The Wenzi: creation and manipulation of a Chinese philosophical text

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1. The Dìngzhōu Discovery

In 1973, Chinese archaeologists excavated a Hàn dynasty tomb situated at the southern edge of Bājiǎoláng 八角廊, a small village four kilometers south-west of Dìngzhōu 定州 in Héběi 河北 province.[1] [**Figure 1.1**] In eight months of excavation, from May to December, the team revealed a tomb of considerable dimensions and brought to light a rich array of funerary furnishings, with significant potential for the study of early imperial Chinese history and culture.[2]

1.1. The Tomb

When its construction was completed, some two thousand years ago, the burial site must have been an impressive sight. The tomb was covered by a burial mound with an estimated height of 16 meters and a diameter of 90 meters, and circumvallated by an earthen wall of 145 by 127 meters, enclosing an area of nearly two hectares. But centuries of precipitation and farmers borrowing soil for their lands resulted in the disintegration of the tumulus and its circumvallation. By 1973, both were virtually flat.

The tomb was built in a style that is known in Chinese archaeological literature as "wooden outer coffin tomb" 木槨墓. Tombs of this type consist of large quantities of debarked cypress slats, a meter or more in length, piled up with their heads facing inwards to create a rectangular or square barricade structure.[3] This

[1] The tomb has come to be called "Hàn Dynasty Tomb Number 40 of Dìngxiàn" 定縣 40 號漢墓, because at the time of the discovery, Dìngzhōu 定州 was known as Dìngxiàn 定縣, a name it kept until 1986. Both names, Dìngxiàn and Dìngzhōu, as well as that of Bājiǎoláng, the actual location of the archaeological site, occur in Chinese literature on the topic. Accordingly, the unearthed bamboo *Wénzǐ* manuscript is variously known as Bājiǎoláng *Wénzǐ*, Dìngxiàn *Wénzǐ* and Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*. For consistency, I refer to the tomb and its content by the name of Dìngzhōu only.

[2] A brief article on the jade suit found in the Dìngzhōu tomb, published in the July 1976 issue of *Cultural Relics*, contains a preliminary description of the tomb and its discovery. A more detailed excavation report was published five years later in the August 1981 issue of *Cultural Relics*, along with an account of the disinterred bamboo manuscripts. This chapter draws mainly on these two articles in *Cultural Relics*, the prime medium for the various institutions involved in the analysis of artifacts and manuscripts from Dìngzhōu. For the exact references to articles on the Dìngzhōu find, see under the National Cultural Relics Bureau and the various Héběi institutions in the Bibliography.

[3] An alternative name for this type of wooden sarcophagus is "yellow intestines heads gathering" 黃腸題湊, a puzzling designation in which the first two graphs supposedly depict the cypresses without exterior covering, whereas the latter graphs refer to the horizontal, inward facing position of the slats.

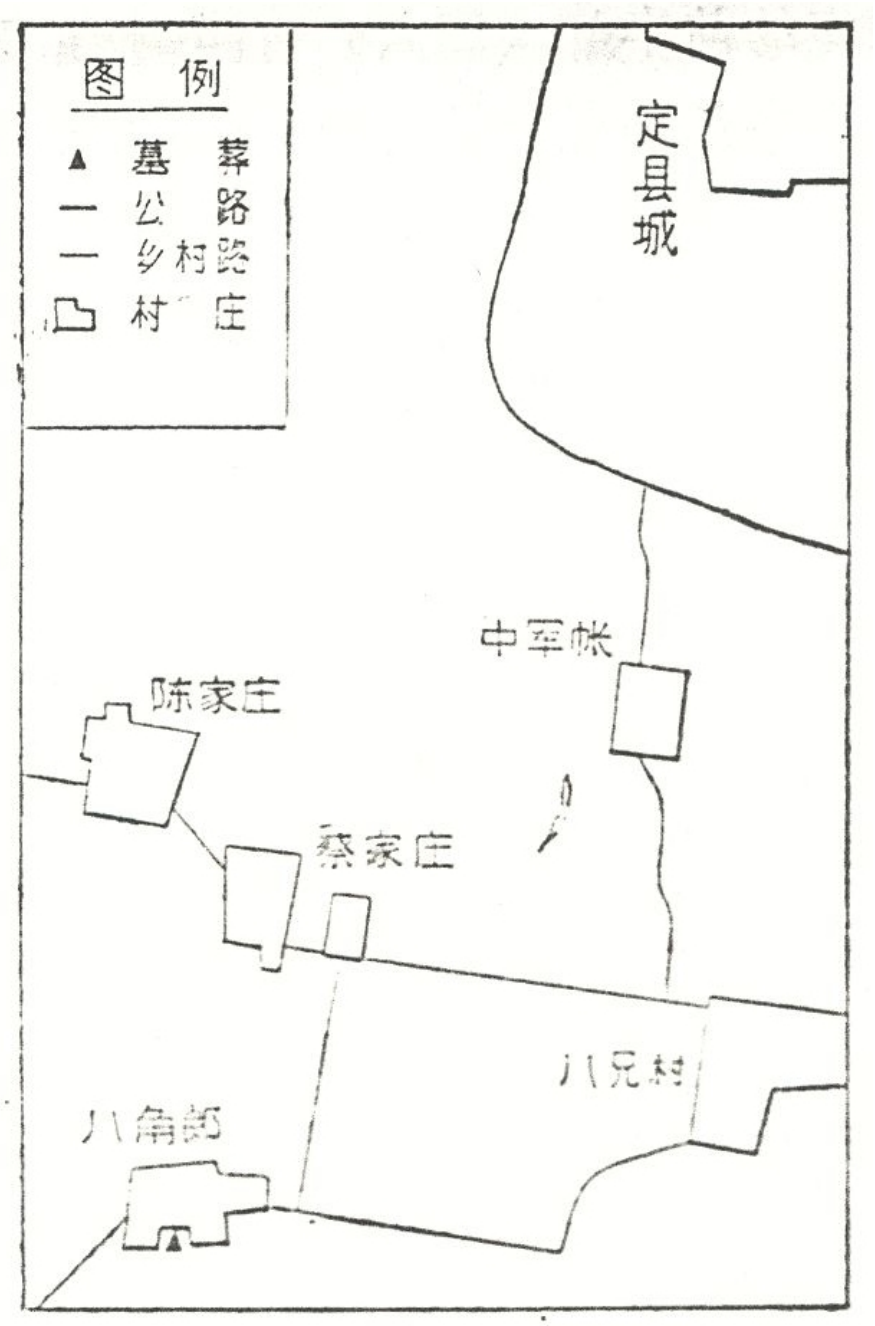
barricade structure constitutes a wooden burial chamber, the "outer coffin" that houses the inner coffin or set of inner coffins. Such outer coffin structures, Loewe [1999: 11] notes, were "intended to provide a stout defense for the tomb, presumably against both the destructive powers of the elements and the malevolent intentions of robbers, which were too frequent to be ignored." During the Former Hàn 前漢 dynasty (206 BCE-8 CE), this was the prevailing type of sarcophagus for emperors, kings and occasionally, by way of special privilege, also for high officials. Afterwards, such sarcophagi became rare.[4]

The Dìngzhōu tomb is built on a north-south axis and comprises three parts with a total length of 61 meters. A long passageway that descends from south to north provides access to a front chamber which leads into a larger rear chamber. [**Figure 1.2**] This multi-chambered structure is a Former Hàn development aiming to represent the residence of the living; chambers variously include a bedroom, restroom, library, garage for chariots, and so on.[5] Each chamber in the Dìngzhōu tomb is furthermore subdivided into three compartments (east, center, west), with the central compartment of the rear chamber serving as the final resting place of the deceased. Grave goods were uncovered in most compartments, with the most precious items nearest the deceased.

The prospect of finding valuable funerary objects is a strong incentive for thieves. Unfortunately, tomb robbery is an all too common phenomenon, in China as much as elsewhere, and the Dìngzhōu tomb was not spared. In their excavation report, the archaeologists note that the tomb was plundered in the distant past, probably not long after its construction, when an unknown number of funerary objects were taken away. The tomb contains obvious traces of fire, which they suspect was caused by the robbers. The valuables remaining in the tomb indicate that the robbers were forced to flee before finishing their job and that the fire, supposedly the result of carrying torches in a wooden construction, was unintended. A sad consequence of the fire is that many of the remaining funerary objects are damaged. Items made of wood and other easily ignitable materials were particularly affected: if not reduced to ashes, they

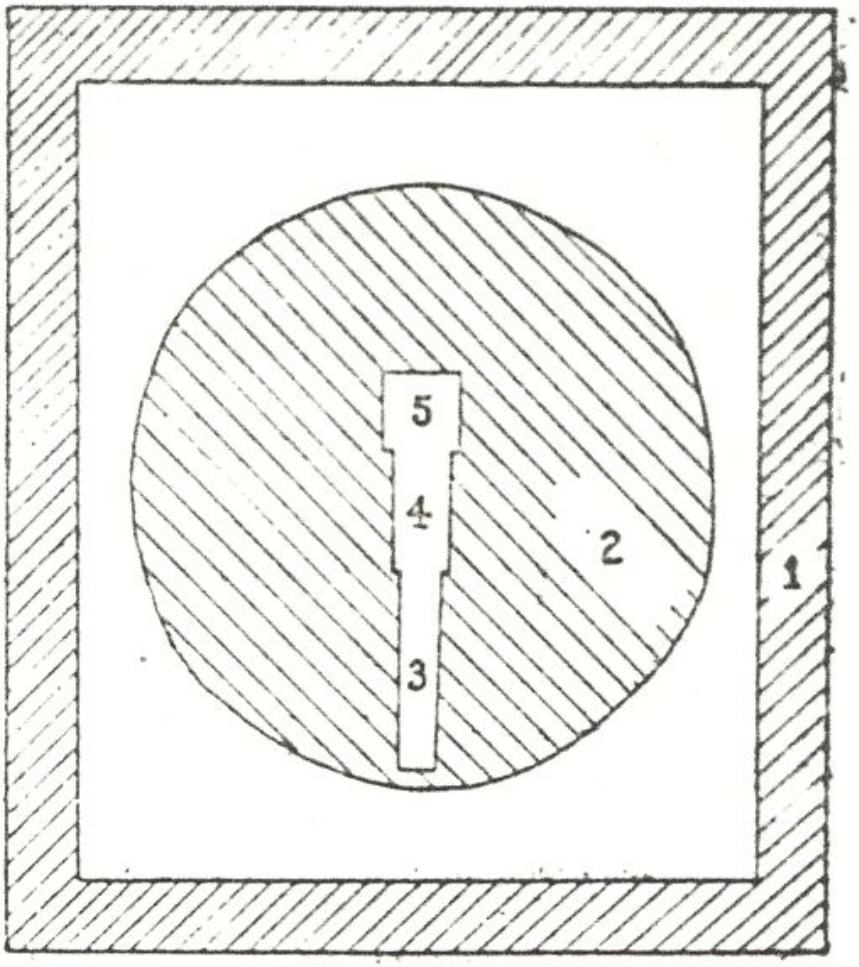
[4] Wooden tombs appeared as early as the Shāng 商 dynasty (16th-11th c. BCE), but the complex wooden outer coffin structure is typical of the Former Hàn. According to the team that excavated the Dìngzhōu tomb [*Cultural Relics* 1976.7: 59], the style became extinct before the beginning of the Latter Hàn 後漢 (25-220 CE), though there are indications of sporadic use until after the Hàn.

[5] Rawson [1980: 199-200] notes on the change from shaft tombs to chambered tombs that while "the shaft tomb was used well into the Western Hàn", this period also witnessed a new development, namely "the construction of tombs with several rooms rather than a single pit". The Dìngzhōu tomb may be seen as representative of this development.



图一　八角廊村及汉墓位置图

Figure 1.1: Location of the Dìngzhōu Tomb



图二　定县八角廊40号汉墓平面示意图

1.城垣　2.封土　3.墓道　4.前室　5.后室

Figure 1.2: Layout of the Dìngzhōu Tomb

were charred by the fire. Fortunately, plenty of objects survive, some even in excellent condition.

From the fragments of charred wood in the burial chamber, the archaeologists infer that its occupant was encased by a complex of five nested coffins, one within the other. Such a five-layered coffin-structure was reserved for rulers of the highest strata of society. The high-ranking deceased was buried in the innermost coffin, head to the north and feet facing south, a posture of authority in the Chinese cultural tradition. While his corpse had virtually disintegrated by the time of the discovery, the jade garment that clothed him survived. [**Figure 1.3**] This funerary suit measures 1.82 meters in length and consists of 1.203 jade tesserae, mainly trapezoid and rectangular in shape. The pieces of jade, perforated in all four corners, were sewn together by circa 2.580 grams of fine gold threads.[6] According to Loewe [1999: 15], the practice of enclosure in a jade suit became increasingly more frequent after circa 130 BCE and probably lasted until the end of the Latter Hàn dynasty. While such precious garments obviously bear witness to the status and wealth that the deceased enjoyed in his lifetime, they are also important in the afterlife, as Rawson [1980: 197] points out:

> Jade, it was believed, without any grounds whatsoever, would preserve the body from corruption. This inhibition of bodily decay was to enable the attainment of immortality. While the jade preserved the whole body intact, it could house the earthly soul, leaving the spiritual soul to achieve immortality.

In Hàn dynasty funerary customs, three types of metal thread were used to link the jade plaques: gold, silver and copper. As a rule, only emperors were enshrouded in jade suits sewn with gold threads. Rulers of lesser status had to make do with inferior metals, though in exceptional cases the privilege of being clad in a gold-sewn jade costume was granted to kings as well.[7] This privilege seems to apply here, for there are indications that the Dìngzhōu suit was not tailor-made, but ready-made at the central court and adapted to the posture of the deceased after it was bestowed upon him.[8] Naturally, the sheer value of jade costumes is a strong motive for tomb robbers. Loewe [1999: 15] speaks of several tombs where only a few pieces of perforated jade

[6] For pictures of the suit and a close-up of pieces of jade, see *Cultural Relics* [1976.7: 57-59].
[7] For example, Liú Shèng 劉勝, King Jìng of Zhōngshān 中山靖王 (r. 154-113 BCE), who was a son of Emperor Jǐng 漢景帝 (r. 157-141 BCE) and a brother of Emperor Wǔ 漢武帝 (r. 140-87 BCE), received this privilege. He was buried in a jade suit sewn with gold thread in a tomb in Mǎnchéng 滿城, Héběi province, which archaeologists opened up in 1968. See Loewe [1999: 23] for details.
[8] For an analysis of the jade suit, see *Cultural Relics* [1976.7: 58].

were found, drop-offs left behind by looters who carried away the rest of the suit. The complete suit discovered at Dìngzhōu, which ironically survived due to the fire that chased out the looters, therefore provides rare evidence for the study of Hàn dynasty funerary practices.

In addition to the jade suit, the tomb yielded a wealth of funerary objects, including jadeware, goldware, bronzeware, lacquerware and some 300 pieces of earthenware. Noteworthy objects include a richly decorated bronze mirror 銅鏡, several jade discs 玉璧, bracelets 玉環 and pendants 玉佩, golden objects in the shape of horse hoofs 馬蹄金 and unicorn feet 麟趾金, and forty discus-shaped gold coins 金餅.[9] [**Figures 1.4, 1.5**] The western compartment of the front chamber furthermore housed the remains of three horse-drawn chariots, which the archaeologists identify as a means of conveyance used by kings in Hàn times. Another compartment stored a charred bamboo basket containing inscribed bamboo strips, a scribe's knife and other writing utensils.

Who occupied the Dìngzhōu tomb? The costly material, high-quality craftsmanship and rich array of funerary objects point to an occupant of considerable status and wealth, yet none of the objects are reported to contain inscriptions that reveal the identity of the deceased. Nonetheless, the sheer dimensions of the burial site, the capaciousness of the tomb chambers, the particular type of wooden sarcophagus, the five-layered coffin, the type of chariots interred in the tomb and the jade costume with gold threads imply that the deceased was a member of the imperial Liú 劉 clan, who headed one of the subordinate kingdoms in Former Hàn times.

Some of the unearthed bamboo strips contain dates, which delimit the possible period of the tomb's construction. The excavation report gives the latest mentioned date as "tenth day of the fourth month in the second year of the Five Phoenixes reign period" 五鳳二年四月十日. The Five Phoenixes reign of Emperor Xuān 漢宣帝 (r. 73-49 BCE) lasted from 57 to 53 BCE and the said date corresponds to 8 May of the year 56 BCE in the Gregorian calendar. The tomb therefore must have been constructed between that year and the final stages of the Former Hàn. In those days, Dìngzhōu was a walled fortification known as Lúnú 盧奴 and served as the capital

[9] The Mǎnchéng tomb (see note 7), neighbouring the Dìngzhōu tomb in location and date of closure, yielded the same number of gold coins, which, if no coincidence, may bear witness to a Hàn dynasty burial regulation [*Cultural Relics* 1981.8: 3]. Gold was cast in the shape of horses' hoofs and unicorns' feet after Emperor Wǔ, according to historiographical sources, captured a white unicorn and had the auspicious presage of a heavenly horse. See Dubs [1944: 110-111] for details.

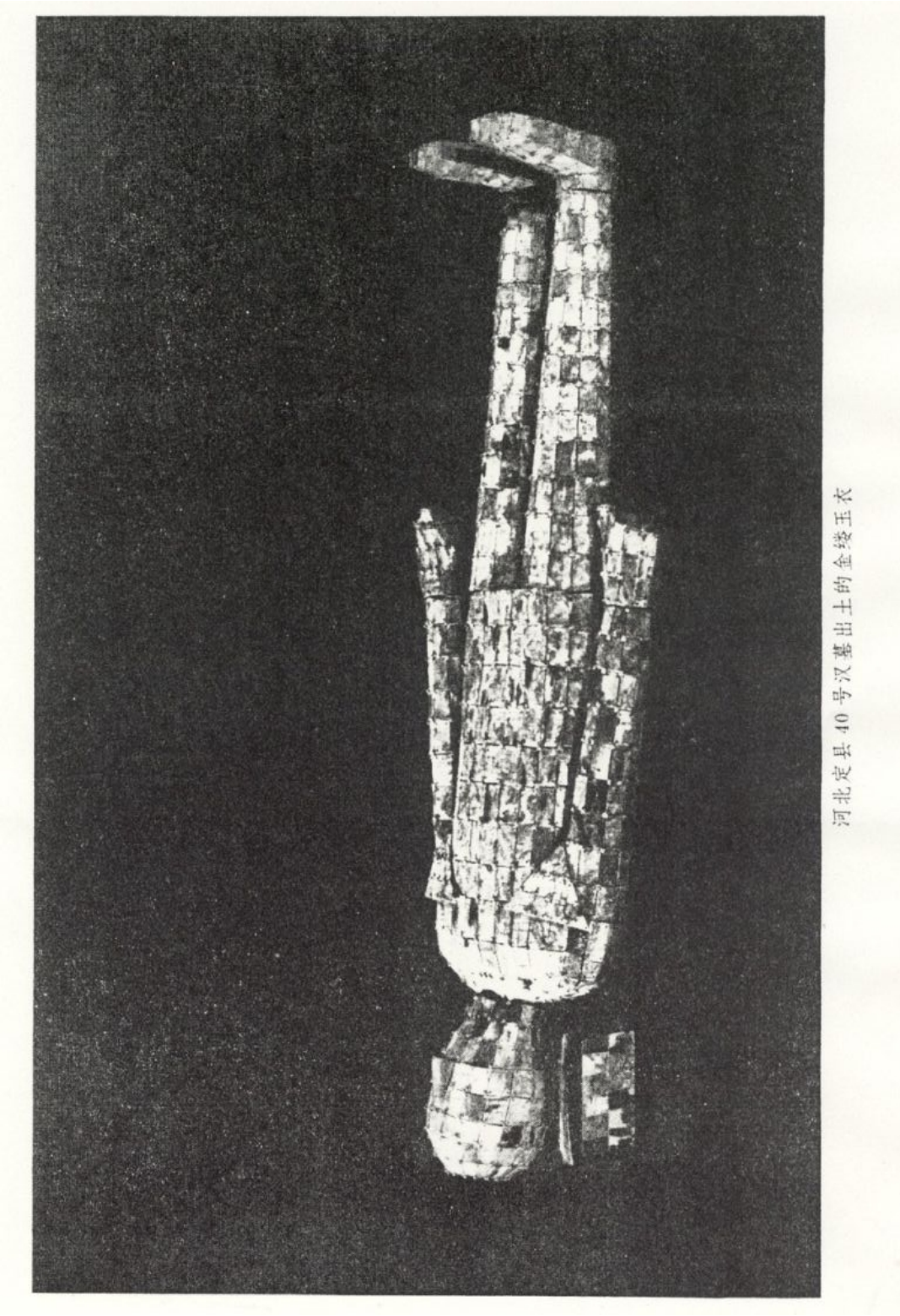
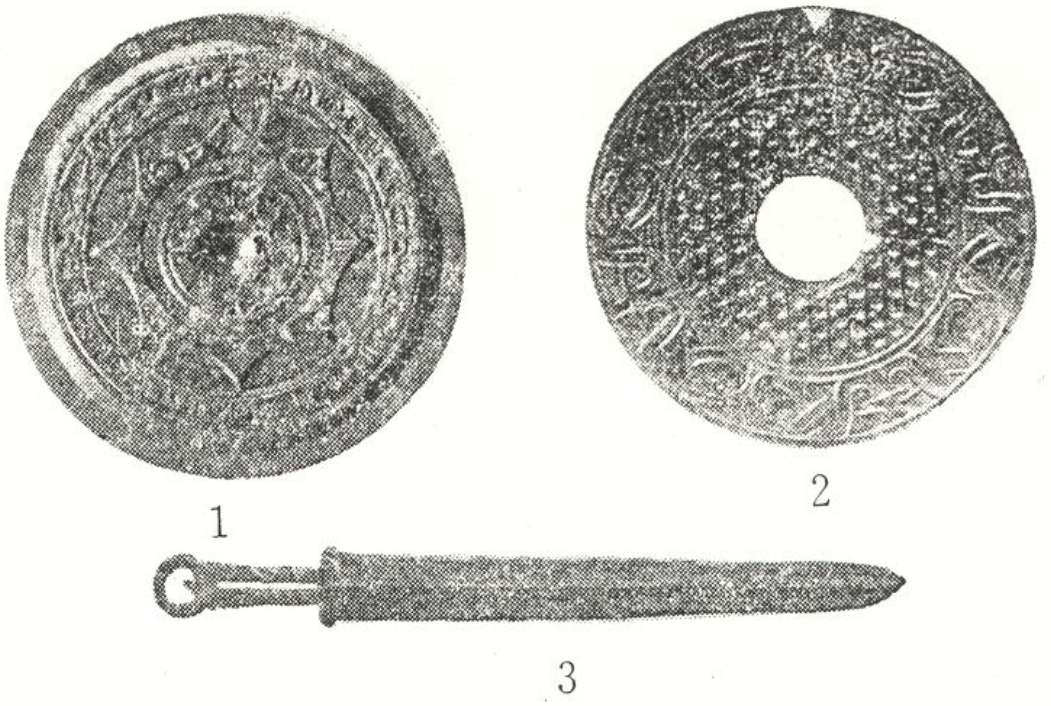


Figure 1.3: Jade Suit Sewn with Gold Threads



图一　1、连弧纹铜镜　2、玉璧　3、铜剑

Figure 1.4: Funerary Objects from the Dìngzhōu Tomb (1)

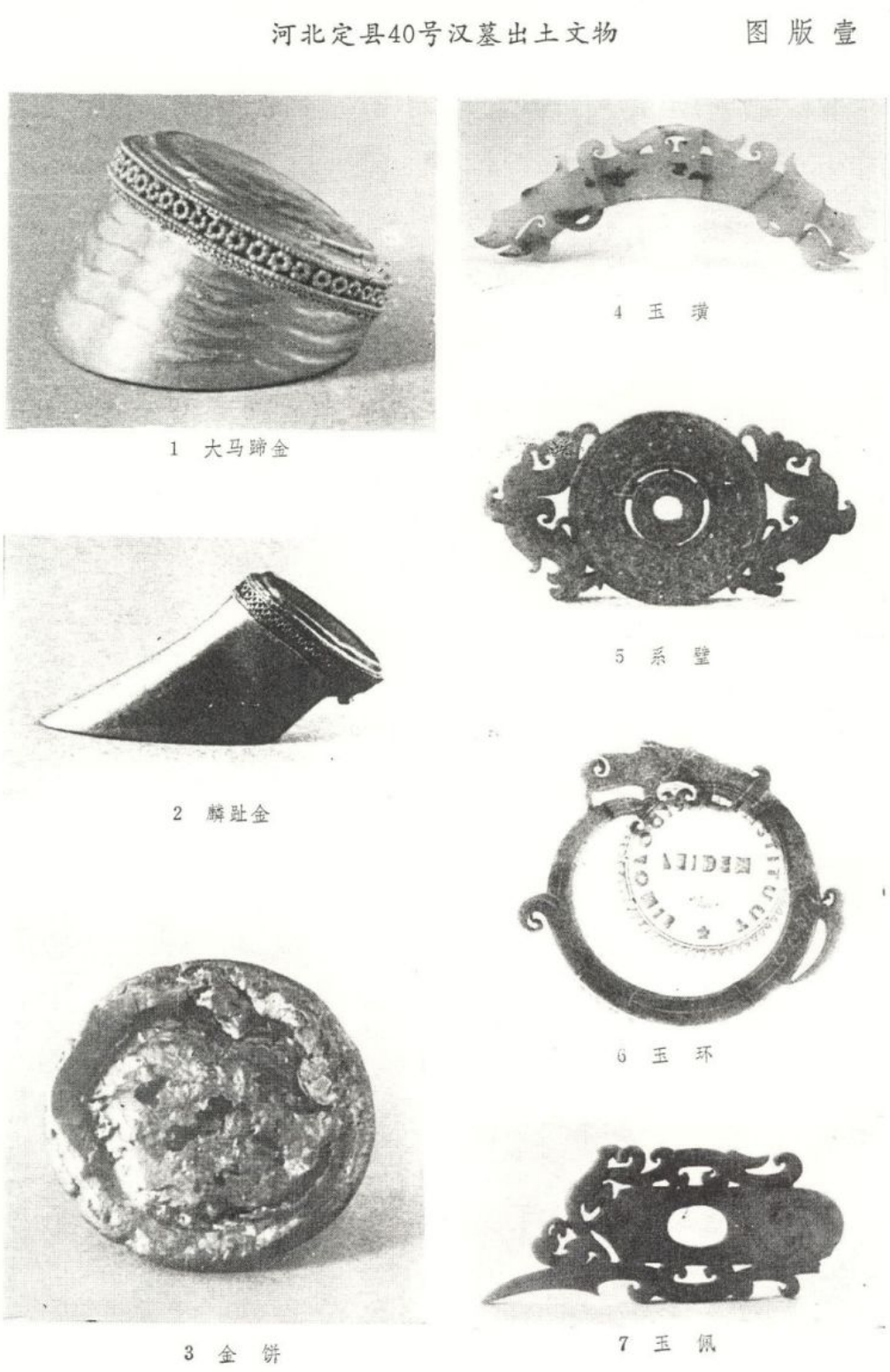


Figure 1.5: Funerary Objects from the Dìngzhōu Tomb (2)

city of the Kingdom of Zhōngshān 中山. Three kings are known to have ruled over the Zhōngshān fiefdom during this period:

(1) Liú Xiū 劉脩 (d. 55 BCE), King Huái of Zhōngshān 中山懷王 [10]
(2) Liú Jìng 劉竟 (d. 35 BCE), King Āi of Zhōngshān 中山哀王
(3) Liú Xìng 劉興 (d. 8 BCE), King Xiào of Zhōngshān 中山孝王

Historiographical sources report that Liú Jìng, the second king on the list, is buried in Dùlíng 杜陵, near present-day Xī'ān 西安, which leaves Liú Xiū and Liú Xìng as possible candidates for the Dìngzhōu tomb.

In a preliminary article on the Dìngzhōu discovery, published in the July 1976 issue of *Cultural Relics* 文物, the research team put forward Liú Xìng, the third king, as most likely occupant of the tomb. Their argument was that the first king's relation to the contemporary Emperor Xuān was too remote to be offered a jade suit sewn with gold threads; and for his lack of posterity, effectively ending the Zhōngshān ancestral line, he furthermore deserves no rich funeral.[11] The third king, on the other hand, had direct blood ties with the imperial court and the size of the tomb and the gold threads of the suit are said to match his status.[12] He may have been offered these privileges as compensation for not having been nominated to succeed the childless Emperor Chéng, his half-brother, who considered him unsuitable for the throne.

In a second publication on the Dìngzhōu discovery, in the August 1981 issue of *Cultural Relics*, the team revised their earlier conclusion and identified the deceased as Liú Xiū, the first king, offering these four arguments:

(1) Emperor Xuān, who had the reputation of being open-minded, once offered a jade suit to Huò Guāng 霍光, a high official at his court, and he may have favored Liú Xiū, also no direct relative, in a similar way.[13]

[10] Chinese scholars usually take 55 BCE as the year of Liú Xiū's death; Loewe [2000: 388] takes it at 54 BCE. *Hàn History* [14.414] is not helpful here, because it states that Liú Xiū died either *in* or *after* the fifteenth year following his accession to the throne in 69 BCE.
[11] Liú Xiū belongs to the fifth generation of descendants of Liú Shèng, son of Emperor Jǐng and the first king enfeoffed with Zhōngshān (see note 7).
[12] Liú Xìng was a son of Emperor Yuán 漢元帝 (r. 49-33 BCE), a half-brother of Emperor Chéng 漢成帝 (r. 33-7 BCE) and the father of Emperor Píng 漢平帝 (r. 1 BCE-5 CE).
[13] A successful official and Emperor Xuān's father-in-law, Huò Guāng was provided with a jade burial suit on imperial orders [Loewe 1999: 31].

(2) Liú Xìng's death in 8 BCE postdates the second year of Emperor Xuān's Five Phoenixes reign by 48 years. Liú Xiū's death in 55 BCE, the third year of that same reign period, is much closer to the dates mentioned on the bamboo strips.

(3) Historiographical sources portray Liú Xìng as an imprudent, unintelligent man and see this as the reason for his failure to become emperor. A person of such deficient intellectual caliber would not have been buried with objects highlighting erudition, such as the bamboo manuscripts discovered in the Dìngzhōu tomb.

(4) Língběi 陵北 village, also near the former Zhōngshān capital, houses an even larger tomb. Liú Xìng, related to three Hàn emperors by blood, makes the ideal candidate for that tomb of imperial dimensions.[14]

Of these arguments, perhaps the second one is most convincing. To Liú Xiū the bamboo strips that refer to the Five Phoenixes period discuss current affairs, whereas to Liú Xìng these would have been half a century old. Moreover, none of the disinterred bamboo strips mention a date after Liú Xiū's death, which may indicate that the tomb was closed soon after the last date was inked on bamboo.[15]

There is circumstantial evidence to corroborate the research team's revised conclusion. Within a decade before Liú Xiū's death, Chancellor Wèi Xiāng 魏相 (?-59 BCE) submitted a memorial to warn Emperor Xuān against sending an expeditionary force to attack the Xiōngnú 匈奴, who had raided the Western Regions, that is, Hàn territory west of Dūnhuáng 敦煌.[16] His memorial commences thus:

> 臣聞之，救亂誅暴，謂之義兵，兵義者王；敵加於己，不得已而起者，謂之應兵，兵應者勝；爭恨小故，不忍憤怒者，謂之忿兵，兵忿者敗；利人土地貨寶者，謂之貪兵，兵貪者破；恃國家之大，矜民人之，欲見威於敵者，謂之驕兵，兵驕者滅：此五者，非但人事，乃天道也．間者匈奴嘗有善意，所得漢民輒奉歸之，未有犯於邊境，雖爭屯田車師，不足致意中．今聞諸將軍欲興兵入其地，臣愚不知此兵何名者也．[17]
>
> I have learned that: to rectify chaos or punish tyranny is called "righteous war" and that if you wage a righteous war you shall be king; to have no choice but to rise in arms when the enemy has invaded your territory is called "reactive war" and that if you wage a reactive war you shall be victorious; to be unable

[14] As far as I am aware, the Língběi tomb has not yet been excavated, and Liú Xìng's occupancy of the tomb cannot be confirmed.
[15] This remains hypothetical. We cannot exclude the possibility, however unlikely, that bamboo strips with later dates were consumed by the tomb fire.
[16] The memorial dates from Emperor Xuān's Yuánkāng 元康 period (65-62 BCE), when Xiōngnú forces attacked Hàn colonies near Jūshī 車師 (present-day Turfan-region), but were unable to reduce them. Emperor Xuān wished to exploit the temporary weakness of the Xiōngnú to attack them.
[17] *Hàn History* [74.3136].

> to hold back your rage when quarreling over a small matter is called "aggressive war" and that if you wage an aggressive war you shall be defeated; to profit from other people's land and goods is called "greedy war" and that if you wage a greedy war you shall be captured; to presume on your realm to be large and pride yourself on a vast population while desiring to show off your majesty is called "arrogant war" and that if you wage an arrogant war you shall be annihilated. These five are not just decided by man; rather, they are the Way of Heaven.
>
> Recently, the Xiōngnú have treated us with the best of intentions. Each one of our people that they captured, they kindly sent back to us, and on no account did they violate our borders. Admittedly, there were frictions at the colonies of Jūshī, but this is not worth our attention. Now I have heard that all generals desire to deploy our forces and enter their territory. I humbly submit that I have no idea which type of war this consitutes.

The "five ways of warfare" mentioned at the beginning of the memorial is a theory from the *Wénzǐ* (see Chapter 4). It is discussed on several bamboo strips of the *Wénzǐ* manuscript that was discovered in the Dìngzhōu tomb. Hence, it seems that under Emperor Xuān the *Wénzǐ* widely circulated in the highest echelons of society. It was quoted in a chancellor's memorial to the imperial throne and, in all likelihood, within a decade afterwards also taken to the grave by a distant relative of the emperor.

The archaeological team's revised conclusion of 1981 is rarely questioned and the king inhumed in the Dìngzhōu tomb is now generally taken as Liú Xiū.[18] In the absence of convincing evidence for a converse conclusion, and with the above memorial in mind, we may accept 55 BCE as the closing date of the tomb and the *terminus ante quem* for manuscripts buried inside.

1.2. The Texts

The eastern compartment of the rear chamber in the tomb probably served as a workplace for the deceased to conduct his studies, for it stored a scribe's knife, three rectangular ink-slabs, a small copper pot possibly used for catching excess ink from the pencil, and a large cache of inscribed bamboo strips. It is the spectacular discovery of this posthumous library that constitutes the Dìngzhōu tomb's primary importance.

[18] Aware of the counter-proposal, Loewe [2000: 387, 388] still tentatively identifies Liú Xìng as the occupant of the Dìngzhōu tomb. Loewe attaches most importance to the argument that Liú Xìng may have been offered the jade suit by way of compensating for the treatment that he had received, i.e., being passed over for nomination to succeed his half-brother [personal communication; June 2001]. I share Loewe's doubts regarding the dating issue, but I find the dated bamboo strips, which point to Liú Xiū, more convincing.

The library entombed in the Former Hàn was much larger than that unearthed in 1973. A substantial number of strips did not survive the fire that raged in the tomb shortly after it was closed.[19] Moreover, alongside the surviving pile of strips, the archaeologists found a chest containing fragments of charred silk, which they suspect to be the remnants of inscribed rolls. Had robbers not disturbed the serenity of the tomb, the Dìngzhōu discovery would have been even more impressive.

The unearthed bamboo strips are charred, fragmented and disorganized. The process of carbonation had completely blackened the strips. Some are even too dark to discern any graphs. To date, inadequate facilities and financial resources have prevented specialists from applying infra-red, ultra-violet or more complicated and costly methods, which would enable them to read more graphs. The strips are also severely damaged. Of a handful, either end has been preserved; most others have both ends broken off. As a result, some fragments contain no more than two or three graphs. The strips were originally joined in bundles by three silk threads, two at both ends and one in the middle. The threads are no longer there, but some bamboo fragments still contain their imprints. Disintegration of the threads caused the strips to lose their sequential order and fall into disarray. Deciphering and arranging these charred bamboo fragments proved to be a complicated and laborious undertaking.

In June 1974, the fragments were sent to the National Cultural Relics Bureau 國家文物局 in Běijīng 北京 for conservation and analysis. Two years later, in June 1976, several specialists who worked on the Mǎwángduī silk rolls, including the renowned archaeologist and historian Lǐ Xuéqín 李學勤, joined the project. The team started by assigning a consecutive number to each bamboo strip and transcribing legible graphs on the strips onto note cards, one strip per card. After one month of work, in July 1976, a harsh fate befell the strips again. According to the report, the devastating Tángshān 唐山 earthquake overturned the wooden storage chest, causing the bamboo strips to be thrown once more into disarray and suffer further damage. The project abruptly came to a standstill and was continued only after an interlude of four years, with the foundation of the Committee for Arranging the Bamboo Strips of Dìngxiàn 定縣竹簡整理組 in April 1980. Their efforts resulted in the publication, in 1981, of a brief report on the excavation of the tomb, a short introduction of the disinterred bamboo strips and the transcription of a small portion of them. Soon

[19] To illustrate: the tomb yielded a copy of the *Analects* 論語, but the 7.576 graphs on 620 surviving strips approximate only half the length of the received text.

afterwards, however, the project was again discontinued, for reasons that remain unspecified. Fourteen years later, in August 1995, the Subcommittee for Arranging the Hàn Dynasty Bamboo Strips of Dìngzhōu 定州漢簡整理小組 was founded. Continuing where the previous team had ended, the Small Group has published several transcribed texts to date.[20]

Graphs on all bamboo strips of the Dìngzhōu find are written in a mature Hàn dynasty "clerical script" 隸書. The clear handwriting is remarkably similar to modern script, which facilitates recognition of the graphs. In sufficient light, the jet-black graphs on most strips stand out against their dull-black background and can be read even without proper paleographic training. [**Figures 1.6, 1.7**]

Having transcribed all legible graphs, the research team was then able to distinguish the remnants of eight distinct texts, citing differences in calligraphy, content and format of the bamboo strips as criteria for organizing them into groups.[21] Four texts, totaling over 12.500 graphs on more than 1.100 strips, have thus far been published in transcription; the rest still awaits publication.

manuscripts	strips	graphs	transcript
Words of the Rú Lineage 儒家者言	104	884	1981.08
Wénzǐ 文子	277	2790	1995.12
Analects 論語	620	7576	1997.05
The Grand Duke's Six Secret Teachings 太公・六韜	144	1402	2001.05
Duke Āi Inquires about the Five Ways of Righteousness 哀公問五義	---	---	---
Biography of the Grand Tutor 保傅傳	---	---	---
Book of Days: Divination 日書・佔卜	---	---	---
Record of the King of Lù'ān's Visit to the Imperial Court in the First Month of the Second Year of the Five Phoenixes Reign 六安王朝五鳳二年正月起居記	---	---	---
total	1.145	12.652	

Table 1.1: The Dìngzhōu Manuscripts[22]

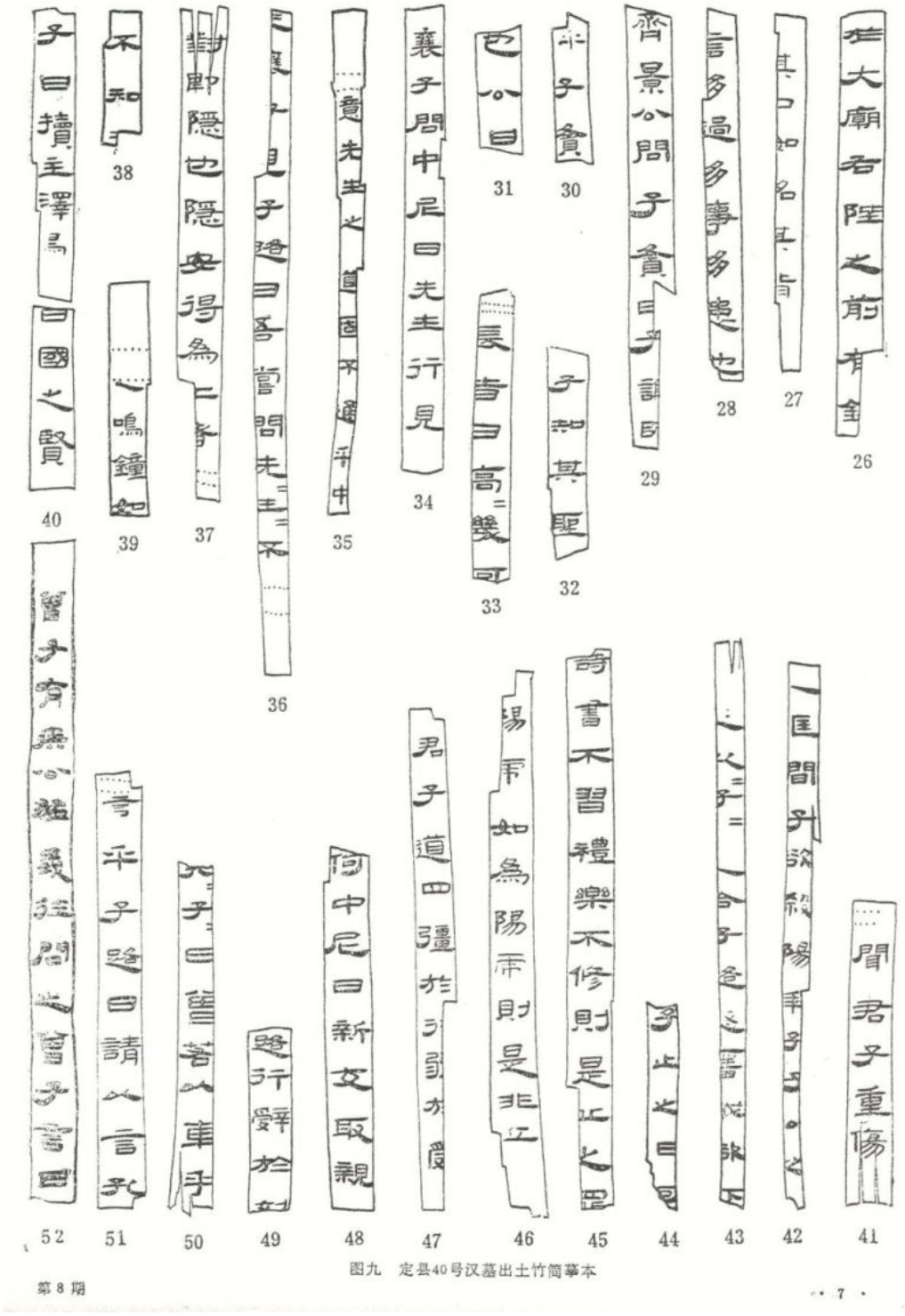
[20] See *Cultural Relics* [1995.12: 38-40] for a detailed report of the work on the Dìngzhōu strips.
[21] See *Cultural Relics* [2001.5: 84] for details.
[22] The last column refers to issues of *Cultural Relics*.

The Dìngzhōu *Analects*—the earliest manuscript of the *Analects* ever found—differs notably from the received text, for instance in the division of chapters and sections, and is important for our understanding of its transmission [Ames and Rosemont 1998: 271-278]. Another manuscript, *Words of the Rú Lineage*, contains intertextual links with transmitted texts that are generally ascribed to the Confucian school, such as *The Garden of Persuasions* 說苑 or *The School Teachings of Confucius* 孔子家語. A third manuscript, the *Wénzǐ*, was purportedly authored by a disciple of Lǎozǐ and is therefore traditionally classified as Daoist. The manuscript most recently published in transcription is known under three titles (*Grand Duke* 太公, *Six Secret Teachings* 六韜, or both combined) and ranks among the primary military treatises of China.

Of the as yet unpublished manuscripts, two consist of passages also found in received texts. The inquiries by Duke Āi contain intertextual links with *Xúnzǐ* 荀子, *Record of Rites by Dài Senior* 大戴禮記 and *The School Teachings of Confucius*; and the biography of the Grand Tutor overlaps partly with *New Writings* 新書 by Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 and partly with *Record of Rites by Dài Senior*. The other two unpublished manuscripts have not been reported to have a transmitted equivalent, or intertextual links to other texts. The *Book of Days* is described as a fragmentary manuscript on divinatory practices and the *Record* tells the journey by Liú Dìng 劉定, King Miù of Lù'ān 六安繆王, to the court of Emperor Xuān, undertaken in 56 BCE.[23] His travelogue mentions the places he passed through and the distances between them and describes the court activities he witnessed and participated in.

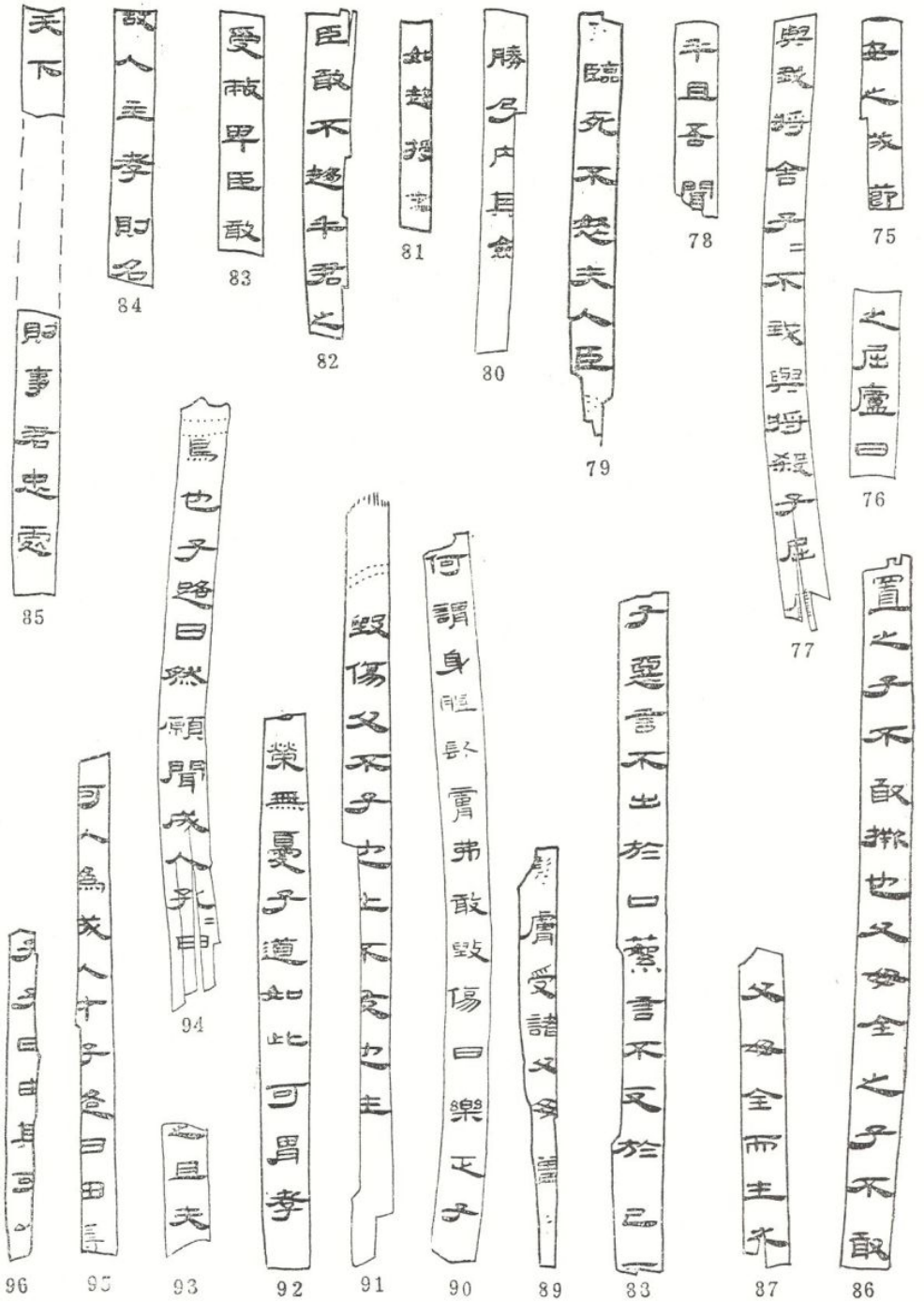
The Dìngzhōu tomb does not attract the amount of scholarly attention that other archaeological discoveries of the twentieth century enjoy, perhaps because its funerary objects are quantitatively and qualitatively inferior to those from tombs that had not been subject to robbery or fire, such as Mǎnchéng 滿城. Another reason may be that the Dìngzhōu manuscripts appeal less to scholars' imagination than those discovered elsewhere, for example in Guōdiàn 郭店 or Mǎwángduī 馬王堆, which, moreover, survived in better condition and larger quantity. In addition, the many setbacks the Dìngzhōu team had to endure delayed publications on the discovery and prevented scholars from quick access to the manuscripts, which may also have tempered scholarly enthusiasm.

[23] The bamboo strips with dates on them belong to this travelogue. Following Loewe [2000: 292], I transcribe the name of Liú Dìng's fiefdom as Lù'ān, rather than Liù'ān, because the reading of Lù probably persisted for the place name in Hàn times.



图九　定县40号汉墓出土竹简摹本

Figure 1.6: Tracings of Bamboo Strips from the Dìngzhōu Tomb (1)



图一一　定县40号汉墓出土竹简摹本

Figure 1.7: Tracings of Bamboo Strips from the Dìngzhōu Tomb (2)

Nonetheless, the Dìngzhōu find provides important information for the study of early Chinese history and culture. One aspect deserving of our attention is the handwriting on the bamboo strips, which presents a crucial piece of the puzzle that is the evolution of the Chinese script. Chinese scholars were quick to point out that the calligraphy on all Dìngzhōu strips displays a high degree of regularity and uniformity [Wáng Dōngmíng 王東明 et al. 1981]. It differs markedly from the "seal script" 篆書 of the Qín 秦 (221-206 BCE) and early Hàn dynasties, while closely resembling the "regular script" 楷書 that allegedly came into use at the end of the Latter Hàn. They therefore conclude that the maturation of Hàn dynasty clerical script did not take place in the Latter Hàn, as scholars had previously maintained, but much earlier, and certainly before the closure of the Dìngzhōu tomb.

The mere fact that the Dìngzhōu tomb contains a posthumous library is in itself remarkable, because not all tombs have libraries. It reveals the Zhōngshān king's proclivity to literature and may reveal something of his personal background and interests. The literary diversity of the library is no less important. The Dìngzhōu library, like that of Mǎwángduī, contains texts on a wide range of topics, including what we would now label philosophy, strategy and divination. Would the deceased have prided himself on the breadth of his library, or would he consider the manuscripts as one coherent corpus? Perhaps all documents are aspects of one and the same topic: governance. Philosophical treatises provide the king with an ethical foundation for his rule; strategic knowledge is required in his dealings with others, especially when he has to resort to violence to restore order; divinatory texts regulate his relationship with divine powers and their predicative value is both needed and acclaimed by people of his high social strata; and the travelogue is presumably not a noncommittal description of a leisurely voyage for literary enjoyment, but a prescription for kings on dealings with the emperor.[24]

The Dìngzhōu library also calls attention to the function of tomb texts, which is not yet well understood. They may be a display of the deceased's this-worldly vocation and interests, or serve as posthumous advice to help him in the afterlife, or both. In the Dìngzhōu case, the travelogue is of particular interest, because if the occupant is indeed Liú Xiū, the text was barely one year old when he died. What was the relationship between Liú Xiū and Liú Dìng, whose journey to the imperial court is described in the document? How did a king of Zhōngshān in the North come to obtain

[24] As the travelogue is not yet available in transcription, its content remains subject to speculation.

the travelogue of a king of Lù'ān in the South? And why was it entombed with him? We need not even take into consideration the speed of publication, reduplication and transportation of texts in Hàn times, to say that the travelogue was relatively new when it was buried in the Dìngzhōu tomb, which shows that interred texts are not necessarily canonical works of great importance, but also everyday documents valued by the deceased for one reason or another.

The Dìngzhōu discovery also makes us think about the intellectual affiliation of entombed manuscripts and the alleged polemical relation of different intellectual trends. Similar to the discoveries of Guōdiàn (early third century BCE) and Mǎwángduī (early second century BCE), the Dìngzhōu find (mid-first century BCE) also contains texts of both "Confucian" and "Daoist" orientation.[25] Naturally, a Hàn dynasty monarch is at liberty to store works of different, even incompatible, schools of thought on his bookshelves, but repeated discoveries of supposedly incongruous works in posthumous libraries—in tombs covering three centuries!—may well point to the imposition of modern ideas on an old reality, rather than real ideological or generic distinctions in the eyes of contemporary readers. If a "struggle between schools" ever took place, ancient libraries bear no witness to it. Therefore, tomb libraries and the manuscripts they contain should be studied as distinct units, irrespective of their supposed intellectual affiliation.

Issues such as these are important and will be occasionally touched upon in the following chapters, but their full exposure awaits another study. In the present work, I focus on one of the texts discovered in the Dìngzhōu tomb: the *Wénzǐ*.

[25] In the Guōdiàn corpus, *Lǎozǐ* 老子 and *The Great One Engenders Water* 太一生水 generally classify as Daoist, other manuscripts as Confucianist. In the Mǎwángduī corpus, the two *Lǎozǐ* manuscripts are Daoist and the *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor* 黃帝四經 is said to belong to its Huáng-Lǎo branch, whereas the *Essay on The Five Conducts* 五行篇 is considered a Confucian work. The Dìngzhōu tomb counts four Confucian texts (*Analects*, *Words of the Rú Lineage*, *Biography of the Grand Tutor*, *Duke Āi Inquires about the Five Ways of Righteousness*) and one Daoist (*Wénzǐ*). With reference to current debates (Sivin [1978], Petersen [1995], Ryden [1996b], Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan [2003], Smith [2003]), which are beyond the scope of this study: I believe that labels such as "Confucian" and "Daoist" are unsuitable when referring to individual texts dating to the Former Hàn or earlier. For readability, I leave out the quotation marks in further reference to these labels.

2. The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*

Some 277 bamboo strips of the Dìngzhōu find have been identified as belonging to a Hàn dynasty *Wénzǐ* manuscript, that has become known as the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*. A brief description of this manuscript, published in the August 1981 issue of *Cultural Relics*, sent scholars into euphoria, because the *Wénzǐ* is a controversial text. Once praised for its literary qualities, quoted in memorials to the imperial throne and selected for the curriculum of the official state exam, the *Wénzǐ* at some point in Chinese history was branded a forgery and for many centuries transmitted—if not arrested—at the periphery of the Chinese politico-philosophical discourse, though most scholars suspected that amidst its "forged" parts, there might be some "authentic" passages.[26] The bamboo manuscript did indeed lay bare the remains of an early version of the *Wénzǐ*, generally referred to as the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, which differs markedly from the Received *Wénzǐ*. Before turning to the date, authorship and philosophy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and its complex relation to the Received *Wénzǐ*, let us take a closer look at the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* manuscript that caused the excitement.

2.1. The Manuscript

Judging by the handful of tracings published with the transcribed text of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, the 277 bamboo fragments vary in length from barely 2 cm to just under 21 cm and in width from circa 0,4 to 0,8 cm.[27] When still in the hands of their Former Hàn dynasty reader, the strips probably measured circa 21 by 0,8 cm, the length of which approximates nine "inches" 寸 in Hàn standards. [**Figure 2.1**]

On the charred and fragmented Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips, specialists have discerned circa 2.790 graphs. A distinctive aspect of their handwriting is that

[26] For a detailed study of the reception history of the *Wénzǐ*, see Chapter 9.

[27] This would mean that the *Wénzǐ* strips were considerably longer than those of other manuscripts found in the tomb, such as *Words of the Rú Lineage* (11,5 cm) and *Analects* (16,2 cm). While measurements for these two texts are provided in the introduction to their transcriptions, no measurements are mentioned for the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*. I came to the sizes of *Wénzǐ* strips by measuring the few tracings published with its transcription [*Cultural Relics* 1995: 28]. The shortest measures 1,8 cm and the longest 20,7 cm. Naturally, the accuracy of these measurements depends on whether the few published tracings are representative for the entire group and on whether they reflect the actual length and width of the fragments.

certain words, as identified by modern paleographers, are represented by graphs that differ from modern counterparts. Some graphs are written without a classificatory semantic component. For example, the graph 兆 supposedly stands for 逃 *táo* 'to escape'. Other examples are:

- 反 for 叛 *pàn* 'to rebel'
- 正 for 政 *zhèng* 'to rule'
- 曹 for 遭 *zāo* 'to meet'
- 隹 for 唯 *wéi* 'only'

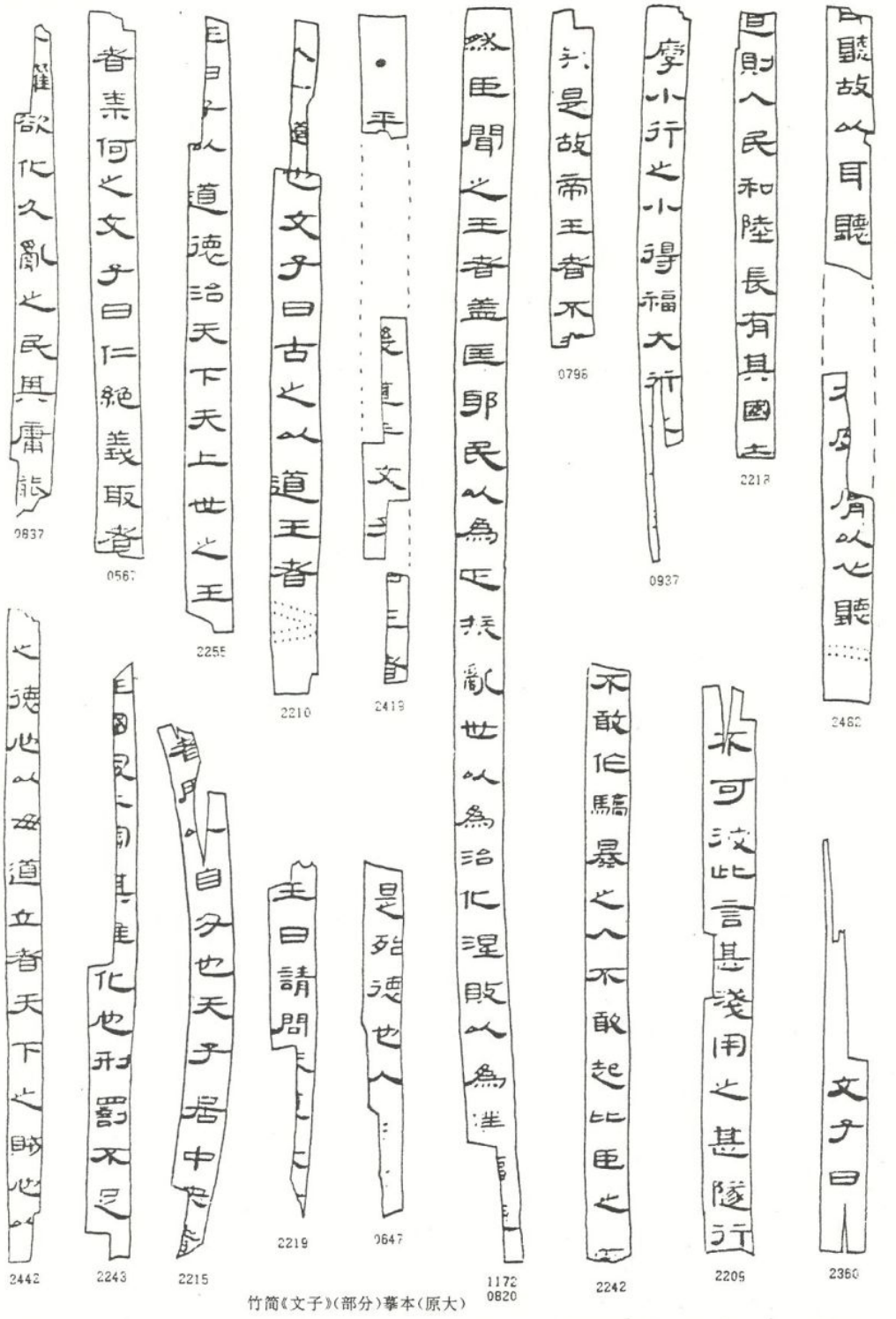
The last graph in its standard form, 唯, also appears in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, but the paleographers have interpreted it as a short form of 雖 *suī* 'although', without its semantic component 虫 *huǐ* 'insect'. There are also graphs with semantic components that differ from later standards. These include:

- 陸 for 睦 *mù* 'friendly'
- 秧 for 殃 *yāng* 'calamity'
- 刑 for 形 *xíng* 'shape'
- 適 for 敵 *dí* 'to oppose'
- 說 for 悅 *yuè* 'pleased'

The manuscript also has a "single standing-man" component, 亻, in graphs now written with a "double standing-man" component, 彳, such as:

- 住 for 往 *wǎng* 'to go'
- 侍 for 待 *dài* 'to wait'

Some words are represented by more than one graph. For example, 謂 *wèi* 'to refer to' is normally written in full, but six times only as 胃; 歡 *huān* 'to be glad' appears without the 欠 *qiàn* 'deficiency' component on the right, but with either a 馬 *mǎ* 'horse' or a 言 *yán* 'word' element on the left instead; and finally, 無 and 毋, both pronounced *wú* and meaning 'to lack', are used interchangeably in similar expressions,



竹简《文子》(部分)摹本(原大)

Figure 2.1: Tracings of Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* Bamboo Strips

once even on the same bamboo strip.[28] The manuscript also contains phonetically similar but structurally different loan graphs, such as 倍 *bèi* 'times' for 背 *bèi* 'back'.

Most of these variations also occur in other Hàn dynasty manuscripts. They are typical for handwritings of that time, when no orthographic standard had yet been reached. However, whereas other manuscripts tend to display a much higher degree of variation, these examples cover most of the variations mentioned in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription. This may have implications for its date, as I will show further on.

Three distinct features of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* mould its content in the structure of a "book": (1) section markers; (2) graph counts; (3) chapter titles.

(1) The transcription of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* mentions black dots on four strips. Such black dots frequently appear in unearthed bamboo or silk documents of the late Zhōu 周 dynasty (11th c.-221 BCE) and beyond. Though their function is not always well understood, they usually demarcate sections. Two dots in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, on strips 0869 and 2439, evidently serve this purpose:

[0869] 耶。•平王曰：“用義何如？”文子[曰：“君子□]
isn't it?" • King Píng asked: "What is it like to employ righteousness?" Wénzǐ replied: "The gentleman [X]

[2439] 道產。•平王曰：“道之于人也，亦有所不□//
the Way is produced." • King Píng asked: "The Way, in its relation to man, also must have something that it does not [X]

Both black dots appear in front of a question and separate this question from the answer to a preceding question. The new questions apparently negotiate new topics and may have been conceived as forming new sections; hence the two black dots. The third black dot, at the end of strip 0575, presumably also denotes a new section:

[0575] 德，則下有仁義，下有仁義則治矣•
virtue, inferiors have humaneness and righteousness. If inferiors have humaneness and righteousness, there is order! •

[28] Four strips (0811, 1812, 1086, 0780) speak of 無道 and three strips (2442, 0695, 2273) of 毋道; both combinations are pronounced *wú dào* and mean 'lacking the Way'. Strip 0591 mentions both 無 and 毋 as it speaks of 無禮 *wú lǐ* 'lacking propriety' and 毋德 *wú dé* 'lacking virtue'. The frequency of both synonyms in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* shows no clear preference: 無 occurs 23 times, 毋 22 times. A third synonym, 亡 *wú*, is not used (it occurs only as 亡 *wáng* 'to perish').

The black dot here follows the exclamation "there is order!", which could easily serve as the concluding remark of a section.[29] The fourth dot, in the middle of strip 0645, is clearly no section marker, as it separates two perfectly parallel phrases:

> [0645] 如四時之[□受，・如風雨之]
> like the [taking and] giving of the four seasons, • like the […] of wind and rain

Since the latter half of the strip (all graphs, including the dot, between square brackets) is now lost, the size and shape of the black dot can no longer be verified. Its function therefore remains unclear.

(2) One bamboo strip of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* exhibits the total number of graphs in the textual unit to which the strip belongs:

> [0696][30] 不道始于弱細者，未之[有也]。百一十八字｜
> that someone … disobeyed the Way and yet began as weak and small has never occurred. One hundred and eighteen graphs. |

The unit of "one hundred and eighteen graphs" probably corresponds to what we would call a chapter, given that sections, demarcated by black dots, are not provided with a graph count. Notably, the imperial library of the Hàn dynasty is known to have stored a *Wénzǐ* in nine "chapters" 篇 and this library copy is probably similar to the Dìngzhōu manuscript.[31] If the 118 graphs mentioned on strip 0696 correspond to what the imperial library catalogue calls a "chapter" and if all chapters in the *Wénzǐ* are of comparable length, then it would contain some 1.062 graphs. On the fragmentary

[29] Strip 0575 corresponds to a line in the middle of what is now *Wénzǐ* 5.20, where it concludes the second paragraph (on the ruler being a teacher) and precedes the third paragraph (on accumulating virtue). Given their different topics, these paragraphs probably derive from two different sections in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, which were later combined into one section in the Received *Wénzǐ*. The black dot on strip 0575 in all likelihood concluded the first of these two sections in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.

[30] The syntax of the first part of the text, in particular the two graphs 不道, is unclear. To "begin as small and weak" 始于弱細 is a positive quality in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, for it allows one to grow big and strong (cf. strips 0581 and 2331 in Section 4.3). That it "has never occurred" 未之有也 indicates that this positive quality is preceded by its opposite. The beginning of strip 0696 then probably read "end up as disobedient to the Way" 成于不道. My tentative interpretation of this strip is that it has never occurred that someone who starts out as weak and small ends up as going against the Way.

[31] The Hàn dynasty imperial library catalogue, transmitted in Bān Gù's 班固 (32-92 CE) *Hàn History* 漢書, lists a *Wénzǐ* in nine chapters. The imperial library copy and the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* are probably similar because (1) redaction of the *Wénzǐ* into the 12-chapter received text took place much later and (2) Bān Gù mentions King Píng, who plays a negligible role in the received text, as a protagonist in the 9-chapter imperial copy of the text.

Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* strips, however, no fewer than 2.790 graphs have been discerned and the complete manuscript, as buried in the Former Hàn, was even larger. This means that the 118 graphs mentioned here represent either an atypically small chapter or a unit that does not correspond to what the catalogue calls a chapter. So in the end, maybe this unit is something between a chapter (titled) and a section (marked with black dots). Unfortunately, due to the fragmented and disorganized status in which the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* was found, its original length and the exact number and size of its chapters and sections are no longer known.

(3) The most exciting feature of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is that it provides titles for coherent textual units. That the largest unit, the text itself, was originally titled "*Wénzǐ*", is evidenced by one bamboo strip:

[2465] [文子上經聖□明王]

Lǐ Xuéqín [1996: 38] interprets the graphs discerned on this strip as:

[2465] 《文子》上經:〈聖□〉、〈明王〉

This may be rendered in English as: "The *Wénzǐ*, Part One: 'Sageness and …', 'The Enlightened King'". In this interpretation, the first two graphs represent the overall title of the text; the last four, including one indecipherable graph, the titles of two chapters. No one has objected to Lǐ's reading of the first part, but the last four graphs as potential chapter titles have been the subject of heated scholarly debate.[32] I agree with Xíng Wén 邢文 [2000] that any reading of the four graphs other than as chapter titles is syntactically implausible. Strip 2465 therefore provides an inventory of the text, mentioning its overall title, its division into at least two parts and its subdivision into several titled chapters. This "table of contents" on a separate strip makes the

[32] Following Lǐ Xuéqín's statement, discussion focused on identifying the illegible graph and on whether or not the last four graphs are chapter titles. The illegible graph was soon identified as 知, used for 智 *zhì* 'wisdom', because the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* often pairs this concept with 聖 *shèng* 'sageness'. Lǐ Xuéqín's reading of the last four graphs as chapter titles is supported by Xíng Wén [2000] and others. Lǐ Dìngshēng 李定生, however, suggested at a 1996 symposium on the *Wénzǐ* at Fu Jen University 輔仁大學 that the four graphs should be read in succession as a summary of Part One of the *Wénzǐ* (cf. Xíng Wén [2000: 241]). Zhào Jiànwěi 趙建偉 [2000: 233-235] seconds Lǐ Dìngshēng's hypothesis, but Xíng Wén [2000] notes that strip 0909 already serves as a summary of Part One, for it states: "Part [One] deals with the way of sageness and wisdom. [The king] has to" □經者，聖知之道也。[王]也不可不.

Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* an exceptional document, because titles are usually mentioned immediately before or after the textual units they represent and there are few bamboo or silk manuscripts that list titles separate from the main text.[33] Most likely, strip 2465 was positioned at either end of the *Wénzǐ* bundle, with graphs facing outwards to facilitate identification of this bundle as the *Wénzǐ* on a crowded bookshelf.

The clerical script and the combined use of section markers, graph counts and chapter titles prove that this manuscript was transcribed onto bamboo in the Former Hàn dynasty. One bamboo strip contains a potential clue to a more precise date, because it differs from the corresponding line in the received text (the two relevant graphs are in boldface below):

[0806]	也，**大**而不衰者所以長守□
Wénzǐ 5.7	**盈**而不虧　所以長守富也

The two *Wénzǐ*'s promote different ways for "achieving enduring prosperity" 長守富. Strip 0806 urges one "to be grand without declining" 大而不衰, while the received text speaks of "to be fulfilled and not discontented" 盈而不虧. The variation between 大 *dà* 'grand' and 盈 *yíng* 'fulfilled' is awkward but would have attracted little attention if the latter were not the personal name of Emperor Huì of the Hàn dynasty 漢惠帝 (r. 195-188 BCE). Zhào Jiànwěi 趙建偉 [2000: 233] suggests that 盈 *yíng* 'fulfilled' is the proper graph, that was retained in the received text but replaced by 大 *dà* 'grand' in the Dìngzhōu manuscript to avoid the tabooed name. This would imply that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* was composed before the reign of Emperor Huì and that the Dìngzhōu copy was put to bamboo when the taboo of 盈 *yíng* 'fulfilled' was being observed. Unfortunately, the use of taboos is marked by ambiguity. When were taboos in force? During the emperor's reign or after his death? How strictly were they observed? When was the ban on a prohibited graph lifted? No clear-cut answers exist, so prudence is in order when applying the taboo criterion in the dating of texts. Moreover, Zhāng Fēngqián 張豐乾 [2002: 27-28, 50] persuasively demonstrates that

[33] The *Five Conducts*, a bamboo manuscript discovered at Guōdiàn, mentions the overall title at the head of the first bamboo strip, immediately preceding what we know from the untitled Hàn dynasty silk manuscript, found at Mǎwángduī, to be the beginning of the text. It does not contain titles of smaller segments within the text. The *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor*, another Mǎwángduī silk manuscript, mentions the title of each canon at the end of the canon and the title of each section (within the first two canons) at the end of the section. None of these manuscripts contain a separate "table of contents". However, *Recipes for Fifty-Two Ailments* 五十二病方, also from Mǎwángduī, contains a separate list of all 52 illnesses at the beginning of the silk roll [Harper 1998: 221-222].

this particular instance of lexical variation cannot be explained as taboo observance. Among other arguments, Zhāng points out that since 大 *dà* 'grand' and 盈 *yíng* 'fulfilled' widely differ in meaning, one would never be used for the other.[34] In addition, scribes commonly used the graph 滿 *măn* 'full' to avoid Liú Yíng's personal name. Hence, the variation between 大 *dà* 'grand' and 盈 *yíng* 'fulfilled' does not prove that the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* was inked onto bamboo strips during or soon after the reign of Emperor Huì.

There is one more graphical variation between the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* and the Received *Wénzǐ* that could be interpreted as taboo avoidance. Bamboo strip 0876 warns the ruler that if he "does not nourish" 不養 the people, they will turn their back on him and revolt. The received text writes "does not nourish" as 弗養. Ho Che-wah 何志華 [2004: ix] suggests that 弗 *fú* 'not', as in the received text, may be the correct graph and that the bamboo manuscript replaced it with 不 *bù* 'not' to avoid the personal name of Liú Fúlíng 劉弗陵, Emperor Zhāo of the Hàn 漢昭帝 (r. 87-74 BCE). However, 弗 *fú* and 不 *bù* are two common negations and one may have been used for the other due to changed linguistic preferences, rather than taboo observance.

With no other case of taboo observance reported, the only way to date the manuscript is through its handwriting. The text must have been copied onto bamboo between the introduction of clerical script (beginning of the Hàn) and the closure of the Dìngzhōu tomb (probably 55 BCE). In terms of stylistic and structural features, the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*'s calligraphy differs markedly from that of other Hàn dynasty manuscripts. Take for instance the silk rolls of Măwángduī, also discovered in 1973, which date from the turn of the second century BCE. The calligraphic style of the silk manuscripts is more expressive, with many elongated strokes of varying width and graphs more complicated to decipher. This may, of course, reflect regional variation or aesthetic preference of the scribe, but the calligraphy of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is exceedingly uniform and displays a noticeably higher degree of resemblance to Latter Hàn "regular script" standards, which points to a later time of writing. Moreover, orthographic variation is more common on the Măwángduī silk manuscripts than on the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips. The former write 又 for the word now written as

[34] In early Chinese texts, the phrase "to be fulfilled and not discontented" 盈而不虧, as in the Received *Wénzǐ*, is often paired with "to be successful without declining" 盛而不衰. The latter phrase is virtually synonymous with "to be grand without declining", as in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*. I therefore suspect that 大 *dà* 'grand' is the proper graph, which was replaced by 盛 *shèng* 'successful' because of their resemblance in meaning; and 盛 *shèng* 'successful', in turn, was later erroneously replaced by 盈 *yíng* 'fulfilled' because of their graphical similarity.

有 *yǒu* ‘to have’, 單 for 戰 *zhàn* ‘war’, 賀 for 加 *jiā* ‘to add’, 德 for 得 *dé* ‘to obtain’ and either 玆 or 才 for the sentence final particle 哉 *zāi*. In all these cases, the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* consistently has the latter graph. The Hàn dynasty witnessed a gradual development in clerical script towards an orthographic standard. The Mǎwángduī manuscripts represent an early stage in this process. The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is more standardized and hence of a later date—probably not long before its entombment.

2.2. The Transcription

The transcribed text of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* was published in *Cultural Relics* of December 1995, accompanied by textual notes, a description of the manuscript, an account of the process of arranging the bamboo strips and a selection of tracings.

The effects of the tomb robbery are reflected in the transcription. As the bamboo strips were found in disorder, the only way to read the manuscript is through the received text. The transcription accordingly presents the bamboo strips of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* in the order in which they appear in corresponding passages in the Received *Wénzǐ*. This does not necessarily reflect the original order.[35] Moreover, it only works for bamboo strips with matching content in the received text.

For two-thirds of the 277 Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* strips, no parallels in terms of content have been found in the Received *Wénzǐ*. How were these “non-corresponding” strips organized? More importantly, on what grounds are such strips judged to be “*Wénzǐ* material”? Some of the non-corresponding strips mention Wénzǐ or King Píng, two names that also appear on strips that do correspond to the received text. These strips evidently belong to the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*. Most non-corresponding strips, however, mention neither of the two names. In the worst case, they contain no more than two or three graphs. For example, only 聞 *wén* ‘to hear’ and 所 *suǒ* ‘place’ are intelligible on strip 0451, two graphs of frequent occurrence in many texts written in Classical Chinese. Unfortunately, the introduction to the transcription does not specify the reasons for classifying such strips as “*Wénzǐ* material”. The bamboo fragments themselves are too damaged to apply the usual association of strips based on such qualities as their measurements or the position of the threads that hold them together.

[35] Note 29 shows that two Ancient *Wénzǐ* sections were combined into one in the Received *Wénzǐ*.

(That is, strips of equal length with bundling threads on the same position probably belong together.) And given that the calligraphy of the *Wénzǐ* is not strikingly different from that of other Dìngzhōu manuscripts, it remains unclear how such non-corresponding strips can be linked to those that demonstrably belong to the *Wénzǐ*, or separated from those that demonstrably do not.

The effects of the Tángshān earthquake are also visible in the transcription. More than a quarter of the graphs on the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips are placed between square brackets. These are "graphs that have not been verified" 未能校對的簡文, which means they can no longer be verified: they occurred on bamboo strips that were damaged or lost after the earthquake. With the strips either missing or no longer legible, these graphs survived only as transcriptions on note cards made prior to the devastating natural disaster. Their transcription can no longer be confirmed.

Questions also apply to the way in which the content of the manuscript was published in transcription. Doubt has been cast on the quality and reliability of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription.

As the transcribed text first appeared in *Cultural Relics*, a journal published in Mainland China, the manuscript is transcribed into simplified Chinese graphs. This is undesirable and methodologically inaccurate. Boltz [1999: 596] writes about the transcription of the *Lǎozǐ* manuscript discovered at Guōdiàn:

> As a general methodological rule, manuscripts such as this one should be transcribed so as to reveal as precisely and unambiguously as possible the exact form of what is written, without introducing any interpolations, alterations, or other extraneous material based on assumptions, biases, or subjective decisions of the scholar-transcriber or of anyone else. In a nutshell, this means that the transcription should reflect exactly what is written and nothing more.

Boltz' argument also applies here: the change to simplified graphs is an alteration of the *Wénzǐ* manuscript. This violates the principle of structural consistency, which, Boltz [1999: 597] explains, entails that the transcription of a graph "should not deviate from the actual structural form of the graph in the manuscript."[36] The

[36] A new method of transcribing early Chinese manuscripts, proposed by Matthias Richter [2003], includes Direct Transcription (faithful representation of all structural features of the graph in its original shape), Analogy (notation of the modern graph with the closest resemblance to the original graph) and Reading (notation in modern orthography of the word that the graph presumably represents). If a Direct Transcription, which accords with the principle of structural consistency, is provided, the change to simplified graphs in a Reading constitutes a much smaller problem.

structural form of some graphs in the *Wénzǐ* manuscript (such as 唯) differs from that of their standard counterparts (雖), which in turn differs from that of their simplified alternatives (虽). Without the intermediary step of non-simplified graphs, the link between a manuscript graph and its simplified counterparts may be unclear, particularly when the two are graphically and phonetically dissimilar (as in 唯 *wéi* versus 虽 *suī*). More importantly, problems occur when one simplified graph stands for several non-simplified ones. Is 尽 in the transcription of strip 2470 a simplification of 儘 *jǐn* 'to the greatest extent' or 盡 *jìn* 'exhausted'? Does 余 *yú* in the transcription of strip 2341 transcribe 余 *yú* 'I, me' or 餘 *yú* 'surplus'? Only those who had the privilege to see the actual manuscript know the answer. Fortunately, problems of ambiguity arise only in a small number of cases.

Another problem is the introduction of punctuation marks, "extraneous material" in Boltz' terminology. These are uncalled for in a methodologically correct transcription, because they force an interpretation of the text that may limit the possibilities offered by unpunctuated transcription. The reader should have the opportunity to see exactly what the scribe wrote, not what the editor thinks the scribe intended to write. In addition, several instances of punctuation in the transcribed text of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* are simply wrong. Ho Che-wah [1998: 170-171] shows that three misplaced commas in the transcription of strip 0198 obscure the link between this strip and the Received *Wénzǐ*. Given the small number of strips that correspond to the received text and the questionable status of those that do not, every single strip that can be re-classified from non-corresponding to corresponding is important. Wáng Sānxiá 王三峽 [2000], in an article that focuses on erroneous punctuation in the *Wénzǐ* transcription, lists numerous examples of wrongly chosen or misplaced punctuation marks. The former include full stops where quotation marks would have been more appropriate and commas that should have been semi-colons. The latter break the text where it should not have been broken or vice versa, or link graphs with the preceding sentence where they belong to the following or vice versa. In the spirit of the Chinese adage that "a mistake by a hairbreadth may lead to an error of a thousand miles" 失之豪釐差以千里, small mistakes in punctuation can lead to an erroneous understanding of the text's content.

Whereas modern punctuation is unnecessarily inserted into the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription, ancient punctuation is occasionally omitted. The transcription mentions four black dots, three of which function as section markers. Surprisingly, Lǐ

Xuéqín [1996: 38] mentions two more strips with black dots, 2419 and 0885, but in the *Cultural Relics* transcription these strips appear without dots. Given that each of the two dots mentioned by Lǐ precedes a new query (and that they correspond to the beginning of sections 5.9 and 5.13 in the Received *Wénzǐ*, respectively), the two dots obviously serve as section markers. Although neither is mentioned in the transcription, the one on strip 2419 is clearly visible on the tracing of this strip, which incidentally occurs in a selection of tracings appended to the transcription.[37]

I emphatically note that the purpose of pointing out these problematic aspects of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription is *not* to criticize Chinese colleagues who faced the complex task of making sense of the unpromising heap of charred bamboo fragments from the Dìngzhōu find, and whose professional facilities may have left much to be desired by international standards. However, these problems do highlight the need for especially careful treatment of ancient manuscripts. Bamboo and silk documents do not always reach us in unscathed fashion: even if no human factors, such as tomb robbers, are involved, the writing materials tend to decay during centuries of subterranean existence. Surviving fragments deserve utmost care. This also involves taking transcription seriously. New methodologies of transcribing early Chinese manuscripts are required to provide broad scholarly audiences with access to accurate copies of manuscripts and strengthen the foundation of studies based on tomb texts. A methodologically accurate transcription, taking into account the above considerations, would do full justice to the importance of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*'s discovery.

The discovery *is* important, because the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* offers spectacular insights into the initial composition of the text and into the process of revision that led to the received text, and as such has heralded a new era in *Wénzǐ* studies. It led to a proliferation of publications and to a revaluation of this long-neglected text.

[37] The tracing of this strip is more accurate than its transcription. This also extends to other tracings. The tracings of strips 2482 and 2210 contain imprints of silk threads that bundled the strips. The imprints on strip 2210 are represented in the transcription by the symbol 〃; those on strip 2482 are not mentioned. This affirms the uneven quality of the transcription.

3. The Ancient *Wénzǐ*: Date, Protagonists, Author

The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is a copy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* that was transcribed onto bamboo in Former Hàn times. When was the Ancient *Wénzǐ* composed? Who are its main characters? And who authored the text?

3.1. Date

Between 65 and 55 BCE, the *Wénzǐ* was quoted in a memorial to Emperor Xuān and placed in the tomb of King Huái of Zhōngshān. The text was extant and known in those days, which means that its initial creation took place earlier. How much earlier?

3.1.1. Current View: Pre-Qín

An oft-read qualification of the *Wénzǐ* in post-Dìngzhōu scholarship is "ancient treatise of the pre-Qín period that already circulated at the beginning of the Hàn" 漢初已有的先秦古籍.[38] Scholars rarely motivate this formula, leaving the reader to wonder why 55 BCE, the probable date of the Dìngzhōu tomb, would qualify as "beginning of the Hàn" and why a document entombed in that year is necessarily of pre-Qín origin. Could it not have been created in the more than 150 years that bridge the beginning of the Qín and the closure of the tomb? The few arguments offered to support a pre-Qín date are weak or indeed fallacious.

One argument, put forward by Ài Lìnóng 艾力農 [1982: 42] and Lǐ Dìngshēng 李定生 [1994b: 464], is that the *Wénzǐ* must be a pre-Qín treatise because so are other manuscripts from the same tomb, such as the *Analects*. This argument is a fallacy of converse accident, the improper generalization ("all Dìngzhōu manuscripts")

[38] As one would expect any pre-Qín text to have "already existed" at the beginning of the Hàn dynasty, the graphs 已有 must mean "already circulated". The first half of this verbose formula probably serves to affirm the circulation of a *Wénzǐ* prior to the composition of the *Huáinánzǐ*, a text that is closely related to the Received *Wénzǐ* (see Chapter 6). Scholars who employ this formula, which finds it origin in the conclusions of Táng Lán 唐蘭 [1975: 27] on the relationship between *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* (see Chapter 9), include Wú Xiǎnqìng 吳顯慶 [1992: 69], Jiāng Guózhù 姜國柱 [1994: 37 and 1998: 39], Lǐ Dìngshēng [1994b: 462 and 1996: 1984], Wèi Qǐpéng 魏啟鵬 [1996: 2019] and Zēng Chūnhǎi 曾春海 [1996: 1954].

from a specific case ("the *Analects*"). The tomb may contain copies of pre-Qín texts, but that does not make the *Wénzǐ* one. The manuscripts entered the tomb library as distinct entities and each should be dated independently. Furthermore, the travelogue unearthed from the Dìngzhōu tomb definitely invalidates the argument by Ài and Lǐ, for it mentions the Five Phoenixes period in its title, thus identifying itself as a Hàn dynasty composition.

Another argument for the *Wénzǐ*'s supposed pre-Qín date concerns the use of bamboo. By 55 BCE, silk was already widely used as writing material and because the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is written on bamboo, Huáng Zhāo 黃釗 [1991: 150] argues, it must have been transmitted from "ancient times" when this was still the default material. This argument is founded on the supposition that bamboo and silk exclude each other as writing materials, which has been disproved by Tsien Tsuen-hsuin [1962: 91], who writes that "it is a mistake to assume that the use of bamboo stopped when the use of silk or paper began." According to Tsien, bamboo was used for writing to the third or fourth century CE, which is long after the Dìngzhōu manuscripts were entombed. Moreover, the unearthed travelogue confirms that texts from as late as the Five Phoenixes period were still copied on bamboo.

If the *Wénzǐ* were an important pre-Qín work, as many scholars now maintain, one would expect to find traces in contemporary sources—but there are none. No extant text that can be plausibly dated to the pre-Qín period mentions or quotes the *Wénzǐ*.[39] Hence, there is no evidence to corroborate recent claims of the *Wénzǐ* being an important pre-Qín treatise. Conversely, the complete absence of verifiable references to the *Wénzǐ* in extant pre-Qín writings suggests that the text was not created in the pre-Qín era, but later. Is this provisional conclusion, an *argumentum ex silentio*, supported by the *Wénzǐ* itself?

3.1.2. Modern Text-Dating Methods: Late Warring States, or Later

Various methods were developed in the 20th century to determine the date of ancient Chinese texts. Two methods, by Karlgren [1926, 1929] and Graham [1961], focus on the use of grammatical particles. These methods are not watertight, one reason being

[39] Lǐ Dìngshēng [1996] argues that Hán Fēi read the *Wénzǐ*, but Zhāng Fēngqián [1999] rightly points out that his arguments are weak. Moreover, *Hán Fēizǐ* 30, the chapter that according to Lǐ quotes the *Wénzǐ*, could date from long after Hán Fēi's death (cf. Brooks [1994: 28] and Wáng Shūhóng 王書紅 [1998: 379]) and cannot serve as evidence that the *Wénzǐ* is a pre-Qín text.

Chinese text forgers' proven mastery of imitating ancient grammar.[40] An additional problem for the *Wénzǐ* is that bamboo strips often contain no more than fragments of a sentence, which impedes interpretation of their grammatical structure.

Pines [2002] has developed a helpful method, which focuses on lexical changes in Warring States texts.[41] One reason for concentrating on a text's lexicon, Pines explains, is that forgers were much less aware of lexical changes than of changes in grammar. Another reason is that sometimes the appearance of a term, or the investment of a particular meaning in a term, can be dated. Pines shows that the absence of certain terms in texts as the *Analects* or *The Zuǒ Tradition* 左傳 indicates that they reflect "earlier linguistic layers than other [Warring States] writings". Conversely, texts that do mention these terms can be said to reflect a later linguistic layer. The *Wénzǐ* belongs to the latter.

Pines offers seven terms as dating criteria. Four appear in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, some more than once.[42] For example, bamboo strip 0204 mentions the graph 樞 *shū* 'trigger [of a crossbow]', not in its literal meaning, but in its metaphoric meaning of "key" or "crucial link", as it speaks of "the key to fortune or misfortune and to gain or loss" 禍福得失之樞. Obviously, the metaphoric meaning of "trigger" appeared after its literal meaning, that is, after the invention and spread of the crossbow. The *Wénzǐ*'s inclusion of this term in its metaphoric meaning suggests that it was written when crossbow-related terms—both literal and metaphoric—had become common in non-military writings, which according to Pines [2002: 696] happened in the late Warring States era. In sum, the combined mention of four criteria terms reflects the *Wénzǐ* as part of a later linguistic layer and points to a late Warring States date at the earliest.

Two aspects of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* corroborate this provisional conclusion: the multiplicity of philosophical concepts and the frequency of compound terms.

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[40] The Received *Wénzǐ* is a good example of the practice of "authenticating" forged texts by imitating ancient grammar. The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* contains questions in direct speech; in the received text these are changed to an archaic statement-question style. See Chapter 6 for details.

[41] Pines' method was discussed and criticized on the Warring States Working Group discussion list from October to December 2004. See http://www.umass.edu/wsp.

[42] Of the seven terms discussed by Pines, the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* mentions "trigger" once; "humaneness and righteousness" 仁義 four times (see ahead); "all things" 萬物 seven times (see Chapter 4); and "pattern" 理 twice. As expected, the less common terms "myriad chariots" 萬乘 and "plain-clothed" 布衣 do not occur. The manuscript also does not mention "yīn and yáng" 陰陽, neither as a compound nor as individual terms. This may be explained by the fragmentary status of the Dìngzhōu manuscript, if the author of the *Wénzǐ* availed himself of these terms to begin with. It reveals a problematic aspect of Pines' theory: the absence of a term in a text does not necessarily point to an early date.

The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, short and fragmentary as it may be, displays a rich use of philosophical terminology. Recurrent terms include "the Way" 道, "virtue" 德, "humaneness" 仁, "righteousness" 義, "propriety" 禮, "sageness" 聖, "wisdom" 智, "non-action" 無爲 and "educative transformation" 教化. Although there is no clear picture of the evolution of concepts in Chinese thought, the general pattern is that early thinkers advocate one or several key terms, whereas later authors employ a larger philosophical vocabulary. The wide range and recurrence of philosophical terms in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is suggestive of a time when one or two terms no longer sufficed vis-à-vis the complexity of the problems facing the world. The world of the *Wénzǐ* requires a complex system of concepts, including those that were previously promoted separately by individual thinkers. This synthesis of ideas also characterizes other texts of the late Warring States and early Former Hàn periods, such as the *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor* 黃帝四經 or the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子.

Another distinct aspect of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is the frequent appearance of compound terms. Liu Xiaogan [1994: 4-16] uses compound terms as linguistic evidence in classifying *Zhuāngzǐ* chapters. Liu's compound terms are absent in philosophical works of the mid-Warring States period and before (e.g., *Mòzǐ*, *Lǎozǐ* and *Zhuāngzǐ*'s Inner Chapters), but ubiquitous in philosophical literature afterwards (e.g., *Xúnzǐ*, *Hán Fēizǐ* and *Zhuāngzǐ*'s Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters). For example, the *Lǎozǐ* never combines "the Way" and "virtue", though it mentions these terms individually over 70 and 40 times, respectively. They are first mentioned in conjunction in late Warring States texts.[43] In the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, they form a compound on no fewer than seven bamboo strips.[44] Two examples:

[2252] □使桀紂脩道德，湯[武唯（雖）賢，毋所建]
Had Jié and Zhòu practiced the Way and virtue, then Tāng and Wǔ, no matter how worthy they were, would have had no occasion to establish

[2248] 道德，則下毋仁義之心，下毋仁義之
the Way and virtue, then inferiors have no heart of humaneness and righteousness. If inferiors have no [heart of] humaneness and righteousness, …

[43] Twice in *Hán Fēizǐ*, 11 times in *Xúnzǐ*, 16 times in *Zhuāngzǐ*'s Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters.
[44] These seven bamboo strips are 2255, 2252, 2248, 2201, 0613, 0902 and 2211.

Strip 2248 mentions "the Way and virtue" together with another important compound, "humaneness and righteousness" 仁義. The latter occurs four times in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, as strips 2248 and 0575 both mention the compound twice.[45]

Liu Xiaogan [1994: 14] concludes on the usage of the compounds "Way and virtue" 道德, "inborn nature" 性命 and "pure spirit" 精神:

> During the mid-Warring States period, or more specifically, during the time of Mencius (372?-289? B.C.) and just prior to Mencius, no one employed the terms *dàodé*, *xìngmìng*, and *jīngshén*. It was only during the later Warring States period, probably during Xúnzǐ's lifetime (325?-235 B.C.), that these compounds began to appear and circulate.

If this conclusion applies to philosophical compounds in general, the *Wénzǐ* was composed no earlier than the late Warring States, when philosophical terms began to appear in mutual conjunction.

The methods of Pines and Liu are neither incontrovertible nor able to pinpoint the precise date of a composition, but they do provide a rough indication. Applied to the vocabulary of the bamboo manuscript, they indicate that the *Wénzǐ* dates from a time when authors readily borrowed terms from a wide variety of earlier thinkers and freely combined these into compounds. In other words, no earlier than the time of Xúnzǐ, and, given the scale of usage in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, probably even later.

3.1.3. Textual Evidence: Early Former Hàn

While evidence for a more precise date is scarce, it shows that the *Wénzǐ* is *not* a pre-Qín text. Various clues in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* point to the early Former Hàn dynasty, more precisely, to the reign periods of Emperor Wén 漢文帝 (r. 179-157 BCE), Emperor Jǐng 漢景帝 (r. 156-141 BCE) or Emperor Wǔ 漢武帝 (r. 140-87 BCE).

One element in the text strongly suggests a Former Hàn date. Strip 2212 speaks of "court invitations" 朝請, which, as Ho Che-wah [1998: 156-157] points out, is a Hàn dynasty custom:

[45] Pines mentions the compound "humaneness and righteousness" on his list of seven criteria and explains that although "humaneness" and "righteousness" were already semantically connected by the late Springs and Autumns 春秋 (722-481 BCE) period, the compound "humaneness and righteousness" became ubiquitous only from the mid-Warring States period onwards.

[2212][46] ［朝］請不恭，而不從令，不集。”平王
the court invitations are not revered; and not following orders, they do not gather.” King Píng

The Chinese etymological dictionary *The Origin of Words* 辭源 explains “court invitations” as a Hàn dynasty rule:

> 漢律，諸侯春朝皇帝叫朝，秋朝叫請。[47]
>
> Hàn dynasty regulation. Feudal lords’ audiences with the emperor in spring were called visits to the imperial court; those in autumn were called invitations to the imperial court.

Zhāng Fēngqián [2005] notes that references to “court invitations” are absent in extant pre-Hàn literature, though some texts speak of “court appointments” 朝聘 or “court presentations” 朝覲. These resemble “court invitations” in name, but differ from it in application and strictness. The appointments and presentations, according to Zhāng, also apply between feudal lords and appear to be voluntary, whereas the invitations are mandatory semi-annual imperial audiences. The Hàn apparently renamed an existing system and reinforced its rules. The absence of references to “court invitations” in pre-Hàn writings and the ubiquity of references afterwards confirms that the *Wénzǐ*, which also mentions the ceremony, was composed in the Hàn dynasty.

A second element in the bamboo manuscript likewise points to an early Former Hàn date. Although the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, as mentioned before, dwells on a multitude of philosophical concepts, one essential concept stands out by its absence: “law” 法.[48] Given the scope and repeated usage of philosophical terminology in the *Wénzǐ*, this can hardly be a coincidence. The striking absence of this concept seems to imply specific avoidance of the Legalist outlook, in which law plays a pivotal role. Implicit disregard for Legalist principles is made explicit on one bamboo strip:

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[46] The graph 朝, placed between square brackets, used to be present on the bamboo strip, but is broken off or no longer legible after the Tángshān earthquake of 1976.
[47] Commercial Press Editorial Office 商務印書館編輯部 [1992: 2.1490].
[48] The graph 法 *fǎ* appears four times as the verb ‘to emulate’ (once on strips 0871 and 0912 and twice on 0689) and once as a noun in the combination 義法 *yìfǎ* ‘models of righteousness’ (on strip 2208). It does not occur as a distinct philosophical concept in its own right. The possible counter-argument that the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is a fragmentary manuscript and that this concept may have been present on now-lost strips, would ignore the frequent occurrences of other concepts, such as the Way or virtue.

[2243] ［主］國家［安］寧，其唯化也。刑罰不足
The stability and safety of the ruler's realm depends only on transformation. Punishments and penalties are inadequate

This claim bespeaks explicit criticism of Legalist ideas.

Implicit and explicit criticism of ideas now collectively labeled Legalist indicates that the author of the *Wénzǐ* may have witnessed the time when this current of thought was most influential: the Qín dynasty. The author appears to be aware of the disastrous effects of Qín rule, whose strict laws and severe punishments were perceived as the main causes for the collapse of the dynasty after merely two decades. Although modern research on newly discovered manuscripts shows that Qín rule was neither exclusively Legalist nor exceptionally harsh, this was the view of early Hàn intellectuals, who analyzed the faults of the Qín to ensure that their own young dynasty would avoid the same fate.[49] Hence, the anti-law sentiments in the *Wénzǐ* are reminiscent of early Hàn author-politicians. For example, Lù Jiǎ 陸賈 (c. 228-c. 140 BCE), author of *New Discussions* 新語, maintains that the Qín Dynasty failed because its rulers set up too many laws and their punishments were too harsh.[50] His contemporary Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 (201-169 BCE) claims in his celebrated essay *Faults of the Qín* 過秦論, that the Qín became a laughing stock because "it failed to rule with humanity and righteousness and to realize that the power to attack and the power to retain what one has thereby won are not the same."[51] Vankeerberghen [2001: 123] observes that both authors explicitly

> attributed the fall of the Qín dynasty to its overemphasis on law and punishment and its consequent neglect of benevolence and duty. They believed that appeals to the people's sense of fear and greed (i.e., rule by punishment and reward) were less effective than educating the people.

The author of the *Wénzǐ* concurs with Lù Jiǎ and Jiǎ Yì in their opposition of laws and punishments and their advocacy of education, which seems to indicate that the three authors are roughly contemporaneous. Notably, they all use the same term to describe as the preferred method for subduing the populace: "educative transformation" 教化. This term is highly uncommon in pre-Hàn writings. It gained currency in the *Xúnzǐ* and was adopted by Lù Jiǎ, Jiǎ Yì and other Hàn dynasty intellectuals. That the *Wénzǐ*

[49] See Hulsewé [1985] for an annotated translation of the unearthed bamboo texts on Qín law.
[50] See Ku [1988: 84-85].
[51] Translation by De Bary [1960: 152].

also repeatedly avails itself of this concept (see Chapter 4) is yet another indication of its Hàn dynasty provenance.

Comparison of the writings of the three Former Hàn authors potentially leads to a more precise dating of the *Wénzǐ*. At the risk of oversimplifying complex philosophies, I would say that Lù Jiǎ and Jiǎ Yì are essentially oriented towards what is now known as Confucianism, but they also espouse elements of Daoism and other currents of thought.[52] The *Wénzǐ* has a similarly eclectic outlook, but with a different emphasis. In essence a Daoist text, it does not eschew Confucian notions such as humaneness and righteousness. This possibly signals a later trend, a further development of the ideas of Lù Jiǎ and Jiǎ Yì in a *laissez-faire* direction. In other words, the *Wénzǐ* shares Lù Jiǎ and Jiǎ Yì's aversion to Legalist ideas, but its strong reliance on Daoist notions makes it the youngest of the three. Whereas Lù and Jiǎ were active until the early years of Emperor Wén and their views dominated intellectual circles of the time, the *Wénzǐ* was probably composed in latter part of Emperor Wén's reign or even under subsequent rulers, when the intellectual world is known to have been receptive to the type of ideas found in the *Wénzǐ*.

We would expect the *Wénzǐ*, with the Way and non-action as key concepts and the *Lǎozǐ* as its main source of inspiration, to date from a time when the authority of the *Lǎozǐ* was widely acknowledged and its ideas were popular. In historiographical sources, such as *Historical Records* and *Hàn History*, the reigns of Emperor Wén and Jǐng and the early years of Emperor Wǔ are described as a time of great enthusiasm for Daoism, or to be precise, for the trend of thought that Sīmǎ Qiān 司馬遷 (ca. 145-ca. 86 BCE) labels "Huáng-Lǎo" 黃老, which refers to the teachings and techniques attributed to the Yellow Emperor 黃帝 and Lǎozǐ 老子. The most fervent promoter of this trend was the wife of Emperor Wén, Lady Dòu 竇后, who forcefully instituted these practices and ideas at the imperial court. Huáng-Lǎo apparently served as the unofficial state ideology when Lady Dòu held sway over the imperial palace, as Empress, Empress-dowager and Grand Empress-dowager, until her death in 135 BCE.

This period of the Former Hàn also witnessed the creation of the *Huáinánzǐ*, a text written under the auspices of Liú Ān 劉安, King of Huáinán 淮南王, and reportedly presented to Emperor Wǔ in 139 BCE. Similar to the *Wénzǐ*, the *Huáinánzǐ* takes the Way and virtue as key concepts, it draws mainly on the *Lǎozǐ* and it

[52] Lù Jiǎ is proponent of a *laissez-faire* type of government and chooses "Non-Action" as the title of chapter 4 in *New Discussions*. Jiǎ Yì's *Owl Rhapsody* 鵩鳥賦 is also larded with Daoist elements.

promotes a quietist form of transforming the populace. The ideological link between both texts is strong and there are some textual correspondences. Compare *Wénzǐ* bamboo strip 2243, which states that "punishments and penalties are inadequate" and that "the stability and safety of the ruler's realm depends only on transformation", to these phrases in the *Huáinánzǐ*:

> 刑罰不足以移風，殺戮不足以禁姦，唯神化為貴。[53]
>
> Punishments and penalties are inadequate to change customs. Killings and executions are inadequate to end wickedness. Only spiritual transformation is valuable.

There are demonstrable ideological differences and few direct quotations between the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*, which suggests that they were written parallel to and unaware of each other. But their similarities indicate that they respond to some of the same problems and situations with comparable tools, in other words, that they are roughly contemporaneous.

Following the death of Lady Dòu, tensions between adepts of Huáng-Lǎo and those described as Confucians 儒者 rapidly increased in vigor. Once in office, the new chancellor of the Confucian faction immediately

> 絀黃老、刑名百家之言，延文學儒者數百人。[54]
>
> rejected the doctrines of the Daoists, the Legalists, and the other philosophical schools, and invited several hundred Confucian scholars and literary men to take service in the government.[55]

These and other pro-Confucian measures are said to have effectively ended the popularity and political influence of Huáng-Lǎo. Even if the distinction between Huáng-Lǎo and Confucianism is not as sharp as historiographical sources describe it, it is scarcely conceivable that the *Wénzǐ* was written long after the death of Lady Dòu, when the intellectual world apparently no longer welcomed the type of ideas it promotes. We may therefore take the early years of Emperor Wǔ's reign as an approximate and tentative *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the *Wénzǐ*.

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[53] *Huáinánzǐ* 9.
[54] *Historical Records* 121.3118.
[55] Translation by Watson [1993c: 358].

Of course, authors may be ahead of their time or well behind it; and texts may be written before or after the ideas they contain are *en vogue*. Still, a political manifesto makes most sense if it aptly voices the problems of its time and employs contemporary politico-philosophical terminology, that is, if the text matches its historical context. If we follow this principle in the complex matter of dating ancient texts, and compare the *Wénzǐ* to the writings of contemporary authors (Lù Jiǎ, Jiǎ Yì, Liú Ān) and to retrospective descriptions in later historiographical sources (*Historical Records*, *Hàn History*), the "Huáng-Lǎo period" of the early Former Hàn would have been the most favorable time for the composition of the *Wénzǐ*. The author's choice of protagonists for his text, King Píng and Wénzǐ, vindicates this hypothesis.

3.2. Protagonists

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is written entirely in the form of a dialogue between King Píng and Wénzǐ; no other names occur in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo manuscript. Who are these two protagonists?

3.2.1. King Píng

The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* often mentions King Píng, but the surviving bamboo fragments never specify the realm over which this monarch held sway. Two kings named Píng are known to have reigned in the centuries leading up to the Hàn dynasty:

- King Píng of Zhōu 周平王 (r. 770-720 BCE)
- King Píng of Chǔ 楚平王 (r. 528-516 BCE)

To which of these two kings does the *Wénzǐ* refer?

The first person to identify the King Píng character in the *Wénzǐ* was the Latter Hàn dynasty historiographer Bān Gù 班固 (32-92). The bibliographical treatise in his *Hàn History* 漢書 lists a *Wénzǐ* in nine chapters 篇, to which the historiographer notes:

> 老子弟子，與孔子並時，而稱周平王問，似依託者也。[56]

[56] *Hàn History* 30.1729.

> [Wénzǐ was] a disciple of Lǎozǐ and a contemporary of Confucius. But [the text] also mentions questions by King Píng of Zhōu, which seem to be inaccurately ascribed to him.

It is unclear from this statement whether the Hàn dynasty imperial library copy of the *Wénzǐ* actually read "King Píng of Zhōu" and not just "King Píng", which Bān Gù interprets as the Zhōu monarch, whom he may have considered the only logical option. Either way, Bān Gù's comment is one of the most heatedly debated statements in *Wénzǐ* studies through the ages, because it contains an obvious chronological problem: How can a disciple of Lǎozǐ (trad. 6th c. BCE) and contemporary of Confucius (trad. 551-479 BCE) serve as adviser to a Zhōu king who acceded to the throne more than two hundred years before Confucius was born? Bān Gù takes Wénzǐ's lifetime in the 6th century BCE for granted and suggests that the questions placed in the mouth of King Píng are fraudulent. Later scholars came up with different solutions.[57]

Attempts to resolve the anachronism in Bān Gù's statement were pioneered by Zhōu Bìdà 周必大 (1126-1204), who proposes that King Píng in the *Wénzǐ* actually refers to King Píng of Chǔ, whose reign in the 6th century BCE wonderfully coincides with the time when Confucius and Lǎozǐ's disciple Wénzǐ were supposed to have lived.[58] Not surprisingly, this chronologically sound theory was embraced by many *Wénzǐ* enthusiasts, both then and now, but the Dìngzhōu discovery forces us to re-examine this solution, because unlike Zhōu Bìdà and his supporters, we now have a *Wénzǐ* manuscript at our disposal that is similar to that of Bān Gù.[59]

Zhōu Bìdà's hypothesis rests on the belief that Bān Gù's comment is entirely correct, except that he mistakenly wrote "Zhōu" instead of "Chǔ". To correct the mistake, all we have to do is replace the former with the latter, so as to bring the three thinkers mentioned by Bān Gù (Wénzǐ, Lǎozǐ, Confucius) in line with the King Píng mentioned in the *Wénzǐ*. As a result, the text perfectly matches its supposed historical context. But what if Bān Gù was right about King Píng of Zhōu and wrong about Wénzǐ's lifetime in the 6th century BCE?

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[57] Here I only discuss Zhōu Bìdà's widely accepted solution. See Chapter 9 for alternative hypotheses.
[58] Zhōu Bìdà wrote long after the major *Wénzǐ* revision. His proposal to read "King Píng" as the Chǔ monarch is based on the Received *Wénzǐ*, which mentions "King Píng" once, not on the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, which had long ago become extinct.
[59] Scholars who support Zhōu Bìdà's hypothesis include Mǎ Duānlín (1254-1323), Liáng Yùshéng (1745-1819), Sūn Xīngyǎn (1753-1818), and, more recently, Jiāng Guózhù [1994: 37; 1998: 38], Lǐ Xuéqín [1995: 31] and Dīng Yuánmíng 丁原明 [1997: 213].

We now know that the *Wénzǐ* was authored at the dawn of the Hàn dynasty, countless generations after either historical King Píng. The dialogue between King Píng and Wénzǐ is no direct account of an actual meeting, but a historical setting created by an author who lived many centuries after the fictional event. Hence, the real question is not which historical King Píng matches the alleged biographical data of Wénzǐ, but rather to which King Píng an early Hàn dynasty author would ascribe the questions in his work. The unearthed *Wénzǐ* provides evidence suggesting that, in line with Bān Gù's comment and contrary to Zhōu Bìdà's hypothesis, King Píng refers to the Zhōu monarch. I offer three arguments to support this claim:

(1) At a symposium devoted to the *Wénzǐ* in 1996, Wáng Bó 王博 and Wèi Qǐpéng 魏啟鵬 independently called attention to one of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips.[60] This strip shows that the Wénzǐ character in the text addresses a "King of Heaven" 天王, a king appointed by Heaven:

> [2391] ［辭曰：道者，先聖人之傳］也。天王不［齎不口］
> A saying goes: "The Way is transmitted by the ancient sages." If you, King of Heaven, are neither generous nor …

Wáng and Wèi point out that "King of Heaven" in pre-imperial literature strictly refers to monarchs of the Zhōu house. *The Origin of Words* confirms this:

> 天王，指周天子。因春秋時，楚、吳等諸侯相繼稱王，故尊稱周王為天王。[61]
>
> King of Heaven refers to the Sons of Heaven of the Zhōu dynasty. From the Springs and Autumns period onwards, the Zhōu monarchs were respectfully referred to as "King of Heaven" after the feudal lords in Chǔ and Wú and other realms had crowned themselves as king.

The etymological dictionary then illustrates this by quoting the *Springs and Autumns* 春秋, one of the traditional classical annals, which specifically refers to King Píng of Zhōu as a King of Heaven.

[60] In June 1996, Fu Jen University organized a joint Chinese-Taiwanese symposium titled "The *Wénzǐ* and the Development of Daoist Thought" 《文子》與道家思想發展. See Wáng Bó [1996b], Xiāo Shūhuá 蕭淑華 [1996] and Edmund Ryden [1996a] for summaries of the meeting and Wáng Bó [1996a] and Wèi Qǐpéng [1996] for their views on bamboo strip 2391.
[61] Commercial Press Editorial Office [1992: 1.0684].

(2) In addition to "King of Heaven", the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* frequently speaks of the "Son of Heaven" 天子 and "All under Heaven" 天下, which refers to the entire empire or the whole world. For example:

> [0717] 矣。故有道者立天下，則天下治
> Therefore, if those who posses the Way establish All under Heaven, then All under Heaven is in order.
>
> [2327] 有天下，貴為天子，富貴不離其身
> Once they possessed All under Heaven and were respected as Sons of Heaven, wealth and nobility did not abandon them

It is obvious from these strips that the text directs its advice to the Son of Heaven and addresses problems that face the entire world, that is, the Zhōu empire, not just those of an individual realm, such as the subordinate kingdom of Chǔ.

(3) Zhāng Fēngqián [2002: 23-26] draws attention to the discussion in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* on the problem of insubordinate rulers. Two bamboo strips speak of "the betrayal of the feudal lords" 諸侯背叛 who "do not follow orders" 不從令. These two strips relate to this passage in the Received *Wénzǐ*:

> 諸侯輕上，則朝廷不恭。縱令不順[2212]，仁絕義滅[0567]，諸侯背叛，眾人力政，強者陵弱，大者侵小[2321]，民人以攻擊為業，災害生，禍亂作，其亡無日。[62]
>
> If the feudal lords disregard their superiors, then the imperial court is not revered and even if orders are given, they are not followed.[63] If humaneness is used up and righteousness is gone, the feudal lords betray them and the masses attack them with all their strength.[64] The strong oppress the weak and the big harass the small. The common people occupy themselves with assault and attack, destruction and harm arise, misfortune and chaos rear their head, and it is only a matter of time before the realm perishes.

A discussion of this kind makes sense only if addressed to an overlord, a Son of Heaven, who worries about his dealings with local rulers, whom he both needs and fears. Pronounced to a lesser ruler, it would make no sense. King Píng of Chǔ is such

[62] *Wénzǐ* 5.15 (excerpt).
[63] Whereas the "court invitations" 朝請 are not revered on bamboo strip 2212 (see earlier), the received text says that the "imperial court" 朝廷 is not revered. The reference to a Hàn dynasty regulation was probably changed to a neutral term during the major revision that led to the Received *Wénzǐ*, to pass it off as a pre-Hàn text.
[64] I read 征 *zhēng* 'attack' for 政 *zhèng* 'policy'.

a lesser ruler, a rebellious feudal lord who did not recognize Zhōu rule, and precisely the type of leader against whom the text fulminates.

In sum, the only King Píng to match the profile in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is an overlord, a member of the Zhōu house. If the text did not explicitly write "King Píng of Zhōu", the abundance of evidence in the bamboo manuscript pointing to this monarch may explain why the author of the *Wénzǐ* felt no need to specify his realm and why Bān Gù as a reader takes it for granted that the questions in the text are King Píng of Zhōu's, even though he was aware of the resulting anachronism.

Who was King Píng of Zhōu? King Píng of Zhōu is a well-known ruler of the pre-Hàn era, for his accession to the throne marks the beginning of the Eastern Zhōu 東周 dynasty (770-256 BCE). The authority of the Zhōu house, which came to power in the 11th century BCE, had started to decline long before King Píng, but during the reign of his father, King Yōu 周幽王 (r. 781-771 BCE), the Western Zhōu 西周 finally collapsed. The Zhōu-court was sacked, Luòyáng 洛陽 became the new capital city and King Píng was enthroned as a figurehead monarch to continue the sacrificial ceremonies. Sīmǎ Qiān paints a gloomy picture of King Píng's pseudo-reign:

> 平王之時，周室衰微，諸侯彊并弱，齊、楚、秦、晉始大，政由方伯[65]
>
> During the reign of King Píng, the Zhōu court fell into decline. Among the feudal lords, the strong annexed the weak. Qí, Chǔ, Qín, and Jìn emerged as major powers, and national policies were made by the local lords.[66]

From King Píng onwards, Zhōu rulers reigned in name only and local powers became ever stronger, which eventually led to the end of the Zhōu dynasty.

Why would a Former Hàn author choose King Píng of Zhōu as his protagonist? First, why a Zhōu ruler? One reason may be that a King of Heaven gives the *Wénzǐ*'s philosophy a universal character. Regardless of the actual state of its power, Zhōu remained the umbrella dynasty, above all quasi-independent principalities, including Chǔ. Unlike pre-Qín masters such as Confucius or Mencius, who proffered their counsel to local rulers, Wénzǐ directed his advice to the Zhōu king who stood above them, at least in name. Hence, his philosophy is not limited to the particular circumstances of one individual realm, but applicable to All under Heaven, or the whole world.

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[65] *Historical Records* 4.149.
[66] Translation by Nienhauser et. al. [1994: 74].

More importantly, as the *Wénzǐ* was written in the Former Hàn, its author had no choice but to select a ruler whose status matched that of a Hàn emperor. Directing his advice to the head of a subordinate realm, say a feudal lord of Chǔ, would have meant support for local power instead of central authority and been a risky strategy during the early Former Hàn.

Why King Píng? The reason may well have been the discouraging situation this Zhōu monarch found himself in. Compared to rulers who preceded or followed him, King Píng was most genuinely in need of advice. His reign provides ideal circumstances for Wénzǐ to prescribe his doctrine as a remedy for the problem of consolidating power faced by the new ruler. The symbolic dating of the *Wénzǐ*, as Cleary [1992: vii-viii] writes, "indicates that it addresses the needs and problems of an age of transition and uncertainty." As the *Wénzǐ* was written in the early Former Hàn, another time of transition and uncertainty, King Píng seems a natural choice.

The similarities between the early stages of the Eastern Zhōu and Former Hàn dynasties confirm that the "King Píng" character in the *Wénzǐ* refers to the Zhōu monarch. This further indicates that the *Wénzǐ* was written with a Hàn emperor in mind. The author of the *Wénzǐ* seems well aware of Hàn orthodoxy, and his choice of King Píng of Zhōu as an allegoric representation of a contemporary Hàn emperor would have made complete sense to the informed reader of his time.

3.2.2. Wénzǐ

In the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, King Píng converses with Wénzǐ. Who is this political advisor, whose name also serves as the title of the work?

Bān Gù calls Wénzǐ a disciple of Lǎozǐ. His contemporary, Wáng Chōng 王充 (27-ca. 100), agrees. In *Balanced Discourses* 論衡, Wáng Chōng compares Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ to Confucius and his apprentice Yán Yuān, thereby affirming their master-disciple relationship. Praising Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ as personifications of Heaven and Earth, he overtly places them above both Confucians:

> 孔子謂顏淵曰：「吾服汝，忘也；汝之服於我，亦忘也。」以孔子為君，顏淵為臣，尚不能譴告，況以老子為君，文子為臣乎？老子、文子、似天地者也。[67]

[67] *Balanced Discourses* 54.

> Confucius said to Yán Yuān: "When I deferred to you, I did not think of it, and when you deferred to me, you likewise did not think of it." Although Confucius was like a prince and Yán Yuān like a minister, he could not make up his mind to reprimand Yán Yuān: how much less would Lǎozǐ have been able to do so, if we consider him a prince and Wénzǐ his minister? Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ were like Heaven and Earth.[68]

Wáng Chōng does not introduce Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ, which indicates that to his audience, the two thinkers and their mutual relationship were as well known as Confucius and Yán Yuān.

Bān Gù and Wáng Chōng show that the idea that Wénzǐ was a disciple of Lǎozǐ had firm grounds as early as the Latter Hàn. Numerous scholars in later times subscribe to this view, including Gě Hóng 葛洪 (ca. 283-343), author of *The Master Who Embraces Simplicity* 抱朴子, who mentions Wénzǐ in conjunction with other students of Lǎozǐ. In one chapter, he associates him with someone called Gēngsāng:

> 夫道之妙者，不可盡書，而其近者，又不足說。昔庚桑胼胝，文子釐顏，勤苦彌久，及受大訣，諒有以也。[69]
>
> Now, the most mysterious aspects of the Way cannot be exhaustively put to words; and what comes close to it is not interesting enough to waste ink on. In the past, Gēngsāng had calluses and Wénzǐ had a sallow complexion. Having devotedly exerted themselves for a long time, they obtained the great secret [of longevity] and that was truly the reason.

Commentators agree that Gēngsāng refers to Gēngsāng Chǔ 庚桑楚, whose name appears as the title of *Zhuāngzǐ* 23. The author of that *Zhuāngzǐ* chapter declares that Gēngsāng Chǔ obtained the Way from Lǎo Dān 老聃, another name for Lǎozǐ.

Gě Hóng also links Wénzǐ to Zhuāngzǐ and Yǐn Xǐ 尹喜, the pass-keeper to whom Lǎozǐ purportedly revealed his teachings on his way to the West:

> 五千文雖出老子，然皆泛論較略耳。其中了不肯首尾全舉其事，有可承按者也。但暗誦此經，而不得要道，直為徒勞耳，又況不及者乎？至於文子莊子關令尹喜之徒，其屬文筆，雖祖述黃老，憲章玄虛，但演其大旨，永無至言。[70]
>
> Although the *Book of Five Thousand Words* is composed by Lǎozǐ, it contains nothing but outlines and generalities. Matters in this work are not discussed in

[68] Translation based on Forke [1907: 100].
[69] *The Master Who Embraces Simplicity* 5.
[70] *The Master Who Embraces Simplicity* 8.

> their entirety, but some of its theories can be upheld and put into practice. If you merely recite this scripture blindly, without grasping the underlying message, all your efforts will prove futile. How much more should this be true for those who do not reach Lǎozǐ's level! The words and writings of such men as Wénzǐ, Zhuāngzǐ and Director of the Pass Yǐn Xǐ may have their origins in Huáng-Lǎo, and their rules and regulations may deal with the mysterious void, but they only dwell on its import and never come up with any supreme theories of their own.

By pairing up Wénzǐ with Gēngsāng Chǔ in one passage and with Zhuāngzǐ and Yǐn Xǐ in another, Gě Hóng evidently regards Wénzǐ a student of Lǎozǐ, though he does not share Wáng Chōng's enthusiasm for these thinkers.

The idea of Wénzǐ as a disciple of Lǎozǐ was as widespread in those days as it is today. To illustrate, Lǐ Dìngshēng [1984b] and Lú Rénlóng 盧仁龍 [1989] label him an important exegete of Lǎozǐ's teachings, and in a detailed outline of the Daoist school, Guō Líhuá 郭梨華 [2002: 20] ranks Wénzǐ as one of Lǎozǐ's earliest immediate disciples (as opposed to posthumous followers).

The identification of Wénzǐ as a disciple of Lǎozǐ says *what* he is, but not *who*, and leaves many scholars unsatisfied. Through the centuries, various names have been proposed for the true identity of Wénzǐ, including (1) Wén Yáng 文陽; (2) Xīn Jìrán 辛計然; (3) Wén Zhǒng 文種; and (4) Tián Wén 田文.

(1) Lù Xiūjìng 陸修靜 (406-477), compilator of a Daoist canon, is the first person known to have given Wénzǐ a name. Under the *Wénzǐ* entry in his *Catalogue of Scriptures in the Temple of the Mysterious Capital* 玄都觀經目錄, he notes that the text was authored by a certain Wén Yáng 文陽.[71] However, nothing is known of this Wén Yáng, and because Lù's catalogue has long since disappeared, no other source identifies Wénzǐ as Wén Yáng.

(2) Lǐ Xiān 李暹, the sixth century CE *Wénzǐ* commentator, wrote a biographical note on Wénzǐ, in which he identifies him as Xīn Jìrán:

> 姓辛氏，葵丘濮上人，號曰計然，范蠡師事之，本受業於老子，文子錄其遺言為十二篇。[72]

[71] Lù Xiūjìng compiled his bibliography in 471 on orders of Emperor Míng of the (Liú-)Sòng dynasty 宋明帝. The bibliography itself is no longer extant, but is often quoted in Buddhist works of the early Tang dynasty. See also Chapter 9.

[72] Lǐ Xiān's *Wénzǐ* commentary no longer exists, but his comment on Wénzǐ's identity has survived in the writings of Cháo Gōngwǔ 晁公武 (ca. 1105-1180). See Chapter 9.

> [Wénzǐ's] family name was Xīn. He was from Kuíqiū in the Púshàng region and his honorific name was Jìrán. Having learned the trade from Lǎozǐ, Wénzǐ later became the teacher of Fàn Lí. He recorded his master's teachings in twelve chapters.[73]

Lǐ Xiān's statement confirms Wénzǐ's apprenticeship with Lǎozǐ and identifies him as Xīn Jìrán, the teacher of Fàn Lí.[74]

Little is known of Xīn Jìrán. He appears several times in the *Springs and Autumns of Wú and Yuè* 吳越春秋 and the *Writings on Yuè Bringing [Wú] to an End* 越絕書, two texts supposedly composed during the Latter Hàn that describe the early 5th century BCE conflict between the southern realms of Wú and Yuè. In both texts, Jìrán advises King Gōujiàn of Yuè 越王句踐 (r. 496-465 BCE), who then prospers and becomes known as one of the Five Hegemons 五霸.

Several scholars support the Xīn Jìrán hypothesis, especially those who read King Píng in the *Wénzǐ* as King Píng of Chǔ, whose reign is said to overlap with Jìrán's supposed lifetime.[75] Building on Lǐ Xiān's note, they see Wénzǐ as a man called Xīn Xíng 辛鈃 (or Xīn Bǐng 辛鉼) with the style name of Wénzǐ and the honorific name of Jìrán or vice versa.

Other scholars dispute the conflation of Wénzǐ and Jìrán, for two reasons.[76] First, Jìrán's name is problematic. Jìrán may be a style name or honorific name, but some consider Jì 計 a family name and Rán 然 a personal name, while others question Jìrán's very existence, claiming Jìrán is not the name of a person but the title of a chapter in *Fàn Lí*.[77] Second, Jìrán's philosophical outlook is incongruous with that of Wénzǐ. Jìrán focuses on profit and prosperity, which is not what one would expect

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[73] Lǐ Xiān commented on the Received *Wénzǐ*, which has twelve chapters in which most sections are attributed to Wénzǐ's master Lǎozǐ.

[74] As Sòng Lián 宋濂 (1310-1381) notes, the *Historical Records* [129.3256] mentions the advice a man named Jìrán once gave to King Gōujiàn of Yuè. Péi Yīn 裴駰 (5th c. CE) expounds on this Jìrán in his *Collected Explanations of the Historical Records* 史記集解. He first quotes a statement by Xú Guǎng 徐廣 (352-425): "Jìrán was the teacher of Fàn Lí and his personal name was Yán." Then, he quotes the *Fànzǐ* 范子: "Jìrán was from Kuíqiū in Púshàng. His family name was Xīn and his style name Wénzǐ. His ancestor was a prince who had fled from the realm of Jìn. He once journeyed south to Yuè, where Fàn Lí became his student." All Lǐ Xiān apparently did was paraphrase Péi Yīn's comment on Xīn Wénzǐ and link it to the Received *Wénzǐ*.

[75] One proponent of this theory is Dù Dàojiān, the Yuán dynasty *Wénzǐ* commentator, who even moves to Mount Jìchóu, where Jìrán according to historical sources once resided (see Chapter 9). Other proponents include Sūn Xīngyǎn (1753-1818) and, more recently, Ráo Héngjiǔ 饒恒久 [1989].

[76] Opponents include Hóng Mài, Chén Zhènsūn (1190-1249), Huáng Zhèn (1213-1280), Sòng Lián (1310-1381), Hú Yìnglín (1551-1602), Wáng Xiānqiān (1842-1918) and, more recently, Wèi Qǐpéng [1996]. See also Huáng Zhèn's essay in Chapter 9.

[77] *Hàn History* 91.3683.

from a disciple of Lǎozǐ, famous for the doctrine of "knowing what is enough" 知足. Hence, Jìrán's name and doctrine cannot be plausibly linked to the *Wénzǐ*.

(3) Jiāng Quán 江琼 (Qīng dynasty) suggests that Wénzǐ stands for the famous Wén Zhǒng 文種. During the reign of King Píng of Chǔ, Wén Zhǒng was the magistrate of a district in Chǔ. Fame came to him later, in the realm of Yuè, where he became known as Grand Master Zhǒng 大夫種 and found himself in the company of Fàn Lí and Jìrán. Like these two men, Wén Zhǒng also served as advisor to King Gōujiàn, but he was later forced to commit suicide. The hypothesis of Wén Zhǒng as the true identity of Wénzǐ is understandably popular among scholars who see King Píng in the *Wénzǐ* as the Chǔ monarch, such as Wú Guāng 吳光 [1989: 79-86].

(4) Another alternative is the famous Tián Wén 田文, the Lord of Mèngcháng 孟嘗君, who is known as a prominent patron of learning.[78] He invited thousands of scholars from all over the empire and even Xúnzǐ is said to have paid him a visit.

Which of these four men, if any, is Wénzǐ? As biographical information on Wénzǐ is scarce, speculation about his identity is all the more intense. Without substantial and reliable evidence, however, none of the hypotheses is convincing. Two factors complicate identification of Wénzǐ: the ambiguity and the popularity of this name.

The name Wénzǐ is ambiguous because, as the four examples show, it may consist of the title "master" 子 added to the surname Wén (as in the cases of Wén Yáng and Wén Zhǒng) or to the personal name Wén (as in the case of Tián Wén); or it may be a combination, Wénzǐ, that functions as someone's personal name, style name or honorific name (as in the case of Xīn Jìrán).

The name is also highly popular, as pre-Hàn texts are full of men called Wénzǐ. Yán Língfēng 嚴靈峰 [1997: 104] counts no fewer than 16 different Wénzǐ's in *The Discourses of the Realms* 國語 and *The Zuǒ Tradition* alone. There is a General Wénzǐ 將軍文子 in the realm of Wèi 衛, a Chén Wénzǐ 陳文子 in Qí 齊, a Shūsūn Wénzǐ 叔孫文子 in Lǔ 魯, and so on, but none is known to have lived in the time of King Píng of Zhōu.

Counting all historical Wénzǐ's, as well as all men with the surname or personal name of Wén, leads to scores of potential candidates for the identity of Wénzǐ. In the absence of plausible evidence, how do we know which one of these men, if any, is related to the *Wénzǐ*?

[78] For arguments for Tián Wén as the identity of Wénzǐ, see Zhāng Fēngqián [2002: 118-121, 123].

The main obstacle in identifying Wénzǐ is the approach itself. Without distinguishing between author and protagonist, scholars usually see the *Wénzǐ* as the book of a pre-Qín figure called Wénzǐ who promulgated his teachings under his own name. This forces them to find a historical Wénzǐ who matches the supposed biographical data of Wénzǐ. They usually end up with a Wénzǐ from the late 6th or early 5th century BCE, because Bān Gù names Wénzǐ a disciple of Lǎozǐ, who was supposedly active in that period.

The Dìngzhōu discovery reveals two things. It shows that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* was created in the Former Hàn and that the King Píng character in the text refers to the first ruler of the Eastern Zhōu. As the dialogues in the text are situated at the court of King Píng of Zhōu, the Wénzǐ character therefore must be someone at his court, either a permanent member of his staff (a minister) or a temporary visitor (an itinerant master). Whether there actually lived a man by the name of Wénzǐ at the beginning of the Eastern Zhōu is irrelevant, because the name is so widespread that a Former Hàn reader could easily imagine that a counselor named Wénzǐ once conferred with King Píng of Zhōu, even if the name does not refer to an actual historical person.

The real question is not which historical Wénzǐ matches the supposed biographical data of Wénzǐ, but why an author of the Former Hàn would choose this name for the main character in his text. Of course, the popularity of the name Wénzǐ makes him a credible protagonist, but this may not have been the only reason.

The word "wén" 文 is one of the most important concepts in Chinese culture and literature. Its significance, as Kern [2001: 41] notes, is rivaled by few other concepts. It is profound in meaning and therefore difficult to translate. From its original meaning of "intercrossing lines", "veins", "patterns" or even "tattoos", it has come to mean "script", "text" or "writing" as well as "elegant", "refined" or "polished", which further leads to the meanings of "cultured" or "educated" (as opposed to vulgar) and "mild" or "civil" (as opposed to military). All these meanings have positive connotations, which is why the concept is often used in people's names and posthumous epithets, as this anecdote in the *Analects* explains:

> 子貢問曰：「孔文子何以謂之『文』也？」子曰：「敏而好學，不恥下問，是以謂之『文』也。」[79]

[79] *Analects* 5.15.

> Zǐgòng asked, 'Why was Kǒng Wénzǐ called "wén"?' The Master said, 'He was quick and eager to learn: he was not ashamed to seek the advice of those who were beneath him in station. That is why he was called "wén".'[80]

Confucius associates "wén" with learning and narrowly defines it as the capacity to regard anybody, irrespective of social standing, as a potential teacher. Kern [2001] shows that its meaning was much broader and that in early China "wén" more generally suggested wide acquaintance with rites, music and, indeed, textual heritage; and hence meant something like "culturally accomplished".

The concept of "wén" in a person's name is powerful and suggestive, also in Former Hàn times. For example, during the final years of Emperor Jǐng's reign, there was a man named Wén Wēng 文翁, who served as prefect of Shǔ Commandery 蜀郡 (in present-day Sìchuān Province) and set up a local academy that attracted countless students from the region.[81] Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan [2003: 86] note that in view of Wén Wēng's aim to acculturate the South-Western parts of the empire, it is interesting that his name translates, through a paronomastic gloss, as "Old Man Culture". I do not suggest that Wén Wēng is in any way related to the *Wénzǐ*, but his name does bear witness to the currency of the notion of "wén" in those days and to its overt association with culture and education. Hence, in choosing Wénzǐ as the name of his main protagonist, the author follows an old, yet alive tradition, so as to create an aura of authority for his text. The name Wénzǐ suggests that these are teachings that anyone who wishes to become "culturally accomplished" has to study.

If my hypothesis regarding the date of the *Wénzǐ* is correct and the text was indeed written in the turbulent period when Lady Dòu held sway over the imperial palace, the concept of "wén" in the name Wénzǐ may have even deeper significance, related to its two meanings of "lettered" and "civilized".

The concept of "wén" is particularly significant in the Confucian tradition, as the discussion between Confucius and Zǐgòng shows. In the Former Hàn, after the death of Lady Dòu, the new Confucian-oriented chancellor rejected the doctrine of Huáng-Lǎo and other schools, while inviting "Confucian scholars and literary men" 文學儒者 to take service in the government.[82] There is an apparent opposition between Huáng-Lǎo scholars and literary scholars, that is, those who are well versed in the classics. In terms of philosophical outlook, the *Wénzǐ*, which does not quote the

[80] Translation by Lau [1979: 78].
[81] See *Hàn History* [89.3625-3627] for Wén Wēng's biography.
[82] See Sīmǎ Qiān's quotation earlier in this chapter.

classics but draws on the *Lǎozǐ*, would lean towards Huáng-Lǎo, but in using the name of Wénzǐ—which could translate as Lettered Master—for the main protagonist, the author suggests that his text also contains classical wisdom.

We may also speculate whether the name Wénzǐ refers to the posthumous name of Liú Héng 劉恒, Emperor Wén. If so, then the *Wénzǐ* postdates Emperor Wén's death and the name Wénzǐ possibly draws attention to this ruler's quietist, *laissez-faire* style of government, as opposed to the militarist atmosphere the author may have experienced in his own time. The *Wénzǐ* indeed has a strong anti-militarist component and is recognized for that.[83] The text opposes military campaigns for fame or material gain, perhaps not unlike those undertaken by the ruler who would be known to history as Emperor Wǔ, the Martial Emperor. If the *Wénzǐ* is written under Emperor Wǔ and against his aggressive, expansionist policies, the name of the leading protagonist in the text—Wénzǐ, which might then translate as something like Civil Master—may refer to the peaceful reign of the eponymous Emperor Wén, the Civil Emperor. This would make sense, because the name of the other protagonist, King Píng, translates as Peaceful King.

3.3. Author

In Chinese philosophical traditions, author, title and protagonist are normally seen as one. The philosopher Mencius wrote the *Mencius* in which he propagates his worldview under his own name. Accordingly, scholars take Wénzǐ, an alleged disciple of Lǎozǐ, as the author of the *Wénzǐ*. The Dìngzhōu discovery invalidates this approach, for it shows that the *Wénzǐ* postdates Wénzǐ's supposed lifetime and was not created with a disciple of Lǎozǐ in mind.

To trace its author, we have to look for clues in the early Former Hàn—but there are none. Contemporary sources do not mention the *Wénzǐ*, let alone its author. As a result, we do not know who authored the text, or even the number of people involved in its composition, though its relative brevity and homogeneous style implies singular authorship. Although it is impossible to determine the identity of this person, I propose that the lack of information about the author of the *Wénzǐ* may in fact be meaningful in its own right.

[83] See Wèi Xiāng's memorial to Emperor Xuān in Chapter 1, in which he quotes the *Wénzǐ*'s theory of five ways of warfare, to dissuade the emperor from attacking the Xiōngnú.

In the Former Hàn dynasty with its centralized government, the long tradition of itinerant masters 諸子 seeking to counsel heads of feudal realms had ended. Philosophical masters were succeeded by author-politicians, who were often associated with the central court and wrote under their own name (e.g., Lù Jiǎ, Jiǎ Yì, Yáng Xióng 楊雄). When a text is exceptionally named after a master (e.g., *Huáinánzǐ*, named after Liú Ān, the Master of Huáinán), the author of the work is known. So why does the author of the *Wénzǐ* remain anonymous and write under the guise of Wénzǐ?

The pseudonym of Wénzǐ may have been conceived as a means to increase the authority of the text. This technique was frequently applied in early China. Texts were often ascribed to the wise rulers, ministers and generals of the past to increase their authority. At the end of the Warring States, texts allegedly written by the Yellow Emperor 黃帝 or the Divine Farmer 神農 mushroomed. However, during the Hàn this technique had become too obvious to deceive the well-informed reader. The *Zhuāngzǐ* has a special word for it: "imputed words" 寓言, which refers to fictional characters "brought in from outside for the purpose of exposition" [Watson 1968: 303]. The *Huáinánzǐ* likewise explains why texts were ascribed to others:

> 世俗之人，多尊古而賤今，故為道者必託之於神農、黃帝而後能入說。亂世闇主，高遠其所從來，因而貴之。為學者，蔽於論而尊其所聞，相與危坐而稱之，正領而誦之。[84]
>
> Men of worldly customs often esteem the past and despise the present. Thus, those who perform the Way use the authority of the Divine Farmer and the Yellow Emperor, and only then can they enter the discourse. Ignorant rulers in chaotic times are greatly removed from their roots; hence they follow such texts blindly and honor them. Those who perform studies are confused by their arguments, as they honor whatever comes to their ears. They sit down together and praise such texts; they adjust their clothes and chant them [without understanding their import].

Even if the author antedated his text for the purpose of borrowing authority, why would he ascribe his views to an unknown minister by the name of Wénzǐ and not to one of the more popular, exalted ancient dignitaries?

I believe that the *Wénzǐ* was meant to be understood by its Former Hàn readership as a text of its own time. Clues in the text—such as the apparent anti-Qín

[84] *Huáinánzǐ* 19.

sentiments and the Hàn term “court invitations”—show that the text was construed as a contemporary allegorical creation. The suggestion that this text would have been taken at face value, as an actual composition of the time of King Píng, does injustice to the interpretative skills of its contemporary readers.

The allegorical function of the text also entails that its author purposefully avoided writing under his own name, presumably because he lived in a time of acute political and intellectual tensions and was not in a position to promote his theories in public. The early Former Hàn was a turbulent era, when political factions passionately advocated their own proposals, and a wrong word could cost one one’s head. Lù Jiǎ and Jiǎ Yì publicly condemned the Qín dynasty, while actually criticizing the Hàn, and Liú Ān, once he fell out of favor, had to pay for his divergent views with his life. A careful look at the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* shows that the author tries to get his message across without offending those of different persuasions, as I will discuss in the next chapter. His awareness of the potential consequences of his writings bespeaks the same watchfulness that made him hide behind the pseudonym of Wénzǐ.

4. The Ancient *Wénzǐ*: Philosophy

The disentombed *Wénzǐ* manuscript offers a unique opportunity to explore the philosophy of the text as it circulated in the Former Hàn dynasty.[85] In this chapter, I analyze the philosophy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* according to three interrelated questions: How does the Ancient *Wénzǐ* convey its philosophical views to readers? What are the main philosophical concepts and themes in the text? How does its philosophy relate to other Chinese philosophical writings? These three questions regarding the form, content and context of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s philosophy, respectively, are discussed in three consecutive sections. Section 4.1 shows that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* couches its philosophical views in an exceptional literary form. Awareness of the text's distinct discursive structure, and of the function this structure has in conveying its message, enables a better understanding of the text's philosophical views. Section 4.2 analyzes these views by focusing on the *Wénzǐ*'s key philosophical concepts and themes. Section 4.3 discusses the philosophical affiliation of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and examines the philosophical *milieu* to which it belongs.

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is no longer complete. Parts of it survive in two distinct forms: the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* and certain passages in the Received *Wénzǐ*. The bamboo manuscript dates from the Former Hàn and forms a direct representation of the *Wénzǐ* as it circulated in those days. Hence, my exploration of its philosophy is primarily based on the unearthed material. But the bamboo strips are damaged, incomplete and only partly legible. Therefore, my analysis also takes into account passages in the Received *Wénzǐ* for which corresponding bamboo strips have been found, that is, passages that are demonstrably based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. The relevant passages often contain a complete argument, offering additional insight in the philosophy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Notably, these passages have been modified by an editor who used the Ancient *Wénzǐ* for his own agenda. The change of protagonists—from Wénzǐ and King Píng to Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ—bears witness to the radical nature of his revisions. Yet, even in their modified form these passages still provide a valuable source for

[85] Several Chinese and Taiwanese scholars have studied (aspects of) the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s philosophy, including Zēng Chūnhǎi [1996], Zhèng Guóruì 鄭國瑞 [1997], Dīng Yuánzhí 丁原植 [2000] and Zhāng Fēngqián [2002]. I have benefited from their research, but my analysis and my conclusions differ from theirs.

analysis. The more than eighty Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips that correspond to them signal continuity in a shared ancestral line. Moreover, deviations between the two sources are often inconsequential and explicable, which indicates that both reflect the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, each in their own way.

4.1. Vocabulary and Discursive Structure

The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, the most faithful representation of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, contains two characteristic features that help to understand its philosophical content. The bamboo manuscript displays (1) a substantial philosophical vocabulary and (2) an exceptional discursive structure.

(1) As discussed in Chapter 3, the wide range and recurrent mention of philosophical concepts in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* are distinguishing features of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*: "the Way" 道, "virtue" 德, "humaneness" 仁, "righteousness" 義, "propriety" 禮, "sageness" 聖, "wisdom" 智, "non-action" 無爲, "educative transformation" 教化, among other concepts. This wide range indicates that the text was composed at a time when each concept had already been independently put forward by individual thinkers. Notably, the bamboo manuscript never mentions earlier thinkers or texts by name. The only explicit quotations are vaguely ascribed to "a saying" 辭曰, "a tradition" 傳曰 or "a decree" 命曰.[86] Another indication of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s late date, also discussed in Chapter 3, is the repeated combination of single concepts into compounds, such as "the Way and virtue" and "humaneness and righteousness". Several combinations with no particular philosophical connotation are also selected for discussion in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, such as "all things" 萬物, "Heaven and Earth" 天地 and "fortune and misfortune" 禍福. For instance, the notion of "all things" occurs seven times in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*.[87] Three strips, with no parallel in the received text, apparently belong together:

[86] Such quotations occur on strips 2391, 2446, 0565, 0694, 2404, 0741 and 1805.

[87] This notion occurs on strips 2246, 2288, 2481, 0868, 2240 and 0607 (which mentions "all things" twice). Three possibly related strips (0772, 1171, 0914) speak of the exact number of "the things between Heaven and Earth" 天地之間物 or "the various things" 諸物 and discuss the special position of humankind among all things. The complete argument no longer survives, but it appears to be related to a statement in *Zhuāngzǐ* 17: "When we refer to the things of creation, we speak of them as numbering ten thousand—and man is only one of them." 號物之數謂之萬，人處一焉 [tr. Watson 1968: 176]. The Ancient *Wénzǐ*, as I show in this chapter, also develops other ideas from the *Zhuāngzǐ*.

[2246] 文子曰：“一者，萬物之始也。”平王曰：“［何］
Wénzǐ answered: “The One is the beginning of all things.” King Píng asked: “What

[0607] 萬物”。文子曰：“萬物者天地之謂也。
all things?” Wénzǐ answered: “‘All things’ is the designation of Heaven and Earth.”

[2240] 曰：“何謂萬物，何謂天地？”文子曰：“王者
asked: “What is meant by ‘all things’ and what is meant by ‘Heaven and Earth’?” Wénzǐ answered: “As for those who are king,

Placed in succession, these strips form a discussion on the meaning of “all things”:

Wénzǐ: “The One is the beginning of all things.”
King Píng: “What [is meant by] ‘all things’?”
Wénzǐ: “‘All things’ is the designation of Heaven and Earth.”
King Píng: “What is meant by ‘all things’ and what by ‘Heaven and Earth’?”
Wénzǐ: “As for those who are king, …”

Terms such as “all things”, “Heaven and Earth” and “fortune and misfortune” had previously entered pre-Hàn discourse as part of a common vocabulary. That is, philosophical masters who employed such terms felt no need to explain them, their meaning apparently being self-evident or generally known at the time. The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* does explicate such concepts, which indicates that to its author, they contained an extra-ordinary, if not philosophical, value.

(2) The text’s employment of these concepts is supported by its discursive structure. The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* consists entirely of a dialogue between Wénzǐ and King Píng. Notably, the bamboo manuscript does not provide details of the text’s setting. Chinese philosophical texts that contain (historical or fictional) conversations between a master and one or more interlocutors often mention the time or place of the meeting, provide circumstances or reasons for the dialogue, or describe the manner in which statements are pronounced or perceived. Such elements are absent from the surviving Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips. We are not told when or where Wénzǐ and King Píng convened, what the purpose of their meeting was, or how each perceives statements by the other. The manuscript simply ascribes a good ninety statements to King Píng or Wénzǐ and introduces each with the sober formulation “King Píng said”

平王曰 or "Wénzǐ said" 文子曰. King Píng never "inquires" 問曰 and Wénzǐ "replies" 對曰 only once (on strip 1061). Perhaps more so than in other texts, one would be inclined to treat the graph 曰 *yuē* 'to say' simply as a colon introducing direct speech and leave it untranslated. For stylistic considerations, I still choose to render it as "asked" and "answered", respectively.

The two protagonists' content of speech is likewise kept to a minimum. King Píng's role is particularly limited. His questions are normally brief, to the point, and restricted to four standard formulations:

"May I ask about …?"	請問 ……
"What is meant by …?"	何謂 ……
"What is … like?"	…… 何如
"What about …?"	…… 奈何

Over two thirds of all statements ascribed to King Píng are in one of these four forms. The following strips are examples of such formulaic statements:

[2219] ［道。”平］王曰：“請問天道？”文［子曰：“天之］
Way [of Heaven]." King Píng asked: "May I ask about Heaven's Way?" Wénzǐ answered: "The [Way of] Heaven

[2240] 曰：“何謂萬物，何謂天地？”文子曰：“王者
asked: "What is meant by 'all things' and what is meant by 'Heaven and Earth'?" Wénzǐ answered: "As for those who are king,

[1184] //□，天之道何如？”文子曰：“難言于天□
[X], what is the Way of Heaven like?" Wénzǐ answered: "It is hard to speak about [the Way of] Heaven

[0885] 平王曰：“為正（政）奈何？”文［子曰：“御之以道□］
King Píng asked: "What about carrying out government?" Wénzǐ answered: "Steer them by means of the Way [X]

It almost seems as if King Píng's succinct and highly formalized questions merely serve to highlight the topic of discussion. The nominalizing particle 者 *zhě* that often appears at the beginning of Wénzǐ's explanatory comments, indicates same. It is tempting to see the Ancient *Wénzǐ* as a dictionary or an encyclopedia in which entries

are highlighted by its discursive structure. We could re-write the earlier discussion on "all things" according to modern lexicographic standards:

【一】　　一者，萬物之始也。
The One　　The One is the beginning of All Things.

【萬物】　　萬物者，天地之謂也。
All Things　　All Things is the designation of Heaven and Earth.

Reference works in the modern sense of the word did not exist in China at the time, but the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, with its distinctive pattern of discussing numerous concepts from various sources and providing each with an explanation, bears some resemblance to a repository of pre-Hàn thought. But its definitions are not value-neutral and the protagonists cannot be simply obliterated, for the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is an argumentative text. Its discursive structure and the names of its two protagonists are part of a rhetorical strategy to persuade readers, and objectivity is not its main concern. Its choice of philosophical concepts is selective: important ones such as "law" 法, "vital energy" 氣, "vital essence" 精, "inner feelings" 情 or "inner nature" 性, are absent throughout. Its explanations of selected terms are neither objective nor descriptive, but normative attitude-shaping valuations. The text intends to impress the reader with a display of encyclopedic knowledge and to influence the reader through what Stevenson [1938: 331] has called "persuasive definitions":

> A "persuasive" definition is one which gives a new conceptual meaning to a familiar word without substantially changing its emotive meaning, and which is used with the conscious or unconscious purpose of changing, by this means, the direction of people's interests.

In this respect, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is perhaps best compared to a catechism, which summarizes the Christian doctrine in the form of questions and answers. Note the resemblance between the passage on "the One" and "all things" in the *Wénzǐ* and this passage from the Baltimore Catechism:

1. Q. Who made the world?
   A. God made the world.

2. Q. Who is God?
A. God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.

Catechisms are doctrinal manuals which tell the disciple what to believe. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* similarly contains the author's worldview and tells the reader what must be done to create lasting social order in the realm.

4.2. Philosophical Concepts and Themes

This section analyzes the most prominent philosophical concepts and themes in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. It also discusses their previous history, so as to establish their meaning at the time of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s composition and to understand the unique contribution of this text to the history of Chinese thought.

4.2.1. The Way

King Píng's role in the unearthed *Wénzǐ* may be limited, but he sometimes diverges from his usual dreary and formal style of questioning to offer emphatic statements:

[0976] □者。”平王曰：“［善。好乎道，吾未嘗聞道也。］
[X]." King Píng exclaimed: "Excellent! I am fond of the Way, though I have never been properly informed of the Way."

That King Píng's exceptional statement concerns "the Way" 道 is no coincidence, for it emphasizes the importance of this concept in the text. The Way is by far the most important philosophical concept in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. It occurs no fewer than 88 times on 74 bamboo strips in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*. With 277 strips in total, one in every four mentions the Way. To compare, the second most frequent concept, "virtue" 德, occurs less than half as frequent (36 times on 33 strips), and often in conjunction with the Way.

The Way does not always occur as an autonomous philosophical concept. The bamboo manuscript sometimes specifies it, making it the way *of* something. Several subordinate ways can be discerned on the bamboo fragments, such as:

“the way of troops and soldiers” 師徒之道 (strip 1198)

“the way of bringing about achievements” 致功之道 (strip 0565)

“the way of sageness and wisdom” 聖知之道 (strip 0909)

“the way of emperors and kings” 帝王之道 (strip 0925)

Each of these four subordinate ways occurs only once in the bamboo manuscript. On most other occasions, the Way occurs as a philosophical concept in its own right.

In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the Way has three main functions. It is (1) the source of all things; (2) the model for moral conduct; and (3) the primary criterion for restoring order. In its description of all three functions a strong ideological and terminological influence of other texts can be discerned.

(1) The Way as the source of all things. Two Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo fragments that mention the Way discuss its first function:

[2466] 生者道也，養□
That which engenders, is the Way. [That which] nourishes

[0722] ［子曰：“道產之，德畜之，道有博］
[Wén]zǐ answered: “The Way produced them, Virtue nurtured them. In the Way, there is profundity

The text on these two bamboo strips is reminiscent of the *Lǎozǐ*. The beginning of strip 0722 corresponds near-literally to the beginning of what is now *Lǎozǐ* 51: “the Way engenders them, virtue nurtures them” 道生之，德畜之. The two strips clearly show that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* adopts the *Lǎozǐ*’s view that the Way engenders or produces all things, after which virtue nourishes or nurtures them.

Several other bamboo strips also discuss the Way as the progenitor of all things, even though they do not mention the Way:

[1181] 元也，百事之根
the origin […], the root of all tasks

[0792] 生，侍之而成，侍
life, they depend on it for completion, and they depend

[2469] 而生，侍之而成，
and life, they depend on it for completion,

We know that these bamboo fragments speak of the Way, for they correspond to a passage in the Received *Wénzǐ* that focuses on the Way:

> 夫道者，德之元，天之根[1181]，福之門，萬物待之而生，待之而成，待[0792]之而寧。[88]
>
> Now, the Way is the origin of virtue, the root of Heaven and the gate to good fortune. All things depend on it for their birth, they depend on it for their completion and they depend on it for their well-being.

The first part of this short passage, with strip 1181 to match it, presents the Way as the source of everything, including virtue, fortune and Heaven. (Note that strip 1181 does not speak of "Heaven" 天, but of "all tasks" 百事) The second part of the passage, with the two near-identical strips 0792 and 2469 to match it, states that all things depend on the Way for birth, growth and well-being. This idea is not unique to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, but also occurs in the *Guǎnzǐ* 管子, *Lǎozǐ*, *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor* and *Huáinánzǐ*.

The *Guǎnzǐ* contains a mystical tract with the title "Inward Training" 内業, which says of the Way that "all things are engendered by it, all things are completed by it" 萬物以生，萬物以成.[89] Speaking of the Great Way, *Lǎozǐ* 34 likewise purports that "all things depend on it for life" 萬物恃之以生. The last canon in the *Four Canons* is a verse that explicates the origin of all things from the Way. Speaking of the Way in terms of "Eternal Nothingness" 恆无 and "Great Void" 大虛, it asserts that "all things live by acquiring it, all tasks are successfully completed by acquiring it" 萬物得之以生，百事得之以成.[90] The opening chapter of the *Huáinánzǐ* contains a double-negative variant, saying that "all things are not born if they do not acquire it" 萬物弗得不生. The "it" here refers to water, the softest and most pliable thing on earth, and a metaphor for the Way.[91]

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[88] *Wénzǐ* 5.1 (excerpt).
[89] Cf. Roth [1999: 56-57].
[90] Cf. Yates [1997: 173].
[91] In a related, more elaborate passage, the *Huáinánzǐ* speaks of "the Way of high antiquity" 太上之道 and maintains that all creatures wait for it and "only then they are born" 待而後生 and "only then they die" 待之後死 [Lau and Ames 1998: 66-67].

The intertextual relationship between these four texts and the two Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo fragments is evident. The following table presents the different versions of this formula in what is probably the historical order.[92]

Guǎnzǐ	道也者．．．．．．．萬物．．以生，萬物．．以成，．．．
Lǎozǐ	大道．．．．．．．．萬物恃之以生．．．．．．．．而不辭
Four Canons	恆无．．大虛．．．．萬物得之以生，百事得之以成，．．．
Huáinánzǐ	天下之物莫柔弱於水，萬物弗得不生，百事不得不成，．．．
Wénzǐ #0792	．．．．．．．．．．．．．．．．生，．．侍之而成，侍．．
Wénzǐ #2469	．．．．．．．．．．．．．．．．而生，．．侍之而成，．．．

Table 4.1: The Way as Progenitor of All Things

There are minor differences between the different versions of the formula. For instance, the *Lǎozǐ* discontinues the engendered/completed 生/成 parallelism that is present in all other texts; and whereas the *Guǎnzǐ* speaks of "all things" 萬物 the *Four Canons* and the *Huáinánzǐ* speak of "all tasks" 百事. This signals a direct connection between the latter two texts, because "all tasks" rarely occurs in pre-Hàn texts: it does not occur in the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Mòzǐ*, *Lǎozǐ* or *Zhuāngzǐ*. It also suggests that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is related to these texts, because the aforementioned strip 1181 mentions "all tasks" in the same context.

In sum, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* endorses these four texts' fundamental position of the Way as the procreator of all things, and uses similar wording to express this idea, thereby nesting itself firmly in this tradition of texts.

(2) The Way as the model for moral conduct. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is not only interested in the cosmogonical aspects of the Way, but also in its moral dimensions. Its views on how adherence to the Way can lead to moral conduct survive on five bamboo strips, which all correspond to this passage in the Received *Wénzǐ*:

[92] Roth [1999: 187-190] offers literary, logical and philosophical reasons for the historical priority of *Guǎnzǐ*'s "Inward Training" over the *Lǎozǐ*. The date of the *Four Canons* is disputed and not all four canons are necessarily of the same period. The fourth canon is clearly related to *Guǎnzǐ* and *Lǎozǐ*, as all three are written in verse. The canon probably postdates *Guǎnzǐ* and *Lǎozǐ*, because it is more elaborate and introduces the phrase "all tasks". Yates [1997: 36] may be right in holding that the last of the *Four Canons* draws from the *Lǎozǐ* and became influential itself on later texts, such as the *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*. The *Huáinánzǐ* is clearly based on the *Four Canons*. *Huáinánzǐ* 1, the chapter in which this formula occurs, is titled "Tracing the Way to its Origin", a reference to the title of the fourth canon, "The Origin of the Way". *Huáinánzǐ* also speaks of "all tasks". Where the Ancient *Wénzǐ* fits in is unclear. As a Former Hàn work, it postdates *Guǎnzǐ*, *Lǎozǐ* and *Four Canons*. But which of them it quotes and how it relates to the *Huáinánzǐ* remains unclear.

夫道者，原產有始，始於柔弱，成於剛強[0581]，始於短寡，成於眾長[2331]，十圍之木始於把，百仞之臺始於下[1178]，此天之道也。聖人法之，卑者所以自下[0871]，退者所以自後，儉者所以自小，損之所以自少，卑則尊，退則先，儉則廣，損[0912]則大，此天道所成也。[93]

Now, the Way in its original production has a beginning. It begins as soft and weak and reaches completion as hard and strong. It begins as short and few and reaches completion as many and long. *A tree of ten arm's lengths in circumference begins as the size of a fist, a tower of one hundred feet in height begins at the base*.[94] This is the Way of Heaven. Sages emulate this: through humility they lower themselves, through retreat they position themselves behind, through restraint they make themselves small and through reduction they make themselves few. By being humble they are honored, by retreating they advance, by restraining themselves they expand and by reducing they grow large. This is brought about by Heaven's Way.

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[0581][95] 產于有，始于弱而成于強，始于柔而
was produced in "being". It began as weak and reached completion as strong. It began as soft and

[2331][96] 于短而成于長，始寡而成于眾，始
as short and reached completion as long. It began as few and reached completion as many. It began

[1178][97] 之高始于足下，千[方之群始于寓強]，
a height of […] begins from under the feet, a crowd of a thousand sides begins with sheltering the strong

[0871][98] 聖人法于天道，[民者以自下]，
Sages emulate Heaven's Way, those who belong to the common people take this to lower themselves

[93] *Wénzǐ* 5.1 (excerpt).
[94] *Lǎozǐ* 64.
[95] Strips 0581 and 2331 mention single terms (weak, soft, strong, short, long, few, many) where the received text has combinations (weak and soft; hard and strong; short and few; long and many).
[96] The graph 始 *shǐ* 'to begin' at the end of strip 2331 suggests that the parallelism continues. In the received text, the argument is discontinued and concluded with a quotation from the *Lǎozǐ*.
[97] The first part of strip 1178 paraphrases *Lǎozǐ* 64. The second part is vague and my translation tentative. If the transcription is correct and 寓強 means "sheltering the strong", it would oppose Lǎozǐ's preference of soft and weak over hard and strong. The phrase does not occur in any *Lǎozǐ* version. It may be the invention of the *Wénzǐ*'s author or the quotation of an unknown *Lǎozǐ* version.
[98] The transcription of strip 0871 has 民 *mín* 'common people', which is a mistake for 卑 *bēi* 'humility' in the received text and on the next strip. This mistake, perhaps based on graphical resemblance, is either caused by the editors of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription, who may have misinterpreted the bamboo strip, or by the copyist of the bamboo manuscript, who may have misread the graph. The latter option would indicate that the scribe copied by looking at previous copies, not by taking oral dictation.

[0912][99] 卑、退、斂、損，所以法天也。”平王曰：
humility, retreat, restraint and reduction is what they use to emulate Heaven.” King Píng asked:

This passage describes the Way as a process of growth, a natural tendency to grow from small to large, in number, size, length, strength, and so on. Strip 1178 and its corresponding line in the received text borrow imagery from the *Lǎozǐ*, as they paraphrase a famous passage that reads, in its received form:

> 合抱之木生于毫末，九層之台起于累土，千里之行始于足下 [100]
>
> A tree that can fill the span of a man’s arms grows from a downy tip; a terrace nine storeys high rises from hodfuls of earth; a journey of a thousand miles starts from beneath one’s feet.[101]

Both *Wénzǐ*-versions of this quote differ from known *Lǎozǐ*-versions, but the syntactic structure and the underlying idea are the same. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* evidently draws on the *Lǎozǐ* for its view of the Way as a process of growth.

In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the concept that describes this process is “Heaven’s Way” 天道 or “the Way of Heaven” 天之道. (I believe that the difference between the two is stylistic, and will use “the Way of Heaven” to refer to both.) This concept features prominently in the text. Of the 88 occurrences of “the Way” in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, no fewer than 11 times it is mentioned in conjunction with “Heaven”. For example:

[2219] ［道。”平］王曰：“請問天道？”文［子曰：“天之］
Way [of Heaven].” King Píng asked: “May I ask about Heaven’s Way?” Wénzǐ answered: “The [Way of] Heaven

[0585] 胡象于天道？”文子曰：“天之道，高
Why imitate Heaven’s Way?” Wénzǐ answered: “The Way of Heaven is high

[0689] ［法］天道。”平王曰：“人法天道奈何？

[99] Strip 0912 forms a conclusion to the four preceding lines in the received text (no corresponding strips) on humility, retreat, restraint and reduction. It ends the reply by Wénzǐ. The following question by King Píng shows that the dialogue originally consisted of at least one more question and answer.
[100] *Lǎozǐ* 64.
[101] Translation by Lau [1963:71].

emulate Heaven's Way." King Píng asked: "What about humans emulating Heaven's Way?"

[2216] ［天道，德之行］也，自天地分畔至今，未
Heaven's Way is a form of virtuous conduct. From the time when Heaven and Earth divided their borders to the present, it has never

[2315] 天之道也，不積而成者寡矣。臣［聞］
the Way of Heaven. It rarely occurs that someone who did not accumulate it managed to succeed. I have heard

[0766] 此功者天道之所成，聽聖人守道□
This achievement is brought about by Heaven's Way. Listen to the Sage preserving the Way [X]

[0887] //道。”平王曰：“此天道也。
Way." King Píng asked: "This is Heaven's Way.

The Way of Heaven often occurs in such texts as the *Lǎozǐ* and *Zhuāngzǐ*, in which it refers to the workings of nature. It represents the universal and ineffable Way in the natural world around us. The Way of Heaven sets the seasons in motion and makes sure that everything keeps moving, so that all things grow and eventually reach completion. Although the Way of Heaven is permanently in motion, it does not contrive to realize things and it selflessly retires once a task is accomplished. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* subscribes to this view, but it additionally sees this function of the Way of Heaven as a perfect example for moral behavior. Strip 2216 explicitly states that the Way of Heaven is a form of "virtuous conduct" 德之行, which shows its moral dimensions.[102] The Way of Heaven as the natural representation of gradual increase serves as a model for good conduct to the sages. In the natural world, things spontaneously grow from short to long, from weak to strong, and so on. Sages emulate this pattern. They do not strive to become famous, powerful or wealthy. Conversely, they lower themselves, position themselves behind and make themselves small. In so doing, they advance, expand, grow large and strong; and therefore they are honored by others. They do not command respect, but spontaneously receive this once they successfully emulate the Way of Heaven.

[102] This formula rarely occurs in early Chinese philosophical writings and appears to refer to the *Five Conducts*, one of the few texts that mention it. In *Five Conducts*, "virtuous conduct" means to internalize humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sageness, and to establish harmony between them. In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, on the other hand, virtuous conduct means to emulate the Way of Heaven as a process of growth.

(3) The Way as the primary criterion for restoring order. The Way's function as a model for moral behavior does not apply to sages only, but also extends to ordinary rulers. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* mentions the "way of the king" 王道 and "the way of kings and emperors" 帝王之道 and it speaks of "establishing All under Heaven on the basis of the Way" 以道立天下 by "those who rule by the Way" 以道王者 or those who "steer [the people] by means of the Way" 御之以道. On six bamboo strips, all corresponding to one passage in the received text, it urges rulers to implement the Way:

> 夫道者，小行之小得福，大行之大得福[0937]，盡行之天下服，服則懷之，故帝者，天下之[0929]適也，王者，天下之往也，天下不適不往[0990]，不可謂帝王。故帝王不得人不能成，得人[0798]失道亦不能守。夫失道者，奢泰驕佚，慢倨矜傲，見餘[1194/1195]自顯自明，執雄堅強，作難結怨，為兵主，為亂首，小人行之，身受大殃，大人行[2437]之，國家滅亡，淺及其身，深及子孫，夫罪莫大於無道，怨莫深於無德，天道然也。[103]
>
> Now, meagerly practicing the Way results in a meager amount of good fortune, abundantly practicing the Way results in an abundance of good fortune, and completely practicing the Way results in the submission of All under Heaven. If All under Heaven submits to you, it cherishes you. Therefore, emperors are those to whom All under Heaven resorts, kings are those to whom All under Heaven turns. Those to whom All under Heaven does not resort or turn cannot be called emperors or kings. Therefore, if emperors or kings do not obtain the people, they cannot succeed. If they obtain the people but lose the Way, they cannot preserve [their position]. Now, those who lose the Way are extravagant and arrogant, haughty and proud. They display excessive self-glorification and self-exaltation. They hold on to a masculine attitude and solidify their strength. They create trouble and form resentment. They are the leaders of armies and the heads of rebellions. When small people practice this, they personally suffer great misfortune; when great people practice this, the realm perishes. At best it only affects themselves, at worst it reaches their children and grandchildren. Now, there is no greater crime than to lack the Way; there is no deeper resentment than to lack virtue. Such is Heaven's Way."

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

> [0937] □□，小行之小得福，大行之[大得福]。
> [XX] meagerly practicing it results in a meager amount of good fortune, abundantly practicing the Way results in an abundance of good fortune

[103] *Wénzǐ* 5.1 (excerpt).

[0929] 則帝王之功成矣。故帝者，天下之
then the achievements of emperors and kings have reached completion! Therefore, emperors are what All under Heaven

[0990][104] 者，天住也，天下不適不住，［□□］
[kings] are what [All under Heaven] moves to. [Those to whom All under Heaven] does not turn or move [XX]

[0798] 矣。是故，帝王者不得人不成，得人□
Therefore, if those who are emperors or kings do not obtain the people, they cannot succeed. If they do obtain the people [X]

[1194/1195][105] 徒暴□，廣奢驕洫，謾裾陵降，見余
bandits and tyrannical [X], they are broadly extravagant and arrogant, haughty and unpredictable. They display excessive

[2437] ［為兵始，為］亂首，小人行［之，身受大秧(殃)］，大［人行］
They are in front of armies and at the head of rebellions. When small people practice this, they personally suffer great misfortune, when great people practice

These bamboo strips contain intertextual links to several other texts. Strip 0937 echoes a statement in the *Guǎnzǐ*, which says of the Way:

> 小取焉則小得福，大取焉則大得福。盡行之而天下服 [106]
>
> When a little of it is grasped, there is some prosperity; when a great deal is grasped, there is great prosperity. When it is carried out to the full, the entire realm submits.[107]

The resemblance between these lines in *Guǎnzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* is too close to be incidental. Notably, this line is found in one of the four mystical chapters in the *Guǎnzǐ*, to which also the aforementioned "Inward Training" tract belongs and which relate textually and ideologically to other works, such as the *Lǎozǐ* and the *Four Canons*.

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[104] In keeping with the rest of the paragraph, the first graph 天 *tiān* 'Heaven' on strip 0990 should be 天下 *tiānxià* 'All under Heaven' or 'the world', which indicates that the bamboo *Wénzǐ* is not flawless.
[105] Strip 1194/1195 differs markedly from the received text. The graph 洫 *xù* 'ditches running through farmland' makes no sense here. I interpret the graphs 陵降 *língjiàng* 'to mount and to fall' as 'ups and downs' and hence as 'unpredictable'. My translation of this strip is tentative.
[106] *Guǎnzǐ* 38.
[107] Translation by Rickett [1998: 88]. A similar statement appears in *Guǎnzǐ* 42 [Rickett 1998: 133 n. 33].

Strip 2437 warns that those who lose the Way stand "at the head of rebellions" or "at the forefront of chaos" 為亂首. This phrase also occurs in *Lǎozǐ* 38 and, several times, in the *Four Canons*. For example, one canon says of Dàtíng 大庭, one of the most ancient rulers of China, that "he did not waste his masses; he did not consider warfare crucial; and he did not stand at the forefront of chaos" 不曠其眾，不為兵邪，不為亂首.[108] The Ancient *Wénzǐ* agrees with these texts that those who are careful not to lose the Way, will lead the realm to order and away from chaos.

In sum, according to the Ancient *Wénzǐ* everyone should strive to obtain and maintain the Way, from the sages in high antiquity, to the emperor and commoners of this day. The Way not only gives life, it also serves as a model for moral behavior, which, if properly employed, can turn chaos into order and misfortune into fortune. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* appears to draw on a tradition of like-minded writings, such as the *Guǎnzǐ*, *Lǎozǐ*, *Four Canons* and *Huáinánzǐ*. It adopts their philosophical views and employs their terminology. Through its typical discursive structure, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* organizes borrowed concepts, summarizes various functions of the Way, and offers new explanations, or definitions, so as to form an integral whole, and reserve its own place in the history of Chinese thought.

4.2.2. The Four Guidelines

In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s explicit hierarchy of philosophical concepts, the Way is succeeded by virtue, humaneness, righteousness and propriety, in that order. These four concepts form a cluster in which each has a different function and value.

Clusters of concepts occur in many Chinese philosophical texts. For instance, the *Mencius* collectively labels humaneness, righteousness, propriety and wisdom as "the four shoots of moral conduct" 四端; and the *Essay on the Five Conducts* adds a fifth concept, sageness, as the fruit of growing these four shoots [Ames and Hall 2001: 140]. While such clusters are similar to that in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, one chapter of the *Lǎozǐ* mentions the exact four concepts of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* in the same succession. Given the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s reliance on the *Lǎozǐ*, as shown in the previous section, it may have also drawn this cluster of concepts from that text:

[108] *Four Canons* II.14; cf. Yates [1997: 151].

上德不德，是以有德；下德不失德，是以無德。上德無為而無以為；下德無為而有以為。上仁為之而無以為；上義為之而有以為。上禮為之而莫之應，則攘臂而扔之。故失道而后德，失德而后仁，失仁而后義，失義而后禮。夫禮者，忠信之薄，而亂之首。[109]

Those of the highest virtue do not display their virtue, which is why they have virtue. Those of the lowest virtue do not miss an opportunity to display their virtue, which is why they lack virtue.

Those of the highest *virtue* take no action and have no reason for doing so. Those of the lowest *virtue* take no action, but have all the reasons for doing so. Those of the highest *humaneness* take action, but have no reason for doing so. Those of the highest *righteousness* take action, and have all the reasons for doing so. Those of the highest *propriety* take action and, when no one responds, roll up their sleeves and force the people to comply.

Therefore, only after you have lost the Way, you may turn to virtue; only after you have lost virtue, you may turn to humaneness; only after you have lost humaneness, you may turn to righteousness; and only after you have lost righteousness, you may turn to propriety. Now, propriety is but a thin edge of loyalty and trustworthiness and it is the forefront of chaos.

This *Lǎozǐ* chapter exhibits a distinct regression, which starts with the Way as the highest quality and goes via virtue, humaneness and righteousness finally to propriety, the lowest of them all. The Way stands for harmony and order; propriety is but one step away from chaos and disorder.

For the three lowest qualities, there is a notable distinction between the oldest known *Lǎozǐ*, the three bamboo manuscripts discovered in Guōdiàn 郭店, and later versions of the text.[110] While humaneness, righteousness and propriety are hardly mentioned in the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ*, disdain for these notions is prominent in later versions.[111] Given the importance attached to these notions by other thinkers, especially Confucians, the differences between the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* and later versions suggest that anti-Confucian sentiments were added to the *Lǎozǐ* at a later stage.[112]

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[109] *Lǎozǐ* 38 (excerpt).

[110] The status of the three Guōdiàn bamboo manuscripts remains the subject of debate (see Allan and Williams [2000: 142-146]. For present purposes, I jointly refer to the three manuscripts as "Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ*", to distinguish them from later versions (Mǎwángduī, Héshàng gōng, Wáng Bì and others).

[111] Humaneness and righteousness occur in *Lǎozǐ* 5, 8, 18, 19 and 38; propriety in *Lǎozǐ* 31 and 38. Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* lacks 8 and 38. Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* A contains what is now *Lǎozǐ* 5, but without the famous statement against humaneness. Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* A also contains *Lǎozǐ* 19, but instead of humaneness and righteousness, it fulminates against other notions (see note 112). In the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ*, humaneness and righteousness are only mentioned in the equivalent of *Lǎozǐ* 18, which claims that they appear after the Way has been rejected. Propriety occurs once, in the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* C equivalent of *Lǎozǐ* 31, which mentions it in a combination, not as a philosophical concept in its own right.

[112] Scholars have already noted the case of *Lǎozǐ* 19, where the original criticism of the text, against learned rhetoric, has been replaced by denunciation of the Confucian values of humaneness and righteousness. See, for instance, Allan and Williams [2000: 61, 160-161] or Henricks [2000: 11-15].

The increasing devaluation of these concepts in the textual history of the *Lǎozǐ* is in marked contrast to their revaluation in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* agrees with *Lǎozǐ* 38 as regards the hierarchy of virtue, humaneness, righteousness and propriety, but invests them with more positive meanings. All four, even propriety, have unique functions and are indispensable in bringing order to the realm.

A detailed discussion of the four concepts in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* survives on eight bamboo strips which correspond to one section in the Received *Wénzǐ*. This section consists of two parts. The first part, with only two corresponding strips, offers definitions for each of the four concepts. The second part, to which six strips correspond, further explicates their mutual relationship.

> 文子問德。老子曰：畜之養之，遂之長之，兼利無擇，與天地合，此之謂德。何謂仁？曰：為上不矜其功，為下不羞其病，大不矜，小不偷，兼愛無私，久而不衰，此之謂仁也。何謂義？曰：為上則輔弱，為下則守節，達不肆意，窮[0582]不易操，一度順理，不私枉橈，此之謂義也。何謂禮？曰：為上則恭嚴，為下則卑敬，退讓守柔[0615]，為天下雌，立於不敢，設於不能，此之謂禮也。[113]

> Wénzǐ asked about virtue. Lǎozǐ answered: "*Rear them and nurture them, bring them up and let them grow.*[114] Benefit everyone without giving preference to anyone and form a unity with Heaven and Earth. This is what is meant by virtue."
>
> When asked "What is meant by humaneness?" he answered: "When occupying a high position, do not discomfort others by boasting about your achievements; when occupying a low position, do not discomfort others by exhibiting your misery. Do not show off when you have a big name and do not demoralize when your name is small. Care for all without favoring anyone and persist in this over a long period of time without weakening.[115] This is what is meant by humaneness."
>
> When asked "What is meant by righteousness?" he answered: "Support the weak when occupying a high position and preserve your integrity when occupying a low position. Do not behave without restraint when you are well off and do not alter your moral fortitude when you are poor. Unify measures, follow principles, and do not pervert the law for private purposes. This is what is meant by righteousness."
>
> When asked "What is meant by propriety?" he answered: "Be reverent and solemn when occupying a high position and be humble and respectful when occupying a low position. Yield and preserve softness and adopt a

[113] *Wénzǐ* 5.3 (first part).
[114] *Lǎozǐ* 51.
[115] The obscure locution "care for all without favoring anyone" 兼愛無私 also occurs in *Four Canons* I.3, which reaffirms the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s connection to this text.

feminine attitude towards All under Heaven. Find your footing on non-daring and base yourself on incompetence.[116] This is what is meant by propriety."

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[0582] □為下[則守節，循道寬緩，窮]
[X] preserve your integrity when occupying a low position, follow the Way in an unhurried and relaxed manner, and when poor

[0615] 則敬愛、損退、[辭讓、守□服之以]
be respectful and caring. Retreat and resign, preserve [X] and make them submit to you by means of

Lǎozǐ 38 distinguishes between virtue, which comes in two forms (high and low), and humaneness, righteousness and propriety, for which no such forms are distinguished. The *Wénzǐ*, on the other hand, mentions only one kind of virtue and two kinds of each of the other concepts. Virtue is restricted to exemplary figures who distinguish themselves from the common people, whom they raise and benefit equally, by the perfect mastery of non-action. The other three qualities apply to all people, regardless of their social standing. Each comes in two kinds: one for those in higher positions, another for those in lower positions.

Having offered definitions for each of the four concepts, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* proceeds to explicate their mutual relationship:

故脩其德則下從令，脩其仁則下不爭，脩其義則下平正，脩其禮則下尊敬，四者既，國家安寧。故物生者道也[2466]，長者德也，愛者仁也，正者義也，敬者禮也。不畜不養，不能遂長，不慈不愛，不能成遂，不正[0600]不匡，不能久長，不敬不寵，不能貴重。故德者民之所貴也，仁者民之所懷也，義者民之所畏也，禮者民之所敬也，此四[2259]者，文之順也，聖人之所以御萬物也。君子無德則下怨，無[0591]仁則下爭，無義則下暴，無禮則下亂，四[0895/0960]經不立，謂之無道[0811]，無道不亡者，未之有也。[117]

Therefore, if you cultivate virtue, those below will follow orders. If you cultivate humaneness, those below will not contend. If you cultivate

[116] These sentiments also appear in the *Guǎnzǐ*, *Four Canons* and *Huáinánzǐ* [Yates 1997: 266 n. 412]. The phrase "find your footing on non-daring and base yourself on incompetence" in the Received *Wénzǐ*, for which matching bamboo strips did not survive, corresponds near-literally to a line in *Four Canons* II.14, the same section to which strip 2437 relates (see Section 4.2.1). This reaffirms the intertextual relationship between the *Four Canons* and the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.
[117] *Wénzǐ* 5.3 (second part).

righteousness, those below will be fair and upright. If you cultivate propriety, those below will be honorable and respectful. Once all four are cultivated, the realm will be secure and calm.

Therefore, what gives birth to the things is the Way, what makes them grow is virtue, what makes them caring is humaneness, what makes them upright is righteousness, and what makes them respectful is propriety. If you do not rear or nurture them, they cannot be brought up. If you do not show kindness and care, they cannot be successful. If you do not make them upright and irreproachable, they cannot live long. If you do not make them respectful and honorable, they cannot be valued highly.

Therefore, virtue is what the people value, humaneness is what the people cherish, righteousness is what the people hold in awe, and propriety is what the people respect. These four are the sequence of cultivation and the means whereby the sage steers all things. If the ruler lacks virtue, those below will feel resentment. If he lacks humaneness, those below will contend. If he lacks righteousness, those below will be violent. If he lacks propriety, those below will rebel. If these four guidelines are not established, this is called "lacking the Way". It has never occurred that someone who lacked the Way did not perish.

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[2466] 生者道也，養□
That which engenders, is the Way. [That which] nourishes

[0600][118] ［不〈1〉（慈）不愛］，不能成遂，不正
If you do not show kindness and care, they cannot be successful. If you do not make them upright

[2259] 之所畏也，禮者民之所□也。此四
is what they hold in awe, and propriety is what the people [X]. These four

[0591] 踰節謂之無禮。毋德者則下怨，無
exceeding the regular intervals is called "lacking propriety". Without virtue, those below will feel resentment. Without

[0895/0960] 則下諍，無義則下暴，無禮則下亂。四
those below will forward criticism. If he lacks righteousness, those below will be violent. If he lacks propriety, those below will rebel. If these four

[0811] □立，謂之無道，而國不
[X] are not established, this is called "lacking the Way" and when the realm does not

[118] The graph marked <1> on strip 0600 is an orthographic variation of 慈 *cí* 'kindness', with a 女 *nǚ* 'woman' radical on the left instead of a 心 *xīn* 'heart' radical below.

This passage refers to virtue, humaneness, righteousness and propriety as “these four” 此四者 or even calls them “the four guidelines” 四經. Each of the four guidelines has its own function:

- Virtue is what people value because it makes them grow. If it is properly applied, they will follow orders. Otherwise, they will feel resentment.

- Humaneness is what people cherish because it makes them care for others. If it is properly applied, they will not contend. Otherwise, they will engage in dispute.

- Righteousness is what people hold in awe because it makes them upright. If it is properly applied, they will be fair and honest. Otherwise, they will be violent.

- Propriety is what people revere because it makes them respectful. If it is properly applied, they will be honorable and reverent. Otherwise, they will rebel.

In the *Wénzǐ*’s view, each quality is indispensable in the process of bringing order to the realm. Only when all four are cultivated will the realm be calm and secure. This is in sharp contrast with the *Lǎozǐ*, according to which the ruler should only turn to virtue when he has lost the Way, to humaneness only when he no longer has virtue, and so on. The *Wénzǐ* sets the same hierarchy for the four qualities, but it only agrees with the *Lǎozǐ* on the succession of terms, not on their regression. In the philosophical system of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, one quality is not worth more or less than another. Whereas the *Lǎozǐ* presents the concepts in a vertical hierarchy of decreasing value, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* employs a horizontal hierarchy:

the Way ↔ { virtue → humaneness → righteousness → propriety }

The sage needs all four guidelines to steer the people. Indeed, when taken together, they are of equal importance to the Way. Failing to establish the four guidelines equals lacking the Way, which ultimately leads to one’s downfall.

In sum, the four guidelines are important concepts in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Three of these have come full circle in Daoist writings. In its oldest form, the *Lǎozǐ* does not strongly oppose humaneness, righteousness and propriety. Criticism of these notions was introduced into the text later, when opposition against Confucians hardened. *Lǎozǐ* 38, added to the text after the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* was consigned to its tomb, may be seen as the climax of anti-Confucian polemic. The new polemical *Lǎozǐ* was completed before the beginning of the Hàn dynasty, as evidenced by the two silk versions from Mǎwángduī. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* adopts the conceptual framework offered by this new *Lǎozǐ*, but distances itself from its harsh rhetoric. Instead, it subscribes to the contemporaneous positive appraisals of humaneness, righteousness and propriety, while adapting their conceptual meaning according to its own persuasion. In so doing, it promotes ideas that run counter to the *Lǎozǐ*, its primary source of inspiration. The most striking example in this respect is propriety. The *Lǎozǐ* rejects propriety as the lowest of all qualities, claiming that it stands at the forefront of chaos, but the *Wénzǐ* asserts the very opposite: without propriety there will be chaos.

4.2.3. Sageness and Wisdom

Whereas current *Lǎozǐ* versions reject humaneness, righteousness and propriety, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* reserves important roles for these values in rulership. This pattern extends to another pair of concepts: "sageness" 聖 and "wisdom" 智. *Lǎozǐ* 19, for instance, urges its readers to "exterminate sageness and discard wisdom" 絕聖棄智; and *Lǎozǐ* 65 criticizes those who "use wisdom to govern the realm" 以智治國 for being "thieves of the realm" 國之賊.[119] The Ancient *Wénzǐ* claims instead that those who lack sageness and wisdom are ignorant. And the unearthed bamboo strips indicate that sageness and wisdom combined to form a chapter title in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, which would confirm their special position (see Chapter 2).

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* discusses sageness and wisdom in parallel arguments, as several surviving bamboo strips and a corresponding section in the received text show:

> 文子問聖智。老子曰：聞而知之，聖也[0896/1193]，見而知之，智也。聖人嘗聞[0803]禍福所生而擇其道，智者嘗見禍福[1200]成形而擇其行

[119] Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* A contains the content of what is now *Lǎozǐ* 19, but it proposes to exterminate and discard something other than sageness and wisdom (see the conclusion to this section). The content of *Lǎozǐ* 65, with its pronounced anti-wisdom sentiments, is absent in the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ*.

[0765]，聖人知天道吉凶，故知禍福所生，智者先見成形[0834]，故知禍福之門。聞未生聖也，先見成[0711]形智也，無聞見者，愚迷。[120]

Wénzǐ asked about sageness and wisdom. Lǎozǐ answered: "To hear something and recognize it is sageness. To see something and recognize it is wisdom. The sagely man constantly hears where fortune and misfortune appear and adjusts his way accordingly. The wise man constantly sees fortune and misfortune taking shape and adjusts his conduct accordingly. The sagely man recognizes the good and ill portents of Heaven's Way and therefore knows where fortune and misfortune appear. The wise man foresees their taking shape and therefore knows the gate to fortune or misfortune. To hear what has not yet appeared is sageness. To foresee something taking shape is wisdom. Those who lack both hearing and sight are stupid and confused."

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[0896/1193] 知。”平王曰：“何謂聖知？”文子曰：“聞而知之聖也
wisdom." King Píng asked: "What is meant by sageness and wisdom?" Wénzǐ answered: "To hear something and recognize it is sageness.

[0803] 知也。故聖者聞//
is wisdom. Therefore, the sagely man hears

[1200] 而知擇道。知者見禍福
and knows how to adjust the way. The wise man sees fortune and misfortune

[0765] [刑]，而知擇行，故聞而知之，聖也。
shape and knows how to adjust conduct. Therefore, to hear something and recognize it is sageness.

[0834] 知也成刑（形）者，可見而
is knowledge. That which takes shape can be seen and

[0711] 未生，知者見成
has not yet appeared. The wise man sees [things] taking

These are possibly related Dìngzhōu Wénzǐ bamboo strips:

[0904] □之□而知之乎？”文子曰：“未生者可
[X] it [X] and know about it?" Wénzǐ answered: That which has not yet appeared can be

[120] *Wénzǐ* 5.5.

The concepts of sageness and wisdom gained currency at an early stage in the development of Chinese thought. The *Analects* frequently mentions them, but never in conjunction. They occur together in other texts, such as the *Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸, *Mencius* and *Xúnzǐ*, but the most exhaustive elaboration on sageness and wisdom is the *Essay on the Five Conducts*.

The *Five Conducts* contains prescriptions for moral behavior. In a semi-systematical way, it advocates the development of human character through the cultivation of five forms of proper conduct: humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sageness. The *Five Conducts*, as Ames and Hall [2001: 142] note, is the first text that organizes these concepts into a formal, sequential cluster and collectively identifies them as the five forms of proper conduct.

In the *Five Conducts*' method of inner cultivation, the first task is to embody the five forms of proper conduct. It distinguishes the morally advanced, who succeed in this and are said to possess "virtuous conduct" 德之行, from the morally untrained, whose conduct is unremarkable.[121] The second task is to tune them to harmony. The text here distinguishes between those who harmonize only four virtues and the "gentleman" 君子 who is capable of harmonizing all five. The four ordinary virtues are humaneness, righteousness, propriety and wisdom; the fifth and highest virtue is sageness. Although sageness is singled out as the highest form of conduct, the *Five Conducts* sometimes combines sageness and wisdom, as does the Ancient *Wénzǐ*:

> 未嘗聞君子道，謂之不聰。未嘗見賢人，謂之不明。聞君子道而不知其君子道也，謂之不聖。見賢人而不知其有德也，謂之不智。見而知之，智也。聞而知之，聖也。[122]
>
> If you have never heard the way of the gentleman, this is called "not sharp of hearing"; and if you have never seen a worthy man, this is called "not clear of sight". If, on the other hand, you have heard of the way of the gentleman but did not recognize it as the way of the gentleman, this is called "not sagely"; and if you have seen a worthy man but did recognize him as a worthy man, this is called "not wise". To see him and recognize him is wisdom. To hear it and recognize it is sageness.

[121] The bamboo *Wénzǐ* speaks of "virtuous conduct" 德之行 in its discussion on the Way of Heaven (see Section 4.2.1). Since this phrase rarely occurs in pre-Hàn writings, the *Wénzǐ* may have borrowed it from the *Five Conducts*.
[122] *Five Conducts*: Guōdiàn strips 22-26; Mǎwángduī lines 195-198.

This *Five Conducts* passage is in many ways analogous to the *Wénzǐ* section under discussion. Both juxtapose sageness and wisdom, relate them to hearing and sight, and regard them as extra sensitive forms of sensory perception. Sageness is no ordinary form of hearing, but full awareness of what one hears; wisdom no ordinary seeing, but full awareness of what one sees. Both texts express this idea in the same phrase: "to hear [something] and recognize it is sageness; to see [something] and recognize it is wisdom" 聞而知之，聖也；見而知之，智也. If no third text is involved from which either or both borrow, then one must have copied this phrase from the other. In view of their respective dates, the *Wénzǐ* probably copied the *Five Conducts*.[123]

This "key phrase" that the *Five Conducts* and the *Wénzǐ* have in common also reveals their differences. These differences find expression in the object pronoun 之 *zhī* 'him, it' in the key phrase, for which both texts provide different referents.

In the *Five Conducts*, the two 之 *zhī*'s in the key phrase refer to the worthy man and to the way of the gentleman. To see a worthy man is called "clarity of sight" 明, but to actually recognize *him* [之] as such is called wisdom. To hear the way of the gentleman is called "sharpness of hearing" 聰, but to actually recognize *it* [之] as such is called sageness. The *Five Conducts* advocates the internalization and harmonization of five forms of conduct, which takes place in the "inner mind" 中心.[124] According to the *Five Conducts*, those who succeed in internalizing and harmonizing four virtues in accordance with their inner mind reach "goodness" 善; they understand the way of man and have become "worthies" 賢人. Those who achieve this for all five conducts accomplish virtue; they understand Heaven's Way and become "gentlemen" 君子. In the *Five Conducts*, the concepts of sageness and wisdom stand for extra sensitive sensory perception of worthies and gentlemen. Once you have cultivated sageness and wisdom in correspondence with your inner mind, you acquire sensory awareness of these exemplary models, who have also cultivated

[123] Guōdiàn tomb 1, in which the oldest version of the *Five Conducts* was discovered, was sealed before 278 BCE. Entombed documents must have been composed before that year. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* dates from the Former Hàn, when the *Five Conducts* was still in circulation, as the Mǎwángduī version, dated to the early 2nd c. BCE, shows.

[124] As Csikszentmihalyi [1998: 80] explains, "the good act is distinguished from the act which is a genuine expression of virtue by whether or not it is an expression of the 'inner mind'." The inner mind is the prime criterion for morally good conduct, because it shows whether an act is spontaneous and authentic or externally motivated and not truly virtuous. In this respect the text speaks of "sageness that conforms to the inner mind" 中心之聖 and "wisdom that conforms to the inner mind" 中心之智 and warns that a lack of these cultivated forms of sageness and wisdom results in the loss of virtue (cf. Guōdiàn strips 5-6, Mǎwángduī lines 173-176).

four or five forms of conduct. Ordinary people may see a worthy person passing by, but remain unaware of his outstanding character. They may hear about the way of the gentleman, but remain unaware of its marvelous potential. Those who have internalized and harmonized sageness and wisdom develop the means to recognize worthies and gentlemen as their own kind. Ames and Hall [2001: 137] point out that the *Five Conducts* "reflect rather deeply on the correlative relationship between the 'inner' and the 'outer'." In this interactive process, the criterion for good conduct lies within the self: the inner mind. Sageness and wisdom, once they are cultivated in accordance with the inner mind, serve as tools to reach sensory awareness of external models to verify and reinforce one's own moral achievements.

In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the key phrase appears as the beginning of a reply by Wénzǐ to a question posed by King Píng (on strip 0896/1193). By removing the context that originally preceded this phrase, the text also omits the original referents of the two 之 *zhī*'s (the worthy man and the way of the gentleman in the *Five Conducts*). Without referents for both 之 *zhī*'s, the key phrase can only be vaguely translated as "to hear something and recognize *it* [之] is sageness; to see something and recognize *it* [之] is wisdom". Notably, this vagueness appears to be purposeful. Removing the original context enables the Ancient *Wénzǐ* to provide new context with new referents for both 之 *zhī*'s. From the remainder of this passage in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the 之 *zhī*'s can be seen to refer forward to "misfortune and fortune" 禍福. These two concepts, which do not appear in the *Five Conducts*, play an important role in the philosophy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.[125] Fortunate and unfortunate events can be perceived through ordinary hearing or sight, but those who perceive them through sageness and wisdom reach a deeper awareness. Ordinary people, using plain hearing and sight, perceive instances of fortune and misfortune only after they have appeared, when it is too late. They notice a horse gone missing only after it has bolted. Sageness and wisdom perceive fortune and misfortune earlier than that. Wisdom is to foresee fortune and misfortune, that is: to see event *y* that leads to result *z*. Sageness is to forehear fortune and misfortune, that is: to hear portent *x* that leads to event *y* that leads to result *z*. To continue the analogy, wisdom allows one to perceive that the horse is about to flee, just in time to prevent it from doing so, whereas sageness makes one recognize the stable's open doors as a stimulus for the horse to flee. In the

[125] Six strips speak of fortune or misfortune: 2444, 0204, 0674, 2485, 0625, 0937. On strip 2444, King Píng even asks "What is meant by fortune and misfortune?" 何謂禍福, which indicates that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* contains a discussion exclusively devoted to this topic.

Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the criterion for taking action is therefore external: the portents determine one's action. Sageness and wisdom enable full awareness of this.

The different referents for the object pronoun 之 *zhī* (worthies and gentlemen versus fortune and misfortune) and the resulting different interpretations of sageness and wisdom lead to a second distinction between the *Five Conducts* and the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and reveal the *Wénzǐ*'s unique character.

There is no conceptual difference between sageness and wisdom in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the *Five Conducts*. The use of these concepts in the key phrase is the same; both interpret them as extra sensitive forms of sensory perception. But their different focus changes the nature of the discussion.

The *Five Conducts* reflects on the interaction between the "inner" and "outer" and sees sageness and wisdom as internally cultivated virtues that serve as tools to acquire external confirmation and corroboration. In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the interaction between 'inner' and 'outer' is much less explicit. Sageness and wisdom mainly serve to perceive external portents; the text does not mention how one comes to possess such keenness of perception. In the *Five Conducts*, sageness and wisdom are subordinate to the inner mind and have to be cultivated as forms of virtuous conduct. In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, there is no notion of an inner mind and superior people simply possess sageness and wisdom. The lack of interest for the "inner" also shows that the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, unlike the *Five Conducts*, is not concerned with developing *virtuous* conduct. The text merely writes that the sagely man "adjusts his way" and the wise man "adjusts his conduct" based on the awareness reached through sageness and wisdom. It does not offer details of the process of adjustment, nor does it suggest that this adjustment makes someone a morally superior person. The primary concern of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is how to avert misfortune and ensure fortune. This pragmatic approach renders a moral interpretation of this *Wénzǐ* passage improbable. A socio-political interpretation, on the other hand, is eminently possible, for two reasons.

(1) As we have seen in the preceding section, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* discusses the *Five Conducts*'s first three forms of conduct not in the field of moral cultivation, but in the social or political domain. Humaneness, righteousness and propriety, if cultivated properly, function as guidelines for all people, regardless of their social standing, on how to treat those above or below themselves, with the ultimate result that "the realm and its families will be secure and calm". By extension, the last two forms of conduct, sageness and wisdom, should also be interpreted socio-politically.

(2) The discursive structure of the text changes the meaning of these terms. In the Ancient *Wénzǐ* this exposition on sageness and wisdom is offered as advice to a ruler, King Píng, emphasizing their function in the political domain. Ordinary rulers notice fortune and misfortune only after the event. They perceive foreign invasions or internal uprisings only once they are well under way. The ruler who masters wisdom sees increasing numbers of enemy troops at his borders or skirmishes and conflicts taking place in his realm, and thus perceives an impending invasion or revolution as it is building up. The ruler who masters sageness hears the invasion or revolution before enemy soldiers or local conflicts have started to appear, and is thus able to prevent even the very precursors of the crisis.

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* appears to have borrowed the concepts of sageness and wisdom from a Confucian discourse and copied the key phrase in its exposition verbatim from the *Five Conducts*, but changed its conceptual content. It ignores the original moral connotations and uses sageness and wisdom purely *an sich*, as extra sensitive forms of sensory perception of great importance in the socio-political realm.

Similar to humaneness, righteousness and propriety, the concepts of sageness and wisdom have come full circle in early Daoist writings. The *Lǎozǐ* in its earliest form, the Guōdiàn manuscripts, proposes to eliminate scholarly rhetoric with a statement that the transcription editors have deciphered as "abandon wisdom and discard distinction" 絕智棄辯. Later, after a growing influence of Confucian texts, in which sageness and wisdom play important roles, this line was changed to "abandon sageness and discard wisdom" 絕聖棄智. If the proposed reading of the Guōdiàn variant is correct, then this precursor of the *Lǎozǐ* contained less anti-Confucian polemic than later edtions, as several scholars have noted (e.g., Allan and Williams [2000: 61, 160-161]). The Ancient *Wénzǐ* heavily borrows from an already standardized *Lǎozǐ*, but reverts its anti-Confucian polemic.

4.2.4. The Five Ways of Warfare

The Ancient *Wénzǐ*, like most Chinese philosophical writings, is primarily concerned with avoiding misfortune or its concrete manifestation of social chaos. Its core message, as bamboo strip 0674 states, is to make sure that "misfortune and chaos do not rise" 禍亂不起. The ultimate form of social chaos, of course, is war. This topic receives much attention in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. On strip 1198, for example, King Píng

asks about "the way of troops and soldiers" 師徒之道. Wénzǐ's reply to this particular query is no longer known, but another lengthy discussion on warfare survived on several bamboo strips and in one corresponding section in the Received *Wénzǐ*:

> 文子問曰：王道有幾？老子曰：一[2419]而已矣。文子曰：古有[0829]以道王者，有以兵[0850]王者，何其一也？曰：以道王者[2210]德也，以兵王者[1035]亦德也。用兵有五：有義兵，有應兵，有忿兵，有貪兵，有驕兵。誅暴救弱謂之義，敵來加己不得已而用之謂之應，爭小故不勝其心謂之忿，利人土地，欲人財貨謂之貪，恃其國家之大，矜其人民[0572]之眾，欲見賢於敵國者謂之驕。義兵[2217]王，應兵勝，忿兵敗，貪兵死，驕兵滅，此天道也。[126]
>
> Wénzǐ asked: "How many ways of a king are there?" Lǎozǐ answered: "Only one." Wénzǐ asked: "Formerly, there were those who reigned on the basis of the Way and those who reigned on the basis of warfare. In what way are they one?" Lǎozǐ answered: "To reign on the basis of the Way is virtue and to reign on the basis of warfare is also virtue. There are five ways of using the army: there is righteous warfare, reactive warfare, aggressive warfare, greedy warfare and arrogant warfare. To punish tyranny and rescue the suppressed is called 'righteous'. To have no choice but to rise in arms when the enemy has invaded is called 'reactive'. Not being able to hold back when quarrelling over a small matter is called 'aggressive'. To profit from other people's land and desire other people's goods is called 'greedy'. To presume on the sheer size of one's realm and take pride in the sheer number of one's people, while desiring to appear more worthy than one's enemies, is called 'arrogant'. Righteous warfare leads to kingship, reactive warfare to victory, aggressive warfare to defeat, greedy warfare to death and arrogant warfare to annihilation. Such is Heaven's Way."

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

> [2419] 平[王曰："王者]幾道乎？"文子曰："王者[一道]。
> King Píng asked: "How many ways are there to be king?" Wénzǐ answered: "There is only one way to be king."
>
> [0829] 王曰："古者有
> The king asked: "In ancient times, there were
>
> [0850] 以道王者，有以兵
> those who reigned on the basis of the Way, and there were [those who reigned] on the basis of warfare
>
> [2210] 以一道也？"文子曰："古之以道王者//，

[126] *Wénzǐ* 5.9 (complete).

How could there be only one Way?" Wénzǐ answered: "Those who in the past reigned on the basis of the Way

[1035] 以兵王者
those who reigned on the basis of warfare

[0572] ［者］，謂之貪［兵］。［恃］其國家之大，矜其人民］
is called 'greedy warfare'. To presume on the sheer size of one's realm and take pride in one's people

[2217] 眾。欲見賢于適（敵）者，謂之驕［兵］。義［兵］
sheer number, while desiring to appear more worthy than one's enemies, is called 'arrogant warfare'. Righteous warfare

These are possibly related Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[2385] ［故王道唯德乎！臣故曰一道。"平王］
Therefore, the only royal way is that of virtue. Therefore I say that there is only one way." King Píng

[2278][127] 道也。然議兵誅［□□□，不足禁會］
the Way. In that case, righteous warfare punishes [X X X], is not enough to forbid meetings

[0914] 也，兵之門，天地之間物。
the gate of warfare, the things between Heaven and Earth.

This passage distinguishes five types of warfare and offers a name, description and assured outcome for each. Not all types of warfare are permissible and each leads to a different result. The respective outcomes of these wars tell us how the text evaluates them, that is, whether it approves (↑) or disapproves (↓) of them:

#	name	description	outcome	↕
1	righteous warfare	liberate suppressed peoples	coronation	↑
2	reactive warfare	resist invader	victory	↑
3	aggressive warfare	rage about trivia	defeat	↓
4	greedy warfare	desire others' land or goods	death	↓
5	arrogant warfare	overpower weaker enemy	annihilation	↓

Table 4.2: Taxonomy of warfare in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*

[127] I read 議兵 *yì bīng* 'discussing war' as 義兵 *yì bīng* 'righteous war'.

This taxonomy of warfare exhibits a regression, with righteousness being the best motive and arrogance the worst. Righteous warfare leads to coronation, arrogant warfare to annihilation. When the text states that "to reign on the basis of warfare is also virtue", it probably refers only to righteous and reactive warfare.

In addition to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, at least two more texts contain similar categorizations of warfare: the *Wúzǐ* and the *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor*.

The *Wúzǐ* 吳子, one of the military classics of China, is named after Wú Qǐ 吳起 (ca. 440-ca. 361 BCE), a notorious general who is said to have studied under Confucius' disciple Zèngzǐ.[128] The *Wúzǐ* is grounded on a Confucian ethical foundation—the opening passage presents Wú Qǐ as wearing the distinctive garb of a Confucian and values such as humaneness, righteousness and propriety appear throughout—but it mainly deals with the strategies and tactics of war. One passage contains a five-fold ethical gradation of military motives:

> 吳子曰：凡兵之所起者有五：一曰爭名，二曰爭利，三曰積德惡，四曰內亂，五曰因饑。其名又有五：一曰義兵，二曰強兵，三曰剛兵，四曰暴兵，五曰逆兵。禁暴救亂曰義，恃眾以伐曰強，因怒興師曰剛，禮貪利曰暴，國亂人疲，舉事動眾曰逆。五者之數，各有其道：義必以禮服，強必以謙服，剛必以辭服，暴必以詐服，逆必以權服。[129]
>
> Wúzǐ said: "In general the reasons troops are raised are five: to contend for fame; to contend for profit; from accumulated hatreds; from internal disorder; and from famine. The names […] are also five: 'righteous [warfare],' 'strong [warfare],' 'hard [warfare],' 'fierce [warfare],' and 'contrary [warfare].' Suppressing the violently perverse and rescuing the people from chaos is termed 'righteousness.' Relying on [the strength of] the masses to attack is termed 'strong.' Mobilizing the army out of anger is termed 'hard.' Abandoning the forms of propriety [*lǐ*] and greedily seeking profit is termed 'fierce.' While the country is in turmoil and the people are exhausted, embarking on military campaigns and mobilizing the masses is termed 'contrary.' These five each have an appropriate Way [*dào*]. In the case of the righteous you must use propriety to subjugate them. Towards the strong you must be deferential to subjugate them. Against the hard you must use persuasive language to subjugate them.[130] Against the fierce you must employ deceit to subjugate them. Against the contrary you must use the tactical balance of power [*quán*] to subjugate them."[131]

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[128] For more information about Wú Qǐ and a translation of the *Wúzǐ*, see Sawyer [1993: 187-224].
[129] *Wúzǐ* 1 (excerpt).
[130] The graph 辭 *cí* 'persuasive language' also means 'to retreat'. One could well imagine an argument identifying retreat as an effective response to an army mobilized out of anger.
[131] Translation by Sawyer [1993: 208].

The *Wúzǐ* lists five names, motives, descriptions and counter-methods, but not systematically. For instance, the first motive, fame, does not seem to match the first name, righteous warfare, and so on. This is what I take to be the intended order:

#	name	motive	description	counter-method	↕
1	righteous warfare	disorder	oust tyrants and rescue people from chaos	propriety	↑
2	strong warfare	fame	attack because of one's own strength	deferential	↓
3	hard warfare	hatred	mobilize the army out of anger	persuasive language	↓
4	fierce warfare	profit	abandon propriety and seek profit	deceit	↓
5	contrary warfare	famine	mobilize troops while the country is in turmoil	tactical balance of power	↓

Table 4.3: Taxonomy of warfare in the *Wúzǐ*

Righteous warfare expels a tyrannical ruler and brings his realm back to order. Strong warfare brings fame to the ruler who attacks smaller realms because the strength of his masses gives him the power to do so. Hard warfare is an outburst of accumulated anger. Fierce warfare results from the ruler's quest for profit. Contrary warfare is to mobilize troops against an external enemy to lead attention away from turmoil in one's own realm. Of these five, only righteousness is a permissible motive. The *Wúzǐ* also describes counter-methods for each type of warfare. An army launched in search of profit can be countered by deceit, an army mobilized out of anger by persuasive language. In the exceptional case of righteous war, the only justified motive, the unrighteous ruler under attack can only achieve victory if he turns to propriety.

The *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor* also contemplates warfare. One section distinguishes three motives for war: profit, righteousness and anger.

> 諸庫藏兵之國，皆有兵道。世兵道三：有為利者，有為義者，有行忿者。所謂為利者，見□□□飢，國家不暇，上下不當，舉兵而裁之，唯無大利，亦無大害焉。所謂為義者，伐亂禁暴，起賢廢不肖，所謂義也。義者，眾之所死也。是故以國攻天下，萬乘之主□□希不自此始，鮮能終之；非心之恒也，窮而反矣。所謂行忿者，心雖忿，不能徒怒，怒必有為也。成功而無以求也，即兼始逆矣，非道也。道之行也，由不得已。由不得已，則無窮。故□者，摭者也；禁者，使者也：是以方行不留。《本伐》 [132]

[132] *Four Canons* II.11.

> All states that have armories and store weapons in every case possess a [way] of warfare. The [ways] of warfare of the present generation are three: there are those who act for profit; those who act out of righteousness; and those who act out of anger.
>
> What is meant by acting for profit is: the ruler sees … famine, the state is not at leisure, superiors and inferiors do not match each other, yet the ruler raises soldiers and causes them misery. Although there is no great profit, yet there is also no great harm from it.
>
> What is meant by acting for righteousness is: the ruler attacks the disorderly and prohibits the rebellious, raises the wise, and gets rid of the worthless: that is what is meant by righteousness. [Righteousness] is what the masses die for. For that reason, when using a single state to attack the world, that the lord [of] ten thousand chariot state …, hoping not to start from this righteousness, rarely is able to end it is not because he lacks constancy of heart, but because when things reach the limit, they return.
>
> What is meant by acting out of anger is: although the ruler's heart is angry, it is not only that he is able to be angry, but his anger must have something to act on. When he sets out to accomplish his ends, he lacks the means to achieve them, and also he begins to be in opposition of the [Way]. That is not [the Way].
>
> The success of action in accordance with the [Way] derives from its inevitability. If it derives from its inevitability, then it is limitless. Therefore to … is to expand (?); to prohibit is to force. For this reason one may carry out the [Way] everywhere without cease.[133]

The first motive for waging war, profit, probably means that the humane ruler of a successful realm, who observes a neighboring realm on the verge of collapse, may raise armed forces and annex it.[134] Given the poverty in that realm and the cost of rebuilding it, the annexation will not bring him great profit, but in view of the little resistance he can expect from the impoverished and demoralized enemy troops, it will not cause him great harm either. The second motive, righteousness, means to expel incapable despots and install competent monarchs instead, something which the masses on both sides of the border wholeheartedly support.[135] The text warns that rulers may attack other nations out of righteous principles, but seldom manage to

[133] Translation by Yates [1997: 141].

[134] In the description of the first motive, profit, three graphs are missing. Yates attributes "acting for profit" and the description of the moribund realm to one and the same ruler, thereby suggesting that the ruler of a nation in decline may start a war for profit without much harm. This is unlikely, because a ruler who "causes the people misery" has already produced "great harm". A more likely interpretation is that the benign ruler of a thriving realm may raise armed forces and annex an impoverished realm.

[135] In the second part of this paragraph, two graphs are missing. Yates translates the first graph after the lacuna, 希 *xī*, as 'hoping', resulting in the translation that rulers of large states hope not to start from righteousness, which makes little sense. Other translators use its alternative meaning of 'rarely', suggesting that such rulers rarely do not start from righteousness; that is, they normally do.

uphold these principles to the end without letting things like power or material possessions win them over. Hence, righteousness is approved of as a motive for attack so long as the ruler's righteous principles are not attenuated. The third motive, anger, takes warfare as a means for the ruler to vent his pent-up rage. He thereby acts in opposition to the Way, which is why the *Four Canons* disapproves of this motive.

#	motive	description	↕
1	profit	annex destitute realms	↔
2	righteousness	oust incapable rulers	↑
3	anger	ventilate pent-up rage	↓

Table 4.4: Taxonomy of warfare in the *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor*

The *Four Canons* sees no harm in war for profit, it conditionally supports righteous wars, but it denounces war out of anger as contravening the Way.

How do the three taxonomies relate to each other? The following table presents their similarities and differences, in what I take to be the historical order of the texts.[136]

Wúzǐ		*Four Canons*		*Wénzǐ*	
righteous	↑	righteous	↑	righteous	↑
hard	↓	angry	↓	aggressive	↓
fierce	↓	profit-seeking	↔	greedy	↓
strong	↓	---------		arrogant	↓
contrary	↓	---------		---------	
---------		---------		reactive	↑

Table 4.5: Different Taxonomies Compared

All three texts call righteousness a justified motive for war. A ruler may deploy troops if his intention is—and remains—to oust a tyrannical ruler. All three also disapprove of accumulated anger as a motive for war. Small matters of frustration and resentment should be dealt with through diplomacy, not war. Both *Wúzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* condemn profit as a motive for war; the *Four Canons* does not, because it only discusses the

[136] The *Wúzǐ* is probably the earliest text. Sawyer [1993: 192] asserts that the core of the *Wúzǐ* was probably composed by Wú Qǐ himself. Taeko Brooks [2003] argues that the *Wúzǐ* is merely associated with Wú Qǐ. She identifies the expository paragraphs introduced by "Wúzǐ said" as the core of the text, which was formulated between approximately 312 and 275 BCE. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we may provisionally accept this period as the time when the *Wúzǐ*'s taxonomy of warfare, which also starts with "Wúzǐ said", was created. The *Four Canons* probably dates from the end of the Warring States era, not long before its entombment in the beginning of the Hàn dynasty. The Ancient *Wénzī* postdates the closure of the Mǎwángduī tomb.

justified annexation of weak realms that no longer have the right to subsistence on their own. The *Wúzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* each mention two more motives, one of which corresponds. What the *Wénzǐ* calls "arrogant warfare" is called "strong warfare" in the *Wúzǐ*: attacking another nation because one has the power to do so. Both oppose this type of war. The *Wúzǐ*'s remaining motive, "contrary warfare", which is waged to avert people's attention from the famine and turmoil that plague them, is in no way related to the *Wénzǐ*'s "reactive warfare", which is to use military means to defend one's realm against invasions.

How did the Ancient *Wénzǐ* reach its taxonomy of warfare? There are intertextual links between the *Four Canons* and other passages in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, as shown earlier in this chapter, but the *Four Canons*' three-fold classification of warfare differs from that in the *Wénzǐ* in number (only three motives), in description (long narrative explanations) and in evaluation (one positive, one negative and one indifferent). The *Wénzǐ*'s classification is more similar to that of the *Wúzǐ*. Both distinguish five motives, four of which are similar, and both are equally concise. This makes it likely that the *Wénzǐ* drew inspiration from the *Wúzǐ*.

Classifications are typical for military writings such as the *Wúzǐ*. In addition to the "five reasons for raising troops", the *Wúzǐ* speaks of the "six circumstances to avoid conflict", the "five affairs to which the general must pay careful attention" and the "four vital points of warfare", to name but a few. These classifications in military writings, Van Creveld [2002: 29] notes, serve as mnemonic devices to students of military thought and allow them to keep the essentials of warfare in mind. Hence, it seems that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* was informed by the *Wúzǐ* or other military texts.

If the Ancient *Wénzǐ* borrowed its taxonomy from the *Wúzǐ*, their different times of compilation (*Wúzǐ* in the late 4th-early 3rd c. BCE; *Wénzǐ* in the 2nd c. BCE) may also explain the most notable difference in their classifications: *Wúzǐ*'s "contrary warfare" versus *Wénzǐ*'s "reactive warfare". The political and economical situation of the early Hàn dynasty is described in historiographical sources as fairly stable, which does not match the *Wúzǐ*'s description of a country in turmoil with exhausted people. Grounds for waging the *Wúzǐ*'s "contrary war" are lacking. External attacks by the Xiōngnú, however, constitute an acknowledged and growing problem under the Hàn dynasty. These attacks match the description of an invading enemy, for which the *Wénzǐ* permits "reactive warfare" in defense. (As shown in Chapter 1, within a century after the *Wénzǐ*'s composition, Chancellor Wèi Xiāng uses its taxonomy of

warfare to dissuade Emperor Xuān from sending an expeditionary force to attack the Xiōngnú). Hence, the *Wénzǐ*'s adaptation of the *Wúzǐ*'s categories results in a categorization that best fits the time of the *Wénzǐ*'s creation.

Why do classifications of warfare, typical of military writings such as the *Wúzǐ*, appear in philosophical texts such as the *Four Canons* and the *Wénzǐ*?[137] Most pre-Hàn Chinese philosophical texts had an outspoken aversion to warfare. In *Analects* 15.1, Confucius refuses to speak about commanding troops, and in *Analects* 13.29 and 13.30, he states that warfare is permissible only in exceptional circumstances, if the soldiers have been thoroughly trained and the well-being of the people is guaranteed. The *Mòzǐ* contains three chapters that passionately argue against offensive warfare, which have given Mòzǐ the reputation of an archetypical pacifist. The *Lǎozǐ* fulminates against those who "intimidate All under Heaven by a show of arms" 以兵強天下, because it sees arms as "instruments of ill omens" 不祥之器.[138] Whence the approval of martial solutions in the *Four Canons* and the *Wénzǐ*?

That philosophical texts borrow ideas from military writings indicates the bankruptcy of the anti-war position. After two centuries of war, the social devastation and the scale and intensity of military confrontations were so enormous that civility alone no longer sufficed as a solution. As the Warring States era drew to an end, it became increasingly difficult for the philosophical masters to uphold their anti-war views. Opposition against their theories increased. For example, three *Mòzǐ* chapters titled "Against Offensive Warfare" 非攻 exhibit increasing criticism of anti-war ideas; and Xúnzǐ's idealistic theory against war is bitterly criticized by a proponent of military intervention in *Xúnzǐ* 15.[139] The *Wénzǐ* is more pragmatic than the *Mòzǐ* or the

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[137] The distinction between military and philosophical writings is somewhat misleading, as it suggests a diametric opposition, one pro-war and the other pro-peace. Rand [1977, 1979-1980] shows that in contemplations on the social chaos of the Warring States era, thinkers proposed "martial" 武 or "civil" 文 solutions, or combinations of the two. He distinguishes three views: militarist, compartmentalist and syncretist. The militarists advocate the predominant use of martiality to excise conflicts. This view is articulated in the works of ancient Chinese military theorists, but also found in philosophical texts such as the *Book of Lord Shāng* 商君書 or the *Hán Fēizǐ*. Most philosophical texts, however, favor the civil approach, which insists on the primacy of civility to prevent and mitigate chaos. In between the militarists and compartmentalists sit the syncretists, who posit civility and martiality as equivalent means for conflict management. The *Four Canons* and *Wénzǐ* both belong to the latter group.

[138] *Lǎozǐ* 30 and 31. Anti-war sentiments also occur in *Lǎozǐ* 46, 50, 57, 67, 68, 69, 76 and 80.

[139] In the *Mòzǐ*, there is a development from a short essay on warfare as a crime (*Mòzǐ* 17), through a sizeable chapter with utilitarian arguments against war (*Mòzǐ* 18), to a long chapter disputing historical and ethical pro-war arguments by opponents who directly attack Mòzǐ (*Mòzǐ* 19). In these chapters, criticism of Mòzǐ's doctrine increases and his replies become increasingly complex. Hence, differences between the three chapters are to be explained chronologically, *Mòzǐ* 17 being the oldest and *Mòzǐ* 19 the latest. In the *Xúnzǐ*, Lord Línwǔ 臨武君 quotes principles of Sūnzǐ and Wúzǐ to attack Xúnzǐ, but the text naturally congratulates Xúnzǐ, despite his naïve argument, as the victor of the disputation.

Xúnzǐ. It does not *a priori* condemn war and even advocates certain types of warfare, thereby displaying a realist outlook on the socio-political reality of its time. By accepting certain types of warfare, it takes the wind out of the war advocates' sails, such as the opponents of Mòzǐ or Xúnzǐ. Its realist view offers a middle way between the anti-war thinkers, whose ideas are often too idealistic, and militarists, who focus on strategic and tactic aspects of war with little attention to the motives involved.

Whence the fivefold classification in the *Wénzǐ*? Growing criticism of the anti-war position is not only the result of an idealism which no longer reflected the late Warring States' socio-political reality, but also of the confusing terminology employed by anti-war thinkers. Thinkers such as Mòzǐ tend to employ relatively simple jargon, in which military operations are reduced to one term, such as "warfare" 兵 or "offensive warfare" 攻. Criticizing this one term, they appear to object to any form of war, which comes close to the pacifist stance. But they are no pacifists, if pacifism means absolute opposition to war or violence as a means of restoring order. They merely strive for peace, preferably through civility, but if all peaceful methods are exhausted, also through martiality. Confucius, for one, approves of war if peasant-soldiers are thoroughly trained for at least seven years.[140]

A complex socio-political reality demands nuanced ideas to reflect it and these ideas can only be expressed through refined terminology. Where terminology is inadequate, misunderstandings lead to heated debate, which forces thinkers to sharpen their vocabulary. By introducing a clear categorization of warfare into the philosophical discourse, the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, as does the *Four Canons*, not only advances war as a measure towards peace, but also meets the demand for a sophisticated, unambiguous terminology, which states clearly which types of warfare are permissible and which are not. Its fivefold classification makes explicit what many earlier thinkers implied.

[140] The friction between ideology and terminology is most apparent in *Mòzǐ* 19, where Mòzǐ's opponents criticize his opposition to offensive warfare by pointing out that the sages of the past also attacked other tribes. Mòzǐ replies: "You have failed to examine the terminology which I employ and do not understand the reasoning behind it. What these men did was not to 'attack' but to 'punish'." [tr. Watson 1967: 56]. Mòzǐ sees punishing tyrants as a *casus belli*, but his neglect to distinguish this from offensive warfare leads to confusion among his opponents, who understandably think that Mòzǐ equates the two types of war and opposes both. Mòzǐ does not oppose "punishing tyrants" (the type of war that the *Wénzǐ* distinguishes as righteous), but his limited terminology makes it seem as if he does.

4.2.5. Educative Transformation

Instead of warfare, the *Wénzǐ* argues, the ruler should concentrate on educating his masses. This idea is expressed most clearly on strip 2208 (below), which states that the ruler is a teacher to his people. As a teacher, the ruler has to transform the people through his example, a process referred to as "educative transformation" 教化. Several relevant questions by King Píng indicate that "educative transformation" is yet another important concept in the unearthed *Wénzǐ*. It is discussed in a dialogue that survives on various bamboo strips, but not in the received text:

[2310] ［教］化之。”平王曰：“何謂以教化之？”文子
transform them through education." King Píng asked: "What is meant by transforming them through education?" Wénzǐ

[0694] 古聖王以身先之，命曰教。”平王
The ancient sage kings put themselves in front of them and labeled this 'education'." King Píng

[0570] □不化為之奈何？”文子曰：“不□人
[X] do not transform, how can this be?" Wénzǐ answered: "Not [X] the people

[2389] ［□何］可謂德？”文子曰：“不然，夫［教］人
[X] how can this be called virtue?" Wénzǐ answered: "It is not like that. Now, to educate others

[1803] □焉，已必［教之，所以］
[X] in it. It is already necessary to educate them. This is the means by which to

[2260][141] 猷。故］民之化教也，［毋卑小行則君服之。甚］
plan. Therefore, the transformation of the people is in education. If he does not humbly practice this in a small way, then the gentleman can make them submit. Extremely

[2243] ［主］國家［安］寧，其唯化也。刑罰不足
The stability and safety of the ruler's realm depends only on transformation. Punishments and penalties are inadequate

Neither the idea of transforming the masses through education, nor the term for it, are new. The roots for the idea of the ruler's never-ending task to transform the people by

[141] My translation of the second part is tentative.

instruction may lie in the teachings of Confucius or Mencius or other Warring States thinkers, but it matured only in the *Xúnzǐ*, the first text to combine "transformation" and "education" into a concept of philosophical significance. In the *Xúnzǐ*, educative transformation consists of implementing ritual and moral principles and norms and is based on the belief that society can be changed for the better by refining the customs and habits of the common people. *Xúnzǐ* 9.17 specifically attributes this task to two types of officials: the "masters of rural communities" 鄉師 and the "dukes of the insignia" 辟公. The former combine educative transformation with the task of urging the peasants to be filial and display brotherly affection. The latter's duties also include deliberating on ritual principles and music, rectifying personal conduct and refining popular customs and usages. Instructing the people with ritual and moral principles, according to *Xúnzǐ* 15.1, transforms them into supporters of the common cause and prevents them from indulging in secretive conduct for personal profit.

Prescription of principles and norms is not what the Ancient *Wénzǐ* has in mind with transformation through education. When this text urges the ruler to be a teacher to his people, it only demands that he possess the Way and virtue, two normative criteria for transforming the populace:

> 人主者，民之師也，上者，下之儀也[2208]，上美之則下食之，上有道德則下有仁義，下有仁義則[0575]無淫亂之世矣。[142]
>
> The ruler of men is a teacher to his people. The superior is a model for his inferiors. What the superior presents as good, inferiors swallow. If the superior has the Way and virtue, inferiors have humaneness and righteousness. If inferiors have humaneness and righteousness, All under Heaven is no longer licentious or in chaos.

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

> [2208] 之師也。上者下之義法也。
> a teacher to [his people]. The superior is a model and an example to his inferiors.
>
> [0575] 德，則下有仁義，下有仁義則治矣・
> virtue, inferiors have humaneness and righteousness. If inferiors have humaneness and righteousness, there is order! •

[142] *Wénzǐ* 5.20 (excerpt).

These are possibly related Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

> [2248] 道德，則下毋仁義之心，下毋仁義之
> the Way and virtue, those below do not have their mind set on humaneness and righteousness. If those below do not have their [mind] set on humaneness and righteousness

The *Wénzǐ* is clearly at variance with the *Xúnzǐ*, which reserves "righteousness" and "propriety" for the function of transforming the populace. Another difference is that the *Wénzǐ* does not encourage interference with the customs and habits of the populace. If they require change, they will change of themselves, as long as the ruler provides the right example. Strip 0694 (above) defines "education" by saying that "ancient sage kings put themselves in front of others", meaning that they served as guiding models, as a result of which transformation spontaneously followed.[143] In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the ruler does not dictate laws or codes of behavior, but openly adheres to the Way and virtue, and thereby non-actively transforms the populace.

Given the overall Confucian emphasis on education and Xúnzǐ's specific coinage of the term "educative transformation", the Ancient *Wénzǐ* probably borrows this concept from Confucian discourse. It subscribes to contemporary positive appraisals of this concept, but instead of agreeing with its original conceptual meaning, the *Wénzǐ* gives it a Daoist flavor. The *Wénzǐ*'s interpretation is not only incongruous with that of the Confucian tradition, but also runs counter to the Legalist outlook. Strip 2243 claims that punishments and penalties are inadequate to sustain order, which bespeaks an explicit critique of Legalist ideas. Penal retribution, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* appears to say, is mere treatment of symptoms that does not cure the underlying problem. Questioning the deterrent and awe-inspiring functions of penalties and punishments, the text maintains that only a quietist form of transformation can effectively change the people and ensure enduring safety and stability of the realm.

4.2.6. Learning and Listening

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* combines its socio-political views with references to what appears to be a mystical practice of self-cultivation. These references link it to other mystical

[143] Note that the *Lǎozǐ* maintains that the sage places himself behind others.

writings. In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, two key concepts to describe the process of self-cultivation are "learning" 學 and "listening" 聽. These concepts and their mutual relation are explained in this dialogue:

> 文子問道。老子曰：學問不精，聽道不深。凡聽者，將以達智也，將以成行也，將以致功名也，不精不明，不深不達。故上學以神聽，中學以心聽，下學以耳聽，以耳聽者，學在皮膚，以心聽[2482]者，學在肌肉，以神聽者[0756]，學在骨髓。故聽之不深，即知之不明，知之不明，即不能盡其精，不能[2500]盡其精，即行之不成。凡聽之理，虛心清靜，損氣無盛，無思無慮，目無妄視，耳無苟聽，尊精積稽，內意盈并，既以得之，必固守之，必長久之。[144]
>
> Wénzǐ asked about the Way. Lǎozǐ answered: "If in learning you do not focus on the essence, then in listening to the Way you will not be profound. All listening is used to arrive at wisdom, to succeed in practicing [the Way], and to bring about achievement and reputation. If [in learning] you do not focus on the essence, you will not reach clarity. If [in listening to the Way] you are not profound, you will not arrive [at wisdom].
>
> Therefore, superior learning is to listen with the spirit, average learning is to listen with the mind and inferior learning is to listen with the ears. The learning of those who listen with their ears takes place in their skin. The learning of those who listen with their mind takes place in their muscles and flesh. The learning of those who listen with their spirit takes place in their bones and marrow.
>
> Therefore, if in listening to it [the Way] you are not profound, your understanding of it will not be clear. If your understanding of it is not clear, you will not be able to fully comprehend its essence. If you cannot fully comprehend its essence, in putting it into practice you will not succeed.
>
> The principle of all listening is to be empty-minded and quiescent, to reduce [bad] energies and prevent them from proliferating, and to be without thoughts or concerns. Do not let your eyes look rashly, do not let your ears listen carelessly. Save up your concentrated essence and fill up your inner intentions. Once you have obtained it, you must firmly preserve it and make it last long."

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

> [2482] ［脩德非一］聽，故以耳聽［者，學在］皮膚；以心聽
> In cultivating virtue, there is not just one form of listening. Therefore, the learning of those who listen with their ears takes place in their skin. The [learning of those who] listen with their mind

[144] *Wénzǐ* 5.1 (excerpt).

[0756] 學在肌月（肉）；以口聽者，
takes place in their muscles and flesh. The learning of those who listen with their [X]

[2500] ［不深者知不遠，而不能盡其功，不能］
those who [in listening to the Way] are not profound, their understanding [of it] will not reach far and they cannot fully comprehend its achievement. [If] they cannot

These are possibly related Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[2470] ［乎是。”平］王曰：“吾不能盡［學道，能口學人］，
like this.” King Píng asked: “I cannot completely learn about the Way, but can I then [X] learn about man.

My translation of the dialogue as it survived in the Received *Wénzǐ* counts four paragraphs, which probably derive from different parts of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.[145]

Paragraphs 1 and 3 describe the process that leads to the Way in the form of a negatively formulated chain. If the reader fails at one step in the process, the next step will not come about. The four steps in this process are: learning the essence of the Way → listening to the Way → understanding the Way → practicing the Way. Learning forms the first stage in a long process that eventually, if all stages are effectively carried out, enables one to successfully put the Way into practice.

Paragraph 2 offers a differentiation and physical localization of listening and learning. Three modes of listening, each representing a different level of learning, are:

form of learning	mode of listening	location of learning	level
superior learning	spirit	bones and marrow	spiritual
average learning	mind	muscles and flesh	mental
inferior learning	ears	skin	physical

Table 4.6: Listening and Learning in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*

Ordinary listening, with the ears, represents the simplest form of learning, the physical level. This type of learning remains superficial as it does not go beyond the

[145] Paragraphs 1 and 3 both contain chain arguments (if not *x*, then not *y*) and claim that learning should be “clear” and “profound”. They correspond in thought and wording, and probably belonged together in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Paragraph 2 uses different wording and breaks the chain. It probably derives from elsewhere in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and may have been erroneously inserted here during redaction.

skin. With our ears we can hear only sounds from the world outside us. Since the scope of the Way exceeds that of mere sounds, in order to grasp the Way we must resort to a higher form of listening. The second form of learning, the mental level, is reached by listening with the mind. This is more profound, for it enters the muscles and flesh. But as Roth [1999: 233 n. 58] notes, the Way "is not an object and cannot be apprehended as an object of the mind". Therefore, the third and most superior form of learning is the spiritual level. This type of learning, aquired by listening with the spirit, penetrates bones and marrow, the foundation of one's physical constitution and thus permeates one from top to bottom.

This *Wénzǐ* passage is reminiscent of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, which has a similar three-fold taxonomy of listening. One well-known passage in the *Zhuāngzǐ* contains a discussion between Confucius and Yán Huí 顏回, his most beloved disciple. Yán Huí intends to convert a tyrannic ruler and asks Confucius for advice. The correct method, Confucius says, is "fasting of the mind" 心齋, which he describes as:

> 若一志，無聽之以耳而聽之以心，無聽之以心而聽之以氣。聽止於耳，心止於符。氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛。虛者，心齋也 [146]
>
> Make your will one! Don't listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don't listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition, but the spirit is empty and waits on all things. The Way gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind.[147]

This *Zhuāngzǐ* passage on the fasting of the mind distinguishes three senses for listening: ear, mind and spirit.[148] It is remarkably similar to the classification in the *Wénzǐ*, but there are differences. The *Wénzǐ* uses the terms "superior", "average" and "inferior" to denote different values of the three types of listening, which are implied in the *Zhuāngzǐ*; and it understands the three forms of listening as different types of learning and uses physical localizations to reinforce the different values of the three types of learning. The *Wénzǐ* passage is more explicit and further developed and therefore probably based on the *Zhuāngzǐ* anecdote of Confucius and Yán Huí.[149]

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[146] *Zhuāngzǐ* 4.
[147] Translation by Watson [1968: 57-58].
[148] Note that "spirit" translates 氣 *qì* in the *Zhuāngzǐ* and 神 *shén* in the *Wénzǐ* (see note 149).
[149] The anecdote opens *Zhuāngzǐ* 4, one of the Inner Chapters, which Graham [1981: 27-28] and Liu Xiaogan [1994: 32-38] consider part of Zhuāngzǐ's own writings. Zhuāngzǐ's death, ca. 286 BCE, predates the *Wénzǐ*'s composition by a full century.

Roth [1999: 153-161] sees the "fasting of the mind" passage, one of the two classical descriptions of mystical practice in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, as "a relatively concrete reference to a meditation practice in which one focuses on the breathing, rather than perceptions and thoughts." Perceptions and thoughts fill the mind and consequently oust the Way, for the Way resides in emptiness alone. Roth convincingly shows that this *Zhuāngzǐ* passage is related in thought and wording to the "Inward Training" tract in the *Guǎnzǐ*. This also holds true for the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, which promotes a similar method of self-cultivation and borrows the terminology to describe it.

Paragraph 4 in the translated passage from the Received *Wénzǐ* details the kind of learning that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* envisages. It promotes "clearing of the mind" 虛心, resorting to "quiescence" 清靜, being "without thoughts and concerns" 無思無慮 and "preventing sensory distraction" 目無妄視，耳無苟聽. This terminology is typical of the so-called mystical passages in the *Guǎnzǐ*, *Lǎozǐ*, *Zhuāngzǐ*, *Four Canons* and *Huáinánzǐ*. The relationship between the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and these texts has been shown earlier in this chapter and is confirmed here. What makes the *Wénzǐ* unique is that it refers to the process of inner cultivation as "learning", because the *Guǎnzǐ* and the *Four Canons* do not mention learning and the *Lǎozǐ* explicitly rejects it.

If one exterminates learning, the *Lǎozǐ* says, there will be no more worries.[150] Learning leads to arbitrary distinctions, opinions and biases. The Way, on the other hand, is a universal and objective source of guidance that harbors all distinctions. Therefore, the *Lǎozǐ* places the pursuit of learning in opposition to the pursuit of the Way. The Way can be reached only by transcending distinctions, in a process that the *Lǎozǐ* calls "learning not to learn" 學不學.[151] This "unlearning" is believed to lead to genuine inner cultivation and, ultimately, to the Way.[152]

In labeling the process of inner cultivation as "learning", the Ancient *Wénzǐ* reverses the *Lǎozǐ*'s rejection of learning and changes contemporary understanding of the concept. Most texts of that period display a high regard for learning. The main

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[150] This statement comes from *Lǎozǐ* 20, which occurs in Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* B, where it immediately follows what is now *Lǎozǐ* 48, which places learning in opposition to the Way. In the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ*, these two passages form a unit on learning, as Henricks [2000: 20] and others have noted.

[151] This passage, which now belongs to *Lǎozǐ* 64, is part of Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ* C.

[152] The *Lǎozǐ* is exceptional in its condemnation of learning. The text makes use of a rhetorical strategy uncommon in Chinese thought: it accepts the prevalent conceptual meaning of learning (as a process of moral and ritual self-cultivation), but rejects its emotive value (because this type of learning leads one away from the Way). With its dismissal of learning and its promotion of "unlearning", the *Lǎozǐ* places itself on the periphery of a philosophical discourse that generally holds learning in high esteem. The *Wénzǐ* generally supports the *Lǎozǐ*'s ideas but disapproves of its harsh rhetoric and employs a different rhetorical strategy.

objective of learning as they see it, is moral and ritual self-cultivation. This type of self-cultivation can be reached through studying scriptures, so as to learn the ways of the ancient sages, or emulating teachers, to learn the conduct of exemplary models. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* subscribes to the prevalent appreciation for learning, but offers a definition that markedly differs from the general trend of its time. It describes learning as a non-intellectual, meditative process that leads to a clear understanding and successful practicing of the Way. Whereas the Ancient *Wénzǐ* with its appreciation of learning appears to oppose the *Lǎozǐ*'s rejection of learning, in actual fact it defines learning in such a way that it could easily describe what the *Lǎozǐ* seems to mean by "unlearning".

4.2.7. Non-Action and Holding On to the One

In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the practice of inner cultivation ultimately serves political purposes. The text promotes various techniques the ruler should master to ensure safety and stability for his realm, including "non-action" 無爲 and "holding on to the One" 執一. These two concepts play important roles in the philosophy of the *Lǎozǐ* and their discussion in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is likewise larded with references to that text. The discussion survives on six bamboo strips and in one related section of the Received *Wénzǐ*:

> 文子問曰：古之王者，以道蒞天下[2262]，為之奈何？老子曰：執一無為[0564]，因天地與之變化，天下大器也，不可執也，不可為也，為者敗之，執者失[0870]之。執一者，見小也[0593]，小故能成其大也，無為者，守靜[0908]也，守靜能為天下正[0775]。[153]

> Wénzǐ asked: "The kings of the past *used the Way to preside over All under Heaven*. How did they do that?"
>
> Lǎozǐ answered: "They held on to the One and were non-active. They followed Heaven and Earth and transformed with them. *All under Heaven is a large vessel that cannot be held on to and cannot be acted on. Those who act on it, ruin it. Those who hold on to it, lose it*. Holding on to the One is to *see the small*. Seeing the small they could succeed in their greatness. Being non-active is to *preserve quietude*. By preserving quietude *they could be paragons for All under Heaven*."[154]

[153] *Wénzǐ* 5.7 (excerpt).
[154] Italicized phrases in the translation occur in *Lǎozǐ* 60, 29, 52, 16 and 45, respectively.

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[2262][155] ［王曰：“吾聞古聖立天下，以道立天下，］
King [Píng] asked: “I have heard that the sages of the past, in establishing All under Heaven, used the Way to establish All under Heaven.

[0564] ［□何？”文子曰：“執一無為。”平王曰：］
How [did they do that]?” Wénzǐ answered: “They held on to the One and were non-active.” King Píng asked:

[0870][156] 地大器也，不可執，不可為，為者販（敗），執者失
[Heaven and] Earth are a large vessel that cannot be held on to and cannot be acted on. Those who act on it, ruin it. Those who hold on to it, lose [it]

[0593] 是以聖王執一者，見小也；無為者，
Therefore, those sage kings who held on to the One, saw the small; those who were non-active,

[0908][157] 也，見小故能成其大功，守靜□
By seeing the small, they could succeed in their great achievement. By preserving quietude

[0775] 下正。”平王曰：“見小守靜奈何？”文子曰：
paragon for [All] under [Heaven].” King Píng asked: “To see the small and preserve quietude, what does that mean?” Wénzǐ answered:

This dialogue explicates what it means to “use the Way to preside over All under Heaven” 以道蒞天下, an obvious reference to *Lǎozǐ* 60. It contains two parallel causal arguments of three components each:

- holding on to the One → seeing the small → succeeding in great achievements
- being non-active → preserving quietude → being a paragon for All under Heaven

[155] Strip 2262 writes 立 *lì* ‘to establish’ instead of the complex form 蒞 *lì* ‘to preside over’.
[156] Strip 0870 starts with the graph 地 *dì* ‘earth’ and appears to claim that “Heaven and Earth are a large vessel”. The received text writes instead that “All under Heaven (天下; “the world”) is a large vessel”. *Lǎozǐ* 29, from which this is a quotation, maintains that “All under Heaven is a spiritual vessel”.
[157] Strip 0908 speaks of sage kings “succeeding in their great achievements”. The received text claims that they “succeeded in their greatness”, which is less plausible in syntax and meaning. Moreover, “achievement” 功 is an important concept in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and is usually combined with the verb “to succeed” 成. Hence, the received text most likely accidentally left out this graph.

Both arguments are marked by strong influence from the *Lǎozǐ*, as all six components feature prominently in that text.

The first argument begins with an exhortation to adhere to the One. The numeral here exceeds its conceptual meaning and becomes a philosophical concept with a value comparable to that of the Way. The One is not merely an enumeration of the singular Way. Rather, as Ch'en Ku-ying [1977: 200] states, it "symbolizes the absoluteness and universality" of the Way. In other words, the One refers to the sum total of everything that exists in the universe. It is imperative in both self-cultivation and state-government that one focus on this integral whole.

Emphasis on "the One" and on the practice of "holding on to the One" occurs in various ancient Chinese argumentative writings, but is typical for the set of texts that we have already encountered several times. It occurs—in various forms—in the *Guǎnzǐ*, the *Lǎozǐ*, the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the *Four Canons* and the *Huáinánzǐ*.[158] In these texts, "holding on to the One" is a technique of meditative concentration on one thing only, thereby excluding external sensory influences (sights, sounds, smells) and internal sensory influences (thoughts), all of which distract from achieving union with the Way. This mystical experience also yields practical benefits in government. The underlying idea is that the world is an utterly complex place, where all things and affairs continuously interact. These are so diverse that the ruler cannot aspire to grasp all. One commonality between all things and affairs is that each has the Way as its guiding principle. By focusing on this guiding principle, the ruler is capable of understanding and controlling the wide diversity of things and affairs in the world. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* agrees with the other texts on this underlying principle and it uses the same terminology to describe it. Its unique contribution to the debate is in bringing related concepts together and placing them in parallel arguments, thereby defining their mutual relationship.

By adhering to the One, according to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the sage can "see the small". Here is another typical *Lǎozǐ* phrase. *Lǎozǐ* 52 defines "clarity of sight" 明 as the ability to see the small. The Héshàng gōng commentary explains this as:

萌芽未動，禍亂未見為小，昭然獨見為明。

[158] In addition to "holding on to the One", these texts contain such formulations as "maintaining the One" 抱一 and "preserving the One" 守一. See Roth [1999: 148-150; 191-192] for a discussion of these and related locutions, and for a list of texts in which they appear.

> Seeds and buds that have not yet started to sprout, misfortune and chaos that have not yet become visible, are "small". To be the only one who clearly notices them, is "clarity of sight".

This explanation corresponds to a pivotal concern of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, namely to prevent disaster through extra sensitive perception, discussed earlier. Commenting on the same *Lǎozǐ* passage, Wáng Bì gives it a political context, claiming that perspicacity is a precondition for success in government. This comment corresponds to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s conclusion of the first argument, which states that through their ability to perceive the minute, the sage kings of the past could "succeed in their great achievement" 成其大功.

The second argument begins with "non-action", a concept that occurs throughout the *Lǎozǐ* and related works. One chapter, *Lǎozǐ* 57, states: "if I am non-active, the people transform themselves; if I love quietude, the people correct themselves" 我無為人自化；我好靜人自正. Here, as in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, non-action is related to "quietude" 靜, a mental state of tranquility in which one can fully realize one's authenticity or inner nature. *Lǎozǐ* 16 opens with the following exhortation: "Attain the highest level of vacuity, preserve the profoundest depths of quietude" 致虛極，守靜篤. The phrase "preserving quietude" corresponds to the middle component of the second argument in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Through non-action and the resulting preservation of quietude, according to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, again alluding to the *Lǎozǐ*, the sage can be a paragon for the world.

All these terms had been coined long before the creation of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Its unique contribution is, again, that it selects related concepts from various parts of the *Lǎozǐ* and combines them into a coherent argument, expressed in a distinct parallel structure. The overall idea is that in government, one must focus on the larger whole, the unity of all things, the one entity that sustains all distinctions, to leave trivial details to subordinates and thereby reach a state of tranquility that guarantees success in government.

4.3. Philosophical Affiliation

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* discusses a wide variety of philosophical concepts and themes. In these discussions, numerous influences from earlier texts can be discerned. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* borrows concepts, and quotes or paraphrases entire phrases in support

of its own worldview. In this intertextual process, what is the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s philosophical status? How does its philosophy fit into the larger context of early Chinese philosophical writings? Two views currently dominate the field, as scholars variously see the *Wénzǐ* as a *Lǎozǐ* commentary or a Huáng-Lǎo text.

4.3.1. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* as a *Lǎozǐ* commentary

Two years after the Dìngzhōu discovery was publicized in *Cultural Relics*, Jiāng Shìróng 江世榮 [1983] published an article in which he calls the *Wénzǐ* one of the ancient commentaries on the *Lǎozǐ*. Jiāng's thesis is not new. At least since the Latter Hàn dynasty, as attested in the writings of Bān Gù and Wáng Chōng, Wénzǐ was seen as a disciple of Lǎozǐ and his work as a development of Lǎozǐ's ideas. Jiāng was the first, however, to explicitly label the *Wénzǐ* a "commentary".[159] How closely was the Ancient *Wénzǐ* related to the *Lǎozǐ*? Does this justify calling it a commentary?

There are several intertextual links between *Lǎozǐ* and Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Both value "the Way" 道 and "virtue" 德 as the highest concepts in their philosophical systems. Both speak appreciatively of "non-action" 無為, "seeing the small" 見小 and "preserving quietude" 守靜. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* often quotes or paraphrases longer *Lǎozǐ* expressions, such as "All under Heaven is a spiritual vessel that cannot be acted on; those who act on it, ruin it; those who hold on to it, lose it." 天下神器，不可為也，為者敗之，執者失之 (*Lǎozǐ* 29); "all things depend on it for life" 萬物恃之以生 (*Lǎozǐ* 34); "the Way engenders them, virtue nurtures them" 道生之，德畜之 (*Lǎozǐ* 51); and the "terrace of nine stories high" 九層之臺 that "starts from beneath one's feet" 始於足下 (*Lǎozǐ* 64). Other references to the *Lǎozǐ* quotations include bamboo strip 0916, which speaks of "rivers and seas" 江海 that serve as "kings of the hundred valleys" 百谷王, as does *Lǎozǐ* 66; and bamboo strip 0595, which states that "difficult tasks should be explained as easy, big tasks as minute" 難事道于易也；大事道于細也, which is reminiscent of *Lǎozǐ* 63. Dīng Sìxīn 丁四新 [2000: 31-37; 70-72] offers no fewer than fifty Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips which he claims quote the *Lǎozǐ*, though the relationship is not always clear.

The *Lǎozǐ* evidently was the primary source of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, but does this qualify the Ancient *Wénzǐ* as a commentary on the *Lǎozǐ*? The answer to this

[159] Jiāng does not distinguish between the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the Received *Wénzǐ*. He mentions the Dìngzhōu discovery, but only to support his view of "the *Wénzǐ*" being an authentic ancient work. When he speaks of "the *Wénzǐ*" as a *Lǎozǐ* commentary, he refers to the Received *Wénzǐ*.

question should be informed by the different types of commentary (e.g., devotional, expositional, exegetical; a distinction Jiāng does not make) and, more importantly, evaluate whether the differences between the two texts justify even the loosest usage of the label "commentary". In my view, they do not. *Lǎozǐ* quotations in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* are not exhaustive. Typical *Lǎozǐ* vocabulary such as "simplicity" 朴, "spontaneity" 自然 and "knowing what is enough" 知足 are not quoted in the unearthed *Wénzǐ*. Moreover, the *Wénzǐ*'s treatment of *Lǎozǐ* quotations is not systematic: quoted concepts or phrases are not identified as such, nor explicitly provided with comments. Most importantly, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* embraces concepts that the *Lǎozǐ* as it was known at the time of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s composition vehemently rejects, including humaneness, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. And whereas the *Lǎozǐ* is arguably the most fervent pre-Hàn anti-war text, calling arms nothing but "instruments of ill omens", the Ancient *Wénzǐ* meticulously distinguishes different types of warfare and supports some. While the Ancient *Wénzǐ* supports the basic principles of the *Lǎozǐ*, it employs a fundamentally different rhetorical strategy to persuade readers. The *Lǎozǐ* agrees with the contemporary conceptual meaning of terms such as humaneness or righteousness, but calls them worthless. The Ancient *Wénzǐ*, conversely, supports contemporary appraisal of these terms, but provides each with a new conceptual meaning. Therefore, to label the Ancient *Wénzǐ* a mere commentary on the *Lǎozǐ* would do injustice to the fundamental differences between these texts and ignore the unique character of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.

4.3.2. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* as a Huáng-Lǎo text

The second dominant view in *Wénzǐ* scholarship classifies the text as a "Huáng-Lǎo text". This view has a history of several decades and has continued to be popular after the publication of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription in 1995.[160] Titles such as "Huáng-Lǎo Thought in the *Wénzǐ*" 《文子》的黄老思想 by Dīng Yuánmíng 丁原明 [1997] or "Wénzǐ and Huáng-Lǎo" 文子與黄老 by Chén Lìguì 陳麗桂 [1998] speak for themselves. What is Huáng-Lǎo? Is this label suitable for the Ancient *Wénzǐ*?

Huáng-Lǎo 黄老 stands for the Yellow Emperor 黄帝 and Lǎozǐ 老子 and refers to their teachings, or to the writings ascribed to them. Sīmǎ Qiān, who coined

[160] It is supported by Ài Lìnóng [1982], Huáng Zhāo [1990], Zhāng Dàinián 張岱年 [1994], Chén Lìguì [1996], Wáng Lìqì 王利器 [2000] and Charles Le Blanc [2000: 14], among other scholars.

the term, uses it to denote the intellectual orientation of individuals who lived, for the larger part, during the early Former Hàn dynasty. This has led to the presently popular view of Huáng-Lǎo as a current of thought which originated in the late Warring States era and rose to prominence during the "intellectual vacuum" between the state-endorsed Legalism of the Qín dynasty and the adoption of Confucianism as state ideology under Emperor Wǔ of the Hàn dynasty.

The popularity of Huáng-Lǎo as the subject of academic research surged after Táng Lán 唐蘭 [1975] identified the four manuscripts discovered in the Mǎwángduī tomb on the same piece of silk as the *Lǎozǐ* as the *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor*. The manuscripts, four Yellow Emperor-texts followed by a Lǎozǐ-text, soon came to be regarded as the foundational works of a Huáng-Lǎo school. Even scholars who disagree with Táng's identification usually refer to the manuscripts as "Huáng-Lǎo silk books" 黃老帛書, thereby acknowledging their Huáng-Lǎo affiliation. Descriptive studies of the *Four Canons* and comparative studies of texts with similar content led to the establishment of a substantial Huáng-Lǎo corpus and of a comprehensive Huáng-Lǎo ideology.

The problem with this approach is that there is no consensus on either the corpus or the ideology. Collections of supposed "Huáng-Lǎo texts" often differ, and what one scholar defines as typical Huáng-Lǎo ideas may be labeled otherwise by another. As a result, criticism against the arbitrary application of Huáng-Lǎo is on the increase. A growing number of scholars point out that Huáng-Lǎo is merely a label that was retrospectively applied to individual thinkers and texts, first by Hàn dynasty historians and now by modern scholars. It is unclear, as Loewe [1994: 393] writes, "how far we are justified in regarding Huáng-Lǎo as an integral system of thought comprising elements of political philosophy, metaphysics, cosmology and mythology." He adds:

> It must also remain open to question how far we would be justified in thinking that Chinese writers of the second century B.C. would have described themselves specifically as members of that school, however much they may have been attracted by the thoughts of Huángdì or Lǎozǐ, or by some of those that are expressed in the documents from Mǎwángduī or in the *Huáinánzǐ*. It would perhaps seem more likely that here, as elsewhere, full allowance must be made for an eclectic approach; orthodox, approved ways of thought had yet to be laid down.

Loewe's argument also applies to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. While I believe that the text was composed in the early Former Hàn, during or not long after Lady Dòu dominated the imperial palace, there is no evidence that its author was an adherent of a "Huáng-Lǎo movement" or wrote the text as the manifesto of a "Huáng-Lǎo school". There are striking differences between the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and what is now seen as Huáng-Lǎo thought. Scholars such as Tu Wei-ming [1979] and Jan Yün-hua [1980] hold that "law" 法, "pattern" 理, "balancing" 稱 and "penetrating insight" 觀 are part of the basic philosophical vocabulary of Huáng-Lǎo. These terms rarely appear on the bamboo strips of the unearthed *Wénzǐ*, if at all.[161] References to "yīn and yáng" 陰陽 and "form and name" 形名, central in the *Four Canons*, are also absent in the unearthed *Wénzǐ*. Given that the philosophical outlook of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the *Four Canons* markedly differs, to amalgamate these and other works into a cluster of "Huáng-Lǎo texts" does injustice to each individual piece of writing. For this reason too, we may conclude, as Vankeerberghen [2001: 3] has done for the *Huáinánzǐ*, that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is best labeled loosely as an eclectic text, because efforts to label it "Daoist" or "Huáng-Lǎo" do more to mask the nature of the text than to reveal it.

4.3.3. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* as an eclectic text

To the two dominant views in *Wénzǐ* scholarship, I would like to add a third, namely that of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* as an eclectic work. Eclecticism, broadly construed, is a methodology that selects elements from a wide variety of intellectual traditions, without regard to their possible, mutual contradictions. The term is often used in contradistinction to syncretism. The main difference between eclecticism and syncretism is the absence or presence of synthesis, which scholars variously attribute to either.[162] In my view, an eclectic work is not merely a pastiche of passages from older texts, with the author's sole contribution being the way in which he puts these passages together. Rather, eclecticism stands for the reinterpretation and reorganization of earlier concepts, the synthesis of elements from earlier texts into a

[161] The concepts of "law" and "balancing" are altogether absent and "pattern" appears only twice. The graph 觀 *guān* occurs only as a verb, as in the phrase "looking at it from this point of view…" 由是觀之. The possible counter-argument that the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is a fragmentary manuscript and that these concepts may have been present on now lost strips, would overlook the frequent occurrence of other concepts, such as the Way or virtue.

[162] See Vankeerberghen [2001: 171 n. 18] for a discussion of eclecticism and syncretism as applied to the *Huáinánzǐ*. In this work, I subscribe to Vankeerberghen's usage of eclecticism.

new philosophy. The synthetical nature of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* shows itself in three ways.

(1) The discursive structure of the text. The author of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* couches his thoughts in a form that is exceptionally suited to philosophical synthesis. Staging King Píng and Wénzǐ in an elaborate play of questions and answers enables the author to promote large numbers of known concepts, take them out of their original contexts and give them new meaning.

(2) The selection of concepts. The choice of texts and textual elements is an important indication for the intentions of the author. In this chapter, we have encountered numerous concepts and phrases that also occur in the *Lǎozǐ*, the *Guǎnzǐ*, the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the *Xúnzǐ*, the *Huáinánzǐ*, the *Four Canons*, the *Five Conducts* and even in militarist texts such as the *Wúzǐ*. It is often impossible to attribute a concept or phrase to one source text. For instance, while the *Xúnzǐ* coined the term "educative transformation", it was also used by Lù Jiǎ and Jiǎ Yì, so it seems that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* joined a contemporary debate rather than quote the *Xúnzǐ*. Nonetheless, the wide range of possible sources indicates a thorough acquaintance with the philosophical literature extant in those days. Of equal if not greater importance are elements from earlier texts that are absent in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Typical *Lǎozǐ* tenets are not quoted; neither are terms that are crucial in the *Four Canons*. The selection of concepts and the omission of others is an important indication of purposeful synthesizing, and makes the Ancient *Wénzǐ* a distinctive text.

(3) The adaptation of concepts. The author of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* borrows concepts from earlier texts and subscribes to their contemporary appreciation, but changes their conceptual meanings, so that they suit his own philosophical outlook. For example, in a passage on learning, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* takes advantage of the positive connotation of this term. But while disagreeing with the contemporary interpretation of book learning, he interprets it as a spiritual form of self-improvement such as that in the *Lǎozǐ*. Similarly, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* speaks highly of sageness and wisdom, not as forms of inner cultivation as does the *Five Conducts*, but as tools for perceiving fortune and misfortune.

In the early Former Hàn there was no one state ideology, as the guiding principles of the dynasty had yet to be established. Unlike thinkers from the early or mid-Warring States period, who held on to their individual positions in the intellectual arena, thinkers of the early Former Hàn covered the entire philosophical spectrum. As

the new dynasty encompassed all domains of the Warring States, the new universal philosophy would have to encompass all earlier currents of thought. The best-known synthesis of thought from that period is the *Huáinánzǐ*, but the Ancient *Wénzǐ* was also in the game. It, too, aimed to provide the new all-encompassing ideology, which was far from easy. It had to persuade those in power, while consciously avoiding to offend potential adversaries. As a result, there is a clear sense of political correctness in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. It does not formulate thoughts in a negative manner, by explicitly denying concepts or rejecting their contemporary positive reception, as does the *Lǎozǐ*. Conversely, the *Wénzǐ* cautiously subscribes to the prevalent laudatory connotation of its privileged concepts, and regards each as an effective tool in its politico-philosophical "system". The text does revise the conceptual meaning of concepts, but always in a positive manner. It only states what things are, not what they are not. Consequently, its formulations are imperative rather than prohibitive, telling the reader what to do, not what not to do. Through the answers to King Píng's questions, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* consciously attempts to change the direction of readers' interests and induce them to accept its worldview: again, not unlike a catechism.

5. From Ancient *Wénzǐ* to Received *Wénzǐ*

At some point in Chinese history the *Wénzǐ* underwent major revision. This was a unique event in the history of Chinese politico-philosophical writing, for its breadth and depth are unprecedented. Ancient China produced a variety of methodical editors and scrupulous forgers. Liú Xiàng 劉向 (79-8 BCE), working on the writings of Xúnzǐ, purportedly discarded no fewer than 290 of 322 manuscripts as duplicates, before combining the remaining ones into a definitive text of 32 chapters. Similarly, Guō Xiàng 郭象 (d. 312) re-divided the *Zhuāngzǐ* from 52 to 33 chapters by removing all passages that somehow did not fit into his idea of the text. These recensions are significant events in the transmission of their respective texts; yet, they are dwarfed by that of the *Wénzǐ*. Aiming to create a critical edition of *Xúnzǐ* or *Zhuāngzǐ*, Liú and Guō merely discarded identical or near-identical writings, removed unintelligible passages or passages that resembled other works, and organized the remaining materials into a logical, well-structured text. They may have modified the manuscripts at their disposal, but remained faithful to the texts they worked on, making changes only when they considered them in the interest of the text. The manipulation of the *Wénzǐ* was far more drastic. Numerous passages were added to the *Wénzǐ*, creating a text several times its original length. The revised *Wénzǐ* was subdivided into more chapters than the original text and each chapter received a new title. Most peculiarly, sayings in the revised text were attributed to new protagonists. A closer look at the changes that led from the Ancient *Wénzǐ* to the Received *Wénzǐ* helps to understand the scale of revision and raises fascinating research questions.

5.1. Increased Length

In revised form, the *Wénzǐ* counts circa 39.674 graphs, which ranks it among the middle-sized ancient Chinese politico-philosophical treatises, being somewhat longer than *Mencius* but shorter than Jiǎ Yì's *New Writings*.[163] While the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is

[163] Its exact size is disputed. Dīng Yuánzhí [1999b: 9] takes it at 39.228 graphs; Zhāng Fēngqián [2002: 48] at 39.231. I base my analysis on CHANT, which takes it at 39.674 graphs.

an incomplete copy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and its original length remains unknown, the difference between the unearthed manuscript and the received text is striking:

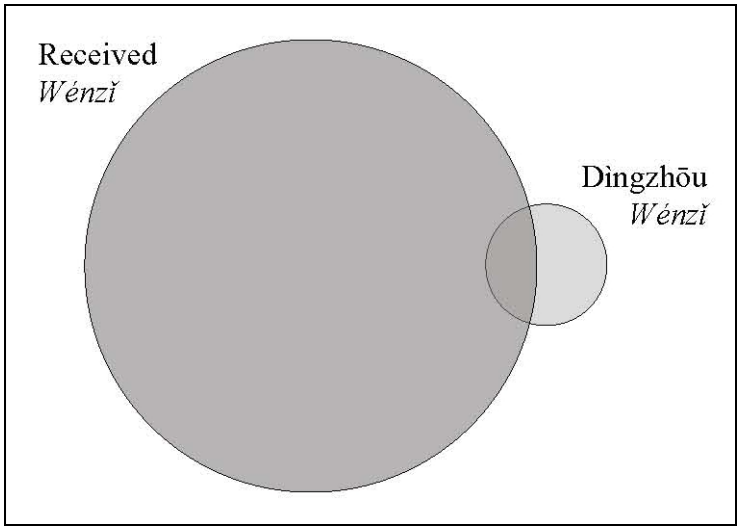

Figure 5.1: Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* versus Received *Wénzǐ*

The surviving Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo fragments contain circa 2.790 legible graphs, which is a mere 7% of the Received *Wénzǐ*'s 39.674 graphs. The actual correspondence is even smaller, because only one third of the bamboo manuscript (94 of 277 strips) correspond to the received text; for the remaining two thirds (183 of 277 strips) the Dìngzhōu team has found no corresponding passages. If we apply the same ratio to the number of legible graphs, the 94 corresponding strips would contain circa 947 graphs, which is less than 2,5% of the received text. Given the fragmentary status of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, this is only a rough indication, but it would suggest that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* contributed only one in every forty graphs in the Received *Wénzǐ*!

This comparison yields crucial questions. What happened to passages in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* for which no counterpart exist in the Received *Wénzǐ*? Were they incidentally lost in the text's transmission or purposefully omitted during its revision? What is the source of passages in the Received *Wénzǐ* for which no counterpart exist in the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*? Did they once form part of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, in sections that did not survive in the bamboo manuscript, or do they derive from other sources? Were they perhaps created by the person, or persons, responsible for the revision? What about the corresponding passages in both *Wénzǐ*'s? How do graphs on the 94 corresponding bamboo strips relate to their counterparts in the received text?

5.2. More Chapters

The two *Wénzǐ*'s are subdivided in different ways. Whereas the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, as evidenced by bamboo strip 2465, had a "Part One" 上經 and therefore also at least a "Part Two" 下經, no edition of the Received *Wénzǐ* contains a bipartite structure. Whereas the Hàn dynasty imperial library catalogue mentions a *Wénzǐ* in nine chapters, which is probably the standard division of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the Received *Wénzǐ* contains more than nine chapters. In library catalogues from the Suí dynasty onwards, the *Wénzǐ* is invariably listed as a work in twelve chapters, as are all currently circulating versions. How did nine chapters become twelve? Were larger chapters split into several smaller ones? Were three new chapters added to the text? And was the increase of chapters a gradual process or did it happen all at once?

5.3. New Chapter Titles

One of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips mentions "Sageness and [Wisdom]" 聖□ and "The Enlightened King" 明王 as chapter titles. These titles do not occur in the Received *Wénzǐ*, because the new chapter division also led to new chapter titles. The twelve chapter titles in the Received *Wénzǐ* are:

chapter	*title*	*translation*
Wénzǐ 1	道原	The Origin of the Way
Wénzǐ 2	精誠	Pure Sincerity
Wénzǐ 3	九守	The Nine Preservations
Wénzǐ 4	符言	Words of Magic
Wénzǐ 5	道德	The Way and Virtue
Wénzǐ 6	上德	Superior Virtue
Wénzǐ 7	微明	Subtle Insight
Wénzǐ 8	自然	Spontaneity
Wénzǐ 9	下德	Inferior Virtue
Wénzǐ 10	上仁	Superior Humaneness
Wénzǐ 11	上義	Superior Righteousness
Wénzǐ 12	上禮	Superior Propriety

Table 5.2: Chapter Titles in the Received *Wénzǐ*

Why were new titles assigned to the twelve chapters? Why were these terms chosen as chapter titles? What is the relationship between these titles and other texts?

5.4. New Protagonists

The most extraordinary aspect of the rigorous manipulation of the *Wénzǐ* concerns the change of protagonists. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is a dialogue between a ruler, King Píng, and his advisor, Wénzǐ. The progatonists in the Received *Wénzǐ* are a master, Lǎozǐ, and his disciple, Wénzǐ. Notably, Lǎozǐ is the leading character in the Received *Wénzǐ*; Wénzǐ plays a side role and King Píng appears only once. Traditionally, the master who wrote the text, or to whom the text is attributed, invariably appears as the main protagonist in his namesake work. In the Received *Wénzǐ*, however, the person who lends his name to the overall title of the work, Wénzǐ, appears only as an occasional questioner of the main character, Lǎozǐ. This atypical feature of the Received *Wénzǐ* led Cleary [1992] to subtitle his English translation "Further Teachings of Lao-tzu". Why was Lǎozǐ introduced at the cost of Wénzǐ's own position? Why was King Píng almost entirely expunged from the text? What is the significance of these protagonists?

The process of revision changed the *Wénzǐ* almost beyond recognition. One would almost think that the only commonality between Ancient *Wénzǐ* and Received *Wénzǐ* is their title. Far more than just establishing a critical edition or a standard version of an existing text, as did Liú Xiàng and Guō Xiàng, the *Wénzǐ* editor created a fundamentally different text.[164] The following chapters address the process of revision in more detail (Chapter 6), analyze when the *Wénzǐ* was revised and by whom (Chapter 7), and establish the motives for creating a whole new text (Chapter 8).

[164] I discuss the issue of singular or plural editorship in Chapter 7. Until then I shall, for convenience, speak of the "editor".

6. The Received *Wénzǐ*: Core Chapter and Outer Chapters

In this chapter, I analyze the composition of the Received *Wénzǐ*. I start with *Wénzǐ* 5. For reasons that will soon become clear, I call this the "core chapter" of the received text: this is where the hand of the editor is most visible. I then proceed to analyze *Wénzǐ* 1 through 4 and *Wénzǐ* 6 through 12: a total of eleven chapters which, for convenience, I collectively label the "outer chapters" of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

6.1. The Core Chapter

Soon after the Dìngzhōu team had transcribed all 277 bamboo strips belonging to the *Wénzǐ* manuscript, they noted that only 94 strips correspond to the received text, and that of these 94, no fewer than 87 correspond to one chapter: *Wénzǐ* 5. This feature naturally drew scholarly attention to this one chapter.[165] It was soon discovered that *Wénzǐ* 5 contains three more conspicuous features which bear out its special position among the twelve chapters of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

(1) The Received *Wénzǐ*'s twelve chapters comprise 186 sections. Of these, 170 may be categorized as monologic and 16 as dialogic. Monologic sections consist exclusively of a speech that is introduced by the phrase "Lǎozǐ said..." 老子曰, or in one exceptional case by "Wénzǐ said..." 文子曰 (*Wénzǐ* 2.21). Dialogic sections feature two protagonists instead of one. There is one dialogue between Confucius and Lǎozǐ, one between King Píng and Wénzǐ, and there are fourteen between Wénzǐ and Lǎozǐ.[166] This table shows the distribution of the 170 monologic sections and 16 dialogic sections in the Received *Wénzǐ*:

[165] The relationship between the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* 5 has been studied by scholars such as Lǐ Xuéqín [1996], Chén Lìguì [1996], Zhèng Guóruì [1997], Charles Le Blanc [2000], Zēng Dáhuī 曾達輝 [2000] and Zhāng Fēngqián [2002]. My analysis builds on their findings.

[166] Confucius and Lǎozǐ appear together in *Wénzǐ* 1.5; King Píng and Wénzǐ in *Wénzǐ* 5.20; Wénzǐ and Lǎozǐ in *Wénzǐ* 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7, 5.9, 5.11, 5.13, 5.15, 7.2, 7.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.12 and 11.6.

chapter		*monologic*	+	*dialogic*	=	*sections*
Wénzǐ 1	道原	9	+	1	=	10
Wénzǐ 2	精誠	21	+	-	=	21
Wénzǐ 3	九守	14	+	-	=	14
Wénzǐ 4	符言	31	+	-	=	31
Wénzǐ 5	道德	11	+	**9**	=	20
Wénzǐ 6	上德	6	+	-	=	6
Wénzǐ 7	微明	17	+	2	=	19
Wénzǐ 8	自然	12	+	-	=	12
Wénzǐ 9	下德	16	+	-	=	16
Wénzǐ 10	上仁	9	+	3	=	12
Wénzǐ 11	上義	15	+	1	=	16
Wénzǐ 12	上禮	9	+	-	=	9
total		170	+	16	=	186

Table 6.1: Monologic and Dialogic Sections in the Received *Wénzǐ*

Most chapters in the Received *Wénzǐ* contain no dialogic sections, some chapters only a few. *Wénzǐ* 5 stands out because it contains more dialogic sections than any other chapter, and more than those of all other chapters combined.

(2) Another conspicuous feature is that monologic sections and dialogic sections in *Wénzǐ* 5 almost invariably alternate. The opening section, *Wénzǐ* 5.1, is a dialogue between Wénzǐ and Lǎozǐ. In the next section, *Wénzǐ* 5.2, Lǎozǐ appears alone. In *Wénzǐ* 5.3, Wénzǐ poses another question to Lǎozǐ. In *Wénzǐ* 5.4, Lǎozǐ again appears alone. This pattern continues until *Wénzǐ* 5.16, a monologic section that is followed by three more monologic sections. The concluding section of the chapter, *Wénzǐ* 5.20, is a dialogue between King Píng and Wénzǐ: the only trace of the original discursive structure that survived revision.

(3) The high frequency of dialogic sections and the remarkable alternation of dialogic sections and monologic sections make *Wénzǐ* 5 a unique chapter, irrespective of the Dìngzhōu discovery; it is just that these features were not noted before 1973. But Dìngzhōu did more than direct scholarly attention to the unique features of *Wénzǐ* 5; it contributed an extra dimension. Following publication of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*'s transcription in 1995, Lǐ Xuéqín [1996] and others noted that unearthed bamboo strips correspond exclusively to dialogic sections in *Wénzǐ* 5, whereas monologic sections relate in their entirety to the *Huáinánzǐ*. The twenty dialogic (d) and monologic (m) sections in *Wénzǐ* 5 can be rendered as follows:

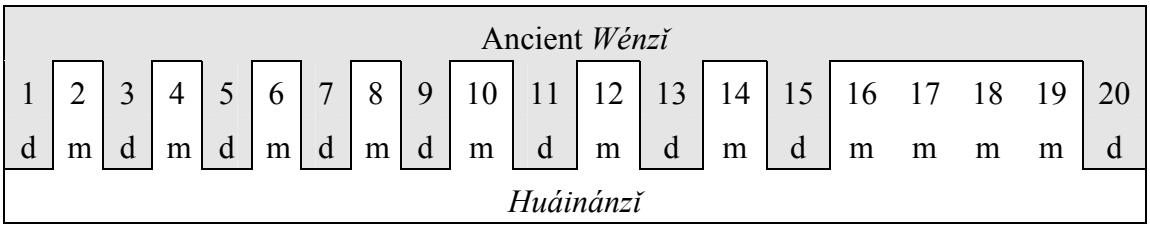

Figure 6.1: Two Strands of Text in *Wénzǐ* 5 [167]

Wénzǐ 5 consists of two distinct, interlocking strands of text, each related to a different source:

- dialogues corresponding to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, but not to the *Huáinánzǐ*
- monologues corresponding to the *Huáinánzǐ*, but not to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*

Wénzǐ 5 is, then, a carefully constructed chapter with unique status in the Received *Wénzǐ*. The vast majority of corresponding bamboo strips relate to this one chapter; it contains most dialogic sections; monologic and dialogic sections alternate and relate to different sources. Because of these unique features, I refer to *Wénzǐ* 5 as the core chapter: this is probably where the process of revision started.

6.1.1. The Dialogues: *Wénzǐ* 5 and the Ancient *Wénzǐ*

Wénzǐ 5 contains nine dialogic sections. They are based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, as evidenced by numerous corresponding bamboo strips. In recent years, several specialists have conducted textual comparisons of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* and the dialogic sections in *Wénzǐ* 5. Lǐ Jìnyún 李縉雲 [1996; 2000], for instance, published two meticulous section-by-section comparisons. Instead of elaborating on the numerous textual variations noted by Lǐ and others, I focus on the most striking differences in the two *Wénzǐ*'s discursive structures, rhetorical devices and linguistic usage, that is, on those changes which most clearly show a rigorous editor at work.

[167] No corresponding bamboo strips have been found for *Wénzǐ* 5.11, and no corresponding *Huáinánzǐ* passage exists for *Wénzǐ* 5.16. However, *Wénzǐ* 5.11 mentions the phrase "rivers and seas" in its metaphoric meaning, which is typical for the Ancient *Wénzǐ* (see Section 6.2.2); and *Wénzǐ* 5.16 is somewhat similar in thought and wording to *Wénzǐ* 2.9, which corresponds to a passage in *Huáinánzǐ* 9. Moreover, the two sections are dialogic and monologic, respectively, and match the general pattern of *Wénzǐ* 5. Hence, *Wénzǐ* 5.11 is probably based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* 5.16 on the *Huáinánzǐ*.

6.1.1.a. Discursive Structure

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is a conversation between one questioner, King Píng, and one respondent, Wénzǐ. The author of the text voices his ideas through the respondent; the questioner emphasizes the demand and validity of the author's ideas and allows him to change the topic when so desired. The conversation is marked by frequent interaction between the two interlocutors: in reaction to the respondent's answers, the questioner constantly asks new questions. Because of the frequency of interaction, I refer to such conversations as complex dialogue.

The *Wénzǐ* revision not only yielded new interlocutors, Wénzǐ and Lǎozǐ, but also reduced the discursive structure of the text to a minimum. It changed complex dialogues into what I would call simple dialogues. These are scarcely more than monologues. In fact, "dialogue" in the Received *Wénzǐ* normally means that the speech in these sections is preceded by one question, such as "What must a king do to win the hearts of the people?" 王者得其歡心，為之奈何. The introductory question merely serves as a rhetorical frame for the editor to convey his thoughts, through the mouth of the respondent. The respondent does not engage in discussion with his questioner, but unilaterally states his opinion.

The Received *Wénzǐ* simplifies the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s complex discursive structure by expunging several questions from the text, thus creating one long answer from two or more smaller ones. *Wénzǐ* 5.13 illustrates this change:

> 文子問政。老子曰：御之以道[0885]，養之以德，無示以賢，無加以力[0707]，損而執一，無處可利，無見可欲，方而不割，廉而不劌，無矜無伐。御[2205]之以道則民附，養之以德則民服，無示以賢則民足，無加以力則民[2324]朴。無示以賢者，儉也，無加以力，不敢也，下以聚之，賂以取之，儉以自全，不敢自安。不下則離散，弗養[0876]則背叛，示以賢則民爭，加以[0826]力則民怨。離散則國勢貨，民背叛[0898]則上無威，人爭則輕為非，下怨其上則位危，四者誠脩[0886]，正道幾矣。[168]
>
> Wénzǐ asked about government. Lǎozǐ answered: "Steer them by means of the Way and nourish them by means of virtue; *do not show off your worthiness* or pressure them with your strength.[169] Reduce these and hold on to the One, so that nothing you do can be considered profitable by them and nothing you

[168] *Wénzǐ* 5.13.
[169] *Lǎozǐ* 3.

show can be desired by them. Be morally square without harming them, incorruptible without injuring them, and be neither boastful nor aggressive.

If you steer them by means of the Way, the people will pledge allegiance to you. If you nourish them by means of virtue, the people will submit themselves to you. If you do not show off your worthiness, the people will be satisfied. If you do not pressure them with your strength, the people will be simple.

Not to show off your worthiness is self-restraint and not to pressure them with your strength is non-daring. Lower yourself to assemble them, use gifts to take them in. Keep yourself intact by means of self-restraint; secure yourself by means of non-daring. If you do not lower yourself, they will leave you and disperse. If you do not nourish them, they will turn their back on you and revolt. If you show off your worthiness, the people contend. If you pressure them with your strength, the people have something to resent. If they leave you and disperse, the realm's position of power declines. If they turn their back on you and revolt, you who are above lack authority. If the people contend, they easily do wrong. If those below resent you who are above, your position is in danger. If you sincerely cultivate the four imperatives above, then you have almost reached the correct Way."

These are the corresponding Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips:

[0885] 平王曰：“為正（政）奈何？”文[子曰：“御之以道□]
King Píng asked: "What about conducting government?" Wénzǐ answered: "Steer them by means of the Way and

[0707] 之以德，勿視以賢，勿加以力，□以□□
them by means of virtue; do not show off your worthiness or pressure them with your strength; … with your … …

[2205] □[言。平王曰：“御]
words." King Píng asked: "To steer

[2324] □□以賢則民自足，毋加以力則民自
[If you do not] show off your worthiness, the people will be satisfied. If you do not pressure them with your strength, the people will themselves

[0876] 可以治國，不御以道，則民離散不養。
the country can be ordered. However, if you do not steer them with the Way, they will leave you and disperse. If you do not nourish them,

[0826] 則民倍（背）反（叛），視之賢，則民疾諍，加之以〃
the people will turn their back on you and revolt. If you show off your worthiness, the people contend. If you pressure them with

[0898] 則民苛兆（逃）；民離散，則國執（勢）衰；民倍（背）
the people flee the harsh circumstances. If they leave you and disperse, the realm's position of power declines. If they turn their back on you,

[0886] [上位危。”平王曰：“行此四者何如？”文子]
your position is in danger.” King Píng asked: “What is it like to implement these four?” Wénzǐ

In line with other dialogic sections in the core chapter of the received text, *Wénzǐ* 5.13 consists of one question and one lengthy reply. On the corresponding bamboo strips, however, King Píng asks three questions. He appears on the first strip (0885), which matches the beginning of *Wénzǐ* 5.13. He appears on what the transcription lists as the third strip (2205), in the middle of *Wénzǐ* 5.13, to enquire further about steering the people by means of the Way. He also appears on the last strip (0886), which shows that the conversation in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* continues where its counterpart in the Received *Wénzǐ* ends. The editor changed several questions and answers by King Píng and Wénzǐ into one question by Wénzǐ and one long reply by Lǎozǐ.

The change from complex dialogue to simple dialogue is also visible in sections that I presented in Chapter 4, when discussing the philosophy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. For instance, in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s discussion on sageness and wisdom (see Section 4.2.3), one bamboo strip reads:

[0896/1193] 知。”平王曰：“何謂聖知？”文子曰：“聞而知之聖也
wisdom.” King Píng asked: “What is meant by sageness and wisdom?” Wénzǐ answered: “To hear something and recognize it is sageness.

The graph 知 *zhī* ‘to know’ at the head of this bamboo strip, which is used for 智 *zhì* ‘wisdom’, indicates that King Píng's query is part of an ongoing discussion. Wénzǐ probably mentions sageness and wisdom in his answer to a previous question. King Píng, who is apparently unfamiliar with the two terms, enquires with Wénzǐ what he means by them. In the Received *Wénzǐ*, this query about sageness and wisdom marks the beginning of a new section:

文子問聖智。老子曰：聞而知之，聖也，見而知之，智也。

> Wénzǐ asked about sageness and wisdom. Lǎozǐ answered: "To hear something and recognize it is sageness. To see something and recognize it is wisdom."

The Received *Wénzǐ* lacks the part of the discussion that preceded King Píng's query on sageness and wisdom in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.

Another example is the discussion on "holding on to the One", which survived as *Wénzǐ* 5.7 (see Section 4.2.7). The received text concludes by saying that those who manage to preserve quietude can "be a paragon for All under Heaven" 為天下正. The corresponding bamboo strip, however, continues with another question:

> [0775] 下正。”平王曰：“見小守靜奈何？”文子曰：
> paragon for [All] under [Heaven]." King Píng asked: "To see the small and preserve quietude, what does that mean?" Wénzǐ answered:

King Píng requests further information about seeing the small and preserving quietude, and Wénzǐ duly replies. The bamboo manuscript obviously continues on the same topic, but the received text starts a new topic. The Received *Wénzǐ* lacks the part of the discussion that follows King Píng's query on seeing the small and preserving quietude in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.

6.1.1.b. Rhetorical Devices and Linguistic Usage

The change from complex dialogue to simple dialogue was accompanied by a change in the mode of questioning, from direct speech to indirect speech. While King Píng's role in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is normally limited to one of four formulaic questions, Wénzǐ's role as questioner in the Received *Wénzǐ* is even more restricted. His questions normally appear as statements. The two previous examples illustrate this:

- Ancient *Wénzǐ*: King Píng asked: "What is meant by sageness and wisdom?"
- Received *Wénzǐ*: Wénzǐ asked about sageness and wisdom.

- Ancient *Wénzǐ*: King Píng asked: "What about carrying out government?"
- Received *Wénzǐ*: Wénzǐ asked about government.

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* pretends to offer verbatim transcripts of actual questions by King Píng. The Received *Wénzǐ*, with its succinct statement-questions, appears to mimic the earliest Chinese philosophical treatises, such as the *Analects*, in which we frequently find questions such as "Zǐyóu asked about filial piety" 子游問孝 or "Fán Chí asked about wisdom" 樊遲問知. Hence, the statement-questions in the Received *Wénzǐ* can be seen to archaize the text.

The Received *Wénzǐ* is even more concise than the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. It aims to express ideas through a minimal number of graphs. This is shown by the omission of questions or the change from direct questions to much shorter statement-questions, and especially in the omission of grammatical particles.

The Received *Wénzǐ* contains many fewer particles than the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. It often deletes 皆 *jiē* 'all', 則 *zé* 'then', 故 *gù* 'therefore' and 是以 *shì yǐ* 'for this reason', as well as sentence-final particles 也 *yě* and 矣 *yǐ*. Such particles can be dropped without a significant change in meaning. Note the difference between strip 0625 and the parallel in *Wénzǐ* 5.1:

[0625]	則功成得福。是以君臣之間有道，則
Wénzǐ 5.1	功成得福。　君臣　有道，則

[0625]	then they complete their deeds and enjoy good fortune. For this reason, when ruler and ministers have the Way between them, then …
Wénzǐ 5.1	they complete their deeds and enjoy good fortune. When ruler and ministers have the Way, then …

The revised version lacks the graphs 則 *zé* 'then', 是以 *shìyǐ* 'for this reason' and 之間 *zhījiàn* 'between them'. Here is another example:

[0798]	矣。是故，帝王者不得人不　成，得人
Wénzǐ 5.1	故，帝王　不得人不能成，得人

[0798]	For this reason, if those who are emperor or king do not obtain the people, they do not succeed. If they do obtain the people, ...
Wénzǐ 5.1	Therefore, if emperors or kings do not obtain the people, they cannot succeed. If they do obtain the people, ...

The received text reduces the graphs 是故 *shìgù* 'for this reason' to 故 *gù* 'therefore' and omits 矣 *yǐ* and 者 *zhě*. Whereas the bamboo manuscript frequently employs 者 *zhě* as a nominalizer, the received text often omits it. As a result, phrases such as "those who are emperor or king" 帝王者 or "those who lack virtue" 毋德者 accordingly become "emperors or kings" 帝王 or "lacking virtue" 無德.

The *Wénzǐ*'s textual history differs markedly from that of other texts, such as the *Analects*. Whereas the Dìngzhōu *Analects* contains noticeably fewer grammatical particles than the received version [Ames and Rosemont 1998: 277], the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* is much richer in grammar than the Received *Wénzǐ*. If the Ancient *Wénzǐ* had gradually transformed into a modern text, it might have followed the same pattern, that is, a gradual increase of grammatical particles. But it did not: the change from Ancient *Wénzǐ* to Received *Wénzǐ* led to a drastic decrease of particles and reflects rigorous editorial action.

The *Wénzǐ* editor's pursuit of conciseness occasionally results in the omission of complete sentences. For example, in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*'s discussion on warfare, the respondent claims that there is only one way for the king, namely that of virtue. One bamboo strip emphasizes this idea:

> [2385] ［故王道唯德乎！臣故曰一道。”平王］
> Therefore, the only royal way is that of virtue. Therefore I, your humble servant, say that there is only one way!" King Píng

This exclamation, an emphatic conclusion of the discussion on virtue, is not found in the received text. This may be incidental, but it likely reflects the distinct pattern of reducing the text to a bare minimum. The *Wénzǐ* editor is only interested in the core message of the text, not in supposedly irrelevant details or frills. This bamboo strip is an emphatic reiteration of an earlier statement. It adds nothing to the discussion and the editor therefore may have considered it redundant.

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is the account of a conversation between a monarch and his advisor. As the previous example shows, the latter refers to himself as "your humble servant" 臣. In the Received *Wénzǐ* this form of self-reference is deleted. Consider the following bamboo strip and its parallel in the received text.

> [1172/0820] 然臣聞之，王者蓋匡邪民以為正，振亂世以為治
> *Wénzǐ* 5.20 夫道德者 匡衰 以為正，振亂 以為治

[1172/0820] Now, I, your humble servant, have heard that the king ought to correct immoral people and make them upright, put down chaos in the world and turn it into order, …

Wénzǐ 5.20 Now, the Way and virtue correct evil and make it upright, put down chaos and turn it into order. …

Among other differences between this bamboo strip and the received text, the latter lacks the introductory phrase "Now, I, your humble servant, have heard that …" 然臣聞之. In another example, a comparable phrase at the end of a bamboo strip is absent in the received text:

[2315] 不積而　成者，寡矣。　　臣[聞]

Wénzǐ 5.20 不積而能成者，未之有也。積道德者

[2315] It rarely occurs that someone who did not accumulate [them] still succeeded. I, your humble servant, have heard …

Wénzǐ 5.20 It has never occurred that someone who did not accumulate [them] managed to succeed. Those who accumulate the Way and virtue …

The phrase "I, your humble servant, have heard" 臣聞 does not occur in the Received *Wénzǐ* at all. It seems that the editor carefully avoided references to Wénzǐ's status as a political advisor, so as to underscore his apprenticeship with Lǎozǐ. As protégé of a philosophical master, he would not refer to himself as "your humble servant".

The change of setting—from political in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* to somewhat more philosophical in the Received *Wénzǐ*—may have motivated other subtle changes in the text. Note, for instance, in a previous example how bamboo strip 1172/0820 speaks of "those who are kings" 王者 and the parallel in the received text uses the broader term "those who posses the Way and virtue" 道德者. In a similar example (below), the expression "ruler of men" 人主 is changed into the more general and somewhat less political expression "worthy man" 賢人.

The *Wénzǐ* editor normally condenses and simplifies the text, sometimes deleting entire phrases, but there is one instance where he inserts a phrase:

[0880] 王曰：“人主唯（雖）賢，而曹（遭）淫暴之世，以一
King Píng said: "No matter how worthy the ruler of men is, if he is up against a licentious and chaotic world, then with one

[0837] ［之權］，欲化久亂之民，其庸能

> [man's] power, he wishes to transform a people subjected to enduring chaos, how is this possible?

These two consecutive strips correspond to the beginning of *Wénzǐ* 5.20:

> 平王問文子曰：吾聞子得道於老聃，今賢人雖有道，而遭淫亂之世，以一人之權，而欲化久亂之民，其庸能乎？
>
> King Píng asked Wénzǐ: "I have heard that you received the Way from Lǎo Dān. Now, a worthy man may possess the Way, but if he is up against a licentious and chaotic world, then how can he with the power of a single man wish to transform a people subjected to enduring chaos?

Wénzǐ 5.20 is the only section in the received text featuring King Píng as questioner and Wénzǐ as respondent—in other words, the only remnant of the original discursive structure that survived revision. The insertion of the phrase "I have heard that you received the Way from Lǎo Dān" serves to explain this exceptional dialogue between King Píng and Wénzǐ. Lǎo Dān, of course, is another name for Lǎozǐ. The explanatory phrase not only introduces Wénzǐ as advisor, but also shows that Lǎozǐ's wise words had reached the monarch and that Wénzǐ, as his disciple, is qualified to elucidate and promote his master's words. The introductory phrase is interesting because it shows that the editor, despite his preference for the severest economy of graphs and his frequent deletion of text, found it necessary to explain King Píng's appearance and justify Wénzǐ's status as an advisor.

6.1.2. The Monologues: *Wénzǐ* 5 and the *Huáinánzǐ*

Wénzǐ 5 also contains eleven monologic sections. Each starts with "Lǎozǐ said ..." and has a parallel in the *Huáinánzǐ*. Are these monologues borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*, or vice versa? If the *Huáinánzǐ* copied the monologues in *Wénzǐ* 5, this would imply that it systematically ignored the dialogues in *Wénzǐ* 5, because these have no parallel in the *Huáinánzǐ*. It is hard to conceive that the *Huáinánzǐ* would copy exclusively from the monologues, because apart from the introductory question that prefaces each dialogue, there are no substantial differences between both types of sections. Hence, the alternation of monologic and dialogic sections in *Wénzǐ* 5 strongly suggests that the monologues are borrowings from the *Huáinánzǐ*. Given that dialogues in *Wénzǐ* 5 draw on an older version of the *Wénzǐ*, it stands to reason that monologues are also

based on an older text. In other words, two existing texts—Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*—were combined into one new text. It is not hard to imagine why the *Wénzǐ* editor should want to alternate monologues and dialogues. One obvious reason is that it would distract the reader from the fact that his new text relied on these older sources. Hence, the Dìngzhōu discovery, which drew attention to the alternation of sections, provided grounds for assuming that the *Huáinánzǐ* is the older of the two disputed texts and that it served as source for the monologues in *Wénzǐ* 5.

Comparative analyses of the monologic sections of *Wénzǐ* 5 and their counterparts in the *Huáinánzǐ* corroborate this view.[170] Le Blanc [2000: 43-84] published a meticulous section-by-section analysis, with detailed notes on textual variations. He concludes that in many cases

> it is impossible to decide on the direction of borrowing, even if there are variations. But when variations are significant, they indicate that the Received *Wénzǐ* borrows from the *Huáinánzǐ*. The converse does not occur.[171]

I agree with Le Blanc that the Received *Wénzǐ* draws on the *Huáinánzǐ*, but I believe the evidence is stronger than he suggests. There are compelling, yet widely ignored arguments that definitely invalidate the view of the Received *Wénzǐ* as the older text. I offer these arguments as I discuss the most striking differences between the monologues in *Wénzǐ* 5 and their counterparts in the *Huáinánzǐ* in the aforesaid fields: discursive structure, rhetorical devices and linguistic usage.

6.1.2.a. Discursive Structure

The eleven monologues in *Wénzǐ* 5 normally correspond to monologues in the *Huáinánzǐ*, but some correspond to dialogues. The latter are most instructive to the directionality issue.

There is one dialogue in the *Huáinánzǐ* between Huì Mèng 惠孟 (fl. ca. 300 BCE), a native of Sòng who supports the teachings of Confucius and Mòzǐ, and King Kāng of Sòng 宋康王 (r. 328-286), the last ruler of Sòng:

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[170] See Chén Lìguì [1996: 1872-1880], Zhèng Guóruì [1997: 8-17] and Charles Le Blanc [2000: 43-84]. Two decades earlier, Barbara Kandel [1974: 66-88] analyzed linguistic variations between *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* in general, that is, not limited to *Wénzǐ* 5. Long before the news of the Dìngzhōu discovery came out, she plausibly argued that the Received *Wénzǐ* is based on the *Huáinánzǐ*. As her work is in German, inaccessible to many *Wénzǐ* scholars, her conclusions went largely unnoticed.
[171] Le Blanc [2000: 44].

惠孟見宋康王，０足謦咳疾言曰：“寡人所說者，勇有功也，不說為仁義者也。客將何以教寡人？”惠孟對曰：“臣有道于此，人雖勇，刺之不入；雖巧有力，擊之不中。大王獨無意邪？”宋王曰：“善！此寡人之所欲聞也。”惠孟曰：“夫刺之而不入，擊之而不中，此猶辱也。臣有道于此，使人雖有勇弗敢刺，雖有力不敢擊。夫不敢刺，不敢擊，非無其意也。臣有道于此，使人本無其意也。夫無其意，未有愛利之心也。臣有疲乏于此，使天下丈夫女子，莫不歡然皆欲愛利之心，此其賢于有勇力也，四累之上也。大王獨無意邪？”宋王曰：“此寡人所欲得也。”惠孟對曰：“孔墨是已。孔丘墨翟，無地而為君，無官而為長天下丈夫女子，莫不延頸舉踵，而願安利之者。今大王，萬乘之主也。誠有其志，則四境之內，皆得其得矣。此賢于孔墨也遠矣。”宋王無以應。惠孟出，宋王謂左右曰：“辯矣，客之以說勝寡人也。”故《老子》曰：“勇于不敢則活。”由此觀之，大勇反為不勇耳。[172]

Huì Mèng once had an audience with King Kāng of Sòng, who stamped his feet and coughed, as he spoke to him in an impatient voice: “I am fond of bravery coupled with strength, and I detest those who practice humaneness and righteousness. What do you plan to teach me?”

Huì Mèng answered: “I know of a method, so that you may be stabbed at, but no matter how brave your opponent is, you will not be hurt. You may be struck at, but no matter how strong your opponent is, you will not be hit. How can you, great king, not be interested in this?”

The king of Sòng exclaimed: “Excellent! This is exactly what I would like to hear about!”

Huì Mèng continued: “Now, even if you are not hurt or hit, being stabbed or struck at is still a disgrace. I know of a method, so that people will not dare to stab or strike you no matter how brave or strong they are. Still, even if they do not dare to stab or strike, that does not mean they lack the intention to do so. I know of a method, so that people will be completely without such intention. Still, even if they have no intention to harm you, that does not mean their heart is set on caring for you and benefiting you. I know of a method, so that all men and women of the world will rejoice in their desire to care for you and benefit you. This is worth more than bravery or strength; it is the best of the four methods. How can you, great king, not be interested in this?”

The king of Sòng said: “This is what I wish to obtain.”

Huì Mèng continued: “Confucius and Mòzǐ are exactly like this. They were rulers although they had no territory and leaders although they had no officials. All men and women in the world craned their necks and stood on tiptoe, in their wish to secure and benefit them. Now, you stand at the head of myriad carriages. If you truly have the intention to do so, you can benefit every one within the four borders. This would make you far more worthy than Confucius and Mòzǐ.”

[172] *Huáinánzǐ* 12.

> The king of Sòng had no answer to this. After Huì Mèng had left, the king told his aides: "What an argument! My guest fully persuaded me with his theories!"
>
> Therefore, Lǎozǐ said: "*Being brave at not daring is to live*."[173] From this point of view, the greatest bravery is, in fact, not being brave!

In the Received *Wénzǐ*, this dialogue is an exposition by Lǎozǐ:

> 老子曰：夫行道者，使人雖勇，刺之不入，雖巧，擊之不中，夫刺之不入，擊之不中，而猶辱也，未若使人雖勇不能刺，雖巧不能擊。夫不敢者，非無其意也，未若本無其意，夫無其意者，未有受利害之心也，不若使天下丈夫女子莫不懽然皆欲愛利之，若然者，無地而為君，無官而為是，天下莫不願安利之。故勇於敢則殺，勇於不敢則活。[174]

> Lǎozǐ said: "Now, if you practice the Way you may be stabbed at, but no matter how brave your opponent is, you will not be hurt. You may be struck at, but no matter how clever your opponent is, you will not be hit. However, being stabbed or struck at, even though you are not hurt or hit, is still a disgrace. It would be better if people did not dare to stab or strike you, no matter how brave or clever they are. However, it is not the case that those who do not dare [to stab or strike] lack the intention to do so. It would be better if people were without such intention. However, it is not the case that those who are without such intention have a heart that is set on caring for and benefiting others. It would be better if all men and women of the world rejoiced in their desire to care for and benefit others. If you could be like this, you would be a ruler even without owning territory or a leader even without holding office: everyone in the world would wish to secure and benefit you. Therefore, *being brave at daring is to be killed, being brave at not daring is to live*."

The Received *Wénzǐ*'s monologue is a concise version of the *Huáinánzǐ*'s dialogue. It contains only the gist of Huì Mèng's advice to King Kāng, with significant differences. For example, it obscures the rhetorical twist at the end of the dialogue, which stunned the king of Sòng. Also, whereas the *Huáinánzǐ* claims that Confucius and Mòzǐ were rulers even though they did not have their own territory, the Received *Wénzǐ* does not mention Confucius or Mòzǐ and relates the idea of non-territorial rulership to "those who could be like this" 若然者. Moreover, the *Huáinánzǐ* comments on the dialogue between Huì Mèng and King Kāng with a quotation from the *Lǎozǐ*. This quotation explains the dialogue with the *Lǎozǐ* and, conversely, it illustrates the saying on "non-bravery" in the *Lǎozǐ* with this dialogue. The Received

[173] *Lǎozǐ* 73.
[174] *Wénzǐ* 5.2.

Wénzǐ places the entire section in the mouth of Lǎozǐ, and therefore has to omit the phrase "Therefore, Lǎozǐ said: …" at the end of the passage.

The *Huáinánzǐ* also contains a dialogue between Lǐ Kè 李克 (fl. ca. 400 BCE), a disciple of Zǐxià, and Marquis Wǔ of Wèi 魏武侯 (r. ca. 396-ca. 371 BCE):

> 魏武侯問于李克曰：“吳之所以亡者，何也？”李克對曰：“數戰而數勝。”武侯曰：“數戰數勝，國之福，其獨以亡，何故也？”對曰：“數戰則民罷，數勝則主橋，以橋主使罷民，而國不亡者，天下鮮矣。橋則恣，恣則極物；罷則怨，怨則極慮。上下俱極，吳之亡猶晚矣。夫差之所以自剄于干遂也。”故《老子》曰：“功成名遂身退，天之道也。”[175]
>
> Marquis Wǔ of Wèi asked Lǐ Kè: "What caused the realm of Wú to perish?"
>
> Lǐ Kè answered: "Frequent victories in battle."
>
> Marquis Wǔ asked: "Frequent victories in battle are a blessing to any realm. Why was Wú the only realm to perish because of this?"
>
> Lǐ Kè answered: "Frequent battles fatigue the people. Frequent victories make the ruler arrogant. It rarely happens that when an arrogant ruler employs a fatigued people, his realm does not perish. When [the ruler] is arrogant, he does as he pleases, and when he does as he pleases, he exhausts his resources. When [the people] are fatigued, they become resentful, and when they are resentful, they exhaust their intellectual faculties. Given that both high and low faced exhaustion, Wú's perishing actually occurred rather late! That is why [King] Fūchāi [of Wú] committed suicide at Gānsuì."
>
> Therefore, Lǎozǐ said: "*to withdraw yourself when the deed is accomplished and fame is achieved, is the Way of Heaven*."[176]

This dialogue occurs in *Wénzǐ* 5 as an exposition by Lǎozǐ:

> 老子曰：夫亟戰而數勝者，即國亡，亟戰即民罷，數勝即主驕，以驕主使罷民，而國不亡者即寡矣。主驕即恣，恣即極物，民罷即怨，怨即極慮，上下俱極而不亡者，未之有也。故「功遂身退，天之道也。」[177]
>
> Lǎozǐ said: "Now, frequent victories in heavy battles assuredly lead a realm to perish. Many battles fatigue the people. Frequent victories make the ruler arrogant. It seldom happens that when an arrogant ruler employs a fatigued people, the realm does not perish. When the ruler is arrogant, he does as he pleases, and when he does as he pleases, he exhausts his resources. When the people are fatigued, they become resentful, and when they are resentful, they exhaust their intellectual faculties. It has never occurred that the exhaustion of

[175] *Huáinánzǐ* 12.
[176] *Lǎozǐ* 9.
[177] *Wénzǐ* 5.19.

both high and low face did not lead [the realm] to perish. Therefore, *to withdraw yourself when the deed is accomplished is the Way of Heaven*."

The Received *Wénzǐ*'s monologue again contains only the gist of the *Huáinánzǐ*'s dialogue, and it speaks in more general terms.

These two examples suffice to show that in the Received *Wénzǐ*'s adaptation of *Huáinánzǐ* dialogues, questions are deleted or changed into statements, references to specific people or places are neutralized, and all phrases that enliven the discussion but do not contribute to the reader's understanding of its key issues are omitted. What remains are dryish statements that contain only the gist of the *Huáinánzǐ* dialogue. This is not a just shift from complex dialogue to simple dialogue, but a radical change from dialogue to monologue.

To claim, as scholars often do, that the *Huáinánzǐ* copied from the *Wénzǐ*, implies that Liú Ān and collaborators unilaterally decided that only *Lǎozǐ* quotations at the end of a *Wénzǐ* 5 monologue are veritable statements by Lǎozǐ, the revered patriarch of Daoism, which would be a blasphemy, and that they turned sober, concise monologues into lively historical dialogues, which would require an extraordinarily creative imagination. This confirms that *Wénzǐ* monologues are based on *Huáinánzǐ* dialogues. In other words, the *Wénzǐ* editor took a *Huáinánzǐ* dialogue with the appended *Lǎozǐ* quotation, reduced it to a concise monologue, and ascribed the entire monologue to Lǎozǐ.

6.1.2.b. Rhetorical Devices and Linguistic Usage

The *Huáinánzǐ* employs a wide variety of rhetorical devices, many of which are simplified or omitted in the monologic sections of *Wénzǐ* 5.

The *Huáinánzǐ* often avails itself of historical or quasi-historical examples and illustrations to add weight to its propositions. Readers who subscribe to the example's central meaning are by extension likely to accept the *Huáinánzǐ*'s proposition. The vast majority of examples in *Huáinánzǐ* passages are left out of their counterparts in *Wénzǐ* 5. One passage in *Huáinánzǐ* 13, for instance, stresses the idea that adjusting one's behavior to the circumstances is superior to obstinate insistence on telling the truth or formalist adherence to agreements. No matter how lofty the latter forms of conduct are, there may be situations when stretching the truth is more appropriate. It illustrates this idea with the story of a merchant from Zhèng 鄭, who once traveled

west to sell cattle at the market. Near the border, he chanced upon an army launched by Duke Mù of Qín 秦穆公 as a surprise assault on Zhèng. The merchant cleverly passed himself of as a messenger of the Earl of Zhèng 鄭伯 and offered the commander his cattle. By this lie, he saved his nation from subjugation. The corresponding text in *Wénzǐ* 5.14 includes the theoretical part of the *Huáinánzǐ* passage, but not the example.

Sometimes the *Wénzǐ* preserves an example, but deletes or rephrases detail. We have seen how it obliterates the names of Confucius and Mòzǐ. Similarly, the *Huáinánzǐ* passage that argues against obdurate honesty mentions Straight Body 直躬 and Scholar Wěi 尾生. Straight Body, as is known from *Analects* 13.18, is the nickname of a man who gave evidence against his own father, who had stolen a sheep. Scholar Wěi 尾生 had an appointment with a woman to meet under a bridge; when she did not show up and the water level rose, he continued to wait for her and eventually drowned. The parallel passage in *Wénzǐ* 5.14 paraphrases the idiocy of these two actions, without mentioning the two names:

> 直而證父，信而死女，孰能貴之？
>
> Who can value being upright to the extent of giving evidence against one's own father or being trustworthy to the extent of dying to observe one's appointment with a woman?

One reason for deleting historical detail is that a text ascribed to a disciple of Lǎozǐ cannot contain references to people who lived well after Lǎozǐ, such as Lǐ Kè (fl. ca. 400 BCE) or Huì Mèng (fl. ca. 300 BCE). The *Wénzǐ* has to omit their names to avoid anachronism. Another reason is that it obscures the relationship between the *Wénzǐ* passage and its more detailed counterpart in the source text.

The omission of concrete detail extends to geographical names. We have seen how *Huáinánzǐ* discusses the downfall of Wú, and *Wénzǐ* theorizes about the downfall of realms in general. Similarly, in *Huáinánzǐ* 2 we find a description of the degenerate times of the tyrants "Jié of the Xià dynasty and Zhòu of the Yīn dynasty" 夏桀殷紂 under whose rule "the Yáo mountain collapsed and the Three Rivers dried up" 嶢崩三川涸. In *Wénzǐ* 5.4, this is generalized to the time when "the world started to decline" 世之衰 and "mountains collapsed and rivers dried up" 山崩川涸.

The *Huáinánzǐ* often uses quotations, from a variety of sources, as a rhetorical device to strengthen an argument. Such quotations are omitted or rephrased in the

Received *Wénzǐ*. Whenever the *Huáinánzǐ* closes an argument with a rhymed passage from the *Book of Odes* 詩經, a common practice in Hàn and pre-Hàn texts, the *Wénzǐ* copies the argument but leaves out the *Odes* quotation. Occasionally, the *Wénzǐ* keeps a quotation, but places it in the mouth of Lǎozǐ. One *Huáinánzǐ* passage starts thus:

> 昔者周書有言曰：“上言者，下用也；下言者，上用也。”[178]
>
> The ancient writings of the Zhōu dynasty mention a saying which goes: “High words are used by those in low positions, low words are used by those in high positions.”

The parallel in *Wénzǐ* 5.14 does not mention the “writings of the Zhōu dynasty” but directly attributes the saying on high and low words to Lǎozǐ.

There are also numerous linguistic differences between the *Huáinánzǐ* and the *Wénzǐ*. Most notably, there are many more grammatical particles in *Huáinánzǐ* passages than in the corresponding monologic sections of *Wénzǐ* 5. Frequently omitted particles include the connectives 故 *gù* ‘therefore’ and 而 *ér* ‘and’, the possession markers 其 *qí* and 之 *zhī*, the nominalizer 者 *zhě*, and the sentence-final particles 也 *yě* and 矣 *yǐ*. Other function words are simplified. The negations 弗 *fú* and 非 *fēi* in a *Huáinánzǐ* passage both become 不 *bù* in *Wénzǐ* 5.10; and 是故 *shìgù* ‘for this reason’ in a *Huáinánzǐ* passage is reduced to 故 *gù* ‘therefore’ in *Wénzǐ* 5.4. The reduction of particles also occurs in the transformation from Ancient *Wénzǐ* to Received *Wénzǐ*, and reflects a distinct pattern of editorial modification.

There is one subtle but significant linguistic variation between *Wénzǐ* 5.17 and its parallel in the *Huáinánzǐ*. Here is the *Wénzǐ* section:

> 老子曰：人主好仁，即無功者賞，有罪者釋，好刑，即有功者廢，無罪者。及無好憎者，誅而無怨，施而不德，放準循繩，身無與事，若天若地，何不覆載。合而和之，君也，別而誅之，法也，民以受誅無所怨憾，謂之道德。[179]
>
> Lǎozǐ said: “When the ruler of men has a great love of humaneness, then those who lack achievements are rewarded and those who have committed a crime are set free. When he has a great love of punishments, then those with achievements are discarded and those who have committed no crime are apprehended. When he is not guided by love or hate, then those who are punished by death are not resentful and those who are rewarded are not

[178] *Huáinánzǐ* 13.
[179] *Wénzǐ* 5.17.

> grateful. He complies with standards and follows guidelines and does not personally meddle with tasks. Resembling thus Heaven and Earth, how could he not cover and support all? He who forms a unity [with the people] and harmonizes them, is a ruler. What isolates [bad elements] and executes them, is the law. When people sentenced to be executed lack any form of resentment, then this is called the Way and virtue."

This *Wénzǐ* section is almost identical to its counterpart in *Huáinánzǐ* 14, but when the *Wénzǐ* concludes "this is called the Way and virtue", the *Huáinánzǐ* writes "this is called the Way". The passage is too short to judge whether it is really an example of "the Way and virtue" or only of "the Way", that is, whether the former or the latter is the preferred conclusion. As Le Blanc [2000: 75] points out, one explanation of why the *Wénzǐ* inserts the philosophical term "virtue" is to reinforce the correspondence between the title and the content of the chapter. In the same way that the editor changed "those who are kings" on one of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips into "those who posses the Way and virtue", he changes the *Huáinánzǐ*'s "the Way" into "the Way and virtue". Both changes serve to underscore the relationship between the title of *Wénzǐ* 5, "The Way and Virtue" 道德, and the content of this chapter.

In sum, *Wénzǐ* 5 consists of interlocking dialogic and monologic sections, related to different sources. The editor systematically modifies his two sources, Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*, in a process that is marked by reduction, simplification and generalization. He turns complex dialogues into simple ones and lively historical conversations into sober unilateral expositions. He removes grammatical particles, reduces compound particles to single ones, and replaces different negations with one standard negation. He removes or rephrases illustrations and quotations, and neutralizes references to specific people, places or events. To increase coherence, he places all borrowings in the mouth of Lǎozǐ and makes sure that Lǎozǐ occasionally utters the phrase "the Way and Virtue", which is the title of *Wénzǐ* 5. The goal of these systematic editorial modifications is to create a new homogeneous treatise that cannot be easily identified as a rhetorically and linguistically poor copy of its two sources.

6.2. The Outer Chapters

Wénzǐ 5 has been the focus of several studies since the publication of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription in 1995. While these studies normally focus on this one chapter only, their results demand reconsideration of the other chapters. *Wénzǐ* 5 consists of two strands of text, one monologic and one dialogic, each related to a different source. This does not apply to the other eleven chapters in the Received *Wénzǐ*:

Only seven sections outside *Wénzǐ* 5 start with a question and may be called "dialogue". Four dialogues appear in pairs (7.2 and 7.3; 10.4 and 10.5), three stand alone (1.5, 10.12, 11.6). The seven dialogues are significantly outnumbered by over 150 monologues. The alternation of dialogues and monologues is thus not typical of the outer chapters.

Moreover, in the outer chapters there is no distinction between dialogues based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and monologues based on the *Huáinánzǐ*. The seven dialogues outside *Wénzǐ* 5 all correspond to the *Huáinánzǐ*.[180] Dialogic and monologic sections outside *Wénzǐ* 5 thus differ only in terms of the introductory question, and no longer reflect the different sources.

The large number of bamboo strips corresponding to *Wénzǐ* 5 and the exceptional arrangement of that chapter are indicative of its special status. It forms the core chapter of the Received *Wénzǐ*, around which eleven outer chapters were created. This leads to new questions, that remain underexposed in recent *Wénzǐ* studies. What are the sources of the outer chapters? How do they relate to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, and to the *Huáinánzǐ*? Are conclusions on directionality—from Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* into the core chapter—automatically valid for the outer chapters?

6.2.1. The *Huáinánzǐ* as a Source of the Outer Chapters

Numerous passages in the Received *Wénzǐ*—not just the eleven monologues of *Wénzǐ* 5—also occur in the *Huáinánzǐ*. The Received *Wénzǐ* contains circa 39.674 graphs, the *Huáinánzǐ* is much larger with circa 133.827 graphs. Notably, some 30.671 graphs—almost four fifths of the Received *Wénzǐ*—occur in both texts.[181]

[180] Of the seven dialogues, six correspond entirely to the *Huáinánzǐ*, one only in part (*Wénzǐ* 10.12).
[181] The CHANT concordances of *Huáinánzǐ* (p. 1345) and *Wénzǐ* (p. 387) mention the total number of graphs for each text. Dīng Yuánzhí [1999b: 9] has calculated the number of corresponding graphs.

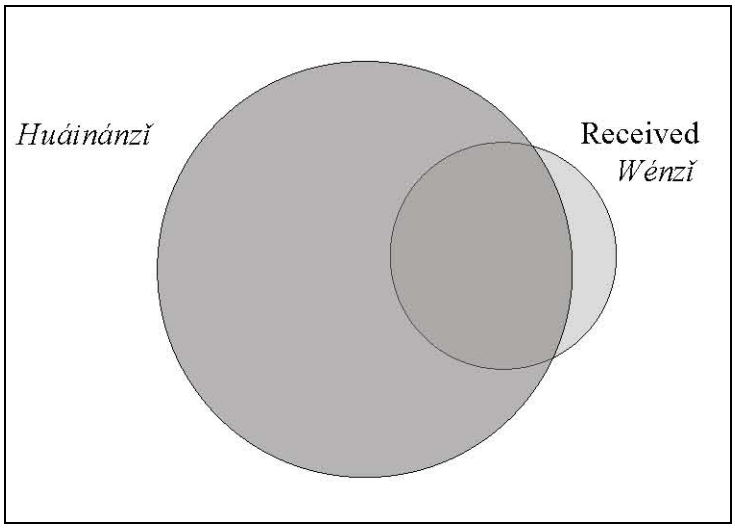

Figure 6.2: *Huáinánzǐ* versus Received *Wénzǐ*

The overwhelming correspondence between the two texts implies that one heavily draws on the other. Over the centuries, scholars passionately argued for either text as the original and denounced the other as a forgery. Some saw the *Huáinánzǐ* as an enlarged version of the *Wénzǐ*; others called the *Wénzǐ* an abridged *Huáinánzǐ*. Both camps usually offer minor textual variations as evidence, showing that their text contains the superior variant and therefore must be the older work. Given that both texts were corrupted during centuries of transmission and that each has been used to correct the other, such arguments never led to universal agreement. The centuries-old controversy received a new impetus in 1973, because in the Dìngzhōu discovery many scholars saw evidence that the *Wénzǐ* is a pre-Qín text and therefore predates the *Huáinánzǐ*. The 1995 publication of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription, however, leads to a converse conclusion. As I have shown in the preceding section, a comparative analysis of the monologic sections in *Wénzǐ* 5 and their counterparts in the *Huáinánzǐ* indicates that the *Wénzǐ*, at least in its revised form, postdates the *Huáinánzǐ*. In this section I will show that the same applies to the outer chapters.

While there are important differences between the Received *Wénzǐ*'s core chapter and outer chapters, sections in all chapters display the same characteristics in their relation to counterparts in the *Huáinánzǐ*. Throughout the Received *Wénzǐ*—in the core chapter and in the outer chapters—we find rigorous adaptations of *Huáinánzǐ* passages. Take, for instance, the opening passage of *Huáinánzǐ* 16, a discussion between the two souls of man, Pò (sometimes translated as the "latent soul") and Hún (sometimes translated as the "volatile soul"):

魄問于魂曰：“道何以為體？”曰：“以無有為體。”魄曰：“無有有形乎？”魂曰：“無有”。“何得而聞也？”魂曰：“吾直有所遇之耳。視之無形，聽之無聲，謂之幽冥。幽冥者，所以喻道，而非道也。”魄曰：“吾聞得之矣。乃內視而自反也。”魂曰：“凡得道者，形不可得而見，名不可得而揚。今汝已有形名矣，何道之所能乎？”魄曰：“言者，獨何為者？”“吾將反吾宗矣！”魄反顧魂，忽然不見，反而自存，亦以淪于無形矣。[182]

Pò once asked Hún: “How does the Way materialize itself?”

Hún answered: “It materializes itself through ‘what does not exist’.”

Pò: “Does ‘what does not exist’ have a form?”

Hún: “It does not.”

Pò: “Then how can I know about it?”

Hún: “I just had a few encounters with it. That which has no form when you look at it and no sound when you listen to it, is called invisible and indistinct. This ‘invisible and indistinct’ merely illustrates the Way, it is not the Way itself!”

Pò: “Now I understand! We need to look inside ourselves and examine ourselves.”

Hún: “Generally speaking, the form of those who have obtained the Way can be neither obtained nor seen, their name can be neither obtained nor praised. In this case, you already have both a form and a name, so how could you obtain the way?!”

Pò: “Listen to yourself! Why should you be the only one who can do this?”

Hún: “I am about to return to my origin!”

When Pò turned his head and looked at Hún, he was suddenly nowhere to be seen. Pò then turned back his head and inspected himself, and likewise sank into the formless!

This is the beginning of *Wénzǐ* 6.3:

老子曰：道以無為有體，視之不見其形，聽之不聞其聲，謂之幽冥者。幽冥者，所以論道，而非道也。夫道者，內視而自反。[183]

Lǎozǐ said: “The Way materializes itself through ‘what does not exist’. If you see no form when you look at it and you hear no sound when you listen to it, this is called invisible and indistinct. This ‘invisible and indistinct’ is merely used to speak about the Way, it is not the Way itself. Now, the Way means to look inside ourselves and examine ourselves.”

[182] *Huáinánzǐ* 16 (excerpt).
[183] *Wénzǐ* 6.3 (excerpt).

The lively conversation in the *Huáinánzǐ* appears as a succinct unilateral statement in the Received *Wénzǐ*. It would take a rich imagination to create such an animated dialogue out of this monotonous statement, whereas any editor can erase elements from the dialogue and turn it into a monologue. This matches the pattern of *Wénzǐ* 5, and conclusions for that chapter also apply to the other chapters.

The dialogues in the *Huáinánzǐ* are most instructive in determining the direction of borrowing between *Huáinánzǐ* and Received *Wénzǐ*, not only because they are far more sophisticated than their *Wénzǐ* counterparts, but also because they are related to dialogues in other texts. For example, the dialogue between Huì Mèng and King Kāng also appears in the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ* and the *Lièzǐ*; and the dialogue between the Lǐ Kè and Marquis Wǔ also appears in the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ*, *Hán's Outer Illustrations of the Odes* 韓詩外傳 and *The New Arrangements* 新序. These two dialogues appear as monologues in the core chapter of the Received *Wénzǐ*. The pattern also extends to the outer chapters. Consider this *Huáinánzǐ* passage:

> 齧缺問道于被衣，被衣曰："正汝形，壹汝視，天和將至；攝女知，正女度，神將來舍，德將來附若美，而道將為女居。蠢乎若新生之犢，而無求其故。"言未卒，齧缺繼以讎夷，被衣行歌而去，曰："形若槁骸，心如死灰，直實不知，以故自持。墨墨恢恢，無心可與謀。彼何人哉？"故《老子》曰：明白四達，能無以知乎？ [184]

> Nièquē asked Bèiyī about the Way.
>
> Bèiyī answered: "Correct your body, unify your vision, and the harmony of Heaven will come to you. Unite your knowledge, correct your measures, and the spirits will come to dwell with you. Virtue will be your beauty, the Way will be your home, and, naive as a newborn calf, you will not try to find out the reason why."
>
> Before he had finished speaking, however, Nièquē stared at him in silence. Bèiyī walked away, singing this song: "Body like a withered corspe, mind like dead ashes; true in the realness of knowledge, not one to go searching for reasons; dim, dim, dark, dark, mindless, you cannot consult with him: what kind of man is this!"[185]
>
> Therefore, Lǎozǐ said: "*Can you understand everything within the four reaches without using your mind*?"[186]

In one of the outer chapters of the Received *Wénzǐ*, we find:

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[184] *Huáinánzǐ* 12 (excerpt).
[185] Translation based on Graham [1968: 237].
[186] *Lǎozǐ* 10.

> 孔子問道，老子曰：正汝形，一汝視，天和將至；攝女知，正汝度，神將來舍，德將為汝容，道將為汝居。瞳兮若新生之犢，而無求其故。形若枯木，心若死灰，真其實知而不以曲故自持。恢恢無心可謀。明白四達，能無知乎？ [187]
>
> Confucius asked about the Way. Lǎozǐ answered: "Correct your body, unify your vision, and the harmony of Heaven will come to you. Unite your knowledge, correct your measures, and the spirits will come to dwell with you. Virtue will be your face, the Way will be your home, and, innocent as a newborn calf, you will not try to find out the reason why. Body like a withered tree, mind like dead ashes; true in the realness of knowledge, not one to go searching for crooked reasons; dark, dark, mindless, you cannot consult with him. *Can you understand everything within the four reaches without using your mind*?"

The dialogue between Nièquē and Bèiyī in the *Huáinánzǐ* appears, with minor textual variations, in *Zhuāngzǐ* 22. In the *Huáinánzǐ*, the dialogue is followed by a quotation from the *Lǎozǐ*, in the *Zhuāngzǐ* it is not. The Received *Wénzǐ* contains only the gist of the dialogue and presents it—including the *Lǎozǐ* quotation!—as Lǎozǐ's response to Confucius' inquiry about the Way. Similar examples abound:

- *Wénzǐ* 3.12 echoes a dialogue between Confucius and one of his disciples in *Huáinánzǐ* 12, *Xúnzǐ* 28, *Hán's Outer Illustrations of the Odes* 3, *The School Teachings of Confucius* 孔子家語 9.4, and *The Garden of Persuasions* 10.4

- *Wénzǐ* 4.21 echoes a dialogue between Sūnshū Áo 孫叔敖 and Old Man Húqiū 狐丘丈人 in *Huáinánzǐ* 12 and also in *Zhuāngzǐ* 21, *Xúnzǐ* 32, *Lièzǐ* 8, *Hán's Outer Illustrations of the Odes* 7 and *The Garden of Persuasions* 10.17

- *Wénzǐ* 7.2 echoes a dialogue between Duke Bái 白公 and Confucius in *Huáinánzǐ* 12, and in *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ* 18.3 and *Lièzǐ* 8

- the first part of *Wénzǐ* 10.4 echoes a dialogue between King Zhuāng of Chǔ 楚莊王 and Zhān Hé 詹何 in *Huáinánzǐ* 12, and in *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ* 17.8 and *Lièzǐ* 8

[187] *Wénzǐ* 1.5.

- the second part of *Wénzǐ* 10.4 echoes a dialogue between Duke Huán 桓公 and his wheelwright in *Huáinánzǐ* 12, and in *Zhuāngzǐ* 13 and *Hán's Outer Illustrations of the Odes* 5

In other words, *Huáinánzǐ* dialogues that appear with minor variations in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the *Xúnzǐ*, the *Lièzǐ*, *The New Arrangements*, the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ*, *Hán's Outer Illustrations of the Odes*, *The School Teachings of Confucius* and *The Garden of Persuasions*, appear in concise monologic form in the Received *Wénzǐ*.

This peculiar feature was first noted by Táo Fāngqí 陶方琦 (1845-1884), a *Huáinánzǐ* specialist whose brilliant essay "The *Wénzǐ* is Not an Ancient Text" 文子非古書說 regrettably remains underexposed in *Wénzǐ* scholarship. Táo notes that the *Wénzǐ* abridges many *Huáinánzǐ* anecdotes that are also found in other texts, and turns them into statements by Lǎozǐ, even though the people in these anecdotes lived long before or long after Lǎozǐ. The argument is in fact stronger than Táo suggests, because the important dates are not those of the people in the historical anecdotes, but those of the texts that contain the anecdotes.

If, for the sake of the argument, we assume that *Huáinánzǐ* dialogues are based on statements by Lǎozǐ in the *Wénzǐ*, then all other texts with the same dialogues would have to be based on the *Huáinánzǐ*. The historical order would then be:

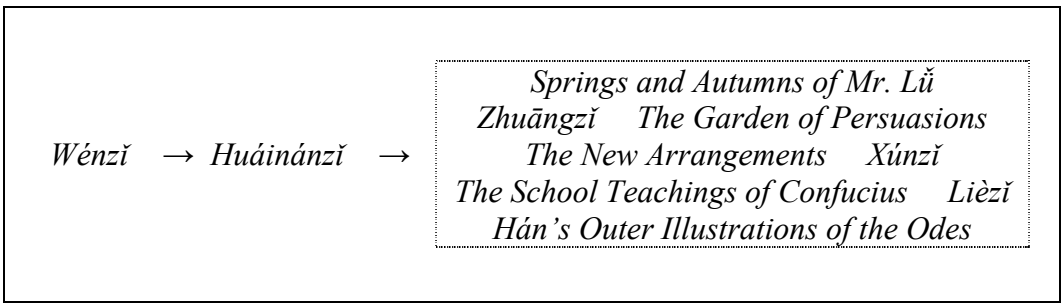

Figure 6.3: Scenario of Intertextual Borrowing (1)

This is a scenario no scholar of Chinese thought would dare defend. Notably, the dialogues in *Huáinánzǐ* and other texts are always virtually identical, and in each case the *Wénzǐ* contains no more than a sober monologic abstract. In this pattern of copying and being copied, the *Wénzǐ* is the odd one out, not as the source of all other texts, but as the final product:

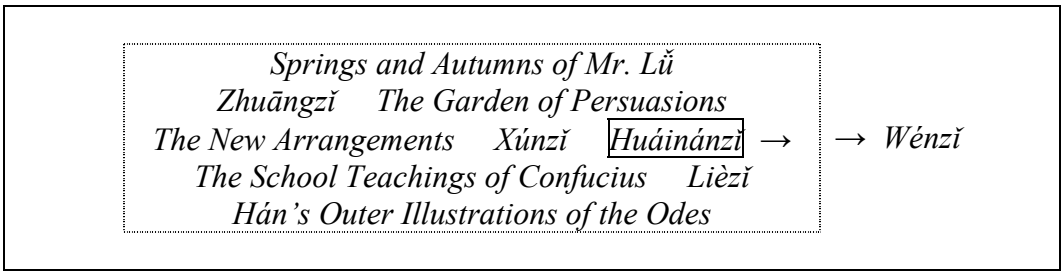

Figure 6.4: Scenario of Intertextual Borrowing (2)

I do not suggest that the dates of these texts are undisputed and that the direction of borrowing between *Huáinánzǐ* and related texts is clear. Nor do I suggest that the *Wénzǐ* postdates all other texts. I merely want to show that the *Huáinánzǐ* is part of a larger body of texts that contain the same historical dialogues. The *Wénzǐ* contains related content, but in a markedly different format. It can only have borrowed this material from a text within that larger body of texts. This text is the *Huáinánzǐ*, because only the *Huáinánzǐ* ends historical anecdotes with a quotation from the *Lǎozǐ*.[188] This is perhaps the strongest evidence that passages throughout the Received *Wénzǐ* are copied from the *Huáinánzǐ*, not the other way around.

6.2.2. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* as a Source of the Outer Chapters

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is one of the two sources of the core chapter in the Received *Wénzǐ*, but is it also a source of the outer chapters? There are two ways to approach this question. We could examine (1) Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips which are said to correspond to the outer chapters; or (2) sections in the outer chapters for which no parallel exists in the *Huáinánzǐ* or other transmitted texts.

(1) Of the 94 Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips that correspond to the Received *Wénzǐ*, as many as 87 correspond to the core chapter. The remaining seven strips are said to correspond to the outer chapters: *Wénzǐ* 1, three strips; *Wénzǐ* 2, one strip; *Wénzǐ* 7, one strip; and *Wénzǐ* 8, two strips.[189] Notably, the relationship between the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* and the core chapter is characterized by:

[188] *Hán's Outer Illustrations of the Odes* ends its dialogues with quotations from the *Book of Odes*; other texts have no such concluding quotation at all.
[189] The seven bamboo strips are: 2469 (which supposedly corresponds to *Wénzǐ* 1.1), 2481 (*Wénzǐ* 1.7), 0766 (*Wénzǐ* 1.10), 0899 (*Wénzǐ* 2.13), 0818 (*Wénzǐ* 7.19), 0916 (*Wénzǐ* 8.6) and 0724 (*Wénzǐ* 8.7).

- the large number of corresponding strips
- the fact that all these strips are clustered in dialogic sections
- the clear relationship between bamboo strips and received text

By contrast, the relationship between the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* and the outer chapters is characterized by:

- the small number of corresponding strips
- the fact that they are scattered across chapters
- the fact that most chapters lack even a single corresponding bamboo strip
- the often unclear relationship between bamboo strips and received text

Here is one of the seven strips said to correspond to the outer chapters:

> [0724] 國無有賢不肖□不□□□
> in the realm there are no worthy or incompetent

This strip is supposedly related to *Wénzǐ* 8.7, which contains the following line:

> 是故群臣輻湊並進，無愚智賢不肖，莫不盡其能。
>
> For this reason, when the group of ministers converge as spokes all coming together [at the hub], the clever, intelligent, talented and even the incompetent will all exhaust their capacities.

The only connection between the bamboo strip and the received text is that both speak of "talented" 賢 and "incompetent" 不肖. This does not prove intertextual borrowing, since these antonyms are often paired in ancient Chinese texts. Moreover, this line in the received text is part of a larger passage that is demonstrably copied from *Huáinánzǐ*. In other words, the passages in Received *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* are related, and the supposed link with strip 0724 is incidental.

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is a source of the core chapter, but its relation to the outer chapters is less clear. Speaking of the seven bamboo strips that supposedly relate to the outer chapters, even the Subcommittee for Arranging the Hàn Dynasty Bamboo Strips of Dìngzhōu [*Cultural Relics* 1995.12: 39] admits that "it seems as though they correspond, but not firmly" 似是而又不確是. If we want to find out whether the

Ancient *Wénzǐ* served as a source for the outer chapters, the Dìngzhōu manuscript is not a good place to start.

(2) The Received *Wénzǐ* borrows most of its content from the *Huáinánzǐ*. It also draws on other sources, as I will show in the next section. In addition, there are passages in the Received *Wénzǐ* for which scholars have been unable to identify a source.[190] These passages clearly relate to each other—and to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Take, for instance, *Wénzǐ* 8.11:

> 老子曰：所謂天子者，有天道以立天下也。立天下之道，執一以為保，反本無為，虛靜無有，忽慌無際，遠無所止，視之無形，聽之無聲，是謂大道之經。[191]
>
> Lǎozǐ said: "The Son of Heaven *presides over All under Heaven because he possesses the Way of Heaven*.[192] The way to preside over All under Heaven is to take 'holding on to the One' as protection, to return to one's roots, to be non-active, empty, quiescent and without possession. It is hazy and boundless, it journeys *without stopping*, *it is formless when you look at it and soundless when you listen to it*.[193] These are what we call the 'guidelines of the Great Way'."

This small section negotiates concepts that also play an important role in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. The opening statement about the Son of Heaven is reminiscent of one of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo fragments:

> [2262] ［王曰："吾聞古聖立天下，以道立天下，］
> King [Píng] asked: "I have heard that the sages of the past, in presiding over All under Heaven, used the Way to preside over All under Heaven.

This bamboo strip corresponds to *Wénzǐ* 5.7, a dialogue in the core chapter of the Received *Wénzǐ* that is demonstrably based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ* (see Section 4.2.7). The key elements in government, in *Wénzǐ* 5.7 as in *Wénzǐ* 8.11, are "holding on to the One" 執一 and "non-action" 無爲. In *Wénzǐ* 8.11, the graph 無 *wú* 'nothing' (which can be rendered as 'non-' or '-less' in compounds) is crucial. It occurs in several compounds in *Wénzǐ* 8.11, including "formless" 無形 and "soundless" 無聲. These

[190] These include (parts of) *Wénzǐ* 1.10, 2.13, 3.11, 3.12, 4.23, 4.27, 7.19, 8.6, 8.11, 9.6, 10.11, 10.12.
[191] *Wénzǐ* 8.11.
[192] *Lǎozǐ* 60. Based on the *Lǎozǐ* parallel, I read 立 *lì* 'to establish' as 莅 *lì* 'to preside over'.
[193] *Lǎozǐ* 20 and 14, respectively.

two compounds also occur on one of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips, which is probably related to this section:

> [2481][194] 毋刑（形）、毋聲，萬物□
> formless and soundless, all things …

The terms "formless and soundless" also occur in *Wénzǐ* 2.13, another section for which no source has been found:

> 老子曰：大道無為，無為即無有，無有者不居也，不居者即處無形，無形者不動，不動者無言也，無言者即靜而無聲無形，無聲無形者，視之不見，聽之不聞，是謂微妙，是謂至神，綿綿若存，是謂天地根。道無聲，故聖人強為之形，以一句為名天地之道。大以小為本，多以少為始，天子以天地為品，以萬物為資，功德至大，勢名至貴，二德之美與天地配，故不可不軌大道以為天下母。[195]
>
> Lǎozǐ said: "The Great Way is non-active. Because it is non-active, it is non-possessive. Being non-possessive means being non-resident. Being non-resident means inhabiting the formless. Inhabiting the formless means not moving. Not moving means to be wordless. To be wordless is to be tranquil, soundless and formless. What is soundless and formless *cannot be seen or heard*.[196] This is called *subtle and marvelous*.[197] This is called the utmost spiritual. *Endlessly seeming as though it has existence. This is called the Root of Heaven and Earth*.[198] The Way is soundless. Hence, the sages, forced to give it a form, in one phrase name it the 'Way of Heaven and Earth'. Largeness is rooted in smallness, many starts as few. If the Son of Heaven considers heaven and earth as goods and all things as resources, then his merit and virtue are the greatest and his power and fame are most valued. The beauty of these twin virtues forms a pair with heaven and earth. Hence, he has to follow the tracks of the Great Way to be the *mother of All under Heaven*."[199]

This section, *Wénzǐ* 2.13, relates to *Wénzǐ* 8.11 in thought and wording, and to the *Lǎozǐ*. It quotes the *Lǎozǐ*'s "continuously seeming to exist" 綿綿若存 and "this is called the root of heaven and earth" 是謂天地根, mentions the "subtle and

[194] This is one of the seven bamboo strips which are said to correspond to the received text. The Dìngzhōu team relates this strip to *Wénzǐ* 1.7, which corresponds in its entirety to the *Huáinánzǐ*. It thus appears that "formless and soundless" were important concepts to both *Huáinánzǐ* and Ancient *Wénzǐ*.
[195] *Wénzǐ* 2.13.
[196] *Lǎozǐ* 14.
[197] *Lǎozǐ* 15.
[198] *Lǎozǐ* 6.
[199] *Lǎozǐ* 25 and 52.

marvelous" 微妙 and refers to the Way as the "mother of All under Heaven" 天下母. This section is strongly influenced by the *Lǎozǐ*, as is the Ancient *Wénzǐ*.

There is one section in the Received *Wénzǐ* in which all these elements come together. This long section, *Wénzǐ* 3.11, exhibits most clearly the philosophy of sections that have no counterpart in the *Huáinánzǐ* or any other transmitted text:

> 老子曰：天子公侯以天下一國為家，以萬物為畜，懷天下之大，有萬物之多，即氣實而志驕，大者用兵侵小，小者倨傲凌下，用心奢廣，譬猶飄風暴雨，不可長久。是以聖人以道鎮之，執一無為而不損沖氣，見小守柔，退而勿有，法於江海，江海不為，故功名自化，弗強，故能成其王，為天下牝，故能神不死，自愛，故能成其貴，萬乘之勢，以萬物為功名，權任至重，不可自輕，自輕則功名不成。夫道，大以小而成，多以少為主，故聖人以道邪天下，柔弱微妙者見小也，儉嗇損缺者見少也，見小故能成其大，見少故能成其美。天之道，抑高而舉下，損有餘奉不足，江海處地之不足，故天下歸之奉之，聖人卑謙，清靜辭讓者見下也，虛心無有者見不足也，見下故能致其高，見不足故能成其賢，矜者不立，奢者不長，強梁者死，滿溢者亡，飄風暴雨不終日，小谷不能須臾盈，飄風暴雨行強梁之氣，故不能久而滅，小谷處強梁之地，故不得不奪，是以聖人執雌牝，去奢驕，不敢行強梁之氣，執雌牝，故能立其雄牡，不敢奢驕，故能長久。
>
> Lǎozǐ said: "When Sons of Heaven, dukes and marquises consider the whole world or their entire realms as their home and all things as their pets, when they cherish the large size of All under Heaven and are possessive about the large number of all their things, then their vigor becomes real and their intentions become imperious. Large realms raise troops to invade smaller ones. Small realms, similarly haughty, oppress even smaller ones. With their minds set on extravagance and expansion, they resemble *violent tornados and torrential rains, which do not last long*.[200] For this reason, the sage wards them off by means of the Way. He holds on to the One and remains non-active, he does not harm his blended energies, he sees the small and preserves softness, he retreats and is not possessive, and he emulates the rivers and seas.[201] The rivers and seas are non-active, hence their fame and achievements are transformed by themselves. They are non-coercive, hence *they are able to become kings*.[202] They are a female to the world, hence they can *spiritually avoid death*.[203] They care for themselves, hence they are able to become most valued. Those in charge of ten thousand chariots derive their fame and achievements from [their treatment of] all things. Their authority and delegative skills are most important and they cannot treat themselves lightly. If they treat themselves lightly, fame and achievements will not come about. In the Way, the great is completed by the small, the many are based on the few.

[200] *Lǎozǐ* 23.
[201] The term "blended energies" 沖氣 is a reference to *Lǎozǐ* 42.
[202] *Lǎozǐ* 66.
[203] *Lǎozǐ* 6.

> Therefore, sages preside over All under Heaven by means of the Way. Soft, weak, subtle and marvelous, they see the small. Frugal, thrifty, sober, modest, they see the few. Seeing the small, they are able to accomplish their greatness. Seeing the few, they are able to accomplish their splendor. *The Way of Heaven presses down the high, elevates the low, reduces the excessive and augments the deficient*.[204] Rivers and seas position themselves where there is not enough earth, hence All under Heaven resorts to them and respects them. Humble, modest, quiescent and courteous, the sages see the lowly. With an empty mind and no desire for possession, they see the deficient. Seeing the lowly, they are able to reach their heights. Seeing the deficient, they are able to accomplish their worthiness. The arrogant cannot establish themselves, the extravagant cannot last long, *the violent die* and the egocentric perish.[205] *Violent tornados and torrential rains do not last until the end of the day*, small valleys cannot be filled at once.[206] Violent tornados and torrential rains carry an air of violence, hence before long they vanish. Small valleys are positioned on violent grounds, hence they will be taken again by force. Therefore, sages hold on to the feminine and reject arrogance and extravagance, and do not carry an air of violence. Holding on to the feminine, they are able to dominate the masculine. Repulsed by arrogance and extravagance, they are able to last long.

This section praises the sage for "holding on to the One and remaining non-active" and for "seeing the small and preserving softness". These are key concepts in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. On several bamboo strips related to *Wénzǐ* 5.7, which is one of the dialogues in the core chapter, "holding on to the One" is related to "seeing the small", and "remaining non-active" to "preserving quietude". *Wénzǐ* 3.11 also claims that sages "see the small and thereby can achieve their greatness" 見小故能成其大. This corresponds literally to a line in *Wénzǐ* 5.7 and to one of its corresponding bamboo strips:

> [0908][207] 也，見小故能成其大功，守靜□
> By seeing the small, they could succeed in their great achievement. By preserving quietude

Wénzǐ 3.11 and *Wénzǐ* 5.7 are clearly related. Several bamboo strips show that *Wénzǐ* 5.7 draws on the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and we may therefore assume that *Wénzǐ* 3.11, with no parallel in the *Huáinánzǐ*, does too.

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[204] *Lǎozǐ* 77.
[205] *Lǎozǐ* 42.
[206] *Lǎozǐ* 23.
[207] The bamboo strip has "succeed in their great achievement", which is more plausible in syntax and meaning than "succeed in their greatness", as both *Wénzǐ* 3.11 and 5.7 have. It appears that the editor copied this phrase from the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and in both cases left out the "achievements".

Wénzǐ 8.11, 2.13, 3.11 and related passages are full of references to the *Lǎozǐ*. In *Wénzǐ* 3.11, for instance, we find references to *Lǎozǐ* 23, 42, 66 and 77. When it states that "sages emulate rivers and seas, because rivers and seas remain non-active" 法於江海，江海不為, this is reminiscent of *Lǎozǐ* 66, which says that "rivers and seas can be kings of the hundred valleys because they are good at flowing downhill" 江海所以能為百谷王，以其善下之，故能為百谷王. One of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips paraphrases this:

[0916] 江海以此道為百谷王，故能久長功。
The rivers and seas are kings of the hundred valleys because of this Way. Therefore they can extend their achievements for a long time

Notably, *Lǎozǐ*'s image of "rivers and seas" appears to be the crucial link between sections in the Received *Wénzǐ* for which no source text has been found. The phrase "rivers and seas" 江海 occurs throughout the Received *Wénzǐ*, also in passages borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*. However, the metaphoric meaning of this phrase—the non-active movement of rivers and seas as an example for the sage—occurs only in passages with no parallel in the *Huáinánzǐ*, but with numerous references to the *Lǎozǐ* and a strong link to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. It occurs in *Wénzǐ* 3.11, as well as in *Wénzǐ* 8.6 and 10.11, and also in *Wénzǐ* 5.11, one of the dialogues in the core chapter.

The link between passages of unknown provenance in the Received *Wénzǐ* is ideological in nature. These passages display strong sentiments against masculinity and aggression, and they urge the ruler to strive for humility, softness and weakness—all "feminine" features. (The graphs 雌 *cī* and 牝 *pìn*, both associated with female qualities, repeatedly occur in *Wénzǐ* 1.10, 3.11, 3.12, 8.6 and 10.11.) The ruler should not coerce the people to join him, but strive to be non-active, so that the masses sympathize with him and join him out of their own will—like tributaries joining the river in its downhill flow.

The link between passages of unknown provenance in the Received *Wénzǐ* and their relation to the dialogues in the core chapter of the Received *Wénzǐ* seem to suggest that these passages are also in one way or another based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. It thus seems that the Ancient *Wénzǐ* was a source of the dialogues in the core chapter and of certain passages in the outer chapters of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

If the dialogues in *Wénzǐ* 5 and the relevant passages in other *Wénzǐ* chapters all derive from the same source, the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, why do the surviving bamboo

fragments relate almost exclusively to the dialogues in *Wénzǐ* 5 and scarcely to the relevant passages in the outer chapters? In other words, why is the relationship between the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* 5 evident, and that between the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and outer chapters unclear? Perhaps this suggests that the relevant passages in the outer chapters are only loosely based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Notably, the ideological link between these passages in the outer chapters is evident: they all negotiate the same topic, namely the ruler's inclination towards a feminine disposition. The philosophy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, as shown in Chapter 4, is more diverse. Moreover, there is a conspicuous number of *Lǎozǐ* quotations in the relevant passages in the outer chapters. Therefore, I suspect that these passages were not literally copied from the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, but freely inspired by that text. It seems that the *Wénzǐ* editor found inspiration in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the *Lǎozǐ* to promote his view of a world in which rulers are not arrogant or extravagant, but humble and frugal.

6.2.3. Other Sources of the Outer Chapters

Most sections in the outer chapters are borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*; others are in all likelihood based on the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Some passages in the outer chapters are based on other sources: (1) the *Lǎozǐ* and the *Zhōnghuángzǐ*; (2) the *Mencius* and the *Guǎnzǐ*; (3) the *Remnants of Zhōu Writings*; and (4) the *Book of Changes*.

(1) Many *Lǎozǐ* quotations occur in passages inspired by the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. The Received *Wénzǐ* also adds *Lǎozǐ* quotations to passages borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*. The *Huáinánzǐ* often quotes the *Lǎozǐ*, but not in passages related to these particular *Wénzǐ* sections. It appears that the *Wénzǐ* editor added *Lǎozǐ* sayings to material borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*. In addition to *Lǎozǐ* sayings, there is one long quotation in the Received *Wénzǐ* from another Daoist text, the *Zhōnghuángzǐ*. The inclusion of additional Daoist material in the Received *Wénzǐ* requires special attention and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

(2) Of *Wénzǐ* 2.21, only the first part corresponds to the *Huáinánzǐ*. The latter part of this section includes the following passage:

> 夫憂民之憂者，民亦憂其憂，樂民之樂者，民亦樂其樂，故憂以天下，樂以天下，然而不王者，未之有也。聖人之法，始於不可見，終於不可及，處於不傾之地，積於不盡之倉，載於不竭之府。出令如流水之原，

使民於不爭之官，開必得之門，不為不可成，不求不可得，不處不可久，不行不可復。[208]

Now, as for those who worry about the worries of the people, the people also worry about their worries; and as for those who enjoy the enjoyments of the people, the people also enjoy their enjoyments. It has never happened that someone who shares the worries and joys of All under Heaven did not become king.[209]

The laws of the sages start with what is beyond vision and end at what is beyond reach. Place them on an unshakable foundation, accumulate them in inexhaustible granaries; stock them in bottomless storehouses. Hand down orders like the wellspring of a flowing stream; place people in offices where they are not at cross-purposes. Open the gates to certain gain. Do not undertake what cannot be completed; do not seek what cannot be obtained; do not assume positions that cannot be maintained; do not do what cannot be undone.[210]

The first paragraph, which urges rulers to worry about the worries of the people, paraphrases advice of Mencius to King Xuān of Qí 齊宣王 in *Mencius* 2.4. The second paragraph, describing the laws of the sages, appears with minor variations in *Guǎnzǐ* 管子 chapter 1. The link between these two paragraphs and their respective sources is hard to overlook. As early as the Táng dynasty, Liǔ Zōngyuán 柳宗元 (773-819), an important *Wénzǐ* critic, mentions the *Mencius* and the *Guǎnzǐ*, in this order, as two sources of the Received *Wénzǐ*. Given that no other passage in the Received *Wénzǐ* directly quotes the *Mencius* or the *Guǎnzǐ*, it seems that this very passage in *Wénzǐ* 2.21 led Liǔ Zōngyuán to brand the *Wénzǐ* as a "composite work" 駁書.

(3) The Received *Wénzǐ* also contains passages related to the *Remnants of Zhōu Writings* 逸周書, a collection of texts that Confucius allegedly did not include in the *Book of Documents* 書經. In the *Remnants*, we find this passage:

時之行也，勤以徙，不知道者福為禍。時之徙也，勤以行，不知道者以福亡。故，天為蓋，地為軫，善用道者終無盡，地為軫，天為蓋，善用道者終無害。天地之間有滄熱，善用道者終無竭。陳彼五行必有勝，天之所覆盡可稱。[211]

The advancement of time, one must change along with diligence; for those who fail to understand this principle, fortune becomes misfortune. The change

[208] *Wénzǐ* 2.21 (excerpt).
[209] Translation based on Lau [1970: 63].
[210] Translation based on Rickett [1985: 55].
[211] *Remnants of Zhōu Writings* 67.

> of time, one must advance along with diligence; those who fail to understand this principle perish because of fortune. […]
>
> Therefore, with Heaven as a canopy and Earth as a carriage, the end of those who skillfully practice this principle is inexhaustible.[212] With Earth as a carriage and Heaven as a canopy, the end of those who skillfully practice this principle is without pain. Between Heaven and Earth, there is cold and heat; the end of those who skillfully practice this principle is boundless. Whoever can explain these five ways of conduct shall be victorious, because whatever Heaven covers can be explained by it.

One short section in the Received *Wénzǐ* paraphrases this passage from the *Remnants of Zhōu Writings* and adds a saying from *Lǎozǐ* 71:

> 老子曰：時之行動以從，不知道者福為禍。天為蓋，地為軫，善用道者終無盡，地為軫，天為蓋，善用道者終無害。陳彼五行必有勝，天之所覆無不稱，故知不知，上，不知知，病也。[213]

> Lǎozǐ said: "As for the advancement of time, if there is some movement, one should follow it; for those who fail to understand this principle, fortune becomes misfortune. As for the following of time, if there is movement, one should advance along with it; those who fail to understand this principle perish because of fortune. With Heaven as a canopy and Earth as a carriage, the end of those who skillfully practice this principle is inexhaustible. With Earth as a carriage and Heaven as a canopy, the end of those who skillfully practice this principle is without pain. Whoever can explain these five ways of conduct shall be victorious, because there is nothing that Heaven covers that cannot be explained by it. Therefore, *to know when one does not know is best; to think one knows when one does not know is a disease*."

The *Lǎozǐ* saying does not appear in the *Remnants*. The *Wénzǐ* editor must have borrowed this passage from the *Remnants* to explain the *Lǎozǐ*.

(4) One section in the Received *Wénzǐ* contains explanations of 16 hexagrams from the *Book of Changes* 易經. In a detailed analysis of *Wénzǐ* 6.4, Chén Gǔyìng 陳鼓應 [1996] compares this section's elucidation of all 16 hexagrams to the Tuàn 彖 and Xiàng 象 explanations that usually accompany the *Book of Changes*. Here is the *Wénzǐ*'s comment on the first hexagram of the famous oracle text, which consists of six non-broken lines:

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[212] The graph 軫 *zhěn* 'bumper' here refers to the entire carriage.
[213] *Wénzǐ* 4.4.

乾 *qián*
The Creative Principle

Tuàn 彖 : 大哉乾元，萬物資始，乃統天。
Vast indeed is the Creative Principle, the Source, the beginning of all things, that controls Heaven!

Xiàng 象 : 天行健，君子以自強不息。
The movement of Heaven is constant and regular. The superior man unceasingly makes himself strong.

Wénzǐ 6.4[214] : 天覆萬物，施其德而養之，與而不取，故精神歸焉，與而不取者，上德也，是以有德。
Heaven covers all things and spreads its virtue to nourish them. It gives without taking. Therefore, the pure spirit returns to it. Those who give without taking are of the highest virtue. *For that reason, they posses virtue*.[215]

This statement in the Received *Wénzǐ* serves three purposes. First, it illustrates the *Book of Changes* hexagram. It interprets the "Creative Principle" 乾 as "Heaven" 天 and characterizes the latter as always giving and never taking. Second, it concludes its comment on the hexagram with a quotation from the *Lǎozǐ*. It thereby explains the paradoxical *Lǎozǐ* claim that "the highest virtue is not virtuous" 上德不德. In the *Wénzǐ*, the "highest virtue" is a quality of people, who, like Heaven, unconditionally give without demanding anything in return. Third, it justifies the title of *Wénzǐ* 6, the chapter that contains these *Book of Changes* explanations: "The highest Virtue" 上德. Here is yet another example in which the editor can be seen to homogenize the text by establishing a connection between the chapter title and its content.

Chén Gǔyìng indicates that the *Wénzǐ*'s explanations are more refined than those of the Tuàn and Xiàng and therefore probably date to the late Warring States period or early Hàn dynasty. The *Wénzǐ*'s explanations may have been part of a commentary on the *Book of Changes* that was copied into the Received *Wénzǐ* during its revision, and ceased to be transmitted as an independent commentary afterwards.[216]

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[214] *Wénzǐ* 6.4 (excerpt).
[215] *Lǎozǐ* 38.
[216] Chén Gǔyìng shows that *Huáinánzǐ* 10 also contains explanations of *Book of Changes* hexagrams. Interestingly, the five *Changes* explanations in the *Huáinánzǐ* do not appear in the *Wénzǐ*, nor are the sixteen *Changes* explanations of the *Wénzǐ* found in the *Huáinánzǐ*.

6.3. Composition of the Received *Wénzǐ*

The Received *Wénzǐ* is a patchwork text that draws on various sources: the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the *Huáinánzǐ*, the *Lǎozǐ*, the *Zhōnghuángzǐ*, the *Mencius*, the *Guǎnzǐ*, the *Remnants of Zhōu Writings*, the *Book of Changes* and other works. The relative weight of the sources can be visualized thus:

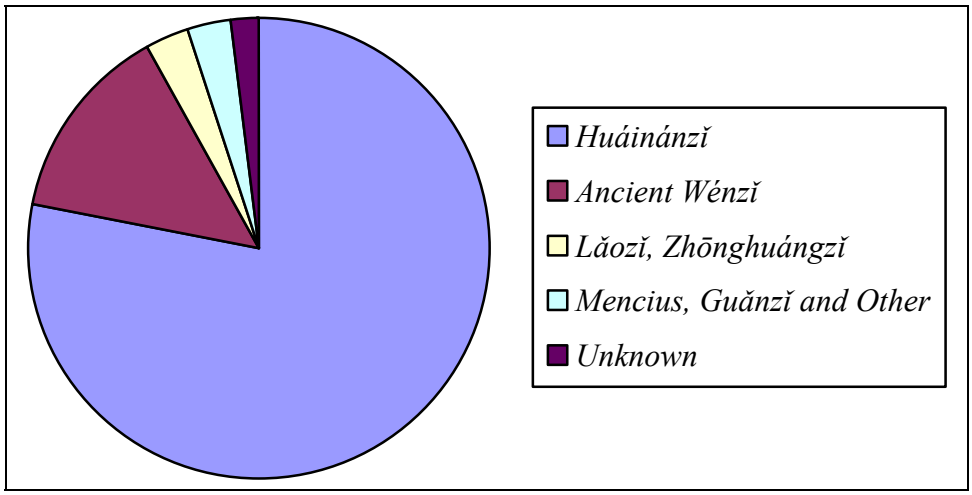

Figure 6.5: Composition of the Received *Wénzǐ* [217]

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* is the heart of the Received *Wénzǐ*. It provided the title for the work as well as content for the dialogues in the core chapter and some passages in the outer chapters. In terms of quantity, the *Huáinánzǐ* is the primary source. It provided almost four fifths of the Received *Wénzǐ*'s content. The *Lǎozǐ* is another important source. The Received *Wénzǐ* is larded with sayings from this work. Other texts, such as the *Mencius* and the *Guǎnzǐ*, are also represented in the Received *Wénzǐ*, but on a much smaller scale, in occasional quotations. Finally, there are passages in the Received *Wénzǐ* for which neither erudite scholars nor powerful databases have found parallels in other texts. These passages may derive from lost parts of the *Huáinánzǐ*, or from another unidentified source of the *Wénzǐ*. Or perhaps they are original additions to the text by the *Wénzǐ* editor.

I have made a distinction between the core chapter and the outer chapters of the Received *Wénzǐ*. This distinction merely serves to highlight the special status of

[217] The "Ancient *Wénzǐ*" segment comprises both core and outer chapters.

Wénzǐ 5, with its special arrangment of interlocking dialogues and monologues, related to different source texts, and with most Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips corresponding to it. I do not suggest that there is an intrinsic difference between the core chapter and outer chapters. In fact, the systematic editorial manipulation of source texts blurs the distinction between core chapter and outer chapters, because for all twelve chapters in the Received *Wénzǐ*, source material has been abridged, simplified and generalized. This systematic process of revision has led to a homogeneous work and suggests that the Received *Wénzǐ* was created at one point in time by one person or one group of people. When, and by whom?

7. The Received *Wénzǐ*: Date and Editor

At some point in time, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* was transformed into the Received *Wénzǐ*. Lǎozǐ was introduced as the main protagonist; complex dialogues were simplified; and countless passages from *Huáinánzǐ* and other sources were added to the text. When did this extraordinary revision take place? Who undertook it?

7.1. Date

7.1.1. Terminus post Quem

The bamboo *Wénzǐ* manuscript that was entombed with a king of Zhōngshān in the Former Hàn dynasty is a copy of what I call the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. This shows that around 55 BCE, the year when the Dìngzhōu tomb was closed, the *Wénzǐ* in circulation was still the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and that its revision must have taken place at a later time.

One century later, in the Latter Hàn dynasty, Wáng Chōng and Bān Gù call Wénzǐ a disciple of Lǎozǐ. They present this as undisputed fact, with no need for explanation, which shows that Wénzǐ was widely believed to have been an apprentice of Lǎozǐ. Modern scholars often take this as evidence that the *Wénzǐ* had already assumed its received form by that time, because the Received *Wénzǐ* portrays Wénzǐ as a pupil of Lǎozǐ. I think this is not necessarily the case. As an early Former Hàn dynasty text, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is profoundly influenced by the *Lǎozǐ*. It borrows typical *Lǎozǐ* terminology and quotes entire phrases. Although it does not mention Lǎozǐ, a Hàn dynasty reader could easily imagine that its main character, Wénzǐ, whose advice to King Píng is interspersed with references to the *Lǎozǐ*, was Lǎozǐ's apprentice. Therefore, Wáng Chōng and Bān Gù need not have seen the Received *Wénzǐ* to believe that Wénzǐ was a disciple of Lǎozǐ. Conversely, the *Wénzǐ* editor must have been aware of this widespread belief when he transformed the *Wénzǐ* into the writings of a disciple of Lǎozǐ.

There are clues which suggest that Bān Gù did not see the Received *Wénzǐ*. The Received *Wénzǐ* counts twelve chapters; the bibliographical treatise in Bān Gù's *Hàn History* still lists a *Wénzǐ* in nine chapters. Moreover, as Táo Fāngqí notes, Bān

Gù classifies the *Wénzǐ* as "Daoist" 道家 and the *Huáinánzǐ* as "Eclectic" 雜家, which suggests that his *Wénzǐ* did not yet incorporate large portions of the *Huáinánzǐ*.[218] In addition, the historiographer mentions "questions by King Píng" as a problematic feature of the *Wénzǐ* that he saw. King Píng features prominently in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, but occurs only once in the Received *Wénzǐ*. It therefore appears that by the time of Bān Gù the *Wénzǐ* was still the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, and that the Received *Wénzǐ* is a product of later times.

The end of the Latter Hàn is a crucial period in determining the date of the *Wénzǐ* revision, because the Received *Wénzǐ* is not only related to the *Huáinánzǐ* but also to Latter Hàn commentaries on the *Huáinánzǐ*. The commentary by Gāo Yǒu 高誘 (ca. 160-220) is the last of five Latter Hàn *Huáinánzǐ* commentaries [Cf. Le Blanc 1985: 71-77] and therefore most instructive in dating the *Wénzǐ* revision. The link between the *Huáinánzǐ*, Gāo Yǒu and the Recevied *Wénzǐ* is that on many occasions when the *Huáinánzǐ* writes graph *x* and Gāo Yǒu explains *x* as *y*, the Received *Wénzǐ* has the *y* alternative. For example:

Huáinánzǐ 2: 地不定，草木無所**植**
When the earth is not stable, plants and trees have no place to *grow*.

Wénzǐ 2.6: 地不定，草木無所**立**
When the earth is not stable, plants and trees have no place to *establish themselves*.

In his comment to this line in the *Huáinánzǐ*, Gāo Yǒu notes that "'to grow' is 'to establish oneself'" (植，立也).

Huáinánzǐ 17: **引**弓而射，非弦不能發矢
You may *draw* a bow and shoot, but without a string you cannot launch the arrow.

Wénzǐ 6.3: **張**弓而射，非弦不能發
You may *stretch* a bow and shoot, but without a string you cannot launch [the arrow].

[218] Library catalogues in later dynastic histories, such as the *Book of the Táng*, uphold the different classifications, although the *Wénzǐ* by then had already become the Received *Wénzǐ*, as my analysis in this chapter shows. The catalogues probably uphold the respective classifications for the *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ* because they follow standards set by Bān Gù and because the *Wénzǐ* editor purposefully increased the Daoist caliber of the text, thus making it suitable for the Daoist section, even though its inclusion of *Huáinánzǐ* material might call for the Eclectic section.

In his comment in the *Huáinánzǐ*, Gāo Yǒu explains "to draw" 引 as "to stretch" 張.

In itself, the triangular relation between the *Huáinánzǐ*, Gāo Yǒu and the Received *Wénzǐ* does not clarify the directionality between the latter two. The *Wénzǐ* editor may have used Gāo Yǒu's glosses when adapting passages borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*. Or Gāo Yǒu may have studied variants between the *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ* when writing his commentary. Two possible scenarios for their historical order are:

Huáinánzǐ → Gāo Yǒu → Received *Wénzǐ*
Huáinánzǐ → Received *Wénzǐ* → Gāo Yǒu

In his "Textual Criticism on the *Wénzǐ*" 文子斠證, Wáng Shūmín 王叔岷 [1956: 1], who first noted the triangular relationship, writes: "whenever this work copies from the *Huáinánzǐ*, it changes the main text based on the commentaries by Xǔ Shèn and Gāo Yǒu." Wáng thus claims that the Received *Wénzǐ* draws on the *Huáinánzǐ* commentaries, offering five examples from various *Huáinánzǐ* chapters in support.

Ho Che-wah [1992] challenges this view. He calls attention to the common practice of commentators explaining one text using parallels in another text. Wáng Sù 王肅 (195-256), for instance, uses *The Garden of Persuasions* to explain passages in *The School Teachings of Confucius*. His contemporary Gāo Yǒu employs the same technique in his commentaries to the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*, both of which are extant, and probably also in his commentaries to the *Mencius* and the *Book of Filial Piety*, which no longer exist. This leads Ho to conclude that Gāo Yǒu used the Received *Wénzǐ* when commenting on the *Huáinánzǐ* and that the *Wénzǐ* revision must have taken place before Gāo Yǒu.

Which of the two hypotheses is more plausible? Wáng Shūmín offers five examples to support his hypothesis; Ho Che-wah offers the same and other examples to demonstrate the exact opposite. The examples cannot prove either view, and we have to examine the bigger picture to determine the direction of borrowing. Three arguments indicate that the Received *Wénzǐ* postdates and thus draws on the *Huáinánzǐ* commentaries.

(1) When Gāo Yǒu uses another text to explain a statement in the *Huáinánzǐ* or to justify his reading of graph *x* as graph *y*, he often names his source. For example,

while *Huáinánzǐ* 2 draws heavily on the *Zhuāngzǐ*, without mentioning this text, Gāo Yǒu explicates the intertextual relationship:

> *Huáinánzǐ* 2: 夫大塊載我以形，勞我以生，逸我以老，休我以死
> Now, the Great Clod burdens me with a body, labors me with life, eases me in old age, and rests me in death.[219]
>
> Gāo Yǒu: 莊子曰：生乃徭役，死乃休息；故曰：休我以死
> The *Zhuāngzǐ* says: "Life is corvée, death is rest". Therefore, [the *Huáinánzǐ*] says: "rests me in death".

In his *Huáinánzǐ* commentary, Gāo Yǒu mentions the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Lǎozǐ* and several other texts—but not once does he mention the *Wénzǐ*.[220] If the *Wénzǐ* had existed in its current form before Gāo Yǒu, then given the large overlap in content between *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*, and given Gāo Yǒu's vast knowledge of the classics, the commentator would have surely used the *Wénzǐ* to explain the *Huáinánzǐ* and mention it as a main source. That he never mentions the *Wénzǐ* suggests that he never saw the text, presumably because it appeared only after his *Huáinánzǐ* commentary.

(2) Gāo Yǒu displays a thorough understanding of the *Huáinánzǐ*, and has the expertise required to supply this treatise with a commentary. Not only is he conversant with a wide range of texts, he also understands the Chǔ dialect in which the *Huáinánzǐ* was written. Like Xǔ Shèn, Gāo Yǒu often uses formulaic comments such as "The people of Chǔ read *x* for *y*" (楚人讀 *x* 為 *y*) or "Graph *x* is actually *y*. The people of Chǔ call it *x*" (*x*, *y* 也, 楚人謂之 *x*) to translate dialectal words into the lingua franca of his time. We find such formulas throughout his commentary, also in *Huáinánzǐ* passages without a *Wénzǐ* parallel. If Gāo Yǒu based his commentary on the *Wénzǐ* and derived his knowledge of the Chǔ dialect from this text, then how could he provide glosses to passages for which no *Wénzǐ* parallel exists? Obviously, Gāo Yǒu did not need the *Wénzǐ* to understand the *Huáinánzǐ* and his commentary emerged independently from the *Wénzǐ*. Conversely, to the *Wénzǐ* editor, who ardently simplifies and generalizes *Huáinánzǐ* borrowings, Gāo Yǒu's commentary served as a useful tool to understand the difficult *Huáinánzǐ*.

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[219] Translation based on Watson [1968: 80].
[220] Roth [1992: 42] lists no fewer than 16 works quoted in Gāo Yǒu's *Huáinánzǐ* commentary.

(3) One variation between the *Huáinánzǐ* and the Received *Wénzǐ* is particularly revealing. In *Wénzǐ* 10, we find this passage:

> 夫以建而制於人者，不能持國，故善建者不拔，言建之無形也，唯神化者，物莫能勝。[221]
>
> Now, those who are controlled by others because they try to construct [things their own way] cannot preserve the realm. Therefore, *those who are good at constructing cannot be taken down*.[222] This indicates the inconspicuous nature of their constructing. Only those who can transform in a spiritual way cannot be overcome by other things.

The graph 言 *yán* 'this indicates' here introduces an explanation or a comment. This is odd, because the Received *Wénzǐ* never explicitly comments on its own content, not even on *Lǎozǐ* quotations, as is the case here. While the Received *Wénzǐ* often quotes the *Lǎozǐ* and is sometimes called a commentary on the *Lǎozǐ*, it never explains *Lǎozǐ* quotations in such a formal manner. The graph 言 *yán* appears some 140 times in the Received *Wénzǐ*, but, apart from this instance, not once to introduce an explanation or a comment. In other words, this explanatory phrase is unique for the Received *Wénzǐ*. The phrase occurs in *Wénzǐ* 10.7, a section borrowed from *Huáinánzǐ* 9. The corresponding passage in the *Huáinánzǐ* also contains the quotation from *Lǎozǐ* 54, but not the explanatory phrase following it. In the *Huáinánzǐ*, this phrase belongs to the Gāo Yǒu commentary. The graph 言 *yán* is a rhetorical element often used by commentators to mark the beginning of their comment. Gāo Yǒu uses it throughout his commentary. For example, when *Huáinánzǐ* 2 describes the omnipresence of the Way, Gāo Yǒu comments: "This indicates that that which is transformed by the Way is great." 言道所化者大. It thus appears that phrase starting with 言 *yán* comes from the Gāo Yǒu commentary. The *Wénzǐ* editor did not distinguish between the main text of the *Huáinánzǐ* and the interlinear Gāo Yǒu commentary, and accidentally copied both as main text into the *Wénzǐ*.[223]

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[221] *Wénzǐ* 10.7.
[222] *Lǎozǐ* 54.
[223] It is unclear whether the *Wénzǐ* editor copied both the main text and this commentary as main text into the *Wénzǐ*, or whether the comment had become main text in the *Huáinánzǐ* edition he used. Elsewhere in the *Huáinánzǐ* we find similar examples in the main text of what appears to be commentary text, because it is preceded by 言 *yán* (cf. Zēng Dáhuī [2000: 257]). Either way, the comment must have been present in the *Huáinánzǐ* before the passage was incorporated into the *Wénzǐ*.

In sum, the *Wénzǐ* editor must have seen Gāo Yǒu's *Huáinánzǐ* commentary and the Received *Wénzǐ* must have been created after 212 CE, the latest date mentioned in Gāo Yǒu's preface.

7.1.2. Terminus ante Quem

To find out how long after Gāo Yǒu the *Wénzǐ* was transformed into its current form, we may start with the earliest surviving copy of the Received *Wénzǐ*. This is a paper manuscript, discovered in Dūnhuáng 敦煌 by Paul Pelliot in 1906, which dates from the Táng dynasty. The colophon at the end of the manuscript reveals that the text was "reviewed and corrected" 校定 by an Erudite Scholar of the Studies of the Way 道學博士 by the name of Suǒ Sùlín 索肅林 (fl. 8th c.). The colophon is dated to the 17th day of the 7th month in the 10th year of the Tiānbǎo 天寶 reign period, or 12 August 751 in the Gregorian calendar. Coincidentally, the paper manuscript of Dūnhuáng contains only *Wénzǐ* 5, just like the bamboo manuscript of Dìngzhōu. However, unlike the bamboo strips—which are fragmentary, correspond only to dialogic sections and clearly belong to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*—the paper manuscript contains the entire chapter 5 in its current form. Comparison of the Dūnhuáng manuscript with *Wénzǐ* 5 in received editions shows that their content is essentially the same, with only a few textual variations [Le Blanc 2000: 40-41]. Moreover, between the end of the chapter and the colophon, Suǒ Sùlín writes: "The *Wénzǐ* 'The Way and Virtue' number 5" 文子道德第五. This confirms that by 751, the chapter titles and their order, as well as their content, already corresponded to the received text.

While the Dūnhuáng manuscript is the earliest direct testimony for the existence of the Received *Wénzǐ* by the mid-Táng dynasty, indirect evidence abounds. Several texts of that period and earlier quote phrases or entire passages from the *Wénzǐ*. For example, *Anthology of Texts on the Essence of Government* 群書治要, which Prime Minister Wèi Zhēng 魏徵 (580-643) presented to the throne in 631, copies long passages from all twelve *Wénzǐ* chapters, amounting to one fifth of the Received *Wénzǐ*'s content. The *Anthology* abridges some *Wénzǐ* chapters, but quotes others almost in full. It leaves out all introductory phrases ("Lǎozǐ said: …"), except for sections in which Wénzǐ poses a question to Lǎozǐ. It includes chapter titles matching those in the Received *Wénzǐ*, with two variations. It lists *Wénzǐ* 8, usually "Spontaneity" 自然, as "The Way and Spontaneity" 道自然; and *Wénzǐ* 10, usually

"The Highest Humaneness" 上仁, as "The Highest Conduct" 上行. Minor textual variations notwithstanding, Wèi Zhēng evidently copied these "essentials of government" from the Received *Wénzǐ*.

In addition to Wèi Zhēng's *Anthology*, several other encyclopedic works of that period quote the *Wénzǐ*. In reverse chronological order, they are: *Writings for Elementary Instruction* 初學記, compiled between 713-742 under the auspices of Xú Jiān 徐堅 (659-729); Lǐ Shàn's 李善 (ca. 630-689) commentary on *Selections of Refined Literature* 文選; *Excerpts from Books in the Northern Hall* 北堂書鈔, compiled around 630 by Yú Shìnán 虞世南 (558-638); *A Categorized Collection of Literature* 藝文類聚, compiled in 604 by Ōuyáng Xún 歐陽詢 (557-641) and others; *General Principles of the Five Phases* 五行大義, by Xiāo Jí 蕭吉 (ca. 525-ca. 606); and *Essential Techniques for the Peasantry* 齊民要術, compiled around 544 by Jiǎ Sīxié 賈思勰 (fl. 6th c.). These texts cover two full centuries before the Tiānbǎo reign period. We know that they quote the Received *Wénzǐ*, because their quotations correspond literally or near-literally to the *Wénzǐ* as it is currently known. Not only are the quotations easily traceable in the Received *Wénzǐ*, most of them come from sections that have a parallel in the *Huáinánzǐ*. In other words, they quote a *Wénzǐ* that already incorporates huge portions from the *Huáinánzǐ*. Moreover, when an encyclopedic work quotes the beginning of a *Wénzǐ* section, we often read: "The *Wénzǐ* states: 'Lǎozǐ said: …'" 文子曰老子云. This must be the Received *Wénzǐ*, because Lǎozǐ became the protagonist of the *Wénzǐ* only after its revision.

There are indications that the *Wénzǐ* revision took place long before these encyclopedic works started to appear. Unfortunately, these indications are few and far between.

In the year 404, the famous Buddhist monk Shì Huìyuǎn 釋慧遠 (334-416), founder of the Pure Land 淨土宗 sect of Buddhism, composed an essay on the transmigration of souls called "When the Body is Exhausted the Soul does not Perish" 形盡神不滅.[224] In this essay, Shì Huìyuǎn presents the soul as an eternal, never-changing entity that is not exhausted in just one incarnation of that ever-changing entity, the body. In support of his theory and to show that native Chinese thinkers in

[224] This essay is part 5 of "A Shramana Does Not Bow before a King" 沙門不敬王者論, which is contained in *Collected Essays on Buddhism* 弘明集 by Sēng Yòu 僧祐 (445-518). See Zürcher [1959: 204-253] and Kenneth Ch'en [1952: 174-175] for biographical information about Huìyuǎn; and Liebenthal [1950: 252] and Fung [1953: 288] for a translation of this essay.

pre-Buddhist China espoused the same notion, he quotes the *Zhuāngzǐ* and extracts the following statement from the *Wénzǐ*:

> 文子稱黃帝之言曰：形有靡而神不化，以不化乘化，其變無窮。
>
> Wénzǐ quotes the Yellow Emperor as saying: "The body suffers destruction, but the soul undergoes no transformation. By not transforming, it rides upon the transformations and passes through endless changes."

This corresponds to a line in *Wénzǐ* 3.14:

> 形有靡而神未嘗化，以不化應化，千變萬轉而未始有極。
>
> The body suffers destruction, but the soul transforms not even once. By not-transforming it responds to transformations, and even after a thousand twists and ten thousand turns, it has not started to reach the end.

There are obvious differences between the *Wénzǐ* statement and Shì Huìyuǎn's version. Notably, the *Wénzǐ* ascribes this statement to Lǎozǐ, whereas the Buddhist monk claims that Wénzǐ here recites a saying of the Yellow Emperor. Even so, the wording of both versions is similar and the underlying idea is the same. Since this *Wénzǐ* statement occurs in a section that is borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*, it is clear that Shì Huìyuǎn quotes the Received *Wénzǐ* and that by the year 404, the *Wénzǐ* had already acquired its received form.

A contemporary of Shì Huìyuǎn, Zhāng Zhàn 張湛 (ca. 330-410), probably wrote the earliest commentary on the *Wénzǐ*. Though his *Wénzǐ* commentary is no longer extant, traces survive in Lǐ Shàn's commentary on *Selections of Literature*. Lǐ Shàn quotes the *Wénzǐ* as often as 126 times. Of these 126 *Wénzǐ* quotations, seven include a comment by Zhāng Zhàn. For example, in his commentary on Bān Gù's *Rhapsody of the Eastern Capital* 東京賦, as included in *Selections of Literature*, Lǐ Shàn quotes the phrase "the group of ministers converge as spokes" 群臣輻湊 from *Wénzǐ* 8.7 and notes that Zhāng Zhàn explains this *Wénzǐ* phrase as "this is like the mass of spokes gathering at the hub" 如眾輻之集於轂也. Since Lǐ Shàn applies the spokes quotation from the *Wénzǐ* with Zhāng Zhàn's appended comment to three more passages in *Selections of Literature*, only four of seven surviving comments are

unique.[225] All four unique comments by Zhāng Zhàn relate to phrases in the Received *Wénzǐ*, mostly in sections that are based on the *Huáinánzǐ*. This corroborates the view that at the turn of the fifth century, when both Shì Huìyuǎn and Zhāng Zhàn were active, the *Wénzǐ* incorporated much of the *Huáinánzǐ* and had already acquired its received form. Perhaps the *Wénzǐ* revision took place much earlier.

In 231, the famous writer and poet Cáo Zhí 曹植 (192-232) sent a memorial to his nephew Cáo Ruì 曹叡, Emperor Míng of the Wèi dynasty 魏明帝 (r. 226-239).[226] In this "Memorial on Seeking Advancement and Recognition as a Relative" 求通親親表, Cáo Zhí requests that the emperor restore normal relationships with his relatives, the feudal princes (whom include Cáo Zhí), because recent laws controlled the princes so stringently that they feared contact with the imperial throne. Cáo Zhí states that Emperor Míng's rule equals that of Emperor Yáo 堯, King Wén of the Zhōu dynasty 周文王 and the Duke of Zhōu 周公. But while these sage-rulers first harmonized their kindred and only then proceeded to regulate the common people, Emperor Míng ignores his family. As a result, Cáo Zhí is cut off from intercourse with his relatives and barred from official promotion, and hence dismayed. He believes he possesses the right qualities and the willingness to work for the emperor. Born into a different family, he would have certainly risen to high status, but now his family background prevents him from so doing. All feudal princes are in the same position, but Cáo Zhí is the first to protest. He knows that his remonstration may aggravate the situation, but feels obliged to submit the memorial so that there "be no sorrow" in the "sage-like rule" of Emperor Míng. To underscore his willingness to subordinate his personal well-being to the interests of the realm and to express his hope that the memorial does not intensify his misfortune, Cáo Zhí writes:

> 臣聞文子曰不為福始不為禍先
>
> I have learned from the *Wénzǐ* that one should be "neither at the beginning of fortune, nor ahead of misfortune".

With these words, Cáo Zhí is the first person to quote the *Wénzǐ* by name. The lesson of being "neither at the beginning of fortune, nor ahead of misfortune" is a verbatim

[225] For a list of all 126 *Wénzǐ* quotations, seven of them with appended comments by Zhāng Zhàn, see Zhèng Guóruì [1997: 162-165]. The seven comments by Zhāng Zhàn, of which four are identical, relate to *Wénzǐ* 1.3, 5.12, 7.19 and 8.7 (or 10.2, which contains the same phrase).
[226] For a translation of this memorial, see Fang [1952: 339-343].

quotation of a phrase in *Wénzǐ* 3.3. This section in the Received *Wénzǐ* is a borrowing from a passage in *Huáinánzǐ* 7, which suggests that Cáo Zhí quotes a *Wénzǐ* that resembles the received text and that the *Wénzǐ* revision took place before his memorial. However, we cannot jump to conclusions. Cáo Zhí quotes only one phrase, which provides limited evidence for dating the *Wénzǐ* revision. Besides, this phrase seems like a popular saying, a proverb that could easily appear in other texts. Indeed, it appears not only in the *Huáinánzǐ* and Received *Wénzǐ*, but also in the *Zhuāngzǐ*. It may have also been present in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, on bamboo strips that did not survive, because the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* mentions the terms "fortune" 福 and "misfortune" 禍 several times, on three strips (1200, 2444, 0204) in conjunction. Although we cannot rule out the possibility that this phrase was present in the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and that Cáo Zhí copied the phrase from the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, this would imply that the *Wénzǐ* editor, for whatever reason, did not copy the phrase from the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, but coincidentally copied the same phrase from the *Huáinánzǐ*. This would be almost too much of a coincidence. A more likely scenario is that Cáo Zhí quotes a *Wénzǐ* that resembles the received text. Hence, 231, the year when Cáo Zhí wrote his memorial, may provisionally serve as the latest possible year for the revision that led to the Received *Wénzǐ*.

In sum, evidence shows that if Cáo Zhí indeed quotes the Received *Wénzǐ*, revision may have taken place between 212 and 231, and that in any case, it must have taken place before the fifth century, when Shì Huìyuǎn and Zhāng Zhàn independently confirm the circulation of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

7.2. Editor

The notion of an editor requires the presupposition that the *Wénzǐ* has undergone revision. In retrospect, that is abundantly clear, but in the first centuries of its transmission, the revised *Wénzǐ* was taken as an authentic, ancient text. The idea of its revision first occurred in the middle of the Táng dynasty and gained currency in the Southern Sòng. Critical scholars discussed the Received *Wénzǐ*'s composite status, but refrained from identifying its editor. Liǔ Zōngyuán 柳宗元 (773-819), who first noted exogenous elements in the *Wénzǐ*, simply refers to the editor as "the person who

created this" 為之者. Other scholars try to identify the editor. The three most frequently proposed names are those of the three earliest *Wénzǐ* commentators:

- Zhāng Zhàn 張湛 (ca. 330-410)
- Lǐ Xiān 李暹 (fl. 6th c.)
- Xú Língfǔ 徐靈府 (fl. first half of 9th c.)

Cháo Gōngwǔ 晁公武 (ca. 1105-1180) and Hú Yìnglín 胡應麟 (1551-1602) argue that Lǐ Xiān may have embellished the *Wénzǐ* after it fell into disuse. Huáng Zhèn 黃震 (1213-1280), a fierce critic who sees the *Wénzǐ* as "nothing but a forgery", suggests that Xú Língfǔ may have forged the *Wénzǐ*, because Xú published his *Wénzǐ* commentary under a pseudonym. Zhāng Bǐnglín 章炳麟 (1868-1936), a political activist in the late Qīng and early Republican period, suggests that Zhāng Zhàn may have forged the *Wénzǐ* and, hence, that *Wénzǐ* and *Lièzǐ* were written by the same hand.

Lǐ Xiān and Xú Língfǔ could not have revised the *Wénzǐ*, because evidence shows that the revised text appeared long before their commentaries. Moreover, if Cáo Zhí's memorial indeed quotes the Received *Wénzǐ* and revision took place before 231, Zhāng Zhàn could not have been the "forger" either.

Modern scholars, such as Dīng Yuánzhí 丁原植 [1999], often claim that the *Wénzǐ* was revised by the "School of Wénzǐ" 文子學派. This suggests plurality and continuity: a group of people who transmitted the Ancient *Wénzǐ* from master to student and admired the text and wished to expand it. If this group revered Wénzǐ, why would they change the main protagonist to Lǎozǐ? And why would they corrupt the teachings of their master by including numerous passages from the *Huáinánzǐ*? Would it not be blasphemy for them to change the canonical treatise of their school virtually beyond recognition? I believe there never was a School of Wénzǐ, because the systematic editorial patterns throughout the Received *Wénzǐ* suggest singular editorship.

While we cannot trace this person's name or identity, we know that he was probably active between 212 and 231 and had access to a palace library to obtain a copy of the *Wénzǐ*, because private libraries were not common. We may acquire a deeper understanding of his professional personality by establishing his motives for creating the Received *Wénzǐ*: they will reveal his philosophical outlook.

8. The Received *Wénzǐ*: Philosophy

The Received *Wénzǐ* consists largely, if not completely, of borrowings from older texts. This patchwork quality generates various evaluations of the text and its philosophy, that may be subsumed under three categories.

(1) Most scholars relate perceived historical and philosophical value of texts to their philological status: authentic works are valuable and deserving of academic attention; forgeries are useless. When Liǔ Zōngyuán in the Táng dynasty discovers borrowings from the *Mencius*, the *Guǎnzǐ* and other works in the *Wénzǐ*, he labels it a "composite work" 駁書, discards all exogenous elements and preserves only the "authentic" parts of the text. Huáng Zhèn in the Sòng dynasty is more straightforward in his judgment, calling the *Wénzǐ* a "forgery" 僞書 with no positive qualities. To Huáng Zhèn and other scholars in subsequent centuries, that automatically means one need not study its philosophy. The *Wénzǐ* is henceforth directed to the periphery of the Chinese politico-philosophical discourse, with most scholars ignoring it altogether, intentionally or unintentionally. Even in the modern era its forged status usually grants the *Wénzǐ* no more than a footnote in overviews of Chinese thought.[227]

(2) Other scholars, such as Chǔ Zhàoyǒng 褚兆勇 [2000] and Liú Shàoyún 劉紹雲 [2002], deliberately disregard the Received *Wénzǐ*'s previous history and its intertextual relations, so as to study it as an integral philosophical treatise in its own right. Such scholars feel that the text deserves academic attention, irrespective of its philological status. They analyze one or more concepts or discuss the Received *Wénzǐ*'s overall message, often to evaluate the text's position in the history of Chinese thought. This approach is justified, but the philological issue cannot be ignored.

One problem is the framework of this approach. Do these scholars describe the philosophy of a pre-Hàn thinker or that of a post-Hàn editor? No one nowadays regards the Received *Wénzǐ* as the actual writings of a disciple of Lǎozǐ named Wénzǐ. If, on the other hand, these studies take the text as representing the views of an editor who lived in the third century CE, that implies that the Received *Wénzǐ* is a

[227] The *Wénzǐ* occurs indirectly in Fung's [1953] *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, when he quotes Shì Huìyuǎn's essay which quotes the *Wénzǐ*. It is absent in Chan [1963], Hsiao [1979], Schwartz [1985] and Graham [1989]. Even Kohn's [2000] *Daoism Handbook* does not mention the text.

philosophically unimaginative work. Everything in it has been said before, albeit in different narrative structures and ideological contexts.

Another problem is that scholars who treat the *Wénzǐ* as a consistent and systematic work with a univocal message, easily overlook the peculiarities of individual passages as well as possible inconsistencies, and indeed contradictions, between different voices resonating in the text (e.g., the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the *Huáinánzǐ*).

A final problem is that this approach is often motivated by the desire to associate the *Wénzǐ* with one school of thought, usually "Daoism" or the "Huáng-Lǎo" branch of Daoism. The notion of Chinese philosophical "schools of thought" has come under fire in the past decade, and exclusive association of any thinker or text with any such "school" has become problematic.[228] Association of the Received *Wénzǐ* with the "Huáng-Lǎo school" is especially problematic, because of the text's provenance in earlier sources. What belongs to Huáng-Lǎo: the Received *Wénzǐ*, one or more of its source texts, or all of these? To make matters worse, the Received *Wénzǐ* borrows from nearly all *Huáinánzǐ* chapters, except from those that some specialists identify as typically Huáng-Lǎo. If the Received *Wénzǐ* belongs to Huáng-Lǎo, why would its editor widely copy from *Huáinánzǐ* but leave out passages that are characteristic of the Huáng-Lǎo view? Without a stable reconceptualization of the nature of "schools of thought" and an unambiguous definition of "Huáng-Lǎo", calling any text Huáng-Lǎo remains an ineffectual exercise.

(3) The third approach, to which I subscribe, accepts the patchwork quality of the Received *Wénzǐ*, but, contrary to approach (1), does not make this a reason for denying the text philosophical relevance. Its philosophical value depends not on whether or not the Received *Wénzǐ* copies earlier sources, but on *how* and *why* it does so. This approach, contrary to approach (2), does not focus on the text's philosophical concepts, but on the editor's actions and intentions instead.

The Received *Wénzǐ* is the product of an editor who crafted the text out of earlier sources. To study its philosophical relevance, therefore, means to explore the editor's selection and manipulation of source texts, so as to uncover his agenda.

[228] Some scholars (e.g., Roth [1999]) argue in favor of intellectual lineages, while others (e.g., Petersen [1995]; Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan [2003]) question the very nature and existence of "schools of thought". See also Note 25.

What are the editor's motives for predominantly borrowing from the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the *Huáinánzǐ* and the *Lǎozǐ*, and for selecting particular passages from his source texts? How does he manipulate and combine his material?

This chapter is not about pre-Hàn or early-Hàn philosophy, but about its post-Hàn reception. It demonstrates how an editor, probably in the third century CE, found a contemporary use for ancient philosophical texts. My analysis shows the editor making a powerful Daoist contribution to the politico-philosophical debate of his time, by revising the *Wénzǐ* into a new, heterogeneous treatise with its own distinct voice.

8.1. Four Phases towards a New Text

The major *Wénzǐ* revision was part of a strategy towards a larger goal. To understand what role the editor envisaged for the text in the politico-philosophical debate of his time, I first analyze the creative process that led to the Received *Wénzǐ*. Within the editorial process, I distinguish four phases of revision:

- selecting a base text
- adding textual content
- making the text more Daoist
- making the text more discursive

Whether or not the editor undertook precisely these four steps, and in this order, is irrelevant. The four phases are no temporal-linear descriptions of how the Received *Wénzǐ* was constructed, but useful tools for modern re-construction and presentation of the editorial process.

8.2. Phase One: Selecting a Base Text

When the editor embarked on his ambitious project, his first step was to select a base text. He decided upon a text called *Wénzǐ*. What drew the editor to this text? What necessitated and facilitated its revision into a radically different text?

(1) What drew the editor to the *Wénzǐ*? The Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ*, the only surviving manuscript comparable to the one on the editor's desk, shows that the

Ancient *Wénzǐ* must have been an eclectic work mainly containing ideas traditionally labeled Daoist. The bamboo text mentions numerous concepts from a variety of philosophical traditions, but "Daoist" concepts and quotations are notably frequent. Accordingly, in the first century CE, when Bān Gù catalogued texts in the imperial library, he canonized the *Wénzǐ*'s affiliation by consigning it to the Daoist section and additionally noted that Wénzǐ was a disciple of Lǎozǐ. Wáng Chōng confirmed this common belief by mentioning Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ in the same breath. When the *Wénzǐ* editor started revision, more than a century after Bān Gù and Wáng Chōng, Wénzǐ had long been known as a "Daoist" thinker and the *Wénzǐ* as a "Daoist" text. The editor's choice of the *Wénzǐ* thus reveals his "Daoist" orientation.

(2) The *Wénzǐ* is not the only early Chinese philosophical text subject to modification, but our editor revises his base text almost beyond recognition. What made this drastic revision possible? Evidence is in short supply, but I hypothesize that at the time of revision the *Wénzǐ* was no longer popular and already incomplete.

After Bān Gù and Wáng Chōng, whose comments suggest that the *Wénzǐ* was widely read in those days, its popularity appears to have faded. In the second half of the Latter Hàn, no one is known to have mentioned Wénzǐ or quoted his work. Whereas five Latter Hàn scholars are credited with a commentary on the *Huáinánzǐ*, no one is known to have written a *Wénzǐ* commentary in that period. The first known *Wénzǐ* commentary is by Zhāng Zhàn 張湛 (ca. 330-410), on the Received *Wénzǐ*.

If, for the sake of the argument, we suppose that the *Wénzǐ* was still popular when the editor laid hands on it, that would make the revision an astonishing event, for it would have led to the concurrent circulation of two fundamentally different texts with the exact same title. The fact remains that the only known quotation of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* is that by Wèi Xiāng, in the first century BCE. No references to the Ancient *Wénzǐ* postdate revision, which implies that the Received *Wénzǐ* immediately and effectively replaced it as the only transmitted version of the text.

The *Wénzǐ* had not only become unknown by the time of revision, but also incomplete. Only one third of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo strips correspond to the Received *Wénzǐ*. What happened to the remaining two thirds? Why are there no corresponding phrases in the Received *Wénzǐ*? Were these passages from the Ancient *Wénzǐ* left out on purpose?

This is unlikely, because there is no significant, generalizable difference between corresponding and non-corresponding bamboo fragments. The names of

King Píng and Wénzǐ feature throughout the manuscript, which indicates structural unity. Key philosophical concepts, such as "the Way", "Heaven's Way", "virtue", "humaneness" and "righteousness" appear throughout. Such non-corresponding fragments moreover contain distinct discussions on topics as "Heaven's Way", "employing humaneness" and "employing righteousness", which should have interested the *Wénzǐ* editor. That they do not appear in the Received *Wénzǐ* suggests that he never saw these parts of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, and that the text had become incomplete prior to revision.

The editor's aim, as we shall see in the next section, was to create a large treatise. What, then, could have made him cast aside two-thirds of his own base text? Again, the only plausible answer is that these passages no longer existed by the time of revision.

It is unclear when and how the *Wénzǐ* became incomplete. One possible explanation is that the editor discovered fragments of a *Wénzǐ* manuscript in the imperial library, which was destroyed by the fire that raged there towards the end of the Hàn dynasty, in 190 CE, not long before the estimated date of the *Wénzǐ* revision.

(3) What motivated the editor in revising the *Wénzǐ*? In other words, what was it that called for the *Wénzǐ* revision? If my assumptions are correct, the third century CE editor, an adherent of the Daoist worldview, somehow chanced upon the *Wénzǐ*. This text, long known as the work of a disciple of Lǎozǐ, had fallen into oblivion and, worse, into disarray. The major *Wénzǐ* revision may well have been an attempt to restore the text to its former glory, and indeed an attempt to create a text whose influence would exceed that of its main source.

8.3. Phase Two: Adding Content

The editor's apparent aim was to create a substantial and encyclopedic treatise, several times its original length, which would encompass all contemporary philosophical knowledge. Such comprehensive works had existed since the late Warring States era, e.g., the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*. His eye fell on the latter.

What drew the editor to the *Huáinánzǐ*? One reason may be the *Huáinánzǐ*'s eclectic character. Le Blanc [1985: 1-2] describes the *Huáinánzǐ* as follows:

> It encompasses a wide variety of subjects, from ancient myths to contemporary government, from didactic historical anecdotes to applied psychology, and from astronomy and topography to philosophy and mysticism. The diversity of content is compounded by the many pre-Hàn schools of thought that find a voice in the *Huáinánzǐ*, a fact which is reflected by the large number of quotations sprinkled throughout the work.

The *Huáinánzǐ* also displays a rich array of rhetorical devices and linguistic styles, including metaphor, allegory, analogy, parallelism, dialogue, rhetorical question and chain reasoning. The diversity of subjects and styles makes it difficult to classify the text, for it does not, as Major [1993: 5] rightly points out, "conform ideologically to the Confucian syncretist doctrine established as state orthodoxy" under Hàn Emperor Wǔ. Hence, Bān Gù could not but classify the text as Eclectic. While its diversity contributed to the idea of the *Huáinánzǐ* as a composite work and led to questions regarding authenticity and authorship, it also constitutes an important reason for its author, Liú Ān, being praised as one of the most talented writers of his time. And it may well have played a decisive role in directing the *Wénzǐ* editor to the *Huáinánzǐ*.

The editor was not interested in the *Huáinánzǐ*'s diversity of linguistic styles: we have seen how he reduced the rich style of borrowed *Huáinánzǐ* passages to a minimum. He was only partly interested in the diversity of subjects: we shall see how he disregarded typical *Huáinánzǐ* subjects such as astronomy or topography. He was mainly interested in subjects he deemed politico-philosophically relevant. I believe that the main attraction for the *Wénzǐ* editor is the diversity of philosophical ideas in the *Huáinánzǐ*, as well as the fact that it expounds on numerous quotations and paraphrases from earlier philosophical works.[229] Not only the quantity of quotations attracted the *Wénzǐ* editor, but also the fact that they derive from the full pre-Hàn and early Hàn ideological spectrum, including texts traditionally labeled Daoist, Confucianist, Mohist and Legalist. I will explain furtheron *why* this is the case.

Another reason for choosing the *Huáinánzǐ* is its ideological resemblance to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. Although their differences led Bān Gù to classify one as Eclectic and the other as Daoist, the editor must have sensed their philosophical closeness. Both are typical of the eclectic vogue of the early Former Hàn and subscribe to a Daoist worldview. Both revere the Way as a supreme philosophical concept and neither eschews concepts from other philosophical traditions. Besides, both have the

[229] Le Blanc's [1985: 83] tabulation totals over 840 quotations, the four most important sources being *Zhuāngzǐ* (269 references), *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ* (190 references), *Lǎozǐ* (99 references) and *Hán Fēizǐ* (72 references).

Lǎozǐ as a primary source of influence. Of the most-quoted texts in the *Huáinánzǐ*, only the *Lǎozǐ* is identified by name. Le Blanc [1985: 84] points out that the *Lǎozǐ* is one of only four texts in the *Huáinánzǐ* that are "always quoted word for word and explicitly acknowledged as the source of the quotation" and that it is the only one of these four canonical texts for which quotations in the *Huáinánzǐ* are always functional, that is, the argument revolves around them. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* does not quote the *Lǎozǐ* by name, but implicitly grants it the same canonical and authoritative status. Hence, when adding *Huáinánzǐ* passages to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, the editor combined two ideologically related eclectic Daoist works that had thus far been transmitted separately.

The editor did not randomly copy *Huáinánzǐ* passages to increase the volume of the *Wénzǐ*, but took care to stay away from passages that he found unsuitable. Which parts of the *Huáinánzǐ* did he reject?

On a micro-level, examples, illustrations, anecdotes and specific references to places, people and events, are omitted or changed into general statements. In so doing, the editor displays a preference for what he considers the core message of the *Huáinánzǐ*. Conversely, he sees the wide range of linguistic styles and rhetorical devices employed in the *Huáinánzǐ* as distracting from that message.

On a macro-level, he quotes from all *Huáinánzǐ* chapters, except 3, 4, 5 and 21. There is a reason for these exceptions. *Huáinánzǐ* 21 "Outline of the Essentials" 要略訓 is a postface to the *Huáinánzǐ*. It "spells out the overall purpose of *Huáinánzǐ*, summarizes the essential teachings of each chapter, and explains how the chapters follow one another logically, forming a coherent, systematic whole." [Le Blanc 1985: 4]. It reinforces the *Huáinánzǐ*'s integral unity, but presents no philosophical insights not found elsewhere in the text. For someone focused on the philosophy of the *Huáinánzǐ*, an editor who selects only substantively relevant parts, it has nothing to offer. The other three chapters—*Huáinánzǐ* 3 "Patterns of Heaven" 天文訓, 4 "Shapes of the Earth" 地形訓 and 5 "Rules of the Seasons" 時則訓—form a distinct subunit within the *Huáinánzǐ*. They constitute the *Huáinánzǐ*'s "cosmological" foundation. They differ from other chapters not only in content, but also in terms of terminology and sources. Their language is technical, referring as they do to astronomical and astrological phenomena, geographical peculiarities and calendrical conventions. In his study of the three chapters, Major [1993: 5] notes that "in light of the very strong influence of *Zhuāngzǐ*, *Lǎozǐ*, and *Hán Fēizǐ* on the *Huáinánzǐ* as a whole, their

influence on the three cosmological chapters […] is not very great" and that "while quotations from the [*Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ*] can be found throughout the *Huáinánzǐ* (in twenty of its twenty-one chapters), they are of unusual importance in Chapters 3, 4, and 5." The cosmological chapters directly feed into the overall politico-philosophical message of the *Huáinánzǐ*, inasmuch as they provide the ruler with in-depth knowledge of the workings of heaven and earth, to which he must conform his every action. In other words, of the *Huáinánzǐ* 3, 4 and 5 are of vital importance to the worldview of Liú Ān. The *Wénzǐ* editor subscribes to a different worldview. In his eyes, this technical and somewhat obscure cosmological subunit does not contribute to state government, but distract from it. In terms of cosmology, all the editor needs to know is that the Way creates and pervades the universe and all things in it. This idea is detailed in *Huáinánzǐ* 1 "Tracing the Way to its Origin" 原道訓 and *Huáinánzǐ* 2 "The Beginning of Reality" 俶真訓, two chapters influenced by the *Lǎozǐ* and the *Zhuāngzǐ*, respectively, and extensively quoted in the Received *Wénzǐ*.

Which parts of the *Huáinánzǐ* did the editor borrow and how did he merge them with the Ancient *Wénzǐ*? Passages from all *Huáinánzǐ* chapters other than 3, 4, 5 and 21 occur in the Received *Wénzǐ*. Not only did the editor abridge these passages, he also rearranged them. There is no one-to-one correspondence between chapters in *Huáinánzǐ* and *Wénzǐ*. In other words, *Wénzǐ* 1 is not an abridged *Huáinánzǐ* 1, *Wénzǐ* 2 not an abridged *Huáinánzǐ* 2, and so on. Instead, each *Huáinánzǐ* chapter is cut into several smaller passages and scattered across different chapters in the *Wénzǐ*. As the following table shows, all relevant *Huáinánzǐ* (HNZ) chapters correspond to two or more *Wénzǐ* (WZ) chapters.

HNZ	→	WZ	HNZ	→	WZ
1	→	1, 4	13	→	5, 7, 9, 11, 12
2	→	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12	14	→	1, 4, 5, 6, 8
6	→	2, 12	15	→	8, 9, 11, 12
7	→	3, 12	16	→	2, 4, 6
8	→	2, 9, 12	17	→	4, 6
9	→	2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	18	→	4, 6, 7
10	→	2, 3, 4, 6, 7	19	→	2, 8
11	→	1, 5, 8, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12	20	→	2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
12	→	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12			

Table 8.1: *Huáinánzǐ* chapters copied into two or more *Wénzǐ* chapters

Conversely, each *Wénzǐ* chapter borrows from at least four different *Huáinánzǐ* chapters:

WZ	←	HNZ	WZ	←	HNZ
1	←	1, 2, 11, 12, 14	7	←	2, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18, 20
2	←	2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 19, 20	8	←	9, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20
3	←	2, 7, 10, 12	9	←	8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20
4	←	1, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20	10	←	9, 11, 12, 20
5	←	2, 11, 12, 13, 14	11	←	9, 11, 13, 15, 20
6	←	10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18	12	←	2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20

Table 8.2: *Wénzǐ* chapters copied from four or more *Huáinánzǐ* chapters [230]

Why did the editor disassemble the *Huáinánzǐ* into numerous passages and work them into the Received *Wénzǐ*? Of course, this is part of a camouflage strategy to mask the Received *Wénzǐ*'s reliance on the *Huáinánzǐ*, but there may be other reasons. Is it perhaps because he deemed the overall structure of the *Huáinánzǐ* in need of improvement? This is unlikely. The author of the *Huáinánzǐ* 21 postface, probably Liú Ān himself, emphasizes the logical order of the preceding twenty chapters, which, in his view, form a coherent, systematic whole. Even if the underlying unity of the *Huáinánzǐ* is not always apparent, to cut chapters into smaller segments and scatter these across different chapters does little to improve it. For example, *Huáinánzǐ* 15 "On Military Strategy" 兵略訓 explains how war can be successfully implemented to achieve peace. Passages from this one chapter are scattered over *Wénzǐ* 8, 9, 11 and 12, where they appear in non-military contexts. The thematic unity of *Huáinánzǐ* 15 is thereby taken apart in the Received *Wénzǐ*. This also holds true for other chapters. The Received *Wénzǐ* breaks down the gradual, compositional structure of the *Huáinánzǐ*, but does not replace it with an observably improved structure.

Not only is the order of chapters in the Received *Wénzǐ* less systematic than that in the *Huáinánzǐ*, it also displays less chapter-internal coherence. If chapters form coherent units, this should be obvious in the chapter with the most articulate structure, in which the hand of the editor is most apparent: *Wénzǐ* 5. This chapter alternates sections taken from Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*. But does the editor's effort result in a coherent chapter? How do the sections from Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* relate?

[230] Both tables list chapters in ascending order. Thus, *Huáinánzǐ* 12 is said to correspond to *Wénzǐ* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 12. The actual situation is more complex. For example, passages from this *Huáinánzǐ* chapter occur in *Wénzǐ* 7, 1, 7, 5, 10, 5, 10, 9, 10, 5, 9, 4, 10, 2, 12 and 3, in this order.

Nowadays, *Wénzǐ* scholars increasingly subscribe to the idea of *Wénzǐ* 5 as consisting of alternating dialogic and monologic sections, each deriving from different source texts. The two types of sections are said to form clusters of one dialogic and one monologic section each.[231]

Two consecutive sections in *Wénzǐ* 5 seem to confirm the idea of clusters. *Wénzǐ* 5.7 (borrowed from the Ancient *Wénzǐ*) discusses "Holding on to the One" 執一 and "being non-active" 無爲. The next section, *Wénzǐ* 5.8 (from *Huáinánzǐ* 14), discusses the same concepts. These two sections form a thematic unit, in which the latter develops the theme from the former. In this case it would seem that a *Huáinánzǐ* passage was added to explicate and reinforce an Ancient *Wénzǐ* passage.

For other clusters, however, it is harder to discern a common theme. For example, *Wénzǐ* 5.11 (from Ancient *Wénzǐ*) explains how the ruler can win the hearts of the people by exercising humility, whereas the next section, *Wénzǐ* 5.12 (from *Huáinánzǐ*), argues against stubborn observance of one system of laws and in favor of changing laws as circumstances require. Perhaps the common denominator is flexibility, though both sections explain this in entirely different ways. In the same way, *Wénzǐ* 5.13 (from Ancient *Wénzǐ*) explains that the ruler must steer his people with the Way and nourish them with Virtue, without resorting to arrogance or force, whereas *Wénzǐ* 5.14 (from *Huáinánzǐ*) argues that the sage has no constant guidelines, but assesses each situation individually and acts accordingly. The link between the two sections in this supposed cluster is unclear, if not entirely absent. This also holds true for other supposed "clusters".

Not only is the relationship between dialogic and monologic sections in *Wénzǐ* 5 often vague, there are inconsistencies and indeed contradictions between them.

For example, *Wénzǐ* 5.3 (from Ancient *Wénzǐ*) mentions righteousness as one of the four guidelines with positive functions in government. *Wénzǐ* 5.8 (from *Huáinánzǐ*) claims that "righteousness cannot motivate the people" 義不能相固.

Also, *Wénzǐ* 5.4 (from *Huáinánzǐ*) says "when the world is in chaos, a worthy man cannot bring it to order on his own" 世亂則賢者不能獨治. This statement is typical for Liú Ān, who presents himself as a sage ruler and reserves for himself the role of sage advisor to the emperor, but covers himself against possible criticism. The sage should always strive to serve his country, but whether or not he succeeds is a

[231] Le Blanc [2000], for instance, does not number these sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and so on, as I do, but 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b and so on, thereby suggesting that dialogic a-sections (deriving from the Ancient *Wénzǐ*) and monologic b-sections (from the *Huáinánzǐ*) form pairs.

matter of fate. If he runs into adverse circumstances, he may not be able to bring fortune about, no matter what he does. This reserved view in stands in opposition to the central message of *Wénzǐ* 5.20 (from Ancient *Wénzǐ*) that even a ruler who "is up against a licentious and chaotic world" 遭淫亂之世 can change it as long as he uses the right principles and acts as a teacher to his people. Unlike Liú Ān, the author of the Ancient *Wénzǐ* believes that the world can be changed for the better no matter what the circumstances.

Wénzǐ 5.5 (from Ancient *Wénzǐ*) promotes sageness and wisdom as extra sensitive sensory perception of fortune and misfortune, and vital skills for the ruler: "To forehear what has not yet appeared, is sageliness. To foresee something taking shape, is cleverness." The *Huáinánzǐ* supports sageness, but rejects wisdom. The graph 智 *zhì* 'wisdom' has such negative connotations in the *Huáinánzǐ* that it is perhaps better translated as 'cleverness' or even 'shrewdness' or 'cunning'. No fewer than three monologic sections in *Wénzǐ* 5 speak unfavorably of this concept:

- *Wénzǐ* 5.6: "If you rely solely on wisdom [cleverness, etc.], failures will assuredly be many. To love wisdom [cleverness, etc.] is the technique that leads to exhaustion." 獨任其智，失必多矣，好智，窮術也

- *Wénzǐ* 5.10: "If you abandon the Way and rely on wisdom [cleverness, etc.], you are in danger" 釋道而任智者，危

- *Wénzǐ* 5.16: "If you allow wisdom [cleverness, etc.] to create peril and try to guard yourself against peril through more wisdom [cleverness, etc.], this can be compared to stirring water while trying to make it still." 以智生患，以智備之，譬猶撓水而欲求清也

No one asks that early Chinese argumentative writings conform to modern Western standards of coherence. Scholars find that even the *Huáinánzǐ*, despite its self-acclaimed general plan, couches its politico-philosophical views in loosely connected discussions [Ames 1994: xxiii]. The Received *Wénzǐ* is different. Not only because it consists of material from earlier sources, but also because of the way in which it combines these sources. The editor tirelessly copied different sources, cut them into smaller parts, adjusted these passages and scattered them throughout the text,

resulting, in *Wénzǐ* 5, in a neat alternation of dialogic and monologic sections, and of passages borrowed from Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*. Such strenuous effort leads one to expect consistency in content. The apparent lack of thematic unity in "clusters" of dialogic and monologic sections and the chapter-internal inconsistencies and contradictions are therefore all the more striking.

In sum, in Phase Two major portions of text from the *Huáinánzǐ* were added to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*. I draw two conclusions from the way this was done.

(1) In the *Huáinánzǐ*, argumentative structure, linguistic style and philosophical content form a trinity, each reinforcing the two others. Shattering the *Huáinánzǐ*'s structural coherency and minimizing its elaborate linguistic style, the *Wénzǐ* editor was predominantly interested in the *Huáinánzǐ*'s politico-philosophical content. It appears more important to him *that* particular content of the *Huáinánzǐ* be included in the text, than *how* or *where* it be presented, even if this leads to stylistic poverty and argumentative inconsistencies.

(2) The absence of a distinct text-internal argumentative structure and the presence of obvious chapter-internal inconsistencies indicate that argumentation in the Received *Wénzǐ* mainly takes place on the level of the section, the smallest coherent unit. There is not much of a gradual argumentative buildup from one section to the next, let alone one from chapter to the next, or a consistency of the text as a whole. I will return to this issue furtheron.

8.4. Phase Three: Making the Text more Daoist

In addition to Ancient *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*, the Received *Wénzǐ* also contains passages from other texts. Most of the inserted material is "Daoist" in orientation and serves to increase the "Daoist" caliber of the Received *Wénzǐ*. Two texts are particularly prominent: the *Lǎozǐ* and the *Zhōnghuángzǐ*.

The *Lǎozǐ*

The two main sources of the Received *Wénzǐ* draw heavily on the *Lǎozǐ*. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* embraces numerous *Lǎozǐ* concepts and sayings. In the *Huáinánzǐ*, the *Lǎozǐ* is the only text from which quotations are always functional, verbatim and explicitly marked. It appears that to the taste of the *Wénzǐ* editor, this was not enough. In his

view, the *Wénzǐ*, known in his time as a composition by a disciple of Lǎozǐ, must be imbued with the wise words of the Daoist sage. He added dozens of *Lǎozǐ* quotations to the new *Wénzǐ*, in addition to those already present in passages borrowed from the Ancient *Wénzǐ* or the *Huáinánzǐ*. Inserted *Lǎozǐ* phrases take three forms. There are individual quotations and clusters of quotations.

Some passages in the *Huáinánzǐ* which do not quote the *Lǎozǐ* appear in the Received *Wénzǐ* with a *Lǎozǐ* saying. The editor must have inserted such sayings, which occur at the beginning or the end of a section, or at the end of a paragraph within a section.[232] *Wénzǐ* 12.9, for example, paraphrases a *Huáinánzǐ* paragraph on warfare:

> 蓋聞善用兵者，必先修諸己而後求諸人；先為不可勝而後求勝。修己于人，求勝于敵。己未能治也，而攻人之亂，是猶以火救火，以水應水也，何所能制？[233]
>
> I have heard that those who are skilled at maneuvering troops must first cultivate it in themselves and only later demand it of others; they first ensure that they cannot be defeated and only later seek [to] defeat [others]. To cultivate yourself based on [the example of] others and to seek defeat based on [the condition of] the enemy is to attack the chaos of others while you have not yet managed to set yourself in order. This can be compared to putting out a blaze with fire or countering a flood with water. How can you control them?

The Received *Wénzǐ* this passage appears as follows:

> 老子曰：以政治國，以奇用兵。先為不可勝之政，而後求勝於敵，以未治而攻人之亂，是猶以火應火，以水應水也[234]
>
> Lǎozǐ said: "*Order the realm with orthodox policies, use the troops with unorthodox maneuvers*.[235] You must first make policies that ensure you cannot be defeated and only then seek to defeat the enemy. To attack the chaos of others while there is not yet order [in your own realm], can be compared to putting out a blaze with fire or countering a flood with water."

The Received *Wénzǐ* borrows what it considers the gist of this passage from *Huáinánzǐ* 12, the military tract in the *Huáinánzǐ*. The addition of a *Lǎozǐ* quotation,

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[232] The *Lǎozǐ* is quoted at the beginning of *Wénzǐ* 9.5 and 12.9, at the end of *Wénzǐ* 4.5, 9.6 and 12.2, and at the end of individual paragraphs within *Wénzǐ* 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 4.11 and 12.4.
[233] *Huáinánzǐ* 12.
[234] *Wénzǐ* 12.9 (excerpt).
[235] *Lǎozǐ* 57.

which does not appear in the *Huáinánzǐ*, and relates military strategy to state government, and the insertion of the graph 政 *zhèng* 'policies', which turns the phrase "make yourself invincible" into "create invincible policies", can be seen to politicize this *Huáinánzǐ* passage on warfare. The *Wénzǐ* section is no longer advice to the commander of an army, but to the ruler of a realm.

The Received *Wénzǐ* inserts *Lǎozǐ* quotations not only into passages borrowed from the *Huáinánzǐ*, but also into passages from other texts, such as the *Book of Odes* and *Remnants of Zhōu Writings* (for examples see Chapter 6).

Some Received *Wénzǐ* sections consist mainly of *Lǎozǐ* quotations, often from more than one *Lǎozǐ* chapter. In these sections, which relate not only to each other, but also to the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, influence from the *Lǎozǐ* is obvious:

- *Wénzǐ* 2.13 contains references to *Lǎozǐ* 6, 14, 15 25 and 52
- *Wénzǐ* 3.11 contains references to *Lǎozǐ* 6, 23, 42, 66, and 77
- *Wénzǐ* 8.11 contains references to *Lǎozǐ* 14, 20 and 60

These sections can be said to form a cluster in the Received *Wénzǐ*. To this cluster we may add the latter part of *Wénzǐ* 10.11:

> 故道不以雄武立，不以堅強勝，不以貪競得，立在天下推己，勝在天下自服，得在天下與之，不在於自取，故雌牝即立，柔弱即勝，仁義即得，不爭即莫能與之爭，故道之在於天下也，譬猶江海也。天之道，為者敗之，執者失之，夫欲名是大而求之爭之，吾見其不得已，而雖執而得之，不留也。夫名不可求而得也，在天下與之，與之者歸之，天下所歸者，德也，故云：上德者天下歸之，上仁者海內歸之，上義者一國歸之，上禮者一鄉歸之，無此四者，民不歸也。不歸用兵即危道也，故曰：「兵者，不祥之器，不得已而用之。」殺傷人，養而勿美，故曰：「死地，荊棘生焉，以悲哀泣之，以喪禮居之。」是以君子務於道德，不重用兵也。[236]
>
> Therefore, the Way means: not to acquire a position by means of masculine aggression, not to be victorious by means of a hard and strong attitude, and not to obtain goods out of desire or through struggle. Position comes when All under Heaven pushes you forward, victory comes when All under Heaven submits itself, and obtainment comes when All under Heaven offers it, not when you take it yourself. Therefore, if you adopt a female disposition you will acquire a position, if you adopt a weak and soft disposition you will be victorious, and if you adopt a humane and righteous disposition you will

[236] *Wénzǐ* 10.11 (excerpt).

obtain. *If you do not vie with others, no one will be able to vie with you*.[237] Therefore, *the position of the way in All under Heaven can be compared to that of rivers and seas*.[238]

As for the way of heaven, *those who actively practice it fail to get it, and those who grasp it lose it*.[239] Now, of those who wish their fame to be grand and yearn and strive for this, *we see that they do not obtain this*, and even if they grasp it and do obtain it, it does not last.[240] Now, fame cannot be obtained by yearning; it comes when All under Heaven offers it to you. Those who offer it turn to you. What All under Heaven turns to, is virtue. Therefore, I submit: to *those of the highest virtue*, the whole world shall turn, to *those of highest humaneness*, the area within the seas shall turn, to *those of the highest righteousness*, one realm shall turn, and to *those of the highest ritual propriety*, one region shall turn.[241] To those who lack all four of these the people shall not turn. If they do not turn to you and you force them by using arms, this is the way of peril. Therefore, I say: *arms are instruments of ill omen, use them only when you have no other options.* [You use them for] *killing or wounding other men to secure victory and not because they are beautiful*.[242] Therefore, I say: *the grounds of death are overgrown with thistles and thorns. In sorrow and grief, we shed tears here, in funeral rites we dwell here*.[243] Hence, the ruler devotes his attention to the Way and virtue, and does not value the use of arms.

Wénzǐ 10.11 argues against purposive action and aggression and in favor of a weak and soft disposition, as do the other, related sections. *Wénzǐ* 10.11 expresses this idea through the male versus female dichotomy, through the rivers and seas metaphor, and through numerous *Lǎozǐ* quotations, as do the other sections. The concluding lines of *Wénzǐ* 10.11 discuss warfare, the most extreme form of aggression and typical masculine conduct, and contain several *Lǎozǐ* quotes. The idea that the ruler "does not value the use of arms" is diametrically opposed to the five-fold classification of warfare in the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, which supports wars that benefit the people. In this matter, as in other matters, the Ancient *Wénzǐ* takes a view that differs from the *Lǎozǐ*. Therefore, the vehement rejection of warfare in the Received *Wénzǐ* most likely does not derive from the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, but directly from the *Lǎozǐ*.

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[237] *Lǎozǐ* 22 and *Lǎozǐ* 66.
[238] *Lǎozǐ* 32 and *Lǎozǐ* 66.
[239] *Lǎozǐ* 29.
[240] *Lǎozǐ* 29.
[241] *Lǎozǐ* 38.
[242] This *Wénzǐ* passage is corrupt. See *Lǎozǐ* 31 for a more elaborate and comprehensible variant.
[243] Cf. *Lǎozǐ* 30, 31 and 50. The phrase "grounds of death" only appears in *Lǎozǐ* 50. The phrase "overgrown with thistles and thorns" is copied from *Lǎozǐ* 30, where it describes "places where armies are stationed" instead of "grounds of death". Finally, "in sorrow and grief we shed tears here, in funeral rites we dwell here" is a paraphrase of *Lǎozǐ* 31.

In sum, the Received *Wénzǐ* inserts *Lǎozǐ* sayings in passages copied from Ancient *Wénzǐ*, *Huáinánzǐ* and other sources which have no *Lǎozǐ* quote. It also contains clusters of *Lǎozǐ* sayings, copied from either the Ancient *Wénzǐ* or, more likely, directly from the *Lǎozǐ*. The editor added these quotations to increase the "Daoist" caliber of the new *Wénzǐ*.

The *Zhōnghuángzǐ*

In addition to *Lǎozǐ* quotations, the Received *Wénzǐ* also quotes from another Daoist text, the *Zhōnghuángzǐ* 中黃子 (Master Middle-Yellow). One long paragraph in the Received *Wénzǐ* commences thus:

> 昔者中黃子曰：天有五方，地有五行，聲有五音，物有五味，色有五章，人有五位，故天地之間有二十五人也。上五有神人、真人、道人、至人、聖人，次五有德人、賢人、智人、善人、辯人，中五有公人、忠人、信人、義人、禮人，次五有士人、工人、虞人、農人、商人，下五有眾人、奴人、愚人、肉人、小人，上五之與下五，猶人之與牛馬也。聖人者以目視，以耳聽，以口言，以足行。真人者，不視而明，不聽而聰，不行而從，不言而公。故聖人所以動天下者，真人未嘗過焉，賢人所以矯世俗者，聖人未嘗觀焉。[244]
>
> In the past, Master Zhōnghuáng said: "Heaven has five directions, Earth has five phases, music has five notes, food has five flavors, color has five primary hues and man has five dispositions. Between Heaven and Earth there are twenty-five types of people.
>
> The highest five are the numinous man, the true man, the man of the Way, the accomplished man and the sagely man. The next five are the virtuous man, the worthy man, the wise man, the capable man and the eloquent man. The intermediate five are the impartial man, the loyal man, the trustworthy man, the righteous man and the ritual man. The next five are the knight, the artisan, the hunter, the farmer and the merchant. The lowest five are the layman, the servant, the fool, the boor and the petty man. The top five compare to the bottom five as human beings to cows and horses.
>
> The sagely man looks with his eyes, listens with his ears, speaks with his mouth, and walks with his feet. The true man sees clearly without looking, hears clearly without listening, he moves without walking, and is impartial without talking.
>
> Therefore, the true man has never made a mistake in the means by which the sagely man moves All under Heaven, whereas the sagely man has never observed the means by which the wise man straightens those who follow worldly customs.

[244] *Wénzǐ* 7.19 (excerpt).

Master Zhōnghuáng is an obscure character in the history of Chinese thought; only a small number of Daoist works mention him or quote his work [Dīng Yuánzhí 1996b: 378]. This quotation in the Received *Wénzǐ* is one of the few surviving quotations from the *Zhōnghuángzǐ*. But it is unique for other reasons too.

In the Received *Wénzǐ*, it is the only quotation with explicit reference to its source—not counting, of course, the numerous "Lǎozǐ says" passages in the text. The *Wénzǐ* does not mention the *Huáinánzǐ*, the *Mencius*, the *Guǎnzǐ* or even the canonical *Book of Changes* as its sources, although the provenance of their quotations is clear. That, in the case of Master Zhōnghuáng, the Received *Wénzǐ* does supply the name of its source, indicates the special status of the quotation.

The *Zhōnghuángzǐ* quotation consists of a categorized enumeration of 25 types of people. There is little philosophical value in this sociological taxonomy, which is thoroughly influenced by the Hàn dynasty categorical thinking that organizes the world according to the five directions, phases, flavors, tastes, colors and so on. Why does the Received *Wénzǐ* include a sociological classification of people without clear philosophical relevance?

The answer may lie in the five highest categories of people. The first four places are types of people admired mainly in Daoist writings: the numinous man 神人, the true man 真人, the man of the Way 道人 and the accomplished man 至人. These four are praised because they influence the world and change the course of action of all things without investing mental, let alone physical, effort. The sagely man 聖人, who features prominently—though not exclusively—in Confucian writings, ranks no higher than fifth. Other supposedly Confucian heroes, defined by concepts that are central to the Confucian tradition, such as the loyal man 忠人, the trustworthy man 信人, the righteous man 義人 and the ritual man 禮人, occupy places even closer to the fools and boors, or horses and cows. In short, this passage in *Wénzǐ* 7 can be seen as a Daoist adaptation of attempts by Confucian scholars to categorize people according to their ethical achievements [Christian Schwermann, personal communication, May 2003]. It is a deliberate attempt to canonize the superiority of Daoist heroes over those venerated in the Confucian tradition.

8.5. Phase Four: Making the Text more Discursive

The new *Wénzǐ* is a voluminous assemblage of passages from various sources imbued with distinct Daoist expressions. The fourth phase consists of moulding borrowed passages and added text into a homogeneous discursive form, by organizing them into 186 sections and combining these sections into 12 titled chapters.

8.5.1. Protagonists

Each of the 186 sections in the Received *Wénzǐ* is marked as speech by a philosophical master. This master is usually Lǎozǐ and occasionally Wénzǐ. Some speeches are preceded by a question. The questioner is usually Wénzǐ, but once Confucius and once King Píng:

total	*introductory statement*	*sections*
1	Confucius asks …, Lǎozǐ answers …	1.5
14	Wénzǐ asks …, Lǎozǐ answers …	5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7, 5.9, 5.11, 5.13, 5.15, 7.2, 7.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.12, 11.6
1	Wénzǐ says …	2.21
1	King Píng asks …, Wénzǐ answers …	5.20
169	Lǎozǐ says …	all other sections
186		

Table 8.3: Protagonists in the Received *Wénzǐ*

As early as 1981, when the discovery of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* was first heralded, specialists noted that not Lǎozǐ but Wénzǐ serves as advisor in the bamboo manuscript. Wénzǐ was the main protagonist in the original text, and someone changed his name into that of Lǎozǐ, thereby creating a peculiar text in which the master whose name titles the work plays but a minor role. The change from Wénzǐ to Lǎozǐ as main protagonist has been known for over two decades, but its implications and importance cannot be overemphasized.

The phrase "Lǎozǐ says" 老子曰 introduces 169 of the 186 sections in the Received *Wénzǐ*. Why was Lǎozǐ's name added? One possible reason is that Lǎozǐ's name adds weight to the text. After all, Lǎozǐ's voice is more authoritative than that of the little-known Wénzǐ—little known in the early third century CE, that is. Having words and ideas pronounced by the grand master, not by a mere disciple, enhances their chance of survival and persuasive powers. Authors in early China often use this technique. Fearing they might not be able to promote their ideas under their own name, they put them in the mouth of rulers (mythical or historical), ministers, generals,

and so on. This mostly applies to authors who wish to introduce new ideas, that need the fame of a ruler, minister or general for persuasion and transmission. The Received *Wénzǐ*, however, does not promote any spectacular new insights. Ideas in the text had been transmitted for centuries under different names (e.g., the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*). Therefore, increasing authority is not a plausible motivation for introducing Lǎozǐ as main protagonist, or at least not the only one. The underlying motivation must be more fundamental, especially if we consider Phases Two and Three, the addition of textual content and the enhancement of Daoist influences.

The Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ* can be considered as syntheses of pre-Hàn and early Hàn argumentative writings. They contain the gist of major philosophical currents to date and reflect the Daoist trend that, in the words of Sīmǎ Tán, "adopted the best elements of all the philosophical traditions handed down to his time." By putting these digests of pre-Hàn and early Hàn thought in the mouth of Lǎozǐ, the Received *Wénzǐ* appropriates this knowledge for Daoism and effectively makes Lǎozǐ the forefather of all Chinese thought. In this masterly falsification of the beginnings of Chinese thought, Lǎozǐ's sermons contain the germs of ideas that were later advocated and developed in more detail by different thinkers and schools. This may also explain why the Received *Wénzǐ* also borrows from other texts, including the *Mencius* and the *Guǎnzǐ*, and, intriguingly, why only one passage from each. The editor obviously pursued completeness: the Received *Wénzǐ* must contain knowledge from all important texts, including the "Confucian" *Mencius* and the "Legalist" *Guǎnzǐ*, so that all major thinkers and schools are indebted to Lǎozǐ.

If most passages in the Received *Wénzǐ* are ascribed to Lǎozǐ, how are we to understand this text? As noted, because of Wénzǐ's minor role in the text, Cleary [1992] calls his work the "Further Teachings of Lao-tzu". This suggests that the Received *Wénzǐ* is a sequel to the *Lǎozǐ*. I believe that the *Wénzǐ* editor may have had yet higher hopes. He aspired for his work to be seen as a prequel to the *Lǎozǐ*; not the *further* teachings of Lǎozǐ, but his *actual* teachings. In this scheme of things, Wénzǐ would have been present when Lǎozǐ preached his views and, as a committed student, written down the wise words of his master. If the *Wénzǐ* contained the actual teachings of Lǎozǐ, the *Lǎozǐ* would become a mere florilegium of his wisest sayings.

That the *Wénzǐ* would contain the full text of Lǎozǐ's sermons, as recorded by his disciple Wénzǐ, would help to explain the lack of ideological buildup and structural consistency in this work. The *Wénzǐ* contains the gist of a *Huáinánzǐ*

argument in one section, which serves as a closed and independent unit: there is little or no connection between subsequent sections and chapters and there are indeed inconsistencies and contradictions between them. The book need not be read from beginning to end. Readers may randomly select one or several sections at their convenience. As it is perfectly understandable that Lǎozǐ, or any speaker, can preach a theory today that is not entirely consistent with another theory propagated last month or even irreconcilable with a theory proposed a year ago, this collection of speeches need not be consistent throughout. I am not trying to say that the editor intentionally increased inconsistencies to make the new text more authentic, but its dialogic structure gave him the freedom not to worry about such inconsistencies.

The few sections with deviant introductory phrasings are no less intriguing. In *Wénzǐ* 1.5 (translated earlier, in section 6.2.1), a *Lǎozǐ* saying is preceded by a question from none other than Confucius. *Wénzǐ* 1.5 is surrounded by sections in which Lǎozǐ appears alone. Whence this remarkable dialogic structure? Is it a mistake, as Dīng Yuánzhí [1999a: 22] suggests, a slip of the brush that turned Wénzǐ's inquiry into a question by Confucius? I think not. Confucius is purposefully introduced here as a conversation partner of Lǎozǐ, because it confirms one of the most important meetings in the history of Chinese thought, that between Confucius and Lǎozǐ, the patriarchs of Confucianism and Daoism, respectively. As a devoted student of Lǎozǐ, carefully copying out his sermons, Wénzǐ is portrayed as having witnessed this meeting and reported on it in his text. That this meeting probably never took place is irrelevant. What matters is that the theory of such a meeting existed at the time of the *Wénzǐ* revision. Confucius' meeting with Lǎozǐ is described in various sources, mainly Daoist: the Confucian sage is portrayed in them as asking Lǎozǐ for advice. The *Zhuāngzǐ* contains various accounts of meetings between the two, as does the *Historical Records*. In Lǎozǐ's biography in *Historical Records* 63, we find that Confucius visits Lǎozǐ in the Zhōu archives, where the latter works as archivist, and asks him about rites. In *Historical Records* 47, Confucius offers Lǎozǐ a parting gift of words. The Received *Wénzǐ* corroborates these accounts and adds further textual evidence of the meeting. It confirms Lǎozǐ's superiority over Confucius, for it is the latter who seeks advice from the former. In *Wénzǐ* 1.5, Confucius inquires about the Way and Lǎozǐ replies by encouraging him to meditate.

In fourteen sections, mostly in *Wénzǐ* 5, Wénzǐ questions Lǎozǐ, and in one section, *Wénzǐ* 2.21, he makes a statement on his own. This discursive form, a disciple

questioning his master and presenting his own views, is reminiscent of other early Chinese argumentative writings. In the *Analects*, for example, Confucius answers questions from his students and the most influential students, such as Zēngzǐ 曾子, Zǐgòng 子貢 and Zǐxià 子夏, are entitled to making statements themselves. Wénzǐ's questions to Lǎozǐ can be seen as an attempt to authenticate or pseudo-historicize the Received *Wénzǐ*. This is reinforced by the change of questions from direct to indirect speech, as in "King Píng asked: 'What about carrying out government?'" (平王曰：為政奈何？; strip 0885) versus "Wénzǐ asked about government" (文子問政; *Wénzǐ* 5.13). The latter version is no longer a question. The questioner simply states the topic of inquiry. This formula is reminiscent of early philosophical texts, such as the *Analects*. For example, "Zǐxià asked about filial piety" (子夏問孝; *Analects* 2.8) or "Zǐgòng asked about being a gentleman" (子貢問君子; *Analects* 2.13). In this light, and in view of the text's mentioning of Confucius, the Received *Wénzǐ* could be seen as a Daoist counterpart to the Confucian *Analects*.

King Píng occurs once in the received text. *Wénzǐ* 5.20 contains the only remnant of the original dialogic discursive structure that survived revision. Why did the editor find it necessary to retain the character of King Píng in the text? After all, he could easily have written this section as a dialogue between Wénzǐ and Lǎozǐ. At the time of revision, the chronological impossibility of King Píng of Zhōu and Lǎozǐ's disciple Wénzǐ appearing together, as noted by Bān Gù, was known. So why keep King Píng in the text? Perhaps this has to do with Bān Gù's comment. If the bibliographical treatise in *Hàn History* claims that the *Wénzǐ* mentions King Píng, and the revised text does not, people would suspect falsification and denounce the text. Since Bān Gù notes only *that* the *Wénzǐ* mentions King Píng, not how many times, one section containing his name will suffice.

In sum, the phrases that introduce the 186 sections in the Received *Wénzǐ* suggest that they mostly contain the philosophy of Lǎozǐ, who gave advice to Confucius, and that of his disciple Wénzǐ, who in turn advised King Píng. The editor of the *Wénzǐ* thus appears well informed of current ideas about these figures and their relation, as recorded in canonical texts such as the *Historical Records* and *Hàn History*—and explicitly confirms them.

8.5.2. Chapter Titles

The Received *Wénzǐ* comprises twelve chapters, each with a new title. In the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, chapter titles appear to summarize the chapters they represent. The bamboo strips mention "Sageness and Wisdom" 聖智 and "The Enlightened King" 明王 as chapter titles, because sageness and wisdom are important concepts in the bamboo manuscript and several bamboo strips emphasize the importance of good government by an enlightened sage-king. In the Received *Wénzǐ*, chapter titles work differently:

no	*title*		*affiliation*
1	道原	The Origin of the Way	*Huáinánzǐ* 1, *Four Canons* 4
2	精誠	Pure Sincerity	*Huáinánzǐ* 7
3	九守	The Nine Preservations	*Guǎnzǐ* 55
4	符言	Words of Magic	*Huáinánzǐ* 14, *Master of the Spirit Valley* 12
5	道德	The Way and Virtue	*Lǎozǐ*
6	上德	Superior Virtue	*Lǎozǐ* 38
7	微明	Subtle Insight	*Lǎozǐ* 36
8	自然	Spontaneity	*Lǎozǐ*, *Zhuāngzǐ*, *Balanced Discourses* 54
9	下德	Inferior Virtue	*Lǎozǐ* 38
10	上仁	Superior Humaneness	*Lǎozǐ* 38
11	上義	Superior Righteousness	*Lǎozǐ* 38
12	上禮	Superior Propriety	*Lǎozǐ* 38

Table 8.4: Received *Wénzǐ* Chapter Titles and Their Affiliation

Chapter titles in the Received *Wénzǐ* do not summarize content, nor do they function as catch phrases copied from the first line of the chapter, as is common in Chinese philosophical writings.[245] Instead, the new titles serve to advertise the philosophical affiliation of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

The title of the opening chapter in the Received *Wénzǐ* probably derives from the first chapter of the *Huáinánzǐ*, which resembles *Wénzǐ* 1 in content and carries the title "Tracing the Way to its Origin". The *Huáinánzǐ* itself probably borrows this title from the *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor*, the last canon of which is titled "The Origin of the Way". Similar titles abound among the writings of the late Warring States era and after. For instance, Lù Jiǎ's *New Discussions* opens with a chapter titled "The Foundation of the Way" 道基 and the *Pheasant Cap Master* 鶡冠子 contains a

[245] Notably, the terms "words of magic" 符言 and "subtle insight" 微明 do not appear in the chapters for which they serve as titles, and indeed nowhere in the entire main text of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

chapter labeled “The Starting Point of the Way” 道端. Obviously, with the Way as the cosmological foundation of the universe, the source and natural order of all things, there was a tendency among Chinese authors to mention this term in the title of a chapter, preferably in the opening chapter that serves as the foundation of their work.

The titles of *Wénzǐ* 2 “Pure Sincerity” 精誠 and *Wénzǐ* 4 “Words of Magic” 符言 resemble those of *Huáinánzǐ* 7 “Pure Spirit” 精神 and *Huáinánzǐ* 14 “Words of Illustration” 詮言, respectively. The *Master of the Spirit Valley* 鬼谷子 contains a chapter with the exact same title as *Wénzǐ* 4, but this may be incidental because the content overlap between *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* in general and *Wénzǐ* 4 and *Huáinánzǐ* 14 in particular indicates that the similarity of titles is no mere coincidence.

The title of chapter 3 in the *Wénzǐ*, “The Nine Preservations” 九守, also heads chapter 55 in the *Guǎnzǐ* 管子, but their respective content is unrelated. The nine things to be preserved in the *Guǎnzǐ* all have to do with the ruler: his position, his clarity of vision, his capacity to observe, and so on. The editor of the Received *Wénzǐ* may have borrowed the idea from the *Guǎnzǐ*, but the nine things he wants to see preserved have Daoist connotations:

- 守虛 “Preserving Emptiness”
- 守無 “Preserving Nothingess”
- 守平 “Preserving Evenness”
- 守易 “Preserving Alternation”
- 守清 “Preserving Purity”
- 守真 “Preserving Trueness”
- 守靜 “Preserving Quietude”
- 守法 “Preserving Laws”
- 守弱 “Preserving Weakness”
- 守樸 “Preserving Simplicity”

There are in fact ten subtitles, which is why some *Wénzǐ* editions list this chapter as “The Ten Preservations” 十守. Most concepts mentioned play important roles in Daoist writings: simplicity, emptiness, quietude, purity, and so on.

Unsurprisingly, most chapter titles in the Received *Wénzǐ* relate to the *Lǎozǐ*, which is in line with the choice of Lǎozǐ as its new, leading protagonist.

The terms "the Way and virtue" combine to form not only the title of *Wénzǐ* 5, but also of the *Canon of the Way and Virtue* 道德經, another name for the *Lǎozǐ*.

The title of *Wénzǐ* 7 "Subtle Insight" derives from *Lǎozǐ* 36, which offers a definition of the term:

> 將欲歙之，必故張之；將欲弱之，必故強之；將欲廢之，必故興之；將欲取之，必故與之。是謂微明。[246]
>
> What you desire to contract, you must firmly stretch; what you desire to weaken, you must firmly strengthen; what you desire to destroy, you must firmly set up; and what you desire to impoverish, you must firmly enrich. This is called subtle insight.

The term "subtle insight" is typical *Lǎozǐ* terminology. It occurs in no other surviving pre-Hàn text.

The title of *Wénzǐ* 8, "Spontaneity", is another key concept in the *Lǎozǐ*. One passage even places it above the Way:

> 人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然．[247]
>
> Man emulates Earth, Earth emulates Heaven, Heaven emulates the Way and the Way emulates that which is so of itself.

Spontaneity also occurs in other texts traditionally labeled Daoist, such as the *Zhuāngzǐ*. It is also the title of *Balanced Discourses* 54, which happens to be the chapter in which Wáng Chōng mentions—and praises—Lǎozǐ and his student Wénzǐ.

The titles of *Wénzǐ* 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12 form a sequence: superior virtue, inferior virtue, superior humaneness, superior righteousness and superior propriety, respectively. They derive straight from *Lǎozǐ* 38, which mentions them in the same order.

In sum, the twelve chapter titles enhance the Received *Wénzǐ*'s discursive form and reinforce its philosophical affiliation. They indicate that the text is primarily associated with the *Lǎozǐ*, but also informed by the wider philosophical debate leading up to the time of its compilation.

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[246] *Lǎozǐ* 36 (excerpt).
[247] *Lǎozǐ* 25 (excerpt).

8.6. Philosophical Relevance of the Received *Wénzǐ*

What motivates someone to take up a fragmentary text (the Ancient *Wénzǐ*), add numerous passages from other texts (mainly from one other text, the *Huáinánzǐ*), intersperse borrowed passages with *Lǎozǐ* quotations, and mould the result into a new discursive form? In short, what is the politico-philosophical relevance of the Received *Wénzǐ*?

One hypothesis, proposed by Ho Che-wah [1998: 185 n. 109] and supported by Lau and Ames [1998: 6], is that the *Wénzǐ* serves as a politically correct version of the *Huáinánzǐ*. When Liú Ān in 139 BCE offered the *Huáinánzǐ* to Emperor Wǔ, the ruler was pleased with the text and stored it in his personal library, but when Liú Ān was executed in 122 BCE on a charge of high treason, the *Huáinánzǐ* probably became a proscribed text, prevented from circulation. Ho suggests that the *Wénzǐ* was created as a legal version of the *Huáinánzǐ*, enabling the gist of this text to remain in circulation and preventing it from extinction. According to my dating, however, *Huáinánzǐ* passages were added to the *Wénzǐ* only after five scholars had written commentaries on the *Huáinánzǐ*, which was then no longer proscribed. Moreover, by breaking the *Huáinánzǐ*'s argumentative structure and simplifying its linguistic style, the *Wénzǐ* editor shows little interest in the literary and argumentative talents of Liú Ān for which his contemporaries praised him. The claim that the Received *Wénzǐ* was created to save Liú Ān's work from extinction overstates the *Wénzǐ* editor's esteem for the *Huáinánzǐ* and understates the uniqueness of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

Still, why would someone copy nearly a quarter of the *Huáinánzǐ* into his own new text? The *Huáinánzǐ* was created, as its Postface explains, to supplement the *Lǎozǐ*, which "speaks of the Way but not of its implications" 言道而不言事.[248] The *Huáinánzǐ* thus explains what Lǎozǐ means but does not say, so that readers can implement the opaque *Lǎozǐ* sayings in their daily lives. The *Wénzǐ* editor agrees with the *Huáinánzǐ*'s intention, not with its application of this idea. The editor, too, sees the need for a comprehensive explanation of the *Lǎozǐ*, but thinks the *Huáinánzǐ* compilers got it wrong. They explain the *Lǎozǐ* in difficult Chǔ dialect, with detailed expositions on astronomical and astrological phenomena, geographical peculiarities and calendrical conventions, and with unnecessary quotations, anecdotes, details, and so on. The *Wénzǐ* editor radically trimmed the *Huáinánzǐ*, leaving only what he

[248] I thank Michael Puett for drawing my attention to this phrase in *Huáinánzǐ* 21.

considers the philosophically relevant parts. He did not create a deformed *Huáinánzǐ* to prevent imperial censors from noting its relation to the outlawed original, but adapted the text to his own linguistic and argumentative preferences, and to his view of effective *Lǎozǐ* exegesis.

What role did the editor envisage for his text in the politico-philosophical debate of his time? The Received *Wénzǐ* was created in turbulent times, with major political, social and cultural changes. The Hàn dynasty had ended after decades of decay, the empire was divided into several spheres of political power, and new material and immaterial elements were introduced to Chinese society. We cannot ascribe the creation of the Received *Wénzǐ* to one simple, singular motive, as various elements may have played a role.

The Received *Wénzǐ* was created after the invention and spread of paper in China in the second century CE. The paper revolution led to an upsurge in text production and a growth in the demand for written works, including canonical scriptures. Accordingly, in the third century CE, many new texts were created and old literature was revised. This period witnessed the creation of the current versions of the *Zhuāngzǐ* and the *Lièzǐ*, and the demand for texts may have also played a role in the compilation of the Received *Wénzǐ*.

Another new element in Chinese society was Buddhism. The Received *Wénzǐ*, as Zēng Dáhuī 曾達輝 [2000] notes, appears in a time of rivalry between indigenous Daoism and foreign Buddhism. To counterbalance Buddhism with its many canonical works, Zēng suggests, the Daoists forged texts to supplement their only sacred scripture—the *Lǎozǐ* of only 5.000 words—and increase the transmitted teachings of Lǎozǐ. The Received *Wénzǐ* may indeed have been intended to countervail growing Buddhist influence, though we might have expected anti-Buddhist sentiments in the text or the confirmation of the theory of "Lǎozǐ's conversion of the barbarians" 老子化胡, which sees Buddha as an inferior reincarnation of Lǎozǐ after he had disappeared to the West.

Even if the Received *Wénzǐ* was not exclusively directed against Buddhism, it may have been conceived as a rejoinder of other texts or philosophies as well, including Confucianism. The fall of the Hàn dynasty, which officially endorsed Confucianism, diminished the influence of that ideology. It seems that the *Wénzǐ* editor, riding the wind of changes, wanted to confirm Daoism's superiority over Confucianism. The Received *Wénzǐ* provides material evidence for Lǎozǐ's meeting

with Confucius, which confirms the latter's inferior position, and it quotes the *Zhōnghuángzǐ*'s extraordinary categorization of people, in which Daoist sages rank higher than Confucian ones.

Finally, the Received *Wénzǐ* was created at a time when Lǎozǐ had been claimed by religious leaders who led rebellions in his name. Whereas these religious figures had deified Lǎozǐ, the Received *Wénzǐ* can be seen to revive and strengthen his philosophical tradition. The Received *Wénzǐ* confirms contemporary ideas about Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ: that the former was a teacher of the latter, and that these masters gave advice to Confucius and King Píng, respectively, making clear that the Daoist worldview, as propagated by Lǎozǐ and Wénzǐ, was superior. As a new, yet age-old book, the Received *Wénzǐ* sought to prove that Lǎozǐ was not some deity or immortal, but an actual historical figure, a man of great wisdom, who set the wheels of Chinese thought in motion.

9. *Wénzǐ* Reception

Chapters 1 through 8 of this work focus primarily on the author's perspective, as I analyze how, when, by whom and why the Ancient *Wénzǐ* and the Received *Wénzǐ* were created. The exact dates of both texts may be difficult to ascertain, but both *Wénzǐ*'s are embedded in specific historical contexts and were conceived as tools for influencing contemporary debate. Whether or not the author and editor succeed depends above all on how their texts were received. Given the importance of the reader in the creation and transmission of texts, the focus in this chapter shifts from *intentio auctoris* to *intentio lectoris*, as I analyze the reader's interpretation of the *Wénzǐ*. From the major revision to the present, many people saw a copy of the *Wénzǐ*. (The Received *Wénzǐ* that is, because after the major revision the Ancient *Wénzǐ* existed only in a closed Former Hàn tomb, unavailable to readers until its disentombment in 1973. Hence, in this chapter, unless otherwise specified, "*Wénzǐ*" refers to the Received *Wénzǐ*.) Here I present their implicit or explicit views on the text, in a brief reception history of the *Wénzǐ*.

Reception history is part of what has come to be called reception theory, a field of discussion in literary theory that arose in the late 1960s, with Jauss and Iser as its main proponents.[249] The underlying premise of reception theory is that the author's intention and the reader's interpretation of a text are independent and that the latter decides how the text is received. As different readers interpret the text differently,

> there is thus not a single pre-determined 'adequate' reception of a given text on which literary theory needs to focus. Instead, all actual receptions in the past and the present are valid as such, and their particular characteristics become the objects of study for a 'reception history'.[250]

In accordance with this principle, I will review receptions of the *Wénzǐ* from the third century CE to the present.

Chinese society attaches great importance to the written word. Ancient texts are transmitted, read and discussed throughout history by numerous scholars, who

[249] Standard works on Reception Theory include Jauss [1970], Grimm [1977], Suleiman and Crosman [1980], Holub [1984].
[250] Cornelius J. Holtorf, unpublished paper: https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/citd/holtorf/2.4.html.

often put their comments in writing, as palpable receptions of the texts. As erudite bibliophiles, they commented on a wide variety of texts. Hence, their names often appear in modern studies of ancient philosophical works. Yet, the *Wénzǐ* is particularly suited for a stand-alone analysis of its reception history, for three reasons.

(1) The *Wénzǐ*'s remarkable textual history. Initially created in the early Former Hàn, the text was thoroughly revised after the Latter Hàn. Chinese history witnessed the publication of innumerable "forgeries", but the extent to which the Received *Wénzǐ* draws on one other text, the *Huáinánzǐ*, is truly exceptional.

(2) The diversity of *Wénzǐ* receptions. Any book will generate positive and negative appraisals, but views are rarely as extreme as those on the *Wénzǐ*: from veneration and canonization to condemnation and rejection.

(3) The *Wénzǐ*'s archaeological fortune. The exceptional discovery of a centuries-old bamboo manuscript clarified the text's creation, but also had a profound effect on *Wénzǐ* reception.

The many *Wénzǐ* receptions call for a selective approach. From a broad perspective, various historical periods yield internally coherent but mutually exclusive evaluations of the *Wénzǐ*. I therefore combine chronological and thematic approaches. Naturally, not all readers have read each other's work, while they all have their own agenda. Hence, there are readers whose evaluation of the *Wénzǐ* does not match the overall trend in *Wénzǐ* reception. Important exceptions (such as Liǔ Zōngyuán or Dù Dàojiān) receive due treatment; others, who did not have a decisive influence on the *Wénzǐ* debate, only appear in the footnotes.

I divide the reception history of the *Wénzǐ* into three phases, each with its own characteristic assessment of the *Wénzǐ*:

Phase I:	reverence
Phase II:	rejection
Phase III:	revaluation

As broad historic currents, Phase I lasts from the Period of the Three Kingdoms until the Northern Sòng dynasty, Phase II starts in the Southern Sòng dynasty and lasts until the Dìngzhōu discovery in 1973, and Phase III continues from the Dìngzhōu discovery to the present. These are no sharp dividing lines, for there have been scholars who revered the *Wénzǐ* even after Phase I or rejected the text before Phase II.

The reception history of the *Wénzǐ* offers a unique opportunity to engage with fundamental notions in the realm of texts and intertextuality, within a clearly delineated cultural framework. What motivates different receptions of a text? How is the text relevant to its various readers? And how relevant is it to them? What is the status of authorship and authenticity? While I address these questions specifically for the *Wénzǐ*, they are obviously not limited to this text or to Chinese philosophical-literary discourse.

9.1. Phase I: Reverence

Phase I is characterized by positive appraisal of the *Wénzǐ*, which eventually resulted in its imperial canonization. Later readers were, as a rule, ill disposed towards the *Wénzǐ*, but the distinction between Phase I and subsequent phases is not just that of positive versus negative appraisal. Rather, they represent different modes of reception. In Phase I, the *Wénzǐ* forms an integral part of a living intellectual tradition. Valued as authentic and functional, the text was transmitted, studied, discussed, quoted and praised. In Phases II and III, the *Wénzǐ* was no longer seen as directly relevant to contemporary literary, philosophical, political or religious debates. Instead, it became a topic of critical scholarly debate, at a distance from lived experience.

The first phase of *Wénzǐ* reception starts with Cáo Zhí's memorial of 231 CE, which quotes the *Wénzǐ*, and lasts until Dù Dàojiān, the last person to write a full-blown *Wénzǐ* commentary in imperial China. In terms of chronology, it lasts from the 3rd century to the mid-12th century (the fall of the Northern Sòng), and finally extends to Dù Dàojiān and his associates, who formed a Daoist circle in the late-13th and early-14th century, when the critical scholars of Phase II had already made themselves heard. While they were aware of the latter, Dù Dàojiān *cum suis* still belong to Phase I.

Phase I produced various receptions. Some scholars registered a copy of the *Wénzǐ* in a library catalogue; others quoted the text or wrote a commentary on it. I distinguish five types of reception:

(1) catalogues
(2) encyclopedias
(3) argumentative writings

(4) commentaries

(5) eulogies

Not all receptions conveniently match one type. One prominent example is Wǔ Zétiān 武則天 (625-705), China's only female emperor and the only pre-modern woman known to have read the *Wénzǐ*. She quotes it twice in her *Regulations for Officials* 臣軌.[251] Once on the first page of her preface, and once several pages on, where she quotes a longer *Wénzǐ* passage and offers comments (italicized in translation below):

> 文子曰。夫道者無爲無形。[湛然安靜。莫見其形。]内以修身。外以理人。[言理人脩身。皆資於道。]故君臣有道則忠惠。[君惠而臣忠也。]父子有道則慈孝。[父慈而子孝也。]士庶有道則相親。[更相親愛。]故有道即和同。無道即離貳。[言人有道者雖疏遠而必和同。無道者雖親近而必離貳。言道不可不貴也。]由是觀之。無道不宜也。[道周萬物。故所在皆宜也。]
>
> The *Wénzǐ* states: The Way is non-active and has no form.
> *It is profoundly quiet and no one sees its form.*
> It is used internally to cultivate oneself and externally to regulate others.
> *What the text calls "regulating others" and "cultivating oneself" are both qualities that belong to the Way.*
> When ruler and ministers have the Way, they are generous and loyal.
> *The ruler is generous and the ministers are loyal.*
> When father and sons have the Way, they show kindness and piety.
> *The father shows kindness and his sons show piety.*
> When gentry and commoners have the Way, they respect one another.
> *There is mutual respect and care.*
> Therefore, having the Way means harmony and agreement, lacking the Way means diffusion and disagreement.
> *This means that when people possess the Way, they harmonize and agree no matter how distant or remote they are from one another; and when they lack the Way, they diffuse and differ no matter how close or near they are to one another. In other words, the Way must be respected.*
> From this point of view, lacking the Way is always unsuitable.
> *The Way encompasses all things. Hence, wherever it is, it is suitable.*

Empress Wǔ's *Regulations for Officials* is an important document in *Wénzǐ* reception, for it shows that the highest echelons of society read, admired and quoted the text, and felt inspired to write comments. Wǔ's work is characteristic for Phase I, because it

[251] *Regulations for Officials* has escaped the attention of *Wénzǐ* specialists. I thank Norman Harry Rothschild for bringing it to my attention. The first quotation is from *Wénzǐ* 12.3; the second, with comments, from *Wénzǐ* 5.1. For details on Wǔ Zétiān's work, see Rothschild [2003].

also quotes from the *Huáinánzǐ* without noting the intertextual relationship. But *Regulations* is not easily classified. As a prescriptive and propagandist document, in which Wǔ attempts to ground her authority within Confucian and Daoist traditions, it may be categorized as an argumentative composition. Quoting freely from the lore of the ancient canon, *Regulations* is also encyclopedic in scope. And Wǔ's comments on the *Wénzǐ* would classify her text as a commentary. But rather than invalidating the typology, *Regulations* corroborates the multiple usages of the *Wénzǐ* in Phase I.

Reverence for the *Wénzǐ* dominates throughout Phase I. Still, given the text's dubious provenance and its reliance on *Huáinánzǐ*, even if we bear in mind traditional Chinese regard for textual seniority and citation, we may well ask: Whence this *Wénzǐ* veneration? How did the *Wénzǐ* obtain the status of canonical scripture? And why was—in a culture that set great store by the memorization of texts—the *Huáinánzǐ* relationship not noticed, or at least not brought to bear on the issue of its canonization?

9.1.1. Catalogues

A basic form of reception involves those sources that simply attest to the transmission of the text. As noted, paper manuscript from 751, discovered in Dūnhuáng, is the oldest extant (partial) edition of the text and the first direct testimony of its transmission. Indirect testimony of the *Wénzǐ*'s transmission throughout Phase I is provided by library catalogues.[252] These bibliographic sources confirm unremitting interest in the text, and potential readership in the imperial palace and outside. Although the catalogues merely report the presence of a *Wénzǐ* copy in the library, their additional value for *Wénzǐ* reception is twofold.

First, the catalogues present no criticism of the *Wénzǐ*. This distinguishes them from the "Treatise on Arts and Literature" 藝文志 in Bān Gù's *Hàn History*, the first bibliographical inventory to mention a *Wénzǐ*. The Hàn dynasty historiographer probably saw a copy of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, not the received text. His work is nonetheless relevant for later *Wénzǐ* reception, because he notes the anachronism of Wénzǐ being at the same time a disciple of Lǎozǐ and a contemporary of Confucius (a

[252] These catalogues list a copy of the *Wénzǐ*: Lù Xiūjìng's *Catalogue of Scriptures in the Monastery of the Mysterious Capital*; *Seven Records* 七錄 by Ruǎn Xiàoxù 阮孝緒 (479-536); *Book of the Suí* "Treatise on Canons and Classics" 隋書・經籍志 by Wèi Zhēng 魏徵 (580-643); *Old Book of the Táng* "Treatise on Canons and Classics" 舊唐書・經籍志 by Liú Xù 劉煦 (887-946); and *New Book of the Táng* "Treatise on Arts and Literature" 新唐書・藝文志 by Ōuyáng Xiū 歐陽修 (1007-1072).

prevalent belief in Bān Gù's time), but also an advisor to the much earlier King Píng of Zhōu (a prominent feature of the Ancient *Wénzǐ*). Bān Gù uses the charged term "inaccurately ascribed" 依託, which he reserves for texts that cannot have originated from their alleged author.[253] His critical note on the *Wénzǐ*'s authenticity is absent from later bibliographical treatises. For example, the bibliographical treatise in the *Book of the Suí* only states that Wénzǐ was a disciple of Lǎozǐ, and those in both *Books of the Táng* merely list a *Wénzǐ* in twelve chapters with no additional comment. To compare, they do give Liè Yùkòu 列禦寇 as author of the *Lièzǐ*. As later imperial catalogues were modeled after Bān Gù's work, their omission of his critical note on the *Wénzǐ* is notable, especially because the anachronism was to pose a major problem for the critical scholars in Phase II.

Second, the catalogues almost invariably place the *Wénzǐ* in the Daoist section, where it is flanked by *Zhuāngzǐ*, *Lièzǐ* and *Pheasant Cap Master*, and thereby enhance the view that Wénzǐ was a disciple of Lǎozǐ. Whereas the *Wénzǐ* is considered Daoist, the *Huáinánzǐ* is listed under Eclectic, together with texts such as the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ*. This categorization of the *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ* mirrors that of Bān Gù. But Bān Gù saw the Ancient *Wénzǐ*, which differs markedly from the *Huáinánzǐ*, whereas later librarians saw the Received *Wénzǐ*, which draws heavily on that text. Yet, placing *Huáinánzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* in different categories, they present the two works as unrelated.[254]

These library catalogues were not compiled by textual critics, let alone *Wénzǐ* or *Huáinánzǐ* specialists. Still, their omission of Bān Gù's critical comment and their apparent unawareness of the relationship between *Huáinánzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* signal the absence of a critical view towards the *Wénzǐ*. This absence is characteristic for Phase I.

9.1.2. Encyclopedias

[253] For example, under the *Tiānyǐ* 天乙 entry, Bān Gù writes: "Tiānyǐ is another name for Tāng 湯 [founder of the Shāng dynasty]. These writings do not date back to the Yīn 殷 [i.e., Shāng] dynasty. They are all inaccurately ascribed [to Tiānyǐ]" 天乙謂湯，其言非殷時，皆依託也.

[254] One exception is Lù Xiūjìng's small and non-categorized *Catalogue of Scriptures in the Monastery of the Mysterious Capital*, which places *Huáinánzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* side by side. This could indicate that Lù noticed one text's heavy reliance on the other; but he lists the *Huáinánzǐ* as authored by Liú Ān and the *Wénzǐ* as authored by a certain Wén Yáng. This catalogue sharply distinguishes "author" 撰 from "editor/compiler" 修撰. For example, the catalogue lists Gě Hóng 葛洪 as *compiler* of the *Biographies of Divine Transcendents* 神仙傳 and as *author* of *The Master Who Embraces Simplicity* 抱朴子. If Lù Xiūjìng had suspected intertextual borrowing, he would presumably have listed either *Wénzǐ* or *Huáinánzǐ* as an edited work.

The second type of reception is represented by sources that I collectively label encyclopedias. These include the broadly oriented "categorized writings" 類書, a genre customarily translated as "encyclopedia", but also specialized works of similarly encyclopedic nature, dealing with subjects such as agriculture, cosmology and government, that are usually excluded from the former genre. All consist of excerpts from a wide range of sources and occasionally furnish these with comments.

Encyclopedias compiled in Phase I incorporate phrases or even entire passages from the *Wénzǐ*.[255] These works not only attest to the wide circulation of the *Wénzǐ*, but also show that it was considered a valuable source for quotation. Their compilers scrutinized the *Wénzǐ* for passages relevant to their topic.

The *Essential Techniques for the Peasantry* 齊民要術 by Jiǎ Sīxié 賈思勰 (fl. 6th c.), one of the leading agronomists in Chinese history, contains references to some 200 ancient texts. Chapter 4 contains this passage from what is now *Wénzǐ* 6.3:

> 文子曰：冬冰可折，夏木可結，時難得而易失。木方盛，雖日採之而復生，秋風下霜，一夕而零。
>
> The *Wénzǐ* has: "In the winter, ice can be chopped up. In the summer, trees can be knotted. The right time is hard to find and easy to lose. When trees are in bloom, even if you pick from them the whole day they still produce more, but when autumn winds send down frost, they wither in one night."

Jiǎ comments on this passage that "it is hard to achieve things for those who act against the right time" 非時者功難立.

In his *General Principles of the Five Phases* 五行大義, Xiāo Jí 蕭吉 (ca. 525-ca. 606) also quotes long *Wénzǐ* passages, including this one from *Wénzǐ* 3.2, which explicitly refers to the five phases:

> 文子云：人受天地變化而生，一月而膏，二月而脈，三月而胞，四月而肌，五月而筋，六月而骨，七月而成形，八月而動，九月而躁，十月而生。形骸已成，五藏乃形，外為表，中為裏，頭員法天，足方象地，天有四時、五行、九星、三百六十日，人亦有四支、五藏、九竅、三百六十節。天有風雨寒暑，人亦有喜怒哀樂。

[255] In addition to the encyclopedias mentioned in the main text, these texts also contain *Wénzǐ* excerpts: *Categorized Collection of Literature* 藝文類聚 by Ōuyáng Xún 歐陽詢 (557-641); *Excerpts from Books in the Northern Hall* 北堂書鈔 by Yú Shìnán 虞世南 (558-638); *Anthology of Texts on the Essence of Government* 群書治要 by Wèi Zhēng 魏徵 (580-643); *Writings for Elementary Instruction* 初學記 by Xú Jiān 徐堅 (659-729); *Forest of Ideas* 意林 by Mǎ Zǒng 馬總 (d. 823). In addition, the *Wénzǐ* is quoted in several encyclopedic works discovered in Dūnhuáng [Dīng Yuánzhí 1999b: 25-27].

> The *Wénzǐ* has: "Having undergone the transmutations of Heaven and Earth, man is conceived. In the first month, there is congelation. In the second month, veins appear. In the third month, the embryo takes shape. In the fourth, there is muscle, in the fifth, tendon, and in the sixth, bone. In the seventh month, it completes itself. In the eight, it moves. In the ninth month, it becomes restless. In the tenth month, it is born. Once the skeleton is complete, the five organs take shape. The senses are the outward and the organs the inward [regulators]. The head's round shape emulates Heaven. The square feet resemble Earth. Heaven has four seasons, five phases, nine planets and 360 days. Correspondingly, man has four limbs, five organs, nine apertures and 360 joints. Heaven has wind, rain, cold and heat. Correspondingly, man has happiness and anger, sorrow and joy.

Elsewhere Xiāo Jí quotes and comments extensively on Master Zhōnghuáng's inventory of 25 types of people (contained in *Wénzǐ* 7.19), which also relates to his interest in the theory of the five phases.

The encyclopedias contain excerpts from a multitude of sources, including not only the *Wénzǐ* but also the *Huáinánzǐ*. They extensively quote the *Huáinánzǐ*, but most *Wénzǐ* excerpts also find their origin in that text. For instance, Jiǎ Sīxié's *Wénzǐ* quote originates in *Huáinánzǐ* 17 and Xiāo Jí's quote in *Huáinánzǐ* 7. The encyclopedias repeatedly quote passages from one text—and attribute it to this one text only—that occur in both. Do their compilers not see the *Huáinánzǐ*-*Wénzǐ* relationship?

Given the scale of intertextual borrowing between the *Huáinánzǐ* and the Received *Wénzǐ* and the compilers' exploration of both sources for quotable passages, they cannot have overlooked the intertextual link. Indeed, Xiāo Jí once writes:

> 淮南子及文子竝云：膽為雲，肺為氣，脾為風，腎為雨，肝為電，與天相類，而心為主。耳目者，日月也。氣血者，風雨也。
>
> The *Huáinánzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* both state: "The gall corresponds to the clouds, the lungs to the atmosphere, the spleen to wind, the kidneys to rain and the liver to lightning. [Man and] Heaven have the same categories and the heart serves as master. Ears and eyes resemble sun and moon. Breath and blood resemble wind and rain."

This passage occurs in *Huáinánzǐ* 7 and *Wénzǐ* 3.2. Oddly, in both texts and in Xiāo Jí's work, this passage follows the description of human conception quoted earlier, which Xiāo Jí attributes exclusively to the *Wénzǐ*. Why does he not mention the *Huáinánzǐ*?

The voluminous *Imperial Digest of the Grand Peace Era* 太平御覽, edited by Lǐ Fǎng 李昉 (925-996) and others, contains over one hundred *Wénzǐ* excerpts and over one thousand from the *Huáinánzǐ*. Only once, a comment to a *Wénzǐ* quote reads: "The *Huáinánzǐ* also has this" 淮南子同.

Although encyclopedia compilers rarely make it explicit, they must have noticed the conspicuous *Huáinánzǐ-Wénzǐ* relationship—but this does not make them reject either source. Conversely, they view both as valuable sources for quotation. Given the large scale of intertextual borrowing, and the fact that this became a problem for scholars in Phase II, we may well wonder why these compilers do not problematize the *Huáinánzǐ-Wénzǐ* relationship. I believe the answer lies in the nature of the encyclopedias. These works consist largely of excerpts from earlier texts, much like the *Huáinánzǐ* and *Wénzǐ* themselves. Their compilers' views on authorship and originality include an eclectic mode that later scholars would discard. This notion of what we may call eclectic authorship is much closer to that of the *Huáinánzǐ* collaborators and the *Wénzǐ* editor, than to that of the critical scholars in Phase II.

9.1.3. Argumentative Writings

The third type of reception comprises diverse texts—essays, memorials to the throne, commentaries to canonical texts—that may be collectively subsumed under the heading of argumentative writings.[256] Similar to encyclopedias, they quote the *Wénzǐ* and provide evidence that the text circulated far and wide. Unlike encyclopedias, however, these writings do not reproduce numerous *Wénzǐ* statements on a given topic. Rather, each quotes one specific *Wénzǐ* phrase in support of its own argument. Whereas encyclopedias seek to impress by the sheer number of excerpts, argumentative writings aim to persuade through the authority of select quotations. In argumentative writings, the *Wénzǐ* is not just one of many quotable texts, but an authoritative treatise with persuasive force in its own right. Below are three examples.

(1) In his *Memorial on Seeking Advancement and Recognition As a Relative*, Cáo Zhí quotes the *Wénzǐ*'s warning that one should be "neither at the beginning of fortune, nor ahead of misfortune". The quote forms an integral part of the memorial, because it underscores Cáo Zhí's willingness to subordinate his personal well-being to

[256] In addition to the texts discussed in this section, these also include Lǐ Shàn's 李善 (ca. 630-689) commentary on *Selections of Literature* 文選 and Yáng Liàng's 楊倞 *Xúnzǐ* commentary.

the interests of the realm. Two aspects of this quotation bear out the *Wénzǐ*'s authoritative status and persuasive force.

First, Cáo Zhí's memorial contains quotations from four more texts: the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Book of Odes* and *The Zuǒ Tradition*. These had all reached canonical or near-canonical status by 231, the year of the memorial. In associating the *Wénzǐ* with this select group, Cáo Zhí implies canonicity for the *Wénzǐ* too. A single quotation from this authoritative text suffices to strengthen his argument.

Second, the *Wénzǐ* expression on fortune and misfortune also occurs in *Zhuāngzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ*.[257] Cáo Zhí's claim that he learned this expression from the *Wénzǐ* indicates that the text was widely read and had authoritative status, possibly even more so than the *Zhuāngzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*.

(2) The Buddhist monk Shì Huìyuǎn promotes the idea that the soul continues to exist after the body has died, an idea alien to the Chinese, who believe that body and soul are inseparable and perish together. To support his controversial idea, Huìyuǎn quotes the *Wénzǐ* as saying "the body suffers destruction, but the soul undergoes no transformation". Huìyuǎn needs *Wénzǐ*—and *Zhuāngzǐ*, which he also quotes—to show that in native Chinese tradition there were influential philosophers who likewise purport that souls transmigrate. He sees the *Wénzǐ* as an ancient work and presents it as an important and authoritative representation of Chinese tradition.

Huìyuǎn quotes from what is now *Wénzǐ* 3.14, a section based on *Huáinánzǐ* 7. Whether his decision to quote the *Wénzǐ* and not the *Huáinánzǐ* is his own—in that he read both texts and opted for the *Wénzǐ*—or that of the society in which he was active, and which prioritized Daoist over Eclectic works, it signals a preference for the *Wénzǐ*.

(3) A memorial that Prime Minister Wèi Zhēng 魏徵 (580-643) submitted to Táng emperor Tàizōng 唐太宗 (r. 626-649) in the summer of 637, a decade after the emperor's accession to the throne, opens with a quotation from the *Wénzǐ*:

> 文子曰：『同言而信，信在言前；同令而行，誠在令外。』自王道休明，十有餘年，然而德化未洽者，由待下之情未盡誠信故也。今立政致治，必委之君子；事有得失，或訪之小人。其待君子也敬而疏，遇小人也輕而狎；狎則言無不盡，疏則情不上通。夫中智之人，豈無小慧！然才非經國，慮不及遠，雖竭力盡誠，猶未免有敗，況內懷姦宄，其禍豈不深乎！夫雖君子不能無小過，苟不害於正道，斯可略矣。既謂之君子

[257] It occurs in *Wénzǐ* 3.3 and 4.3, which are based on passages in *Huáinánzǐ* 7 and 14, respectively. The passage in *Huáinánzǐ* 14, in turn, is borrowed from a passage in *Zhuāngzǐ* 15.

而復疑其不信，何異立直木而疑其影之曲乎！陛下誠能慎選君子，以禮信用之，何憂不治！不然，危亡之期，未可保也。

The *Wénzǐ* states: "When [two people pronounce] the same words and [only one] is trusted, the trust exists before the words. When [two people issue] the same commands and [only one] is obeyed, the integrity exists outside the commands."

It has been ten years or so, since you made the royal way tranquil and luminous. That the transformation by virtue is not yet universal is because your feelings towards your inferiors lack perfect integrity and trustworthiness.

Now, to establish control and create order is something you must entrust to the gentleman. As there is success and failure in this matter, who would consult a petty man about it? While your treatment of the gentleman is respectful but distant, your approach to the petty man is disdainful but intimate. Intimacy implies that he does not mince his words. Distance implies that his feelings do not get through to you.

Now, how could a man of mediocre intelligence not be shrewd? Hence, his talents are not spread through the land and his intentions do not reach far. Even if he uses up all his force and exhausts all his integrity, defeat is unavoidable. And when, moreover, he internally harbors treachery and deceit, how could the resulting disaster not be profound?

Now, even the gentleman may have his flaws, but as long as his harshness does not harm the correct way, surely you could close your eyes to that. How does calling someone a gentleman and fearing that he is not sincere, differ from planting a straight tree and fearing that its shadow will be curved?

Your Majesty, if you are truly capable of carefully selecting gentlemen and employing them on the basis of ritual and trust, what worries would remain unsolved? If not, then your appointment with danger and destruction will be hard to avoid.

This memorial encourages Tàizōng to "distinguish between those at court who were truly loyal and those who were merely clever opportunists, and once having done so, to place complete confidence in the former" [Wechsler 1974: 146]. The *Wénzǐ* quote delivers to Wèi Zhēng the two defining qualities of a gentleman, "integrity" 誠 and "trustworthiness" 信. He repeats these key concepts throughout the memorial, which reconfirms the importance and persuasive force of the *Wénzǐ*.

Wèi Zhēng quotes *Wénzǐ* 2.15, which is based on *Huáinánzǐ* 10. As editor of the *Book of the Suí Dynasty*, which catalogues one *Wénzǐ* and two copies of the *Huáinánzǐ*, and compiler of the *Anthology of Texts on the Essence of Government*, which contains many *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* excerpts, Wèi Zhēng was familiar with both texts. That he attributes the quotation on integrity and trustworthiness to the *Wénzǐ*, not the *Huáinánzǐ*, shows the prestige the *Wénzǐ* enjoyed in those days, and corroborates its perceived priority over the *Huáinánzǐ*.

The argumentative writings of Phase I show that the *Wénzǐ* was widely read and seen as authentic and authoritative. They were composed at a time when what was believed to be an ancient Daoist treatise by a disciple of Lǎozǐ was held in higher esteem than a later eclectic text by a mere King of Huáinán, who was possibly a traitor to the Hàn court.

9.1.4. Commentaries

The fourth type of reception comprises scholarly efforts to elucidate what is said and meant in the *Wénzǐ*. To these commentators, the *Wénzǐ* is an authentic ancient treatise with profound influence on their own lives. They see it as a source of guidance, not only for the ruler, but also for those who wish to improve their conduct through self-cultivation. By publishing their work, the commentators—some of whom were famous in life and had many students—increased the legitimacy and popularity of the *Wénzǐ* and accelerated its circulation. In addition to Empress Wǔ's comments on one *Wénzǐ* passage and Xiāo Jí's on another, no fewer than five full commentaries appeared in Phase I, as Zhāng Zhàn, Lǐ Xiān, Xú Língfǔ, Zhū Biàn and Dù Dàojiān successively enriched the *Wénzǐ* with their insights. The earliest two are extinct; the latter three survive in part until today.[258]

Zhāng Zhàn, renowned for his *Lièzǐ* commentary, probably also wrote the earliest commentary on the *Wénzǐ* (see Chapter 7).[259] Though his *Wénzǐ* commentary is no longer extant, traces survive in Lǐ Shàn's commentary on *Selections of Literature*. Lǐ quotes many texts of supposed antiquity and authority, the *Wénzǐ* no fewer than 126 times. Seven *Wénzǐ* quotes include comments by Zhāng Zhàn. These suggest that Zhāng's *Wénzǐ* commentary was mainly philological and hardly interpretive.[260] As this is different from his *Lièzǐ* commentary, which is philosophical in nature, the surviving *Wénzǐ* comments may not be representative.

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[258] See Kandel [1974: 25-56] for a detailed study of the five commentators and their commentaries.

[259] See Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻 [1996: 275-276] for a detailed account of Zhāng Zhàn's life and work.

[260] Zhāng Zhàn mainly reformulates phrases in simpler wording and occasionally provides an alternative reading for a graph. To the phrase "to raise an army of one hundred thousand men costs one thousand gold coins daily" 起師十萬日費千金 from *Wénzǐ* 7.19, he merely notes that "every day there will be the cost of one thousand gold coins" 日有千金之費也. On *Wénzǐ* 5.12, "above they were friends with the Way" 上與道為友, he comments: "above they could befriend the Way; for 'befriend' some write 'reverse'." 上能友於道；友或反. "They ignore seduction and admiration and expel lust

Lǐ Xiān is the second person known to have written a *Wénzǐ* commentary (see Chapter 3). Unfortunately, the course of his life is obscure and not a shred of his commentary has survived.[261] Only one short remark by Lǐ Xiān on the author of the *Wénzǐ* still exists in the writings of the Sòng scholar Cháo Gōngwǔ. Lǐ's remark confirms traditional ideas of Wénzǐ's apprenticeship with Lǎozǐ, but does not explain his own interest in the *Wénzǐ*.

Zhū Biàn 朱弁, about whom almost nothing is known, also produced a *Wénzǐ* commentary.[262] His commentary has survived, albeit incomplete and in one edition only.[263] Zhū Biàn's interest appears to be in broader philosophical implications of the *Wénzǐ*: he provides no glosses and few explanations of individual terms. As Kandel [1974: 46] points out, Zhū cares little for morality and politics, but rather investigates the physical and cosmological aspects of the *Wénzǐ*. He focuses on the practical implementation of the *Wénzǐ* in personal cultivation. Zhū has little to say on the *Wénzǐ*'s taxonomy of warfare, but discussion of the Way and Virtue, and practical instructions for correct behavior, are invariably accompanied by his lucid and often insightful comments.

Xú Língfǔ 徐靈府, who lived in the first half of the 9th century, wrote another *Wénzǐ* commentary under his pen name of the Master who is Silent about the Inaudible 默希子. Xú's life is well documented, and his commentary and preface to

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and desire" 去其誘慕除其嗜欲 from *Wénzǐ* 1.3, he explains as "they abandon appraisal and esteem, for these harm their true nature" 遺其衒尚為害真性.

[261] Cháo Gōngwǔ asserts that Lǐ was a student of the Buddhist monk Gautama Prajñāruci 般若流支, who worked as a translator in Luòyáng between 538 and 543 [Pelliot 1930: 101-102]. This would situate Lǐ Xiān in the 6th century, two centuries after Zhāng Zhàn. Though now extinct, bibliographical sources from the Táng to the Míng list a *Wénzǐ* with Lǐ Xiān's "explanatory commentary" 訓注.

[262] From a chronological perspective, this was probably the fourth commentary. I discuss it here because the scarcity of biographical information on Zhū Biàn and the partial survival of his commentary bridges the extinct commentaries of Zhāng Zhàn and Lǐ Xiān and the extant ones of Xú Língfǔ and Dù Dàojiān. Biographical data on Zhū are scarce. Even his name is disputed: bibliographic sources variously list his personal name as Biàn 弁, Qì 弃, Bìng 并, Yuán 元 or Xuán 玄. Biàn is likely the correct form, because the first catalogue that lists his commentary and the extant edition of his work both use this name.

[263] Given that no sources prior to the Sòng mention his *Wénzǐ* commentary and that a library catalogue of 1131 already mentions an incomplete edition, Zhū probably lived at the end of the Táng or the beginning of the Northern Sòng. See Kandel [1974: 42-46]. The *Daoist Canon* contains only the first seven chapters of a *Wénzǐ* with Zhū's "notes on the correct interpretation" 正儀注; the last five chapters must have disappeared between the Sòng dynasty, when complete editions are reported, and the Míng dynasty, when the *Dàozàng* was compiled. Of the seven surviving chapters in *Dàozàng*, only five (*Wénzǐ* 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) contain Zhū Biàn's comments; comments to the other two chapters (*Wénzǐ* 4, 7) are by Xú Língfǔ (another *Wénzǐ* commentator, see below).

the *Wénzǐ* survive.[264] The lengthy preface explains his pen name and also reveals his appreciation of the *Wénzǐ*:

> 大道不振，其來已久，微波尚存，出自諸子，莫不祖述道德，彌縫百代。文子者，周平王時人也，著書一十二篇。平王問文子，曰：「聞子得道於老君，今賢人雖有道，而遭淫亂之世，以一人之權，而欲化久亂之民，其能庸乎？」文子對曰：「道德匡邪以爲政，振亂以爲理。使聖德復生，天下安寧，要在一人。故積德成王，積怨成亡。而堯舜以是昌，桀紂以是亡。」平王信其言而用之，時天下治。然安危成敗，匪降自天，在乎君王任賢而已。故聖人怵怵為天下孩，其人同於赤子，欲以興利去害而安之，非欲有私己也。其書上述皇王帝霸興亡之兆，次敍叙道德禮義衰殺之由，莫不上極玄機，旁通庶品，其旨博而奥，其辭文而真。故有国者雖有淫敗之俗，可返樸於太素；有身者而患累之質，可復至命於自然。大矣哉，君子不可不刳心焉。洎我唐十有一葉皇帝，垂衣布化，均和育物，柔懷庶邦，殊俗一軌。故在顯位者，咸盡其忠慕；幽居者，亦安其業。默希以元和四載，投跡迹衡峯之表，考室華蓋之前，迨經八稔，夙敦樸素之風，竊味希微之旨，今未能拱默，強為注釋，是量天漢之高邈，料滄溟之淺深者，亦以自為難矣。默希子序。

> The Great Way has no beginning. It came long ago and still exists in minute waves found in works of the masters, who, without exception, hand down the doctrines of the Way and Virtue to fill in the gaps for the hundred generations.
>
> Wénzǐ, a contemporary of King Píng of Zhōu, wrote a book in twelve chapters. King Píng once asked Wénzǐ: "I have heard that you received the Way from Lord Lǎo. Now, even though you are a worthy man and in possession of the Way, you find yourself in a licentious and chaotic world. How would you, with the power of one man, transform a people subjected to enduring chaos?" Wénzǐ replied: "The Way and Virtue turn 'correcting evil' into a policy and take 'saving [the people] from chaos' as a pattern. The key to the rebirth of sageness and virtue and to the security and peace of the world is this one person. Therefore, accumulating virtue leads to being a king, accumulating resentment leads to perishing. Because of this principle, Yáo and Shùn flourished but Jié and Zhòu perished."
>
> King Píng trusted these words and put them into practice. At the time, the empire was well governed. This shows that neither security nor danger and neither success nor defeat descend from Heaven. They depend on lords and kings appointing worthy men. Therefore, by acting timorously as the most childlike of the world, sages equal newborn babies.[265] Their desire to pacify the world by initiating the useful and expelling the harmful is by no means a desire to secure their private interests.
>
> Wénzǐ's work primarily discusses the portents that indicate the rise and fall of emperors and kings. It also describes the causes of the decline and execution of the Way, virtue, propriety and righteousness. All his writings reach the mysterious truth above and scrutinize the multitude of things on the

[264] See Kandel [1974: 38-42].

[265] The phrases "acting timorously" 怵怵 and "newborn babies" 赤子 refer to *Lǎozǐ* 49 and 55.

> sides. His purposes are broad yet mysterious, his words refined yet real. Therefore, even if those who govern a realm face debauchery and decay, they can return in simplicity to the utmost purity; and even if those who control a body face trouble and toil, they can revert their highest fate to spontaneity. How great! The ruler cannot but cleanse his heart with it.
>
> The eleventh emperor of our Táng dynasty [Xiànzōng 憲宗 (r. 805-820)] spreads civilization without rolling up his sleeves. He nourishes all beings with equal harmony and cherishes the numerous lands with softness, so that all different customs follow the same path. As a result, those in the highest positions exhaust their loyalty and admiration, and those who reside in the most secluded places also find peace in their professions.
>
> In the fourth year of the Yuánhé reign [809], I retreated to the edges of Mount Héng and built a house facing Mount Huágài. For eight years, I administered the wind of simplicity and purity every morning and I sensed the meaning of what is inaudible and intangible.[266] Now, I can no longer remain still and silent, and have forced myself to write a commentary and explanation to the *Wénzǐ*. This text, which measures the heights of the Milky Way and calculates the depths of the blue sea, has perplexed me on many occasions.

This preface is a unique document in *Wénzǐ* reception. For the first time, a reader volubly declares his profound fascination for the *Wénzǐ*'s teachings. In this preface, larded with typical Lǎozǐ terminology, Xú suggests a dual use for the *Wénzǐ*. With reference to the traditional Daoist dichotomy of governing the realm and governing the self, he claims that the *Wénzǐ* can be used by rulers and individuals alike.

Yet, he presents the *Wénzǐ* primarily as a political treatise. The one quotation in his preface is from the exceptional section where Wénzǐ advises King Píng on achieving stability and prosperity by appointing worthy men. The anachronism of King Píng-Lǎozǐ-Wénzǐ does not bother Xú Língfǔ. His message is clear: Wénzǐ's powerful political advice will lead to order in the realm, and is universal and of contemporary relevance.

But the *Wénzǐ* is more than a political treatise, and Xú's stress on its political application and his praise of the emperor rather seem like ways to ensure official approval and wide readership for his work. Xú himself had no political aspirations. For most of his life, he dwelled in the south-eastern mountain areas; he rejected an official position offered by Emperor Wén 唐文宗 and repeatedly declined invitations from Emperor Wǔ 唐武宗. At best he practiced politics from a non-official position. His interest in the *Wénzǐ* is more that of an intellectual, who finds joy in elucidating the text for others—his commentary, accordingly, stays close to the main text—and of

[266] The words "inaudible" 希 and "intangible" 微 refer to *Lǎozǐ* 14.

a practitioner, who uses the text to free himself of worldly suffering by self-cultivation. According to Xú Língfǔ, those who are fatigued and distressed may use the *Wénzǐ*'s advice to return to simplicity and spontaneity. Xú himself links the *Wénzǐ* to his meditative practices at Mount Héng.

Dù Dàojiān 杜道堅 (1237-1318) is the fifth and last person in imperial China to write a full-blown commentary on the *Wénzǐ*. Dù lived at the turn of the Sòng and Yuán dynasties.[267] He was born close to Mount Máo 茅山, a famous center for Daoism where he received his Daoist training. As his star rose, Emperor Dùzōng of the Southern Sòng 宋度宗 conferred upon him the title Master of Assistance of [Daoist] Teachings 輔教大師. Dù's commentary and preface to the *Wénzǐ*, however, postdate the Mongol invasion:

> 古之君天下者。太上無爲。其次有爲。是故皇以道化。帝以德教。王以功勸。伯以力率。四者之治。若四時焉。天道流行固非人力之能強。然則時有可行道無終否。冬變而春存乎歲。伯變而皇存乎君。此文子作而皇道昭矣。文子，晉之公孫。姓辛氏。名鈃。字計然。文子其號。家睢之葵丘。屬宋地。一稱宋鈃。師老子。學早聞大道。著書十有二篇曰文子。歸本老子之言。歷陳天人之道。時變之字。萃萬古於一篇。誠經世之樞要也。楚平王聘而問道。范蠡從而師之。勾踐位以大夫。佐越平吳。功成不有。退隱封禺之地。登雲先去。吳興計籌之陽。乃其故處。唐玄宗時微士徐靈府隱脩衡嶽注文子之書。上進遂封通玄真人號其書為通玄真經。僕生江左。身老吳邦。訪文子之遺蹤。建白石通玄觀。因獲文子故篇。暇日分章纘義。參贊玄風。若夫化教勸率道德。功力之辯則不無望於世之大賢。云爾。後學當塗南谷子杜道堅謹序。
>
> In ancient times, the earliest rulers of the world ruled through non-action, those who came next through action. Therefore, sovereigns transformed [the people] by means of the Way, emperors educated them by means of virtue, kings encouraged them by means of rewards, and hegemons commanded them by means of force. The government of these four is like the four seasons. The course of heaven's way is beyond man's control, and each season has action appropriate to it, but the Way knows neither end nor obstruction. At the end of winter, spring appears again; and at the end of hegemonic rule, a sovereign is sure to emerge. When Wénzǐ appeared, the way of the sovereigns became clear.
>
> Wénzǐ was a prince from the realm of Jìn. His family name was Xīn, his personal name Xíng and his style name Jìrán. Wénzǐ was his honorific name. His hometown was Kuíqiū at the river Suī. This place belonged to the realm of Sòng, which is why he is also known as Sòng Xíng. He took Lǎozǐ as his teacher and in his studies, he learned about the Great Way at a young age. He wrote a book in twelve chapters and called it *Wénzǐ*. The book is inspired

[267] For an article on Dù's life, see Qīng Xītài 卿希泰 [1992a].

by Lǎozǐ's theories. Through expositions on the way of Heaven and Man and on adaptation to the seasonal changes, he united a history of ten thousand years into one compilation. This is truly the foundation for administering the world.

King Píng of Chǔ invited him to his court and asked him about the Way. Fàn Lí followed him as a student. Gòujiàn offered him the title of Grand Master, in which function he assisted Yuè in pacifying Wú. When his achievement was completed, he retreated without possessions to Mount Fēng and Mount Yú, where he ascended a cloud and left as an immortal. The sun side of what is now called Mount Jìchóu in Wúxìng is his former residence.

Recruit for Office Xú Língfǔ, who lived under Táng emperor Xuán [*sic*] as a recluse at Mount Héng, wrote a commentary on the writings of Wénzǐ. He submitted it to the emperor, who accordingly granted the author the name of True Man who Understands the Mysteries and upgraded the title of the work to *True Scripture of Communion with the Mysteries*.

I was born east of the Yángzǐ and spent the twilight of my life in the land of Wú, searching for traces left behind by Wénzǐ. I founded the Monastery of Communion with the Mysteries 通玄觀 at White Rock 白石 [on Mount Jìchóu 計籌山]. Later, I obtained a copy of the old *Wénzǐ*. In my spare time, I divided it into sections and set forth its meaning as advice in matters of the mysterious tradition.

As for the discussion on transforming, educating, encouraging, and commanding by means of the Way, virtue, rewards, and force: I am not without hope for the great and worthy men of this generation.

After the Mongol conquest of southern China, Dù Dàojiān found himself in a difficult position. Having previously received favors from the Sòng house, he had to demonstrate loyalty to the new rulers and compete with others for the favor of the emperor. His efforts paid off, and Kublai Khan 元世祖 (r. 1260-1294) and subsequent emperors granted him various positions and titles. His preface reads as a favor in return: a note of gratitude to the majestic Mongols who ended the hegemonic rule of the Sòng and a pledge of allegiance to the new rulers. It serves to ensure continuous imperial support for himself and his large circle of followers and friends. His *Wénzǐ* commentary lacks the lucidity of Zhū Biàn's and is much less close to the main text than Xú Língfǔ's, two texts Dù is known to have read. Instead, Dù sees the content of the *Wénzǐ* as a philosophical system that he contemporizes to suit the debate of his day. It is understandable that, as Kandel [1974: 50] puts it, Dù's disregard for difficulties, ambiguities and inconsistencies in the main text leads to dubious judgments and wrong interpretations. Dù uses the *Wénzǐ* for his own agenda. This leads to another problem: he writes at a time when critical readings of the *Wénzǐ* had begun to appear and Phase II in *Wénzǐ* reception had started. Dù's preface shows awareness of this recent scholarship.

To reconfirm the authenticity of the *Wénzǐ*, which had come under fire, Dù Dàojiān, using a suggestion by Zhōu Bìdà (1126-1204), plainly states that Wénzǐ advised King Píng of Chǔ not King Píng of Zhōu, whose appearance in the text was seen as chronologically problematic. Dù also maintains that Wénzǐ was Xīn Jìrán, a theory that had gained popularity after Cháo Gōngwǔ (ca. 1105-1180). Not quite coincidentally, this Jìrán once assisted King Gòujiàn of Yuè 越王勾踐 in pacifying Wú 吳 and withdrew when his achievement was completed. This corresponds to the ideals of Dù Dàojiān, who wished to assist the Mongols in a similar, selfless way. In a final move to reinforce the authenticity of the *Wénzǐ* and confirm his own unique position, Dù Dàojiān establishes an almost mythical bond between himself and Jìrán when he moves to Mount Jìchóu, where Jìrán once resided. There he searched for traces left behind by Jìrán and, as if by a miracle, found an old copy of the *Wénzǐ*. Thus, Dù Dàojiān shows that he is the right man to write a *Wénzǐ* commentary and an ideal candidate for assisting the Mongol rulers. Even if Dù's commentary cannot satisfy modern readers, his contemporaries such as Móu Yǎn, Zhào Dàoyī, Wú Quánjié and Huáng Shíwēng readily confirm Dù's miraculous discovery of an old *Wénzǐ* and praise his thorough comprehension of the text—perhaps because they also stood to gain from the official acceptance of Dù Dàojiān's work.[268]

Phase I witnessed the publication of five *Wénzǐ* commentaries. Not a single *Huáinánzǐ* commentary appeared in the same period. The commentators viewed the *Wénzǐ* as an authentic and important treatise. They spared neither time nor effort to elucidate its literal meaning or explicate its philosophical system. The *Wénzǐ* played an important role in their lived experience, as a personal source of guidance and a means for establishing one's position in the political domain.

9.1.5. Eulogies

Several people in Phase I professed their admiration for the *Wénzǐ*. In his *The Literary Mind Carves Dragons* 文心雕龍, literary critic Liú Xié 劉勰 (ca. 446-522) eulogizes Wénzǐ for his ability to "articulate ideas concisely and precisely" 文子擅其能辭約而精.[269] Xú Língfǔ admires Wénzǐ's gift of reaching the mysterious truth above and

[268] All wrote prefaces to Dù Dàojiān's *Wénzǐ* commentary. See Kandel [1974: 52-53].
[269] See Vincent Yu-chung Shih [1975: 135].

scrutinizing the multitude of things on the sides. Dù Dàojiān applauds the *Wénzǐ* for illuminating the ways of the sovereigns. The Mongol ruler Kublai Khan, probably influenced by Dù Dàojiān or other Daoists, granted Wénzǐ the title of True Lord of Brilliant Communion with the Mystery and Diligent Ascendance to the Origins 通玄光暢昇元敏誘真君.[270] But the most fervent advocate of the *Wénzǐ* has to be Emperor Xuánzōng of the Táng dynasty 唐玄宗 (r. 712-756). His Tiānbǎo 天寶 reign period (742-756) marks the heyday of *Wénzǐ* reverence.[271]

Táng emperors had always been preoccupied with Daoism, as they sought to legitimize their rule by claiming direct descent from Lǎozǐ, whose surname, Lǐ 李, corresponded to theirs. Under Xuánzōng, official sanctioning of Daoim took flight, as he "expanded all earlier pro-Daoism measures as part of a shrewd legitimatory program" [Kohn 2000: 345]. In 741, Xuánzōng established temples to Lǎozǐ, revered as the Sovereign Emperor of the Mysterious Origins 玄元皇帝, in the two capitals and all prefecture cities, and founded Daoist Colleges 崇玄學, where the writings of Lǎozǐ, Zhuāngzǐ, Lièzǐ and Wénzǐ served as the curriculum. Through the new system of official examinations, countless scholars became conversant with the *Wénzǐ*. On March 31, 742, Xuánzōng decreed new titles for the Daoist masters. From then on, Wénzǐ was known as the True Man who Understands the Mysteries 通玄真人 and the *Wénzǐ* accordingly became the *True Scripture of Communion with the Mysteries* 通玄真經. In an age where Mysterious Studies 玄學 flourished and under an emperor who was posthumously revered as the Mysterious Ancestor 玄宗, the "mysteries" 玄 in the new title of the *Wénzǐ* truly represents high status. To make the Daoist cult complete, in 749 Xuánzōng erected statues of Lǎozǐ and his disciples, including Wénzǐ, in the main hall of the Lǎozǐ temple in Cháng'ān.

Xuánzōng was an extraordinary emperor. His markedly pro-Daoist reign was exceptional and perhaps not representative for *Wénzǐ* reception. The *Wénzǐ* formed an integral part of Xuánzōng's strategy of political legitimization through veneration of Daoism. The official endorsement of the *Wénzǐ* reveals Xuánzōng's personal motives more than it indicates popular reverence for the text.

However, the official canonization of the *Wénzǐ* reflects longer-standing tendencies. Scholars throughout Phase I view the *Wénzǐ* as a Daoist treatise and consistently mention it in connection with the *Lǎozǐ*, the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the *Lièzǐ* or the

[270] This occurred on July 30, 1266. Other Daoist authors received similar titles. See *History of the Yuán* 元史 39.841.
[271] See Benn [1977] for a detailed study of Daoism as an ideology under Emperor Xuánzōng.

Gēngsāngzǐ. By collectively upgrading these texts to True Scriptures, Xuánzōng merely capitalizes on this long-established view—notably, the *Huáinánzǐ* is never included in this group and did not become a True Scripture. Scholars also view the *Wénzǐ* as an authentic and authoritative treatise, worthy of studying, quoting and commenting on. By making the *Wénzǐ* part of the official curriculum for the state exams and having countless scholars read the text, Xuánzōng again confirms this view. Finally, the statue that Xuánzōng erected for the worship of Wénzǐ is extraordinary, but not inexplicable in view of the public eulogies for Wénzǐ by several scholars in Phase I. In sum, Xuánzōng's reign presents an intensification of *Wénzǐ* reception to date.

When the editor of the *Wénzǐ* set out on his major revision project, he could hardly foresee the tremendous impact of his work. In subsequent centuries, his creation circulated in the imperial palace and other intellectual centers, from southeastern mountain ranges to Dūnhuáng in the far west. It was read by Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, literary critics, court officials and emperors, who considered it authentic, authoritative, quotable and praiseworthy.

What is striking about Phase I, is the lack of any critical view towards the *Wénzǐ*. The problematic chronology of King Píng-Lǎozǐ-Wénzǐ, as noted by Bān Gù, is systematically ignored, and its substantial reliance on the *Huáinánzǐ* goes unnoticed or is not problematized, even by those who had demonstrably read both texts.

Modern Chinese authors usually let the history of the study of forgeries 僞書學 in China begin in the Hàn dynasty or earlier, long before the beginning of Phase I. True enough, writing in the Former Hàn, Liú Ān demonstrates awareness of the fact that authors in his time, in response to prevalent veneration of the past, ascribe their own ideas to ancient sages. In the Latter Hàn, Bān Gù likewise criticizes texts with content ascribed to earlier people, such as King Píng's questions in the *Wénzǐ*.

This critical spirit is absent in Phase I. No one questioned the *Wénzǐ*'s authenticity or found its heavy reliance on the *Huáinánzǐ* suspicious. Of course, not everybody had read both. Some scholars who praised the *Wénzǐ* may simply have been unaware of the *Huáinánzǐ*. Even if they were aware of both, they may have regarded them as ancient treatises, whose high status disallowed critical questions. Most likely, however, one text's considerable borrowing from another was simply not considered problematic. We have to consider the possibility that the people in Phase I

entertained open notions of authorship, in which eclecticism was perfectly acceptable. In calling the *Wénzǐ* a "forgery", one would inappropriately apply a term invented in Phase II—and still in use today—to a time which privileged notions of authorship and originality that are very different from their modern counterparts.

The *Wénzǐ* editor made a brilliant move by adapting the Ancient *Wénzǐ* to the tradition that saw Wénzǐ as a disciple of Lǎozǐ, and expanding the text with the "universal truths" distilled from the *Huáinánzǐ*. As an authentic pre-Hàn treatise with distinct Daoist flair, the *Wénzǐ* was transmitted separately from the *Huáinánzǐ*, which was seen as an eclectic Hàn dynasty work. This resulted in significantly higher status and popularity for the *Wénzǐ*.

9.2. Phase II: Rejection

Phase II of *Wénzǐ* reception marks the advent of textual criticism. In this phase, the *Wénzǐ* is no longer part of a living tradition, treasured for its profound wisdom and its practical value. Instead, it becomes the topic of academic reflection. As critical perception intensifies, appraisal of the *Wénzǐ* turns negative and its significance fades. Rejected as a forgery, the text ultimately loses its authority.

Phase II lasts from Liǔ Zōngyuán (773-819) to the 1973 discovery of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* bamboo manuscript and may be subdivided into three periods:

1. Táng dynasty: Liǔ Zōngyuán
2. Southern Sòng dynasty - Míng dynasty
3. Qīng dynasty - Dìngzhōu discovery

The first period comprises just one man, the erudite Táng dynasty intellectual Liǔ Zōngyuán, who critically examined the *Wénzǐ* before—from a chronological perspective—Phase I had ended. Liǔ was the first and for many centuries the only person who expressed reservations about the *Wénzǐ*'s philological status. The literati of the second period corroborate his critical view, as they question the authenticity of the *Wénzǐ* and the identity of its editor and main characters. The third period adds a new dimension to the debate, as scholars commonly problematize the *Wénzǐ-Huáinánzǐ* relationship.

9.2.1. The Táng dynasty: Liŭ Zōngyuán

Reverence for the *Wénzĭ* in Phase I culminated in its official canonization under Emperor Xuánzōng, when scores of young men had to study the text as part of their curriculum. Xuánzōng's reign dramatically ended in the Ān Lùshān rebellion 安史之亂 (755-763), a major turning point in the Táng dynasty and in Chinese imperial history at large. Táng rulers never fully recovered from the political, economical and social devastation caused by the revolt, which also left an intellectual vacuum. Until the mid-Táng, various forms of Buddhism and Daoism had dominated intellectual and religious circles; Confucianism, though not extinct, was the least vibrant of the three currents. Shifting the balance, the rebellion reduced the political centrality of Daoism and fueled interest in Confucianism "as a body of ideas and values with strongly living relevance" [Chen 1992: 24]. The rebellion thus ended the peak of *Wénzĭ* veneration, and the following hectic period provided the ideal circumstances for the critical evaluation of the *Wénzĭ* by Liŭ Zōngyuán.

Liŭ Zōngyuán 柳宗元 (773-819), a celebrated master of "ancient style" 古文 essays, was one of the Táng dynasty's most influential literati.[272] His interest in politics led to a civil service career from 798 to 805, when his clique launched an abortive reform program and fell from favor. Liŭ was first exiled to Yŏngzhōu 永州 (in Húnán 湖南) and ten years later farther south to Liŭzhōu 柳州 (in Guăngxī 廣西), where he lived out the final years of his life. Grieving over his expulsion from the political and intellectual center of the realm, he turned to scholarship and writing. Liŭ Zōngyuán remains best known for his landscape essays, but his brief essays on ancient texts are no less important. One is "Judging the *Wénzĭ*" 辯文子:

> 文子書十二篇。其傳曰老子弟子。其辭時有若可取。其指意皆本老子。然考其書。蓋駁書也。其渾而類者少。竊取他書以舍之者多。凡孟管輩數家。皆見剽竊。然而出其類。其意緒文辭。叉牙相抵而不舍不知人之增益之歟。或者衆為聚斂以成其書歟。然觀其往往有可立者。又頗惜之。憫其為之也勞。今刊去謬惡亂雜者。取其似是者。又頗爲發其意藏於家。
>
> The *Wénzĭ* comprises twelve chapters and is traditionally ascribed to a disciple of Lăozĭ. Its words are often quite convincing and the gist is indeed completely drawn from the *Lăozĭ*. But, having carefully scrutinized these writings, I suspect it is a composite work. Few passages are complete and

[272] For Liŭ's life and works, see Gentzler [1966]; Nienhauser et. al. [1973]; Chen [1992].

> coherent, and the majority has been stealthily taken from other texts and incorporated into this work. I notice fragments copied from the *Mencius*, the *Guǎnzǐ* and many other works, which are highly out of place here. The *Wénzǐ*'s sequence of ideas and style of writing are like a set of jagged teeth that do not fit together. Did others expand and enlarge it? Or was this work compiled through massive collecting and borrowing? Well, observing a considerable number of persuasive passages, I find [the interpolations] regrettable and commiserate with the efforts of the person who [originally] created this. Now, having eliminated all erroneous and unoriginal elements and preserved those that seem correct, I have enlarged on its meaning and preserved it in my private library.

Unlike his contemporaries, who take the text's traditional ascription to Lǎozǐ's disciple Wénzǐ for granted, Liǔ Zōngyuán has reservations about the *Wénzǐ*'s authorship. Only after careful inspection of the text, he concludes that the core indeed reflects Lǎozǐ's views and—or so we may infer—therefore probably written by Wénzǐ. Notably, Liǔ does not question Wénzǐ's supposed conversation with King Píng of Zhōu, though he is known to have read Bān Gù's bibliographical treatise, which problematizes this.

Although Wénzǐ may have genuinely written the core of his work, Liǔ Zōngyuán questions the integrity of the text when he notices numerous later interpolations, borrowings from the *Mencius*, the *Guǎnzǐ* and many other works. Notably, Liǔ does not mention the *Huáinánzǐ*, which suggests he was not familiar with that text. He labels this mélange of authentic passages and intertextual borrowings a "composite work" 駁書. This is a mild formula, for his criticism of other texts is far more rigorous. For example, he suspects that "an amateur" forged the *Pheasant Cap Master* and concludes that the *Master of the Spirit Valley*, which is absent in official bibliographies of the Hàn dynasty, must be a post-Hàn creation.

Liǔ's brief essay reflects new notions of authorship and authenticity. Scholars in Phase I who noted the *Wénzǐ-Huáinánzǐ* relationship did not find it problematic, but Liǔ Zōngyuán problematizes borrowings from other texts in the *Wénzǐ*. Later insertions, in his view, belong to their respective sources and nowhere else. As exogenous material, they corrupt the *Wénzǐ* and must be eliminated.

What prompted Liǔ's unique observations? One hypothesis is that Liǔ, as a proponent of the incipient revival of Confucianism, uses his judgments to discredit philosophical adversaries. Liǔ is indeed decidedly pro-Confucian. He once stated that "Lao-tzu was merely a heterodox branch of the Confucian school and could not contend with it" [Nienhauser 1973: 56]. Accordingly, most texts that underwent his

critical inspection are traditionally considered Daoist (the *Wénzǐ*, the *Lièzǐ*, the *Pheasant Cap Master*, the *Master of the Spirit Valley*). However, Liŭ also wrote a critical essay on the Confucian *Analects*. His argument that Zēngzǐ's disciples had a role in its compilation marks the beginning of critical *Analects* scholarship, as Bruce and Taeko Brooks [1998: 201] point out. Moreover, Liŭ Zōngyuán was less of a polemical thinker than his friend Hán Yù 韓愈 (768-824), who propagated Confucianism in contradistinction to Daoism and Buddhism. Liŭ is more favorable to Daoism and Buddhism, for he sees both as part of the Confucian Way [Gentzler 1966: 171]. For example, he appreciates Lăozǐ and Zhuāngzǐ because they give free rein to the imagination.[273] The *Wénzǐ* apparently also fits into Liŭ's worldview, for he notes having enlarged on its meaning and preserved it in his private library.

A more likely hypothesis is that Liŭ's judgment of ancient writings results from his views on the purpose of writing. Exiled to the periphery of the realm, Liŭ could no longer make an active contribution to society on the level of his original aspirations, but through writing, he could still serve future generations. To Liŭ, as to pre-modern Chinese literati 文人, holding office and writing were two means of attaining the same goal: the former puts the Way into practice, whereas the latter illuminates the Way so that others may put it into practice [Gentzler 1966: 179]. Liŭ takes the noble task of literary composition serious and demands the same of others. All writing—from the Confucian canons to diverse philosophical writings—potentially contributes to our understanding of the Way, but only if the author shares Liŭ's intention and devotion. Charlatans who merely forge or corrupt texts for fame or other worldly gain deserve to be censured. That is probably why he denounces the *Pheasant Cap Master* and the *Master of the Spirit Valley*, and carefully selects from the *Wénzǐ* those passages which "seem correct", that is, authentic words by Wénzǐ which illuminate the Way.

Liŭ Zōngyuán lived in a transitional period in Chinese history, and he is a transitional figure in *Wénzǐ* reception. On the one hand, he shares with the scholars of Phase I the belief that the *Wénzǐ* has an intrinsic philosophical value that is relevant to a better understanding of the contemporary world, a view that is propagated most clearly by Liŭ Zōngyuán's younger contemporary, Xú Língfŭ. On the other hand, Liŭ is the first to relate philosophical value to philological status, claiming that only authentic passages are relevant. Thematically, Liŭ's perceptive views on authorship

[273] In a letter to Wéi Zhōnglì 韋中立, written in 813 [Gentzler 1966: 169].

and authenticity of the *Wénzǐ* mark the beginning of critical *Wénzǐ* scholarship, but he was ahead of his time. His *Wénzǐ* essay was first noted four centuries later, by scholars of the Southern Sòng, when philological reliability had become a *conditio sine qua non* for philosophical value.

9.2.2. The Southern Sòng dynasty and after

The Ān Lùshān rebellion created the circumstances that facilitated Liǔ Zōngyuán's critical assessment of the *Wénzǐ*, and another calamitous event in Chinese history led to widespread acceptance of his ideas. Soon after the fall of the Northern Sòng dynasty, a second generation of scholars, led by Cháo Gōngwǔ 晁公武 (ca. 1105-1180), Hóng Mài 洪邁 (1123-1202) and Zhōu Bìdà 周必大 (1126-1204), picks up on Liǔ's assessment and resumes critical analysis of the *Wénzǐ*. On the timeline of *Wénzǐ* reception, the fall of the Northern Sòng is something of a watershed.[274] From the Southern Sòng onwards, discussion of the *Wénzǐ* focuses on four interrelated problems: (1) Wénzǐ's identity; (2) King Píng's identity; (3) the authenticity of the *Wénzǐ*; and (4) the identity of its forger.

(1) Wénzǐ's identity. Until the Southern Sòng, Wénzǐ was simply seen as a disciple of Lǎozǐ. No further specification was given or required. Apparently, Lǐ Xiān, the 6th century *Wénzǐ* commentator, had suggested Xīn Jìrán as the identity of the man behind the pen name Wénzǐ, but no one refers to his hypothesis until Cháo Gōngwǔ in *Record of Reading Books in the Commandery Studio* 郡齋讀書志 (completed in 1151) agrees with Lǐ Xiān that Xīn Jìrán was Wénzǐ. Dù Dàojiān, writing in the early 14th century, readily subscribes to this view, as he discusses the *Wénzǐ* on the mountain where Jìrán once resided. Most scholars, however, refute the conflation of Wénzǐ and Jìrán (see Chapter 3). They merely disprove the Jìrán option, but offer few alternatives. Only Sòng Lián conjectured that the *Wénzǐ*'s author was a follower of Lǎozǐ surnamed Wén or a man called Xīn Wénzǐ, to whom the text *Jìrán* had been erroneously attributed; but neither hypothesis was widely accepted. In sum, Wénzǐ's disputed identity doubtless intensified suspicion about the *Wénzǐ*'s authenticity, because, as Mencius already exclaimed, "How can we read the text and fail to know the author?" 讀其書，不知其人，可乎.

[274] A detailed discussion of this crucial period in Chinese history is beyond the scope of this study.

(2) King Píng's identity. In Phase I, Wénzǐ was not only seen as a disciple of Lǎozǐ, but also as an advisor to King Píng of Zhōu. The resulting anachronism was overlooked or ignored until the Southern Sòng, when solutions were offered to solve it. Cháo Gōngwǔ notes the anachronism, but it does not trouble him, because in his view, pre-Qín texts that were fortunate enough "to survive the book burning of the Qín" often display some internal dissonance.[275] Zhōu Bìdà fully recognizes the chronological problem and asserts that King Píng in the *Wénzǐ* actually refers to the ruler of Chǔ, not Zhōu. His solution received much acclaim (see Chapter 3). Yè Dàqìng 葉大慶 (ca. 1180-ca. 1230) offers another, truly inventive solution. He suggests that Lǎozǐ, who is known to have practiced longevity techniques, may have lived for more than two hundred years, so that Wénzǐ, who must have been around almost as long, could advocate Lǎozǐ's teachings to King Píng of Zhōu (at the beginning of the Springs and Autumns period) and record his master's discussion with Confucius (at the end of the Springs and Autumns period). Yè's suggestion, however, found no hearing. In sum, the problematic identity of King Píng may have helped shaping the negative views on the authenticity of the text.

(3) The authenticity of the *Wénzǐ*. When Zhōu Bìdà raises Liǔ Zōngyuán's "Judging the *Wénzǐ*" from oblivion, four centuries after its composition, he effectively rekindles interest in the issue of the authenticity of the *Wénzǐ*. From then on, support for Liǔ's assessment is near-unanimous and "composite work" becomes the accepted label of the *Wénzǐ*.[276] Notably, Liǔ's detection of intertextual borrowings in the *Wénzǐ* generates far more enthusiasm than his acclaim for its authentic parts. Liǔ Zōngyuán distinguished philosophically relevant authentic passages from later interpolations, which do not reflect Wénzǐ's worldview or illuminate the Way. Later scholars comfortably adopt Liǔ's label of "composite work", meaning partially forged, only to pass the entire *Wénzǐ* off as spurious and philosophically irrelevant. Rejection of the *Wénzǐ* becomes so seemingly self-evident, that few scholars bother to verify their judgment through additional textual research. Those who do take the trouble, such as

[275] In other words, Cháo claims that some "pre-Qín" texts, such as the *Lièzǐ*, may contain sayings about people whom the historical person to whom the overall authorship is ascribed, Lièzǐ, could not have known because they lived long after his death, but that does not mean the entire text is a forgery.

[276] Scholars who approvingly mention Liǔ Zōngyuán include Gāo Sìsūn 高似孫 (ca. 1160-1230), Chén Zhènsūn 陳振孫 (1190-1249), Mǎ Duānlín 馬端臨 (1254-1323) and Hú Yìnglín 胡應麟 (1551-1602). Wáng Yìnglín 王應麟 (1223-1296), who shows no awareness of contemporary scholarship on the *Wénzǐ*, is an exception. He still sees it as an authentic work by a disciple of Lǎozǐ.

Huáng Zhèn 黃震 (1213-1280) in his *Daily Notes by Mr. Huang* 黃氏日抄, reject the *Wénzǐ* in even stronger words:

> 文子者，云周平王時辛鈃之字。即范蠡之師計然。嘗當師老子而作此書其為之註與序者。唐人默希子。而號其書曰通玄真經。然僞書爾。孔子沒於周平王幾百年。及見老子。安其生於平王之時已先。能師老子耶。范蠡戰國人。又安得上師平王時之文子耶。此僞一也。老子所談者清虛。而計然之所事者財利。此僞二也。其書述皇王帝霸而霸乃伯字。後世轉聲為霸耳。平王時未有霸之名。此僞三也。相坐之法、咸爵之令、皆泰之事。而書以爲老子之言。此僞四也。僞為之者。殆即所謂默希子。而乃自匿其姓名歟。其序盛稱唐明皇垂衣之化。則其崇尚虛無上行下效皆失其本心為可知明皇之不克終於是乎兆矣。豈獨深宮女子能召漁陽鞞鼓之變哉。書之每章必託老子為之辭。然用老子之說者。文衍意重。淡於嚼蠟。否者又散漫無統自相反覆。謂默希子果有得於老子。吾亦未之信。今畧類分其說。如稱爲「惠者生姦」此法家之說「政勝其民不附其上」此術家之說「國之所以強者必死也」此兵家之說。而上德一篇又全引諸子譬喻語。凡其散雜類此。既曰「道滅而德興」又曰「道之中有德」既非仁義矣又曰「治之本仁義也」既非禮義矣又曰「不知禮義法不能正」。凡其反覆類此。而其言之偶合理者有二曰「不法其已成之法而法其所以為法者與世推移」曰「自天子至於庶人四體不勤於事求瞻者未之聞」。其言之最害理者亦有二曰「任臣者危亡之道也尚賢者癡惑之原也」曰「去恩意舍聖智外賢能廢仁義禁姦僞則齊於道矣」。

> Wénzǐ is said to be a contemporary of King Píng of Zhōu with the style name of Xīn Bǐng, alias Jìrán, who was Fàn Lí's teacher. He compiled this work on the basis of his own studies with Lǎozǐ. The Master who is Silent about the Inaudible [i.e., Xú Língfǔ] of the Táng dynasty added a commentary and a preface to the *Wénzǐ* and gave it the honorific title *True Scripture of Communion with the Mysteries*.[277] Nonetheless, the text is nothing but a forgery.
>
> Confucius died several hundred years after King Píng of Zhōu and he paid a visit to Lǎozǐ. How could someone who lived during the reign of King Píng have previously been taught by Lǎozǐ? In addition, how could Fàn Lí, who lived in the Warring States era, study under this Wénzǐ from the time of King Píng? This is the first proof of its forged status.
>
> Lǎozǐ speaks of "purity" and "emptiness", whereas Jìrán is concerned with "goods" and "profit". This is the second proof of its forged status.
>
> The text speaks of sovereigns, kings, emperors and hegemons. But 霸 *bà* 'hegemon' was traditionally written as 伯 *bó*. Only after its pronunciation had changed [from *bó* to *bà*] was it written as 霸 *bà*. Under King Píng, 'hegemon' was not yet written as 霸 *bà*. This is the third proof of its forged status.[278]

[277] In fact, the *Wénzǐ* received this title from Emperor Xuánzōng in 742, long before Xú Língfǔ.

[278] The graph 霸 *bà* is indeed first mentioned in the sense of 'hegemon' in the *Discourses of the Realms* 國語 (5th to 4th c. BCE), long after King Píng of Zhōu [Le Blanc 2000: 92 n. 27].

The law of "collective punishment" and the decree of "lessening entitlements" were implemented by the Qín.[279] The *Wénzǐ* presents these as Lǎozǐ's propositions. This is the fourth proof of its forged status.

Is the forger of this work perhaps the so-called Master who is Silent about the Inaudible, who carefully hides his real name?[280] […] Each section in the *Wénzǐ* is ascribed to Lǎozǐ. However, those sections that actually quote the *Lǎozǐ* add so many redundant words and excessive explanations that they are more tasteless than chewing wax. Those sections that do not [quote the *Lǎozǐ*], are eclectic and contradictory. It is claimed that the Master who is Silent about the Inaudible [i.e., the forger of the *Wénzǐ*] truly grasped [the essence of] the *Lǎozǐ*, but I find this hard to believe. Now, let me explain this by classifying a few of its theories.

The *Wénzǐ* contains the following statements: "Those who practice kindness give raise to treachery" [*Wénzǐ* 8.11]. This is a theory of the Legalists. "When an administration commands the people, inferiors will submit to their superiors." [*Wénzǐ* 11.15] This is a theory of the Strategists. "What makes a realm strong is the willingness to die." [*Wénzǐ* 11.16] This is a theory of the Tacticians. Moreover, *Wénzǐ* 6 consists entirely of analogies and illustrations quoted from the various masters. These are all examples of its eclectic nature.

On the one hand, the *Wénzǐ* states that "when the Way is extinguished, virtue springs up" [*Wénzǐ* 7.13], while on the other hand, it claims that "inside the Way, there is virtue." [*Wénzǐ* 7.19]. It opposes humaneness and righteousness, but also insists that "humaneness and righteousness are the root of order." [*Wénzǐ* 11.1]. It opposes ritual propriety and righteousness, but also maintains that "without a thorough understanding of ritual propriety and righteousness, one's laws cannot be rectified." [*Wénzǐ* 12.3]. These are all examples of its contradictory nature.

The text incidentally contains two statements that are quite reasonable: "Those who do not base their laws on extant laws, but on the reasons why these laws exist, move forward with their generation." [*Wénzǐ* 5.12] and "I have never heard of anyone, from the emperors down to the common people, who expected to be given what they needed without having worked hard with all four limbs." [*Wénzǐ* 8.10].

Then again, I can also point out two sayings that are most harmful to reason: "To appoint ministers is the way of danger and destruction, to appraise the wise is the origin of stupidity and bewilderment." [*Wénzǐ* 3.10] and "If you rid yourself of feelings of kindness, discard yourself of sagely wisdom, keep intelligence and ability outside, abandon humaneness and righteousness, and block evil and falsity, then you are on one level with the Way." [*Wénzǐ* 8.1].

This is the first in-depth, critical textual analysis of the *Wénzǐ*. Huáng Zhèn fiercely interrogates the text and its author. He shows that current biographical information on

[279] According to *Huáinánzǐ* 20, Shāng Yàng implemented the law of "collective punishment" for the state of Qín. It meant that if someone committed a crime, three families (his own, his wife's and his mother's) were punished. Also according to *Huáinánzǐ* 20, Wú Qǐ drafted the decree of "lessening entitlements" for the state of Chǔ [Le Blanc 2000: 6 n. 17].

[280] The *Wénzǐ*, even in its received form, existed well before Xú Língfǔ. Huáng Zhèn plays with the literal meaning of his pseudonym, 'The Master who is Silent about the Inaudible'.

Wénzǐ, as the alleged author, is inaccurate. Wénzǐ cannot have been advisor to King Píng of Zhōu, because he uses terminology from later times. He cannot have been Fàn Lí's teacher Jìrán, because Jìrán's ideas contradict those of Lǎozǐ. And he cannot have been Lǎozǐ's disciple, because he ascribes laws and decrees to Lǎozǐ that find their origin elsewhere. Huáng Zhèn also shows that the text is eclectic and self-contradictory, because it incorporates conflicting theories from various schools. Hence, he rejects the *Wénzǐ* as a "forgery" 僞書 that possibly dates from as late as the Táng dynasty.[281]

(4) The identity of the *Wénzǐ*'s forger. The theories of Liǔ Zōngyuán and Huáng Zhèn led to the popular view that the *Wénzǐ* was a forgery. Consequently, the question arose who forged it. Liǔ Zōngyuán did not answer this question, but his successors came up with several candidates. Three most frequently proposed names are those of the first three *Wénzǐ* commentators: Zhāng Zhàn, Lǐ Xiān and Xú Língfǔ (see Chapter 7). As evidence is scarce, all three hypotheses are equally plausible, or implausible.

From the Southern Sòng onwards, there is much speculation about the identity of the *Wénzǐ*'s main protagonists, King Píng and Wénzǐ, and that of its forger. There is little discussion about the *Wénzǐ*'s philological status, for the text is commonly seen as forged. Scholars espouse Liǔ Zōngyuán's label "composite work", but use it in a different way. To Liǔ Zōngyuán, despite its interpolations, the text contains authentic passages that help him understand his own world. To later scholars, "composite" means that, its authentic passages notwithstanding, the text as a whole is spurious and therefore useless. These scholars may have studied the text—though it seems that some merely perused it—and occasionally quote phrases they find attractive, but they do not manifestly see the *Wénzǐ* as a text that informs their own worldview. Biographical issues (e.g., Wénzǐ's relation to King Píng and Jìrán) and philological issues (e.g., the *Wénzǐ*'s expansion from nine to twelve chapters) fascinate these scholars more than its philosophy. They do not quote the *Wénzǐ* in commentaries, memorials, essayist compositions, and so on, as did the scholars of Phase I, but discuss the text—often perfunctorily and pejoratively—in essays that are collected in

[281] As an exception, Sòng Lián disagrees with Huáng Zhèn's rejection of the *Wénzǐ*. He claims that the author, to elucidate the deep and profound teachings of Lǎozǐ, had to embrace theories from other schools. Other scholars, such as Hú Yìnglín (1551-1602), agree with Huáng Zhèn that the *Wénzǐ* is not authentic, but argue that it was forged long before Xú Língfǔ.

works with titles such as *Record of Reading Books at the Commandery Studio* 郡齋讀書志, *Explanation of Titles in the Catalogue of Books in the Zhízhāi-studio* 直齋書錄解題 or *Evaluation of the Masters* 諸子辨. In these essays, there is no room for any philosophical significance of the *Wénzǐ*. Their main concern is to judge whether texts are authentic or forged, and to reject the latter as unimportant. That even a forgery can be useful, as Liǔ Zōngyuán maintained, has become unthinkable. In sum, this period marks the transition from what we may call primary reception, when readers perceive the *Wénzǐ* as relevant to their own understanding of the world and lived experience, to secondary reception, when the text was perceived and studied as part of a scholarly discourse, as a signal from the past with no contemporary philosophical significance.

9.2.3. The Qīng dynasty and after

Discussion of the *Wénzǐ* continues into the Qīng dynasty, with one important change: the relationship between *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* is brought to bear upon the issue of authenticity.

Previously, readers had occasionally noted the relationship. Xiāo Jí (in the 6th century) and the editors of the *Imperial Digest of the Grand Peace Era* (in the 10th century) note one corresponding passage between the *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*, but they do not comment on the direction of borrowing, which suggests unconcern for the issue. Wáng Yìnglín (in the 13th century) considers the *Wénzǐ* an authentic work and notes that "countless *Wénzǐ* passages also occur in the *Lièzǐ*, the *Zhuāngzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*." Although the direction of borrowing is clear to him, Wáng observes no difference in the *Wénzǐ*'s relation to the *Huáinánzǐ* and that to the *Lièzǐ* or the *Zhuāngzǐ*. Besides, his statement goes unnoticed, as scholars continue to reject the *Wénzǐ* for other reasons.

In the early Qīng dynasty, the *Wénzǐ-Huáinánzǐ* relationship becomes a matter of concern. The historian Mǎ Sù 馬驌 (1621-1673) quotes various *Wénzǐ* sections and concludes that the "writings of *Wénzǐ* are almost completely copied into the *Huáinánzǐ*". He sees the *Wénzǐ* as authentic and refined and the *Huáinánzǐ* as a poor imitation. Other scholars follow his example. In his preface to the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ*, Bì Yuán 畢沅 (1730-1797) opines that the *Huáinánzǐ* was created by incorporating nearly all of the *Wénzǐ* and occasionally adding or omitting a few

words and moving or changing a few expressions. Sūn Xīngyǎn 孫星衍 (1753-1818) agrees. In an essay called "Preface to the *Wénzǐ*", he writes:

> 淮南王受詔著書。成于食時。多引文子。增損其詞。謬誤疊出。
>
> The King of Huáinán received an imperial order to compose a book and finish it by the time of eating.[282] He often quoted Wénzǐ, but added and omitted words, which led to one error upon another.

For a brief spell, the *Wénzǐ* was perceived as concise and elegant and the *Huáinánzǐ* as a rushed, error-filled reproduction. While Mǎ, Bì and Sūn drew attention to the *Wénzǐ*-*Huáinánzǐ* relationship, their conclusion on the direction of borrowing was soon overturned, as support for the *Huáinánzǐ* as the primary text became overwhelming in the 19th and 20th centuries:

Wénzǐ copied by *Huáinánzǐ*	*Huáinánzǐ* copied by *Wénzǐ*
Mǎ Sù 馬驌 (1621-1673)	Wáng Niànsūn 王念孫 (1744-1832)
Bì Yuán 畢沅 (1730-1797)	Qián Xīzuò 錢熙祚 (1801-1844)
Sūn Xīngyǎn 孫星衍 (1753-1818)	Yáo Zhènzōng 姚振宗 (1842-1906)
	Wáng Xiānqiān 王先謙 (1842-1917)
	Táo Fāngqí 陶方琦 (1845-1884)
	Zhāng Bǐnglín 章炳麟 (1868-1936)
	Liáng Qǐchāo 梁啟超 (1873-1929)
	Yáng Shùdá 楊樹達 (1885-1956)
	Huáng Yúnméi 黃雲眉 (1898-1977)
	Wáng Zhòngmín 王重民 (1903-1975)

Table 9.1: Views on the Relationship between *Huáinánzǐ* and *Wénzǐ*

The most fervent opponent of the *Wénzǐ* was Táo Fāngqí, who disputes Sūn Xīngyǎn's view in an essay with the telling title "The *Wénzǐ* Is Not an Ancient Text" 文子非古書説. In a remarkably modern view, Táo Fāngqí proposes that an early version of the *Wénzǐ* disappeared at the end of the Latter Hàn and that the Received

[282] See *Hàn History* 44.2145. Notably, this anecdote is about Liú Ān's commentary on the *Lísāo* 離騷, not on the *Huáinánzǐ*.

Wénzǐ was created, on the basis of the *Huáinánzǐ*, in subsequent centuries, when Lǎozǐ studies peaked, as the following excerpt shows:

> 其書實亡於東漢之季。今所傳者，乃魏晉以後人剽淮南一書而成者也。魏晉之間競宗老子玄虛之旨。當時惟淮南一書多引老子之言，遂竊其全書以實之以合班氏藝文之志，而又以淮南有博采諸子之說，因割竄附改以動後人之輕信，並以是書先於淮南不使後人之議已。不知欲蓋彌彰。
>
> This work [Ancient *Wénzǐ*] had become extinct in the Latter Hàn period. The received text was created in the Wèi-Jìn period by people who borrowed heavily from one other text, *Huáinánzǐ*. In the Wèi-Jìn period, people held Lǎozǐ's idea of the mysterious void in esteem. At the time, only *Huáinánzǐ* contained many Lǎozǐ sayings. Hence, passages were stolen from all over the *Huáinánzǐ* so as to fill out the *Wénzǐ* and make it accord with the description [of the *Wénzǐ*] in Ban Gù's bibliographical treatise. Moreover, since the *Huáinánzǐ* widely draws on other masters, [the *Wénzǐ* editor] made alterations by deleting and adding words so as to make later people easily accept it [as an authentic work]. He also passed off this book as being older than the *Huáinánzǐ*, lest later people express their doubts. He did not understand that the more he tried to hide it, the more obvious his forgery became.

The lengthy essay continues, as Táo Fāngqí offers five pieces of textual evidence to prove that *Wénzǐ* draws on *Huáinánzǐ*, not vice versa. With Táo's persuasive critical textual analysis, later scholars needed much less space to come to the same conclusion. Liáng Qǐchāo simply says: "a large part of the received *Wénzǐ* is plagiarized from the *Huáinánzǐ*". These analyses dealt a final blow to the status of the *Wénzǐ* as an authentic text. The text was no longer seen as authentic and relevant, but rejected as a poor copy of the *Huáinánzǐ*, that was not only philosophically irrelevant, but also hardly worth scholarly attention.

Around the same time, *Wénzǐ* reception commences in other parts of the world. Unaware of recent scholarship in China, sinologists in Europe and the United States view the *Wénzǐ* as an ancient text. De Harlez [1891: 83-84], for example, believes that "the *Wénzǐ* is certainly very ancient", because "its Daoist outlook is still exempt from the foolish speculation and charlatanry that appeared after the beginning of the Christian era." Von der Gabelentz, in a lecture of 10 December 1887 on the authenticity of the *Wénzǐ*, declares that "the language of the book contains no indications for a later provenance", which means that "the book was partly written by Wénzǐ himself and partly by his students and friends, based on his lectures". In 1927, Forke [1964 reprint: 334] likewise declared that "the Daoist book known as *Wénzǐ* is

valuable throughout and does not give the impression of a forgery". Whereas Chinese scholars saw the *Wénzǐ* as inauthentic and therefore without value, these few Western scholars perceived it as authentic and therefore valuable. However, their positive appraisals did not generate widespread interest in the text. The *Wénzǐ* has never gained wide recognition in Europe and the United States, where canonical texts such as the *Analects* and the *Lǎozǐ* continue to reign supreme. A small number of scholars, such as Yú Dàchéng 于大成 and Barbara Kandel, have not let the realization that the *Wénzǐ* is not an authentic work detract from its significance, and consider it an interesting object of study in its own right. But the vast majority are silent about the text.

9.3. Phase III: Revaluation

9.3.1. The 1973 Discoveries

With two important discoveries, 1973 was a fruitful year for the archaeology of ancient Chinese texts. The findings at Mǎwángduī and Dìngzhōu refueled interest in the *Wénzǐ* and caused another shift in *Wénzǐ* reception.

The Mǎwángduī tomb yielded, among others texts, four silk roles that have come to be known as the *Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor*. These manuscripts indirectly led to a reassessment of the *Wénzǐ* when Táng Lán [1975], one of the specialists of the Mǎwángduī project, published a detailed comparison of the four silk roles with other texts, including the *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ*. In an appended note, he writes:

> 《文子》與《淮南子》很多辭句是相同的。究竟誰抄誰，舊無定說。今以篇名襲黃帝之言來看，《文子》當在前。先秦古書見于《漢書藝文志》的，如《六韜》之類，過去都認爲後世僞作，近西漢墓中所出古籍，證明很多是西漢初已有的古籍。《文子》中有很多內容為《淮南子》所無，也應當是先秦古籍之一。
>
> The *Wénzǐ* and the *Huáinánzǐ* have many words and phrases in common, but it has long been unclear who copied whom. We now know that their chapter titles draw on the Yellow Emperor texts, which means that the *Wénzǐ* must be older. Ancient texts catalogued in the bibliographical treatise of the *Hàn History*, such as *Six Secret Teachings*, were often seen as later forgeries. But manuscripts recently excavated from Western Hàn tombs prove that many are

> actually ancient texts that already circulated in the early Hàn. The *Wénzǐ*, which contains numerous passages not found in the *Huáinánzǐ*, is also one of these pre-Qín ancient texts.

Táng thus concludes that the *Wénzǐ* predates the *Huáinánzǐ* and served as one of its sources. Lóng Huì 龍晦 [1975] confirms this view in his philological study of the *Four Canons*. Referring to the work of Sūn Xīngyǎn, he suggests that *Wénzǐ* draws on the *Four Canons*, and that the *Huáinánzǐ* was based on the *Wénzǐ*.

In sum, the four silk manuscripts from Mǎwángduī drew new attention to the *Wénzǐ-Huáinánzǐ* relationship. Whereas for the past two centuries, scholars had argued that the *Huáinánzǐ* was the source text, those working after the Mǎwángduī discovery favored the historical priority of the *Wénzǐ*.[283]

9.3.2. The 1981 Publication

The view of the *Wénzǐ* as an authentic pre-Qín text was substantiated in 1981, when the news of the 1973 Dìngzhōu discovery was finally made public. In a brief summary of the *Wénzǐ* manuscript in *Cultural Relics* 1981.8, the Dìngzhōu team notes that bamboo strips corresponding to six passages in the received text have been found; that the bamboo manuscript consists of a discussion between King Píng and Wénzǐ (as Bān Gù had said) and not between Wénzǐ and Lǎozǐ (as in the received text); and that the *Wénzǐ*, although corrupted by later people, is essentially not a forgery and therefore important to the study of ancient thought. Because the information is scanty—it is unclear how much of the *Wénzǐ* is "authentic" and to what extent later people "corrupted" the text—its impact was all the more impressive. Scholars such as Ài Lìnóng [1982] and Lǐ Dìngshēng [1984a; 1984b] quickly picked up on the report, publishing articles in which they confirm that the *Wénzǐ* is an "ancient treatise of the pre-Qín period that already circulated at the beginning of the Hàn", long before the creation of the *Huáinánzǐ*. Numerous scholars in the Chinese-speaking world and outside followed their lead, creating a sizable field of *Wénzǐ* studies.

The Mǎwángduī and Dìngzhōu discoveries led to a new cascade of positive *Wénzǐ* appraisals. From 1973, and especially from 1981 onwards, the *Wénzǐ* is widely considered an authentic, pre-Qín text, and one of the sources of the *Huáinánzǐ*. Given

[283] Jiāng Shìróng [1983] follows Táng Lán's analysis and concludes, as early Qīng scholars did before him, that the *Huáinánzǐ* editors copied and expanded the *Wénzǐ*. He suggests that *Wénzǐ* and *Huáinánzǐ* can each be used to correct mistakes in the other text.

that the *Wénzǐ* has been seen to contain the thought of a follower of Lǎozǐ, it also becomes a philosophically relevant text again. In 1988, Lǐ Dìngshēng 李定生 and Xú Huìjūn 徐慧君 publish their *Wénzǐ* commentary, in which they explain the essence of the text. Notably, this is the first *Wénzǐ* commentary since that of Dù Dàojiān in the 14th century, and other commentaries quickly followed. Other scholars, such as Huáng Zhāo [1990] and Jiāng Guózhù 姜國柱 [1994], publish full essays on the philosophy of the *Wénzǐ*. In sum, the *Wénzǐ* regains not only authenticity and scholarly significance, but also some of its former philosophical relevance, albeit in a limited professional and specialized audience and not directly feeding into lived experience.

9.3.3. The 1995 Publication

The publication of the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* transcription in *Cultural Relics* 1995.12 gave scholars access to the text on the bamboo strips. This led to another flurry of publications on the *Wénzǐ*, but also to more nuanced views. Lǐ Xuéqín [1995; 1996] and many others carried out detailed textual analyses, comparing the Dìngzhōu *Wénzǐ* to the Received *Wénzǐ*, and both to the *Huáinánzǐ*. These analyses confirm that the bamboo strips do not bear witness to their supposed pre-Qín status, but indicate Hàn dynasty provenance. Moreover, they confirm the major revision of the *Wénzǐ* that led to the received text, as they indicate precisely how much of the *Wénzǐ* is "authentic" and to what extent later people "corrupted" the text.

Scholars now increasingly subscribe to the idea, foreshadowed by Táo Fāngqí in the Qīng dynasty, that the *Wénzǐ* was first created in the early Former Hàn dynasty and revised, on the basis of the *Huáinánzǐ*, after the Latter Hàn. Interestingly, whereas the *Wénzǐ* is no longer seen as "authentic" and may have lost its philosophical relevance in literary and cultural circles at large, the text is appreciated for its academic value. The Ancient *Wénzǐ* may not be a pre-Qín work, but it is nonetheless relevant to our understanding of early Hàn thought. And the Received *Wénzǐ* may indeed, as Liǔ Zōngyuán already suspected, be a "composite work", but that makes it no less informative of new developments in the third century CE. This new view on authenticity and relevance leads to a speculative, fascinating question: What would have been different in *Wénzǐ* reception if the Ancient *Wénzǐ* had not vanished for almost two millennia?