Daniel K. Gardner (*Zhu Xi’s Reading of the Analects: Canon, Commentary, and the Classical Tradition*; 2003), John Makeham (*Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects*; 2003), Amy Olberding (*Moral Exemplars in the Analects*; 2012), Henry Rosemont (*A Reader’s Companion to the Confucian Analects*; 2013), and Michael Hunter (*Confucius Beyond the Analects*; 2017); and many more journal articles besides. Publications in

3 Hall and Ames 1987.

4 On this history, see Eno’s contribution to this volume (chap. 2) and Kim and Csikszentmihalyi 2014. A spectacular demonstration of this approach is Brooks and Brooks 1998, which systematically reordered the text on the basis of certain (not universally shared) assumptions about the workings of an early Confucius school. Our own view of the Brookses’ project mirrors Eno’s.

Chinese from the same period number in the thousands.⁵ The *Lunyu* has been introduced and reintroduced and re-reintroduced so many times now that one could write a dissertation just on the genre of the *Lunyu* introduction.⁶

Given this context, one might wonder whether the world needs yet another book on the *Lunyu*. The easy response is that there is clearly a market for such publications.⁷ In the People's Republic of China, China Central Television's broadcast of Yu Dan's 于丹 lectures on the *Lunyu* in 2006 created a national sensation. The printed version of those lectures, *Lunyu xinde* 論語心得 (*Confucius from the Heart: Ancient Wisdom for Today's World*), has sold millions of copies. Even more remarkably given the anti-Confucian campaigns of the Maoist era, the Communist Party has come to embrace Kongzi 孔子 and the *Lunyu* as a way of promoting its version of traditional Chinese values, now manifested in some five hundred "Confucius Institutes" all over the globe.⁸ In 2015 various speeches by Xi Jinping 習近平, the general secretary of the Communist Party of China and president of the People's Republic of China, were collected and published with the title *Xi Jinping: How to Read Confucius and Other Chinese Classical Thinkers*.⁹ Quotations of the *Lunyu* also featured prominently in the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, a landmark event in China's emergence on the global stage. The vibrancy of the East Asian classical tradition, with the *Lunyu* as one of its crown jewels, is something even the most contrarian of *Lunyu* scholars can be grateful for.¹⁰

Our Position on the *Lunyu*

Nevertheless, the *Lunyu's* canonicity is not the point of departure for our project. Instead, what motivates this volume is the editors' belief that direct

5 In the CNKI Journal Translation Project database of Chinese academic journals, <http://gb.oversea.cnki.net> (accessed January 2, 2017), a search for “論語” in paper titles since the year 2000 yields over six thousand results.

6 Here one might contrast the *Lunyu* with the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*) and the *Shangshu* 尚書 (*Exalted Documents*), the subjects of other volumes within the Studies in the History of Chinese Texts series; see Elman and Kern 2010; Kern and Meyer 2017. Despite their significance in the Chinese intellectual tradition, both texts have received embarrassingly little attention in Western Sinology.

7 Schaberg 2001.

8 On the resurrection of Confucius and Confucianism, see esp. Song 2003; Billioud and Thoraval 2015.

9 Zhang 2015.

10 The disadvantageous position of classical Indian studies versus classical Chinese studies is a cautionary tale in this regard; see Pollock 2009: 944–945.

evidence of the *Lunyu*'s authority and even its existence is sorely lacking before the Western Han period (202 BCE–9 CE). As argued in Hunter's contribution in this volume, the earliest sources to corroborate the existence and circulation of a *Lunyu* text date to the mid- to late Western Han, when the imperial dynasty began teaching it to princes and invoking it as an instrument of imperial legitimacy.¹¹ The earliest sources to describe the *Lunyu* as a record of Kongzi's teachings compiled by his students emerged decades after its adoption by the imperium.¹² Moreover, representations and quotations of Kongzi prior to the Han period exhibit so few parallels with the *Lunyu* as to preclude the possibility of direct borrowing from a *Lunyu* text. To date, the only excavated or looted manuscripts to corroborate the existence of the *Lunyu* date no earlier than the mid-first century BCE. The wealth of non-*Lunyu* Kongzi material in earlier manuscript finds only makes the *Lunyu*'s invisibility in the Warring States period and the first decades of the Han dynasty that much more remarkable.

Here we must acknowledge our debt to scholars whose skepticism regarding the traditional account of the *Lunyu*'s origins inspired our own. These include the entire tradition of critical *Rongo* 論語 (*Analects*) scholarship in Japan, from Takeuchi Yoshio 武内義雄 (1886–1966) and Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉 (1873–1961) to Kaneto Mamoru 金戸守; the works of Zhao Zhenxin 趙貞信 (1902–1989) and Zhu Weizheng 朱維錚 (1936–2012) in China; and the writings of John Makeham, Mark Csikszentmihalyi, Christiane Haupt, and Oliver Weingarten.¹³ Of special note is Makeham's 1996 article "The Formation of *Lunyu* as a Book," an enduring work of scholarship that established the contours of the revisionist position within English-language scholarship.

When we step back to consider the available evidence in its totality, we conclude that the likeliest context for the creation of a *Lunyu* text is the Western Han dynasty. (This is the argument summarized in Hunter's contribution and

¹¹ See Csikszentmihalyi 2002; Hunter 2017: chap. 3.

¹² That view's earliest expression is a fragment attributed to Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE), the official charged by Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r. 33–7 BCE) in 26 BCE with organizing and cataloging the imperial library: "All twenty sections of the Lu *Lunyu* are fine sayings recorded by Kongzi's disciples" (魯論語二十篇皆孔子弟子記諸善言也). This fragment appears in the preface to the *Lunyu jijie* (*Sibu congkan* ed., 1.1a), attributed to He Yan 何晏 (ca. 190–249). For the expanded "Yiwen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) account, see *Hanshu* 30.1716. See also Mark Csikszentmihalyi's contribution to this volume (chap. 8).

¹³ Takeuchi 1939; Tsuda 1946; Kaneto 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980; Zhao 1961; Zhu 1986, 1987; Makeham 1996; Csikszentmihalyi 2002, 2004; Haupt 2006; Weingarten 2010. We would also like to extend our thanks to Cameron Moore, whose survey of Japanese *Rongo* scholarship reminded us of the importance of Japanese scholarship in the twentieth century.

in his recent monograph.)¹⁴ We believe that the *Lunyu* is both an *imperial* and a *dynastic* text. By that we do not just mean that the *Lunyu* is a product of the Han period. The *Lunyu* as a book came into existence under the intellectual, political, and social conditions of a unified imperial state governed by members of a dynastic lineage. Given the amazing breadth and dynamism of the “Kongzi” phenomenon in the Warring States period, the standardization of Kongzi quotation practice via the *Lunyu* would not have been possible prior to the Qin 秦 unification or the increasing centralization of the early Western Han, nor is there any evidence of such standardization prior to empire. This is not to say that all of the *Lunyu* was written from scratch in the Han; our inquiry is about the compilation date of the *Lunyu* as a book, not about the dating of its individual passages. With regard to the latter, we remain largely agnostic: given the paucity of parallels between the *Lunyu* and pre-imperial Kongzi quotations, evidence that a given saying circulated as a Kongzi saying prior to the *Lunyu* is not forthcoming in the vast majority of cases. We simply insist that inclusion in the *Lunyu* is not a marker of a saying’s antiquity or authenticity.

Moreover, it was under the Western Han dynasty that the need for a quotable Kongzi canon became pressing, as emperors and subjects alike looked to justify their policies with reference to the sage behind the Five Classics, the newly established state-sponsored curriculum for the training of imperial officials. As noted by Hunter, echoes of Western Han recruitment edicts in the *Lunyu* further reveal its interest in the “selection” (*lun* 論) of talented and virtuous candidates, a key ingredient in the emerging imperial system. As a companion text to the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*), which established the broader social, political, and cosmological implications of *xiao* 孝 (filiality) for an early imperial audience, the *Lunyu* indoctrinated imperial scions in values conducive to dynastic continuity.¹⁵ In short, even if it existed in the Warring States period in some form, a possibility that can never be dismissed, such a text could not have had the authority it enjoyed under empire. The Western Han dynasty did not merely put its seal of approval on a preexisting text; in a very real sense, it “created” (*zuo* 作) the Kongzi canon it needed.

This is a controversial position, one with which not all the contributors to this volume (or participants in the 2011 conference that precipitated it) would entirely agree. Despite our enthusiasm for revisionist *Lunyu* scholarship, we do not offer this volume as a definitive answer to the question of the *Lunyu*’s origins. To the contrary, we openly acknowledge the contested nature of our

¹⁴ Hunter 2017.

¹⁵ It is not a coincidence that the two most important themes in *Lunyu* 1 are *xue* 學 (“learning”; 1/1, 1/6–8, 1/14) and *xiao* 孝 (“filiality”; 1/2, 1/6, 1/11).

claims and the impossibility of proving once and for all a particular date for any part of the *Lunyu*, let alone for the collection as a whole. (As pointed out by Goldin and others in the present volume, the undeniable presence of pre-Han material in the *Lunyu* significantly muddies the distinction between a Han and pre-Han text.) No less for the *Lunyu* than for other early texts, early China scholars cannot presume to offer anything approaching definitive proof of its origins. Paradoxically, this is even truer today than it was a few decades ago thanks to the combination of newly available manuscripts, digital research tools (as in Hunter's contribution), and broader comparative approaches to the study of ancient text cultures. To quote the introduction of another volume in the Studies in the History of Chinese Texts series:

The certainty that the eminent philologist Bernhard Karlgren still felt, in the mid-twentieth century, when deciding on the interpretation of individual Chinese characters and words, is long gone: a wealth of new data from unearthed ancient manuscripts, together with more sophisticated conceptual approaches that are informed by neighboring disciplines and cross-cultural comparisons, especially the study of ancient Mediterranean texts, has made us far less sure of ourselves in evaluating the "right" choice for this or that Chinese character. ... In this endeavor, we have been happy to trade false certainty for more interesting and productive questions and possibilities.¹⁶

What is true of individual Chinese characters is even more true for processes of textual formation in the ancient context. In the face of such uncertainties, the best one can do is to consider *all* the evidence at one's disposal in the hopes of devising a provisionally workable hypothesis, all while explicitly acknowledging the tentative nature of one's conclusions and welcoming new evidence as it becomes available. As a field, the worst thing we can do is to promise more certainty than our sources allow us. However much we would like to recover *The Original Analects* or *The Authentic Confucius*, that should not be the goal of (self-)critical textual scholarship.¹⁷

Given the multiplicity of voices on the topic, all of them making very strong cases one way or the other, there is a larger question here: how do we engage in controversy? Or, how does one collaborate in such a way that all perspectives are cherished? Irrespective of their intellectual, methodological, or disciplinary commitments, all our contributors started from the premise that the

¹⁶ Kern and Meyer 2017: 6.

¹⁷ Brooks and Brooks 1998; Chin 2007.

question of the *Lunyu's* origins remains open and vital. Our goal is not to rebut other views or to establish a new orthodoxy but to create a space in which different hypotheses can be advanced, tested, and modified.

Of Rugs and Dominoes

The essays in this volume are further united by a willingness to consider the implications of rethinking the *Lunyu's* origins. By virtue of its canonicity, the *Lunyu* is embedded in the modern imagination of early China in ways that few other texts are. Consequently, every hypothesis about the *Lunyu's* nature, origin, context, and circumstances of composition and compilation implies wider assumptions about ancient Chinese textuality and its intellectual, social, material, and political contexts. To quote Mark Csikszentmihalyi, problematizing the *Lunyu's* chronology and its relationship to the historical Kongzi “has the effect of pulling the rug out from under the usual narrative of what is often called the ‘history of thought’ (*sixiang shi* 思想史) of early China.”¹⁸ Or to use another metaphor: knock over the *Lunyu* and many other dominoes also fall. These include

- Destabilizing the traditional timeline of early Chinese thought anchored to the Kongzi of the *Lunyu* as the earliest master and/or the *Lunyu* as the earliest work of philosophy.
- Problematizing the *Lunyu* as a source of social, political, or linguistic realities in the early Warring States period.¹⁹
- Complicating the study of Kongzi by removing the most convenient Kongzi canon. If not via the *Lunyu*, how does one go about reading and teaching the voluminous yet scattered corpus of early Kongzi literature?²⁰
- Dissolving the disciplinary divide between pre-Qin and early imperial thought. If the *Lunyu* did not exist or did not circulate widely prior to the Western Han period, then it can hardly be read as a foundational text of “pre-Qin philosophy” (*xian Qin zhexue* 先秦哲學). Whether any texts traditionally dated to the Warring States period can be read exclusively from a pre-Qin perspective is an open question.
- Problematizing the master-student model of intellectual and textual transmission that is so central to the modern imagination of the early Chinese

18 Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 25. For a contrasting view, see Goldin’s essay in this volume (chap. 4): “[T]he new insights regarding the relatively late compilation of the *Analects* do not invalidate the traditional understanding of the text’s philosophical importance.”

19 Behr 2011.

20 On this problem, see the introduction to Hunter 2017.

- intellectual scene. Insofar as Kongzi is thought to have formed the first “school” or “intellectual lineage” (*jia* 家), and insofar as he and his *dizi* 弟子 (followers) exemplify master-student relationships in general, where else should we look for evidence of master-student transmission if not to the *Lunyu*? If master-student schools and lineages did not play as large a role in the formation of “Masters” literature, then what is the underlying mechanism of intellectual and textual transmission in the Warring States period?²¹
- Exposing the anachronisms inherent in using post-*Lunyu* sources to make sense of pre-*Lunyu* sources. Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (ca. 145–85 BCE) *Shiji* 史記 (*Grand Scribe’s Records*), most of our earliest extant commentaries to the classics, and resources like the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*Explanations of Characters Simple and Compound*) character dictionary of ca. 100 CE all feed the impression that the *Lunyu* was integral to the pre-Han textual record, and all come to us from the early empire.²²
 - Questioning the appropriateness of the accretion model of textual formation. Insofar as the field of *Lunyu* studies has taught us to think of early texts as successive layers of accretion, rethinking the *Lunyu* also leads us to reconsider our default assumptions about how early texts were formed. Canonization is by definition a process of selection and exclusion,²³ and early descriptions of editors, including Kongzi, Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE), and many others, provide overwhelming evidence for the compilation of ancient Chinese texts through processes of reduction, not expansion.²⁴

From a traditional perspective, these points might read as rallying cries for a deconstructionist, if not outright nihilistic, program. To the contrary, for us the payoff of rethinking the *Lunyu* is the thrill of exploring new perspectives in the study of early Chinese texts. The contributions to this volume are offered in that spirit.

The Contributions

Appearing more than two decades since the publication of his seminal essay “The Formation of *Lunyu* as a Book,” John Makeham’s chapter (“A Critical

²¹ See also Weingarten 2015.

²² See Durrant 1995 for the importance of the Kongzi persona for Sima Qian’s self-presentation, which, in turn, colors the entire reception of the *Shiji* and our understanding of the Warring States period.

²³ Assmann and Assmann 1987.

²⁴ See, e.g., Kern 2015; Van der Loon 1952.

Overview of Some Contemporary Chinese Perspectives on the Composition and Date of the *Lunyu*”) surveys the current state of Chinese-language scholarship on the *Lunyu*, in particular in relation to recently unearthed manuscripts. Makeham spotlights “methodologically naïve” efforts to use these manuscripts to reaffirm traditional accounts of early *ru* 儒 intellectual history involving both the *Mengzi* 孟子 (*Mencius*) and a (re)constructed *Zisizi* 子思子 (*Master Zisi*) and to claim an early date for the *Lunyu* within this history. In a detailed rebuttal of some of the most prominent studies to this effect, Makeham demonstrates how their use of manuscript evidence from Guodian 郭店 and from the Shanghai Museum corpus involves multiple leaps of faith and logical fallacies. Makeham urges us to distinguish between an irrecoverable past and a reconstructed past and to be more critically aware of our own roles as interpreters.

In chapter 2 (“The *Lunyu* as an Accretion Text”) Robert Eno defends the accretion model of the *Lunyu*, the most influential theory of the text’s origins in the modern era. After broadly surveying (and critiquing) previous iterations, including those of Kimura Eiichi and E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, Eno presents the most cautious and persuasive version of the accretion theory to date. Without assuming a strong link between the *Lunyu* and the historical Kongzi, Eno tentatively dates the core layer of the *Lunyu* to the late fourth or early third century BCE, with additional stages of redaction taking place in the Qin and Han periods. Of particular note is Eno’s discussion (following Kanaya Osamu) of “the likely role of Qin encyclopedism” in the compilation of the *Lunyu* and other *ru* texts both in the years before the imperial unification and then further with the official erudites at the Qin imperial court. Their textual work, according to Eno, prepared the basis for the subsequent canonization by Western Han scholars.

Adopting a different approach to the question of the *Lunyu*’s origins, in chapter 3 (“The *Lunyu* as Western Han Text”) Michael Hunter summarizes the argument for reading the *Lunyu* as a Western Han text. From a statistical analysis of thousands of Kongzi quotations across all early Chinese texts, Hunter shows that before mid-Western Han times, anything resembling the received *Lunyu* would be unreconstructable from Kongzi quotations in other texts. Hunter places the compilation and canonization of the *Lunyu* in the reign of Han emperor Wu 武 (141–87 BCE), that is, the time between the *Huainanzi* (139 BCE) and the *Shiji* (ca. 100 BCE), “with post-*Shiji* texts drawing heavily from the *Lunyu* for their Kongzi quotations and pre-*Huainanzi* texts drawing their Kongzi material from elsewhere.” While Hunter allows for the *Lunyu*’s inclusion of pre-imperial material, he removes the *Lunyu* from its exalted position as the fountainhead of Chinese philosophy and, furthermore, opens perspec-

tives on what a philosophical reading of the *Lunyu* as a Western Han text might reveal.

In chapter 4 (“Confucius and His Disciples in the *Lunyu*: The Basis for the Traditional View”) Paul R. Goldin mounts a vigorous defense of “the traditional understanding of the [*Lunyu*’s] philosophical importance” even as he accepts a Western Han date for the redaction of the received *Lunyu*. Surveying various philosophical issues from the fourth and third centuries BCE, Goldin argues that the *Lunyu*’s silence on these issues is in keeping with an early Warring States intellectual milieu. He further shows how references to other philosophers in early texts suggest a robust overall framework for the traditional chronology of Warring States texts. Without committing to the view of the *Lunyu* as an authentic record of Kongzi’s teachings, Goldin thus maintains the *Lunyu*’s status as a canonical, or at least early, source of Chinese philosophy and that “whoever was responsible for compiling” the text “included an overwhelming proportion” of genuinely early material within it.

In contrast, Joachim Gentz, in chapter 5 (“The *Lunyu*, a Homeless Dog in Intellectual History: On the Dating of Discourses on Confucius’s Success and Failure”), expresses skepticism regarding the prospects of dating the *Lunyu*. While acknowledging its wealth of “concepts, ideas, thoughts, terms, metaphors, discourses, and problems,” he argues that the *Lunyu* does not contextualize or systematize these elements in ways that lend themselves to intellectual historical analysis, because “[t]he purpose of the book is obviously not to take part in intellectual debates.” Drawing broadly on a wealth of transmitted texts and recently unearthed manuscripts, Gentz presents two case studies: the *Lunyu*’s contradictory presentation of *ren* 仁 (often translated as “humaneness” or “benevolence”) and its treatment of the problem of Kongzi’s success and failure in comparison to pre-Han debates on the subject. Yet neither individual concepts nor the success/failure problem, Gentz concludes, allow us to date the *Lunyu*—a text that with its fundamental focus on Kongzi’s action “is homeless in early Chinese intellectual history.”

In chapter 6 (“Confucius’s Sayings Entombed: On Two Han Dynasty Bamboo *Lunyu* Manuscripts”) Paul van Els judiciously surveys the evidence from two fragmentary *Lunyu* manuscripts, one from the tomb of Liu Xiu 劉脩 (d. 55 BCE), the king of Zhongshan 中山, unearthed in the 1970s near the modern-day city of Dingzhou 定州 in Hubei 湖北 Province, and the other from the tomb of a high-ranking Han official in Lelang Commandery 樂浪郡 in modern-day North Korea. After summarizing the circumstances of the manuscripts’ discovery and scholarly history, as well as their archaeological contexts, physical characteristics, and paleographic features, including a number of textual variants, van Els addresses more difficult questions regarding the dating,

provenance, and purpose of the manuscripts. Through a detailed comparative analysis of their script styles against various other Han dynasty manuscripts, he argues that both manuscripts date to the first century BCE and not to the early Western Han, as some have contended.

Although not focused primarily on the problem of the *Lunyu's* chronology, Matthias L. Richter's contribution in chapter 7 ("Manuscript Formats and Textual Structure in Early China") bears directly on the question of how we should imagine the processes of textual formation and transmission that ultimately produced the received *Lunyu*. Richter targets the widely held assumption that the composite nature and fluidity of texts like the *Lunyu* are attributable to the format of bamboo manuscripts, which (so the assumption goes) invited the rearrangement, addition, and subtraction of individual bamboo slips—in Erik Maeder's memorable phrase, the "loose-leaf ring binder" theory of textual formation. In contrast, Richter finds little evidence for such a theory, instead pointing to numerous instances in which scribes endeavored "to define textual identity and to prevent a potential confusion of textual order." When looking for explanations for the *Lunyu's* heterogeneity, Richter concludes, we must look to factors other than early manuscript formats.

In chapter 8 ("Interlocutor Collections, the *Lunyu*, and Proto-*Lunyu* Texts") Mark Csikszentmihalyi examines the role of "interlocutor texts" in the formation of the received *Lunyu*. The point of departure for his essay is early theories of the *Lunyu's* composition, which assign a prominent role to Kongzi's students as recorders, compilers, and transmitters of his teachings. However, in his survey of early texts (including whole chapters and shorter dialogues) attributed to interlocutors like Zengzi 曾子, Csikszentmihalyi finds little evidence for the stable attribution of such texts to specific interlocutor figures. To the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that extant interlocutor texts reached their final form only in the Han period, perhaps under the influence of the *Lunyu*. Csikszentmihalyi also devotes a substantial section to the relationship between the *Lunyu* and the *Shiji* chapter of collected biographies of Kongzi's students, which "likely was not done by someone with something very much like a modern *Lunyu* in front of them."

Esther Sunkyung Klein, in chapter 9 ("Sima Qian's Kongzi and the Western Han *Lunyu*"), takes a closer look at that crucially important witness to the *Lunyu's* emergence in the Western Han period: Sima Qian's *Shiji*. Klein surveys the use of *Lunyu* parallels in three layers of the *Shiji*: the numerous *taishigong yue* 太史公曰 (the honorable senior archivist says) passages in which the historian speaks in his own voice, the Kongzi biography of the "Kongzi shijia" 孔子世家 (Hereditary House of Kongzi), and the disciple biographies of the "Zhongni dizi liezhuan" 仲尼弟子列傳 (Arrayed Traditions of Zhongni's

Disciples). Finding that “Sima Qian had a *Lunyu*, or at least some proto-*Lunyu* source(s),” Klein catalogs various discrepancies and contrasting points of emphasis between the *Lunyu* and the *Shiji*. These include the *Shiji*’s amplification of certain *Lunyu* sayings, its condensation of others, its fascination with Zigong coupled with its relative disinterest in Zengzi, its interest in invoking a more “esoteric” Kongzi, and its emphasis on Kongzi’s authorship of the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*).

Finally, in chapter 10 (“Kongzi as Author in the Han”) Martin Kern surveys early sources for the notion of Kongzi’s authorship of the *Chunqiu* as a test to falsify the hypothesis of a Han compilation date for the *Lunyu*. According to Kern, there is little if any evidence of this notion in pre-imperial texts; and notably, the *Chunqiu* is not even mentioned in the *Lunyu*. Kern further shows that contrary to common assumptions, the idea that Kongzi authored the *Chunqiu* also remains limited to very few texts during the Western Han period. The most important exception is Sima Qian’s *Shiji*, which, in Kern’s reading, differs strikingly from the *Lunyu* in one particular respect: unlike the Kongzi in the *Lunyu*, the *Shiji* Kongzi, suffering and frustrated, is obsessed with being recognized by others, and for this reason created the *Chunqiu*. While these observations could be interpreted to mean that the *Lunyu* comes from an earlier period, Kern suggests that it was the very nature of the text as an imperial primer for the education of the crown prince (and others at court) that shaped its ideological outlook, including the absence of any mention of the *Chunqiu* as a text critical of failed rulership.

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Our thanks to the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS) and the David A. Gardner ’69 Magic Project in the Humanities Council at Princeton University for funding the original conference (“The *Analects*: A Western Han Text?”) on November 4–5, 2011. We would also like to thank the original participants in that conference whose conference papers did not end up in the present volume: Wolfgang Behr, Anne Cheng, Cameron Moore, Wojciech Simson, Ken’ichi Takashima, and Oliver Weingarten. Finally, we thank Oliver Weingarten for co-organizing our original conference and for serving as co-editor during earlier stages in the preparation of the present volume.

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