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Els, P. van; Hunter, M.; Kern, M.

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Confucius's Sayings Entombed: On Two Han Dynasty Bamboo *Lunyu* Manuscripts

Paul van Els

As one of the foundational texts of Chinese culture, the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) was copied throughout the centuries and in all corners of the Chinese empire, from the capital city to the very edges of the Sinosphere. The text was inked on bamboo, silk, paper, and wood and durably engraved in stone. Some age-old manuscripts have made it to modern times. Until the final quarter of the twentieth century, the earliest extant version of the *Analects* was one of the “Stone Classics of the Xiping era” (Xiping shijing 熹平石經). These canonical Confucian texts were engraved in stone in Luoyang, the seat of government during the Eastern Han dynasty, around the year 175 CE. Several decades ago, however, archaeologists discovered two handwritten copies of the *Analects* in tombs that had been closed around 50 BCE. Well over two centuries older than the stone carvings, these handwritings on strips of bamboo now rank as the earliest *Analects* ever found.¹

The two bamboo manuscripts have come to be known as the Dingzhou *Analects* 定州論語 and P'yongyang *Analects* 平壤論語, after the respective locations of the tombs in which they were found. Although unearthed decades ago, news about their spectacular discoveries has only gradually trickled out into

1 In 2011, when I wrote the present essay, archaeologists in China started excavating a tomb complex near Nanchang 南昌 in Jiangxi Province 江西省. The person buried in the main tomb is said to have been Liu He 劉賀, the Marquis of Haihun 海昏侯, who died in 59 BCE. The archaeological excavations yielded numerous grave goods related to Confucius, including a lacquer screen containing the earliest known portrait of the master and bamboo strips on which reportedly the chapter “Zhi dao” 知道 (Knowing the Way) was inked. As this chapter does not exist in the received *Analects*, scholars speculate that the Haihun bamboo strips may be part of a Qi 齊 version of the *Analects* (for more on this, see below). This remains speculative, though, given the absence of academic publications on the Haihun bamboo strips to date. For the same reason, the Haihun bamboo strips are not included in the present discussion of Han dynasty *Analects* manuscripts, even though the date of the Marquis of Haihun's tomb roughly corresponds to the dates of the two tombs under discussion in the present essay.

the academic world. As a result, studies of the excavated manuscripts are few and far between.²

The present essay is intended as a gateway to both two-thousand-year-old manuscripts. The first two sections discuss the archaeological context of the discoveries and analyze the manuscripts themselves, including characteristic features of the bamboo strips and the texts inked thereon and notable differences between these and other *Analects* versions. In these sections, I also critically evaluate present-day *Analects* studies and offer alternative hypotheses where there is room for debate. The third and final section of the essay discusses what I consider the most fascinating (and most complex) issue regarding the manuscripts: their provenance. In that section, I examine when, where, and why the *Analects* was copied onto the bamboo strips. The ultimate goal is to present a nuanced understanding of the two bamboo manuscripts that conveys the fascinating insights they offer while also exploring the limitations of what these manuscripts can actually tell us.

The Dingzhou *Analects*

This section discusses the Dingzhou *Analects* from its entombment to its discovery in modern times, its analysis by archaeologists and paleographers, and finally its assessment by other scholars in the field.

Tomb and Excavation

In the Western Han dynasty (202 BCE–9 CE), the area south of present-day Beijing 北京 was known as Zhongshan 中山. In the year 55 BCE, the ruler of

2 The Dingzhou *Analects* was discovered in 1973, but its transcription was not published until 1997. Since then, the bamboo manuscript has been mentioned in a dozen or so publications. Ames and Rosemont (1998: 271–277) in their *Analects* translation devote an appendix to the manuscript; Csikszentmihályi (2002: 146–147) discusses it in his book chapter on Confucius and the *Analects* in the Han dynasty; and Makeham (2003: 367–368) offers a brief description in his essay on the development of the early commentarial tradition on the *Analects*. Other scholars mention the Dingzhou *Analects* in passing, while translators note differences between the bamboo manuscript and the received text in their translations. Specialized studies focusing entirely on the Dingzhou *Analects* have appeared only in Chinese. For details, see the bibliography at the end of this chapter, or see Tang 2007 for a helpful overview of Chinese post-Dingzhou *Analects* research. The P'yŏngyang *Analects* was discovered in 1992. Since access to the manuscript was (and still remains) highly restricted, no academic study on it was published until 2009. The only relevant publications to date are by Kim Kyŏng-ho, Shan Chengbin, and Yi Sŏng-shi et al. (see the bibliography).

Zhongshan, Liu Xiu 劉脩, passed away.³ Posthumously known as King Huai of Zhongshan 中山懷王, Liu Xiu was buried near Lunu 廬奴, the capital city of Zhongshan, in a wooden tomb under a large burial mound surrounded by an earthen wall. Clothed in a precious suit made of jade tesserae sewn together with gold thread, he was laid to rest in a nested coffin and accompanied by a wealth of funerary objects (including jade, gold, bronze, and lacquerware) and a number of texts written on strips of bamboo.⁴ While his tomb had been fitted with every conceivable posthumous comfort, the king's afterlife was far from peaceful. Not long after his burial, robbers entered the wooden-tomb construction. Yet before they could plunder many of the valuable objects within, they inadvertently sparked a fire with their torches, setting the place ablaze, and were thus forced to make a quick escape.⁵ While the flames saved numerous objects from the bandits' hands, an unknown number of artifacts and manuscripts went up in smoke, and many of those remaining were scorched and scattered (fig. 6.1). After the fire, no one is known to have entered the tomb for another two millennia, until 1973.

In 1973 a team of Chinese archaeologists excavated the tomb, located in what is now the village of Bajiaolang 八角廊 near Dingzhou (a city built on the soil that once was Lunu) in Hebei Province. Eight months of work were required to complete the excavation. The excavated materials were sent to the National Cultural Relics Bureau 國家文物局 in Beijing, where specialists analyzed the bamboo strips, which had been severely damaged by the tomb fire.⁶ With the help of the renowned paleographer and historian Li Xueqin 李學勤 and other scholars, they assigned consecutive numbers to the bamboo strips and transcribed legible graphs onto notecards, one strip per card. Sadly, in 1976 the devastating Tangshan 唐山 earthquake toppled the storage boxes in which the ancient manuscripts were contained, causing further damage to the strips. The tomb fire, the earthquake, and spectacular manuscript discoveries elsewhere (Mawangdui 馬王堆, Zhangjiashan 張家山, Guodian 郭店, to give a few examples) delayed further analysis of the excavated objects. In 1981 the research team published a brief excavation report and a short introduction to

3 Van Els (2009: 916–919) reflects on the exact year of the king's death and on the likelihood of Liu Xiu being the person buried in the Dingzhou tomb.

4 Hebei sheng bowuguan et al. 1976 and Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1981 provide detailed information about the jade suit and the excavated grave goods.

5 Hebei sheng bowuguan et al. 1976: 57.

6 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1995: 38–39 is a detailed report of the analysis of the bamboo strips.



FIGURE 6.1
Bamboo fragment from the
Dingzhou tomb (photograph by
the author)

the bamboo strips.⁷ This is when the world first learned that eight distinct texts had been found in the king's tomb:

- *Rujia zhe yan* 儒家者言 (*Sayings of the Scholars*)
- *Wenzi* 文子
- *Lunyu* 論語
- *Taigong liu tao* 太公六韜 (*The Grand Duke's Six Secret Teachings*)
- *Ai gong wen wuyi* 哀公問五義 (*Duke Ai Inquires about the Five Ways of Righteousness*)
- *Baohu zhuan* 保傅傳 (*Biography of the Grand Tutor*)
- *rishu, zhanbu* 日書占卜 (hemerological and divinatory texts)
- *Liu'an wang chao wufeng ernian zhengyue qiju ji* 六安王朝五鳳二年正月起居記 (*Record of the King of Lu'an's Visit to the Imperial Court in the First Month of the Second Year of the Five Phoenixes Reign*)

⁷ Guojia wenwu ju et al. 1981a.

In a later publication the research team mentioned en passant that one more text, a memorial by the prominent Han dynasty statesman Xiao Wangzhi 蕭望之 (ca. 114–46 BCE), had also been discovered in the same tomb.⁸ To date, four of the texts have been published in transcription: *Sayings of the Scholars* (1981), *Wenzi* (1995), *Analects* (1997), and *The Grand Duke's Six Secret Teachings* (2001). The long intervals between these publications and the apparent dormancy of the project since 2001 have done little to enhance academic awareness of the tomb and its discovery. This is regrettable, because the tomb yielded impressive objects and texts aside from the oldest handwritten copy of the *Analects* ever found, and their function and significance will not be fully understood without an in-depth study of all the tomb's contents.⁹

Tracings and Transcriptions

As mentioned, the Dingzhou *Analects* was discovered in 1973, but a description of the manuscript was not published until eight years later, in the August 1981 issue of the Chinese academic journal *Wenwu* 文物.¹⁰ Another sixteen years later, a transcription of select bamboo strips was published in the May 1997 issue of *Wenwu*, accompanied by tracings, notes on the transcription, and an explanatory essay by the research team responsible for arranging the Dingzhou bamboo strips, written by team leader Liu Laicheng 劉來成.¹¹ The same year also witnessed the publication of the full transcription of the Dingzhou *Analects* as a separate monograph.¹²

Compared with other manuscripts, published in sumptuous books replete with magnificent pictures, such as those unearthed in Guodian or those purchased by the Shanghai Museum, the publication of the Dingzhou *Analects* (and other manuscripts from the same tomb) leaves much to be desired. The few tracings are accompanied neither by photographs nor by explanations as to why these few bamboo fragments were selected for tracing. Without photographs or a complete set of accurate tracings, those who wish to study the bamboo *Analects* must rely solely on its transcription. Sadly, the transcription is not flawless.

Because of the fire that once raged in the tomb, the surviving bamboo fragments were found in disorder. Since it is impossible to know their original or-

8 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b: 61.

9 Van Els 2009 provides more information about the Dingzhou tomb and its unfortunate fate.

10 Guojia wenwu ju et al. 1981a.

11 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b.

12 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997a.

der, the transcription presents them in the order of corresponding passages in the received text, which does not necessarily reflect the original order.

Owing to the Tangshan earthquake, numerous bamboo fragments were destroyed or damaged to the point that the graphs on them are no longer legible. The graphs from these fragments survive only as transcriptions on cards made prior to the natural disaster. Because these graphs can no longer be verified against the original manuscript, they appear within square brackets in the published transcription.

The transcription was published in modern regular script (*kaishu* 楷書) in simplified characters. This is a methodological flaw. As William G. Boltz has written, manuscripts “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.”¹³ Boltz’s argument also applies here: the change to regular script is an alteration of the manuscript, and even more so is the change to simplified characters. This violates the principle of structural consistency, which, Boltz explains, entails that the transcription of a graph “should not deviate from the actual structural form of the graph in the manuscript.”¹⁴

To facilitate reading, the transcription also contains modern punctuation marks. While helpful, this “extraneous material” (Boltz’s terminology) is uncalled for in a methodologically correct transcription because it forces an interpretation of the text that may limit the possibilities offered by the unpunctuated transcription. The reader should have the opportunity to see exactly what the ancient scribe wrote, not what the modern editor thinks the scribe intended to write.¹⁵

These are just a few issues with the transcription of the bamboo *Analects*. Other issues are outlined in a four-page article by Sun Qinshan.¹⁶ I emphatically note that the purpose of pointing out these problematic aspects of the transcription is not to criticize Chinese colleagues who faced the unenviable task of making sense of the unpromising heap of charred pieces of bamboo (see fig. 6.1), and whose professional facilities may not have met international standards. However, these problems do highlight the need for especially

13 Boltz 1999: 596.

14 Boltz 1999: 597.

15 Richter (2003) and Xing Wen (2005) discuss methodological issues concerning the transcription of excavated early Chinese manuscripts.

16 Sun 2007.

careful treatment of ancient manuscripts, including the publication of transcriptions. Moreover, the problems emphasize that the transcription must be used with caution. When using the transcription in research, scholars rely heavily on choices made by editors several decades ago, with no opportunity to verify the accuracy of their work. Any study involving the Dingzhou *Analects* should ideally contain a disclaimer stating that its results are tentative.

Chapters, Sections, and Graphs

The Dingzhou *Analects* consists of 620 bamboo strips, most of which are fragments with one or both ends broken off. Only a handful of strips are complete. When they were placed in the tomb two millennia ago, the strips were probably 16.2 centimeters long and 0.7 centimeters wide, with 19–21 graphs per strip. Three binding threads joined these bamboo strips at the top, middle, and bottom. The threads did not survive, but their imprints are still visible on the excavated bamboo fragments. On those fragments, 7,576 graphs have been discerned, which amounts to just under half the length of the received *Analects*. The graphs were written in a mature, highly rectilinear Han dynasty clerical script (*lishu* 隸書), in which the graphs are square to wide in shape, with wavelike flaring of major strokes, as shown on figure 6.2. There are notable differences between the bamboo manuscript and the received text in terms of their (1) chapters, (2) sections, and (3) graphs.

1. The bamboo manuscript appears to have been a complete version of the *Analects* when it was placed in the tomb, as corresponding bamboo fragments have been found for all twenty chapters in the received *Analects*. However, the degree of survival differs markedly per chapter, from as few as 20 graphs (about 4 percent of the chapter total) for chapter 1 to as many as 694 graphs (about 77 percent) for chapter 15. I think the different degrees of survival are coincidental and not due to an inherent feature of the manuscript, as the opening chapter was probably positioned at the outer edge of the roll of bamboo strips and therefore most susceptible to destruction by the tomb fire.

The manuscript does not mention chapter titles or chapter numbers. It does, however, mention the number of sections and graphs within coherent textual units that we would probably call chapters. Ten excavated bamboo fragments list such information, and Chen Dong explored likely counterparts in the received text for each of them (table 6.1). Five of these transcribed bamboo fragments display the total number of graphs in the textual unit to which they belong. In each case, the number is lower than that of the corresponding chapter in the received text. This could potentially indicate that the handwritten copy is a condensed version of the *Analects*. More likely, in view of what we know from other manuscripts, it shows that the growth of the *Analects* at that

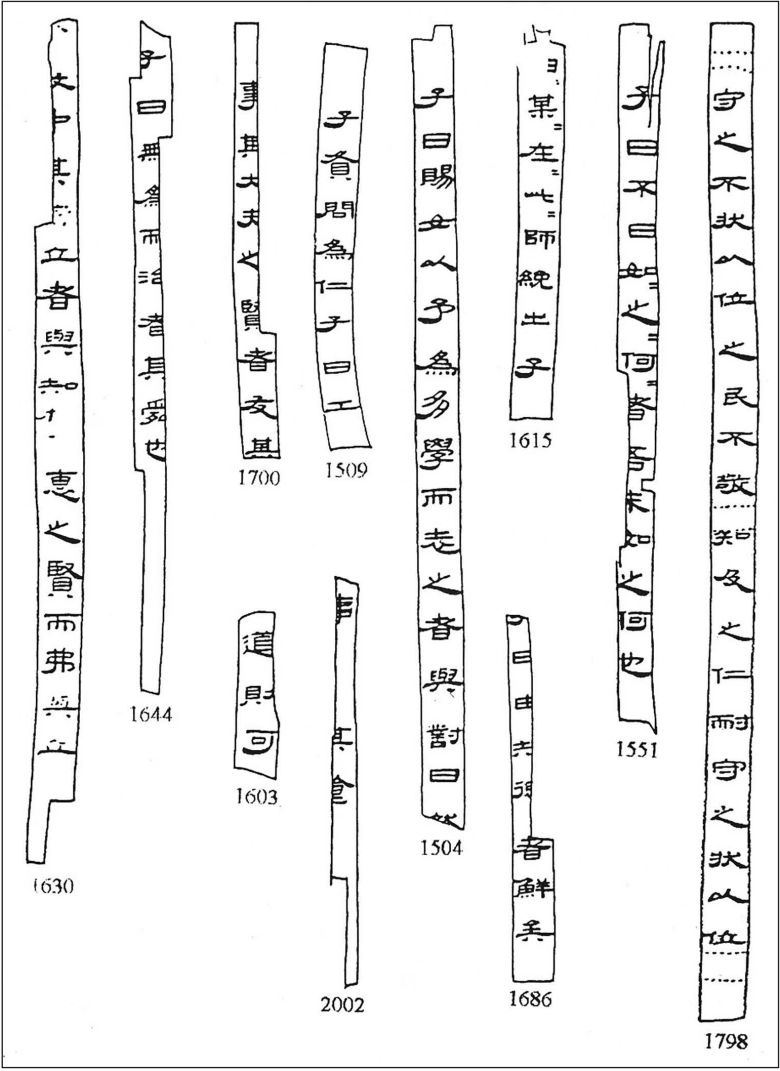


FIGURE 6.2 Tracings of the Dingzhou *Analects* (Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b: 50)

time was still in progress. The Former Han dynasty was a time of textual fluidity, when texts were susceptible to change.¹⁷ It seems that despite occasional

17 One famous case of (relative) textual fluidity in the Han dynasty is the *Laozi* 老子, or *Daodejing* 道德經, in which the text's two constitutive parts occur in reverse order in Han dynasty manuscripts when compared with the received text. For more on this, see Henricks 1990: xvi.

TABLE 6.1 Possible matching chapters in bamboo manuscript and received text^a

Strip	Manuscript text and translation	Received text
o612	• 凡二章 [凡三百廿二字] • In all, 2 sections. A total of 322 graphs.	Chapter 20 堯曰 3 sections, 341 graphs ^b
o613	• 凡卅七章 • In all, 37 sections	Chapter 7 述而 37 sections
o614	 [章] 五百七十五字sections 575 graphs.	Chapter 2 為政 581 graphs
o615	凡[卅六]章 • 凡九百九十字 In all, 36 sections. • A total of 990 graphs.	Chapter 17 陽貨 26 sections, 1,020 graphs
o616	• 凡卅章 • 凡七百九十字 • In all, 30 sections. • A total of 790 graphs.	Chapter 9 子罕 30 sections, 812 graphs
o617	• 凡[卅]四章 • In all, 44 sections	Chapter 14 憲問 44 sections
o618	[• 凡卅七章] [□□百八十一字] • In all, 47 sections. {XX}81 graphs.	Chapter 15 衛靈公 49 sections, 900 graphs
o619	• 凡十三章 • In all, 13 sections	Chapter 16 季氏 14 sections
o620	[凡十]三章 • In all, 13 sections. •	Chapter 11 先進 23 sections ^c
o621	• 凡廿八章 [• 凡八百五十一字] • In all, 28 sections. • A total of 851 graphs.	Chapter 5 公冶長 28 sections, 871 graphs

- a This table is based on Chen Dong 2003: 8. The transcribed text of the Dingzhou *Analects*, here and elsewhere in this chapter, corresponds to Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997a.
- b Chen Dong (2003: 8) explains that the number of graphs here refers exclusively to the first two sections of chapter 20 in the received text. The third section is often considered spurious. See also below.
- c Chen Dong (2003: 8) suspects that the bamboo strip actually mentions 23 sections, which the modern editors of the transcription mistakenly transcribed as 13.

Legend: symbols used in the transcription:

- An illegible graph on the bamboo strip. Rendered as {X} in the English translation.
- A sequence of illegible graphs on the bamboo strip.
- A black dot on the bamboo strip.
- [] Graphs on the bamboo strip that were transcribed onto notecards before the Tangshan earthquake but have become illegible after the forces of nature destroyed the part of the bamboo strip on which they were written. These graphs now exist only on the notecards. The accuracy of their transcription can no longer be confirmed. For aesthetic reasons, square brackets are omitted in the English translation.

attempts to secure the number of sections and graphs, the *Analects* slightly increased in size after this particular manuscript was placed in the tomb.

2. Specialists managed to determine the division of sections in the manuscript because at the end of each section the ancient scribe left the remainder of the bamboo strip empty, starting the next section on a new bamboo strip.¹⁸ There are some differences in the division of sections in the manuscript and the received text. A single section in the Dingzhou *Analects* may correspond to two or more sections in the received *Analects*. Conversely, one section in the received *Analects* may appear as two sections in the Dingzhou *Analects*. Most differences are fairly inconsequential. For instance, chapter 10 in the *Analects* describes how Confucius acted in different situations, such as “when there was a sudden clap of thunder or a violent wind, he invariably assumed a solemn attitude” (迅雷風烈必變) or “when climbing into a carriage, he invariably stood squarely and grasped the mounting-cord” (升車必正立執綬).¹⁹ In the received text, these sentences occur in consecutive sections. In the manuscript, the second sentence immediately follows the first, suggesting that they belong to one section.

There is one noteworthy variation in sections. In the received text, the concluding chapter of the *Analects* contains three sections. In the bamboo manuscript, it contains two sections written in regular-sized graphs, followed by two small dots, followed by the third section, which is written in two columns and in half-sized graphs. In other words, the third section is squeezed onto the very same bamboo strip that contains the last sentence of the second section. Liu Laicheng suggests that the small graphs were added to the manuscript after it had already been completed.²⁰ His evidence is bamboo fragment o612, which mentions “2 sections” and “322 graphs” (see table 1) and likely refers to the concluding chapter. The third section then must have been added after the total number of sections in this textual unit had been written down. It seems that someone in the old days was apparently aware of at least one other *Analects* version and felt the need to tally the division of sections and chapters with that other version.²¹ Why did this person squeeze the additional section onto the last bamboo strip? One practical explanation is that this may have been considered less cumbersome than adding additional bamboo strips to the manuscript. A more likely explanation is that the third section was already known at the time when the text was copied onto the bamboo strips but was not

18 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b: 49.

19 Translations by D. C. Lau (1979: 105).

20 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b: 59.

21 Csikszentmihalyi (2002: 147, 157) also makes this point.

considered canonical. In that scenario, it was included with the text for the sake of completeness, in smaller graphs to mark its inferior status. This is where a photograph or an accurate transcription of the bamboo strip would come in handy, for it could possibly reveal whether the third section was written by the same hand as the other sections.

3. Many graphs on the bamboo strips are written differently from the graphs in modern regular script to which they are said to correspond. The report of the Dingzhou research team mentions no fewer than seven hundred variants, which amounts to 10 percent of the received text.²² In a meticulous analysis of these variants, Ma Yumeng groups them into various categories and shows that the manuscript contains, among others, graphs that are now written with an added semantic element (such as 立, now written with an additional 亻 “man” element on the left: *wei* 位 “place, location”); graphs that are now written with the same phonetic element but a different semantic element (such as 功, now written with a 攴 “beat, strike” element on the right: *gong* 攻 “to attack”); and graphs with a similar pronunciation but no shared structural components (such as 葆, now written *bao* 寶 “treasure”).²³ Most of these variants are what we have come to expect from a Han dynasty manuscript: loanwords, alternative writings, or mere slips of the brush. Such variants are frequently found in other manuscripts of that period. They show that the text was inked on bamboo before the gradual process of standardization of Chinese script had come to completion.²⁴ Finally, Ma Yumeng also notes that the manuscript contains mistakes, such as *yue* 曰, which should have been *you* 由 “You [name of a disciple],” and *jun* 君, which should have been *ju* 居 “to reside.”²⁵

Textual Differences

The *Analects* was transmitted over a period of two thousand years. In the course of its transmission, the text naturally underwent changes, whether by accident or on purpose. The Dingzhou manuscript, by contrast, spent all this time under layers of soil, unaffected by changes above the ground. One major theme in post-Dingzhou *Analects* scholarship is the comparison of the bamboo manuscript and the received text, often to clarify contested passages in the latter.

A primary difference, as noted by Ma Yumeng, concerns the use of grammatical particles.²⁶ Generally speaking, the manuscript is much less inclined

22 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b: 59–60.

23 Ma 2010. For an equally meticulous analysis of the variants, see Xu 2006.

24 Galambos (2006) describes this process.

25 Ma 2010: 70.

26 Ma 2010: 73ff.

to use function words than the received text. For example, there are over sixty instances where modal particles (e.g., *hu* 乎, *yi* 矣), auxiliary words (e.g., *zhi* 之, *zhe* 者), and sentence connectives (e.g., *ze* 則, *er* 而) are used in the received text but not in the bamboo version. Conversely, the manuscript version contains over two dozen function words, mostly sentence-final modal particles, that are absent in the received text. On the basis of the latter observation, Ma Yumeng suggests that the bamboo manuscript has a rather colloquial flavor and may have been copied from oral recitation, as opposed to being copied from a written version of the *Analects*. While tempting, this does not harmonize with the former observation of the many cases where the manuscript has fewer modal particles than the received text. Moreover, some of the mistakes in the manuscript appear to be visual rather than aural.²⁷ Thus, it may be difficult to devise one coherent explanation to account for all the differences in the use of grammatical particles. On the one hand, words without a lexical meaning can sometimes be left out without changing the meaning of the text; on the other, grammatical particles can be added to sentences to clarify grammatical relationships between words. As such, the variation in the use of grammatical particles simply means that this manuscript instantiates a unique reading of the text just as other early *Analects* manuscripts presumably instantiated other unique readings.

In addition to function words, there are other noteworthy differences between the bamboo manuscript and the received text. Here is an amusing example from section 7/1 in the received *Analects* noted by Zhao Jing:²⁸

The Master said, "I transmit but do not innovate. I trust in and love the ancient. One could, perhaps, compare this to our Old Peng."²⁹

子曰：述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭。

No one knows who this Old Peng was. Some commentators suggest that he was an intimate of Confucius's given the atypical grammatical construction with the word *wo* 我 (I, my, we, our) placed immediately before Old Peng's name, which suggests familiarity and forces the translation "our Old Peng." Interestingly, bamboo fragment 0138 has a different word order:

27 Compare: 曰 **g*^{wa}t vs. 由 **lu* or 君 **C*.*qur* vs. 居 **ka*. Old Chinese reconstructions, marked by an asterisk, are by Baxter and Sagart (2011).

28 Zhao Jing 2005: 176.

29 Cf. the translation by D. C. Lau (1979: 86).

but do not innovate. I trust in and love the ancient. One could, perhaps, compare me to Old Peng.

[而不作，信而好古，竊比]我於老彭。

The bamboo manuscript leaves the question of Old Peng's identity unresolved, but the different word order opens up possibilities for someone outside the group of Confucius's intimates, and it makes a lot more sense than "our Old Peng."

One final textual difference between the bamboo manuscript and the received text concerns the designations "Master Kong" 孔子 and "the Master" 子, both of which introduce statements ascribed to Confucius. Scholars have used these designations for centuries to date different portions of the text, the underlying rationale being that "the Master" displays greater intimacy (and hence an earlier date) than the more distant "Master Kong." However, the validity of these designations as a dating criterion is questionable, as Weingarten persuasively shows.³⁰ Moreover, as several scholars point out, the usage of these designations in the bamboo manuscript differs from that in the received text.³¹ There are two sections where the received text reads "Master Kong" and the manuscript has the shorter "the Master." Conversely, there are five sections where the received text reads "the Master" and the manuscript has the fuller "Master Kong." Interestingly, four of these five sections occur in chapter 11 of the *Analects*. It therefore seems that this chapter ascribed more statements to "Master Kong" in the Han dynasty than it does now (see also below). Apart from this conspicuous chapter, there does not appear to be a clear trend or a strict system in the *Analects* for using these designations. They obviously differ in different versions of the text and cannot be meaningfully used as a dating criterion. Thus, other criteria must be used in dating the *Analects*, as I shall explain below.

The P'yŏngyang *Analects*

The P'yŏngyang *Analects*, also known as Lelang *Analects* 樂浪論語, is a bamboo manuscript unearthed in the early 1990s. Quite astonishingly, its discovery is still shrouded in mystery. No official report of the discovery has been released, nor have official tracings or transcriptions of the manuscript been

³⁰ Weingarten 2009: 37–48.

³¹ Yang 2003; Liang 2005; Weingarten 2009.

published. All we have are a few photographs, with partly overlapping content, which were made public through the relentless efforts of a small number of scholars. This section discusses the P'yŏngyang *Analects* on the basis of the information that has been made available.

Tomb and Discovery

About a decade after the Dingzhou tomb was closed, a high official passed away in Lelang Commandery 樂浪郡, an administrative unit in the far north-eastern corner of the Han empire. The official was buried with a number of texts, including a copy of the *Analects* written on bamboo strips and a household register (*hukou bu* 戶口簿) inked on wooden tablets. The register lists increases and decreases in the number of households and inhabitants of the prefectures that constituted Lelang Commandery.³² The text states that it was drawn up in the fourth year of the Chuyuan 初元 period, or 45 BCE. In all likelihood this was done under the auspices of the high official, who presumably died not long after the population census was completed.³³

Two thousand years later, the location of the official's posthumous abode has become known as the Chŏngbaek-tong 貞柏洞 neighborhood, which is part of the Nakrang-kuyŏk 樂浪區域 district in P'yŏngyang, the capital of North Korea. In the early 1990s, most probably in 1992, the tomb was excavated by North Korean archaeologists, who today preserve its contents at the North Korean Academy of Social Science. The excavated texts probably would have remained unknown to the rest of the world if not for the efforts of Japanese and South Korean scholars. From the 1990s to the early 2000s, teams of Japanese scholars repeatedly visited North Korea to gather material for their study of the ancient Koguryŏ 高句麗 culture. The teams included the renowned archaeologist Egami Namio 江上波夫, the equally famous painter Hirayama Ikuo 平山郁夫, and the acting director of the Koguryŏ Society 高句麗會, Itō Toshimitsu 伊藤利光. During one of their visits, they participated in the celebrations for Kim Il-sŏng's 金日成 birthday and were even granted an audience with the North Korean leader. In 2003, perhaps in part due to their acquaintance with Kim Il-sŏng, they received a large batch of photographs depicting excavations of ancient tombs in North Korea, including 152 color photos and 3,400 black-and-white photos. Itō Toshimitsu, as the head of the Koguryŏ Society, preserved the photographs. He kept the color photos, gave two albums of black-and-white photos to Tsuruma Kazuyuki 鶴間和幸, professor at Gaku-shūin University 学習院大学, and donated the remaining black-and-white

³² Kim 2011: 61–63.

³³ Yi, Yun, and Kim 2011: 163.

photos to an unspecified research institute in Ōsaka 大阪. One of the black-and-white photos shows bamboo strips on which parts of the *Analects* are written. In 2003 Yi Sŏng-shi 李成市 of Waseda University 早稲田大学 learned of the P'yŏngyang *Analects* after its discovery had been mentioned at a conference. He applied for permission to visit North Korea, which he received in 2005. Regrettably, the person responsible for the *Analects* manuscript was not in P'yŏngyang at the time, so Yi Sŏng-shi returned from North Korea having been unable to view it. After a three-year lull, he happened to visit Tsuruma Kazuyuki, who showed him a photo of the *Analects* bamboo strips. Together with Yun Yong-gu 尹龍九 and Kim Kyŏng-ho 金慶浩, Yi Sŏng-shi then set out to study the P'yŏngyang *Analects* based on the photo he saw in Tsuruma Kazuyuki's office. In the process, the three scholars discovered that a similar photo had already been published as early as in 2001 in the *Bulletin of the Koguryŏ Society* 高句麗會會報 (issue 63), so they used both images for their analysis. In 2009 the North Korean Academy of Social Science gave Yi Sŏng-shi, Yun Yong-gu, and Kim Kyŏng-ho permission to show Tsuruma Kazuyuki's photo to the wider academic world. Hence, thanks to the combined efforts of North Korean, South Korean, and Japanese scholars and institutions, the world now finally has a chance to learn about the P'yŏngyang *Analects*.

Given this remarkable background, research on the P'yŏngyang *Analects* is still in its infancy. Yi Sŏng-shi, Yun Yong-gu, and Kim Kyŏng-ho coauthored an article in Korean, published in 2009, in which Yi Sŏng-shi details how they came to study the photographs of the manuscript, Kim Kyŏng-ho describes typical features of the manuscript and provides an annotated transcription, and Yun Yong-gu discusses the historical value of the *Analects* manuscript.³⁴ Their article has since been updated and translated into Japanese (2010), and again updated and translated into Chinese (2011).³⁵ Kim Kyŏng-ho also discusses the manuscript in his English article on the spread of Confucianism and Chinese script, which was published in 2011.³⁶ One year later, in 2012, Kim Kyŏng-ho and Yi Sŏng-shi published a comprehensive collection of papers under the catchy title *Chiha ŭi Nonŏ, chisang ŭi Non* 지하의논어, 지상의논어 (*Analects Underground, Analacts on Paper*), which contains a number of papers on the P'yŏngyang *Analects*.³⁷ In addition to these mostly Korean publications, the Chinese scholar Shan Chengbin, who has also worked on the Dingzhou *Analects*, has an unpublished conference paper on the P'yŏngyang

34 Yi, Yun, and Kim 2009.

35 Yi, Yun, and Kim 2010, 2011.

36 Kim 2011.

37 Kim and Yi 2012.

Analects.³⁸ Given that no official report or transcription has been published by the North Korean Academy of Social Science, the writings of scholars mentioned in this paragraph are currently the only sources of information regarding the P'yŏngyang *Analects*. Particulars about the bamboo manuscript in the present essay are drawn from their work, to which I am deeply indebted.

Features of the Manuscript

The photograph from Tsuruma Kazuyuki's collection (fig. 6.3) shows thirty-nine bamboo strips. Of these, thirty-one strips correspond to chapter 11 in the received *Analects*, and eight strips to chapter 12.

The photo that was published in the *Bulletin of the Koguryŏ Society* (fig. 6.4) shows the same bamboo strips as the Tsuruma Kazuyuki photo, plus an additional bunch of strips on the right, fourteen of which are legible.

The two photos show that three binding threads originally joined the bamboo strips at the top, middle, and bottom. The threads did not survive, but they did create discoloration across the width of the strips and indentations of uneven size at the right-hand side of each strip. If the manuscript was created specifically for the burial, Kim Kyŏng-ho reasons, one would expect indentations of fairly similar shape.³⁹ Their unequal shapes may suggest that the manuscript was repeatedly rolled and unrolled for reading, allowing the binding threads to cut deeper into some strips than others. If Kim Kyŏng-ho's hypothesis holds, this could potentially make the P'yŏngyang manuscript the earliest *Analects* copy, depending on how long it had been in use prior to its entombment.

The graphs are neatly written between the binding threads. One way of explaining this, as Kim Kyŏng-ho does, is that the bamboo strips were joined into a bundle before the text was copied on them.⁴⁰ Another possibility, I would add, is that the scribe marked the position of the binding threads before copying the text onto the bamboo strips and bundled the strips only after the text was fully copied on them. At present, our knowledge of the process of text copying in early China is insufficient to make conclusive statements in this regard. Moreover, for the P'yŏngyang *Analects* we would require more and higher-quality photographs.

The medial binding thread divides the text on the strips into two halves. Bamboo strips corresponding to chapter 11 of the *Analects* contain ten graphs above the medial thread and ten graphs below, totaling twenty graphs per

³⁸ Shan 2011.

³⁹ Yi, Yun, and Kim 2011: 171.

⁴⁰ Yi, Yun, and Kim 2011: 170.



FIGURE 6.3 Photograph of the P'yongyang *Analects* (Tsuruma Kazuyuki Collection; Yi Sŏng-shi, Yun Yong-gu, and Kim Kyŏng-ho 2009: 131)



FIGURE 6.4 Photograph of the P'yŏngyang Analects (*Bulletin of the Koguryŏ Society*; Yi Sŏng-shi, Yun Yong-gu, and Kim Kyŏng-ho 2009: 131)

strip. Bamboo strips corresponding to chapter 12 of the *Analects* contain nine graphs above and nine graphs below, totaling eighteen graphs per strip.

Each section in the P'yŏngyang *Analects* starts on a new bamboo strip and is preceded by a black dot to mark the beginning of the section. Similar to the Dingzhou *Analects*, when a section ends before the end of a strip is reached, the remainder of the bamboo is left uninscribed.

The manuscript contains some amusing textual peculiarities which clearly reveal a scribe at work. For instance, some graphs are written small and squeezed in between other graphs. Kim Kyŏng-ho plausibly suggests that they were initially forgotten and inserted later, as is common in manuscripts of that period.⁴¹ On some bamboo strips the scribe also decreased the spacing between graphs or omitted words so as to fit an entire section on a strip and avoid wasting an extra strip on the last couple of graphs of the section. The omitted words were mostly grammatical particles. This feature is noted by Kim Kyŏng-ho, who observes that some bamboo strips contain fewer particles than the equivalent text in the received *Analects*, particularly when a section covers the entire length of the strip.⁴² Thus, it seems that the arrangement of the text on the writing material somewhat influences the content of the text.⁴³

Differences from the Received Analects

One notable textual difference between the P'yŏngyang *Analects* and the received text is that the manuscript fairly consistently attributes statements to "Master Kong" rather than to "the Master," particularly on bamboo strips corresponding to chapter 11. Take, for instance, strip 27:⁴⁴

Master Kong said, "What is You's zither doing inside my gate?" His other disciples ceased to treat Zilu [= You] with respect. Master Kong

孔子曰由之瑟奚爲於丘之門門人不敬子路孔子

In 11/15 of the received *Analects* we find the same passage, with identical wording, but with quotations ascribed to "the Master." As we saw earlier, the Dingzhou *Analects* likewise prefers "Master Kong" on bamboo strips related to chapter 11. Judging by the two manuscripts, then, chapter 11 contained more attributions to "Master Kong" in the Han dynasty than it does now. The impli-

41 Yi, Yun, and Kim 2011: 168.

42 Yi, Yun, and Kim 2011: 168.

43 See Richter's essay in the present volume (chap. 7) on the influence of book format on text structure.

44 Yi, Yun, and Kim 2011: 177.

cations of this observation are unclear, for there are no apparent differences between “Master Kong” and “the Master” attributions with respect to their content.

Apart from these conspicuous differences, major trends are hard to observe when comparing the P'yöngyang *Analects* with other *Analects*. Detailed analyses by Kim Kyöng-ho and Shan Chengbin show that the P'yöngyang and Dingzhou manuscripts sometimes share a textual variant that is not found in other *Analects* versions, while at other times the P'yöngyang manuscript resembles the received text where the Dingzhou manuscript has a textual variant, and then there are instances where the two manuscripts and received editions are all different.⁴⁵

Provenance of the Manuscripts

One important issue in present-day *Analects* scholarship is the position of the Han dynasty bamboo manuscripts among the various *Analects* versions. The issue is normally discussed in a conceptual framework that dates back to the Han dynasty. Historiographical sources of that period, such as the *Hanshu* 漢書, mention three *Analects* versions circulating in the Western Han dynasty: (1) the so-called “Lu *Analects*” 魯論, a version in twenty chapters from an exegetical tradition in the ancient state of Lu 魯; (2) the so-called “Qi *Analects*” 齊論, a version in twenty-two chapters from an exegetical tradition in the ancient state of Qi 齊; and (3) the so-called “Ancient-Script *Analects*” (*guwen Lunyu* 古文論語), or “Ancient *Analects*” (*gu Lun* 古論) for short, a version in twenty-one chapters that was allegedly copied in the Warring States era and hidden in a wall of Confucius's former mansion, where it was discovered in the Western Han dynasty (or so the story goes), by which time its script had become outdated (hence “ancient”).⁴⁶ To which of these three versions are the two excavated manuscripts affiliated? Liu Laicheng suggests that the Dingzhou *Analects* is probably a copy of the Lu *Analects*.⁴⁷ Shan Chengbin concurs and provides further support for this claim.⁴⁸ Li Xueqin, however, notes the manuscript's chapter division and considers the likelihood of a connection with the Qi *Analects* somewhat higher.⁴⁹ Sun Qinshan, on the other hand, suggests that

45 Yi, Yun, and Kim 2011; Shan 2011.

46 Makeham (2003: 363–377) offers a detailed description of these *Analects*.

47 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b: 61.

48 Shan 2002: 124.

49 Li Xueqin 2001: 422.

it resembles the Ancient *Analepts*.⁵⁰ The problem with these hypotheses, as Li Ruohui perceptively points out, is that all modern *Analepts* editions are confluations.⁵¹ Since no one has ever seen an actual Qi, Lu, or Ancient *Analepts*, how are we to associate the excavated manuscripts with any one of these lineages? Accordingly, a growing number of scholars nowadays subscribe to the idea of the bamboo manuscripts as independent copies of the *Analepts* that existed alongside the three main lineages and that may have been related in one way or another to one or more of those lineages, although the exact nature of the relationship can no longer be ascertained.⁵² The differences between the two manuscripts and other versions of the *Analepts* suggest that a discussion of a Han dynasty manuscript within the Lu/Qi/Ancient *Analepts* framework is likely to be ineffective and that excavated materials ought to be studied in their own right. To gain a better understanding of the two excavated manuscripts, I propose to study them from the perspective of three interrelated questions: when, where, and why were the *Analepts* copied onto the bamboo strips?

When were the Manuscripts Copied?

The inscribed bamboo strips were found in tombs dating from the mid-first century BCE, but how old were the two manuscripts when they were placed in their tombs? Let us start with the Dingzhou *Analepts*. Scholars nowadays identify the “early Han dynasty” (*Han chu* 漢初) as the date of the manuscript.⁵³ In fact, this date is so firmly accepted in present-day *Analepts* studies that only one scholar felt the need to support it with evidence. In his study of taboo characters in the Dingzhou *Analepts*, Chen Dong observes that the manuscript avoids mentioning the personal name of Liu Bang 劉邦 (r. 202–195 BCE), founder of the Han dynasty. There are over a dozen instances where the received text contains the word *bang* 邦 (state), which is written as *guo* 國 in the bamboo manuscript.⁵⁴ Chen Dong also notes that the manuscript does not avoid the personal names of later emperors. This leads him to conclude that the text was copied before the names of the later emperors were tabooed—in other words, before these men became emperors. Whether explicitly support-

⁵⁰ Sun 1998: 4.

⁵¹ Li Ruohui 2006: 20.

⁵² These scholars include Chen Dong (2003), Li Ruohui (2006), Tang Minggui (2007), and Ma Yumeng (2010). In a similar vein, Makeham (2003: 368) suggests it may be a hybrid text.

⁵³ These scholars include Chen Dong (2003), Tang Minggui (2007), Zheng Chunxun (2007), and Ma Yumeng (2010).

⁵⁴ Chen Dong 2003. In fact, the graph *bang* 邦 is used only once on the surviving bamboo fragments. Chen Dong explains this single occurrence as a mistake by the modern editors of the transcription.

ing Chen Dong's hypothesis or not, many scholars now maintain that the Dingzhou *Analects* dates from the very beginning of the Han dynasty. What does this date imply? How persuasive is the evidence?

One implication is that at the beginning of the Han dynasty, the *Analects* already existed as a text that closely resembles its current form. The vast majority of present-day *Analects* scholars will have no problem with this.⁵⁵ They concur that the *Analects* was, as Tang Minggui puts it, "basically formed as a book within 100 years following the death of Confucius" (在孔子去世後100年之內已基本成書)—in other words, long before the founding of the Han dynasty.⁵⁶ The scholarly consensus is perplexing, as is this date. Let us look at the basic facts. The two excavated manuscripts, the earliest representations of the *Analects* we have, reveal that the text had by and large acquired its current form when the bamboo strips were placed in their respective tombs, around 50 BCE. To postulate that the *Analects* had already acquired this form a full three centuries earlier is quite a stretch, one that requires solid evidence.⁵⁷ Surprisingly, claims that the *Analects* was created within a hundred years after Confucius's death are scarcely ever supported by evidence, let alone evidence from archaeological finds. It seems to me that the bamboo may have added an air of ancientness and authenticity to the *Analects*, which reinforced preconceived notions about the text's date. In actual fact, the excavated manuscripts in no way prove or even remotely hint at a date close to the passing of the Master. If, hypothetically, the *Analects* did exist that early, then given Confucius's renown we would reasonably expect to find references to the *Analects*, or to the Master's sayings contained therein, in texts reliably dated between the mid-fifth century BCE (when Confucius crossed the great divide) and the mid-first century BCE (when the two tombs were closed). Scholars who have scrutinized those writings, such as Makeham and Hunter, astonishingly conclude that no pre-Han dynasty texts and few Western Han dynasty texts mention the *Analects* and that statements attributed to Confucius in pre-Han and Western Han texts differ markedly from those attributed to Confucius in the *Analects*. They therefore situate the formation of the *Analects* well into the Han dynasty,

55 There are, as usual, scholars with alternative views, such as Zhao Zhenxin (1961) and Zhu Weizheng (1986).

56 Tang 2007: 50. In his critical overview of various contemporary Chinese perspectives on the composition and date of the *Analects*, Makeham's essay in the present volume (chap. 1) discusses the gradual development of a Chinese hypothesis about a large proto-*Analects* corpus, compiled by Confucius's disciples.

57 Confucius reportedly died in 479 BCE. If the *Analects* was created within a century after his death, this brings us to 379 BCE, which is over three centuries before the closing of the two tombs around 50 BCE.

perhaps even as late as 140 BCE, even though it may consist in part of pre-Han dynasty material.⁵⁸

Another implication of the Dingzhou *Analects*' supposed "early Han" date is that the manuscript was transmitted for a century and a half between its inception (around 200 BCE under Liu Bang) and its interment (around 50 BCE). This scenario, (implicitly) supported by all those who favor the "early Han" date, leads to many other fascinating questions. Was it common practice in those days to hand down bamboo manuscripts over such an extensive period? What would be the underlying rationale? Did people have a penchant for antiques? Did they treasure their books and pass them on to their offspring as heirlooms? Did people actually read these antique books? Would it not have been more practical to create new copies from time to time? If the bamboo manuscript was indeed kept in the family of the king of Zhongshan for all this time, why then was it taken out of circulation by putting it in his tomb? And why did the manuscript not accompany an earlier holder into his grave? Such questions may not be answerable, but in my opinion they should at least be explicitly reflected upon when proposing an early Han date.

One possibility, proposed by Ho Yung-chin, is that the bamboo manuscript is a copy (of a copy of a copy) of an *Analects* version that dates from the foundational years of the Han dynasty. In other words, not the actual bamboo strips but the text on them was transmitted from the time of Liu Bang.⁵⁹ While tempting, this view is flawed. If the archetype of this *Analects* lineage was copied and recopied since the early Han dynasty, copyists faithfully observed the taboo on Liu Bang's name but ignored taboos introduced after his reign, which essentially invalidates taboo observance as a criterion for dating texts.

The early Han dynasty date for the bamboo *Analects* manuscript rests solely on one piece of evidence: taboo observance. How persuasive is this? It is indeed clear that the scribe makes a conscious attempt to avoid the tabooed name of the dynasty's founder, but does that necessarily mean the manuscript, or its archetype, dates from his reign? It is also clear that the manuscript does not avoid the personal names of later emperors, but does that mean the manuscript could not have been copied during or after their reigns? What if, for instance, the manuscript was copied in a time or place where taboos for emperors other than the dynasty's founder were not strictly observed? Of course, this is mere speculation, but it does indicate that the taboo theory may not be watertight and that prudence is in order when applying the taboo criterion in the dating of texts. In this context, Lundahl aptly notes that taboo practices

⁵⁸ Makeham 1996; see also Hunter's essay in the present volume (chap. 3).

⁵⁹ Ho 2007: ii.

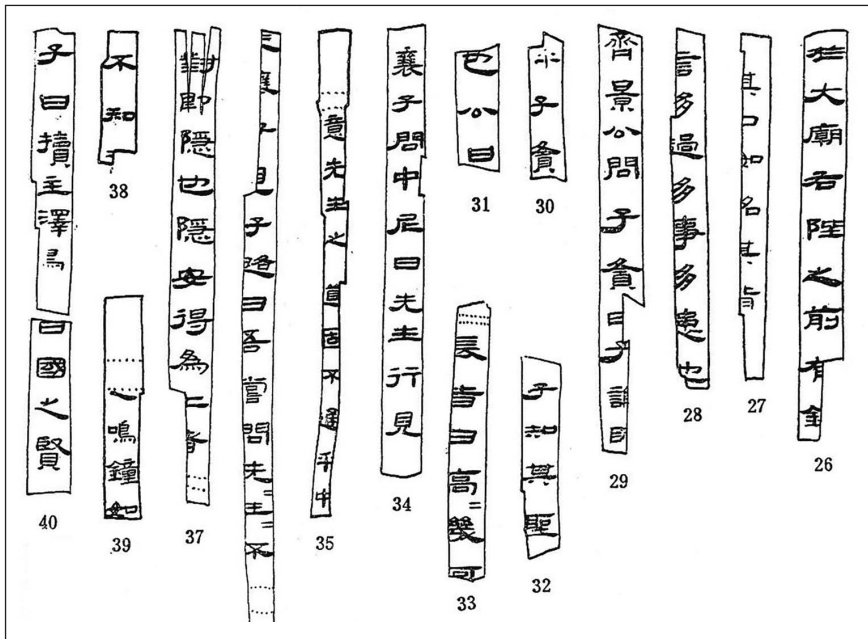


FIGURE 6.5 Select tracings of *Sayings of the Scholars* (Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1981: 7)

“differed not only between different dynasties, but even between different periods of a single dynasty.”⁶⁰ In his analysis of name tabooing in the Han dynasty, Adamek notes “many instances of not avoiding taboo in inscriptions and writings,” which can be explained, among other reasons, “by a lax attitude toward tabooing at the time.”⁶¹

In view of this ambiguity in taboo practices, I propose to approach the manuscript’s date from a different angle: namely, by looking at the structural form of graphs. The structural form of Dingzhou *Analekts* graphs can be seen on the tracings of bamboo fragments that were published with their transcription. Admittedly, the quantity and quality of the tracings and photographs may not be optimal, but let us see what the materials at hand tell us.

First, let us compare the handwriting of the Dingzhou *Analekts* (fig. 6.2) with the handwriting of other manuscripts discovered in the same tomb (figs. 6.5–6.7). The Dingzhou research team published tracings of three other manuscripts: *Sayings of the Scholars*, *Wenzi*, and *Six Secret Teachings*.

60 Lundahl 1994: 181.

61 Adamek 2012: 131.

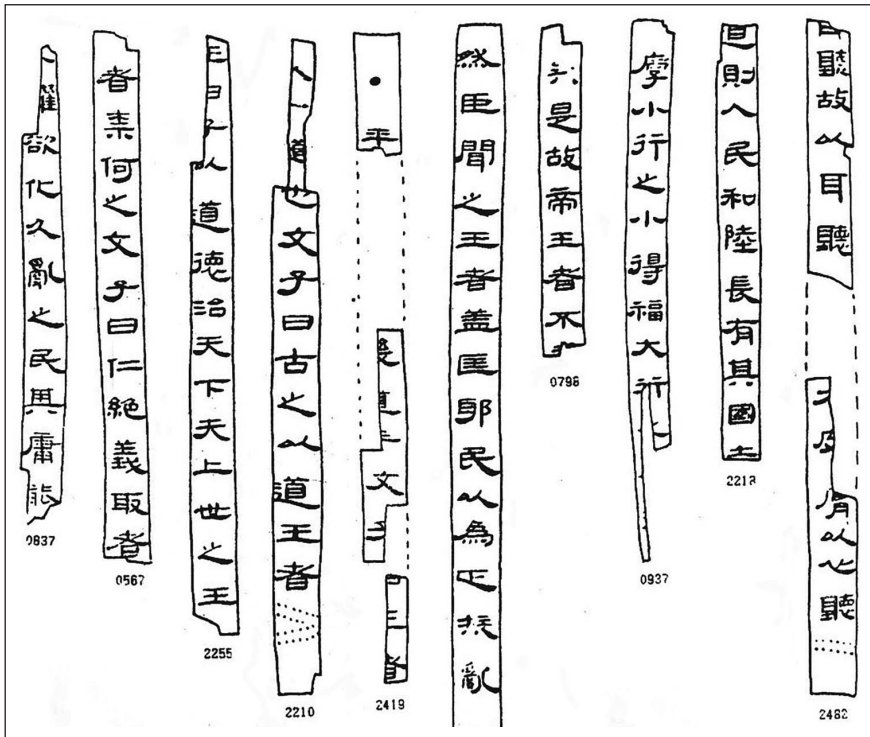


FIGURE 6.6 Select tracings of *Wenzi* (Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1995: 28)

The handwriting on all these manuscripts is remarkably similar. Still, a few differences can be observed. For instance, the graphs of the *Six Secret Teachings* appear to be slightly thicker than the graphs of the other manuscripts, which could be due to a thicker brush or more pressure on the brush in the process of copying. If we zoom in, minute differences can be observed between individual graphs.

In the manuscript *Sayings of the Scholars* (nos. 1 and 2 in fig. 6.8), the upper-left stroke is a dot with a little horizontal “tail” to the right where the brush was lifted from the bamboo. In the *Analects* (nos. 3 and 4) and the *Wenzi* (no. 5) manuscripts, the upper-left stroke is written downward. If the tracings are accurate and the small sample is representative, these subtle differences may reveal different hands at work. Apart from minute differences, what is most striking about the tracings is that the handwriting on all tracings of Dingzhou strips is remarkably similar—especially when compared with other manuscripts.

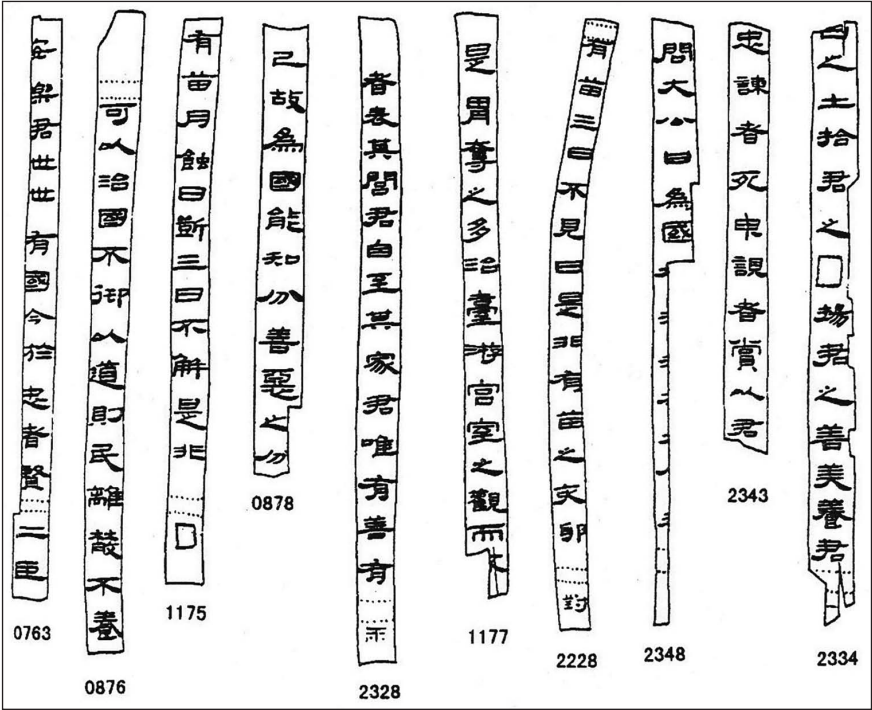


FIGURE 6.7 Select tracings of *Six Secret Teachings* (Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 2001: 79)

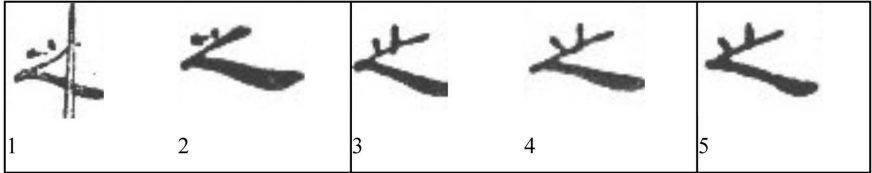


FIGURE 6.8 The graph 之 in Dingzhou manuscripts

If the Dingzhou *Analects* dates from the beginning of the Han dynasty, as is now commonly assumed, one would expect it to resemble other manuscripts from that period. Let us have a look at images and tracings of manuscripts that were placed in tombs in the first century of the Han dynasty, at Mawangdui 馬王堆 (tomb date: 168 BCE), Fuyang 阜陽 (tomb date: 165 BCE), Fenghuangshan 鳳凰山 (tomb date: 156–141 BCE), and Yinqueshan 銀雀山 (tomb date: 140–118 BCE).



FIGURE 6.9 The graph 道 in Han dynasty manuscripts

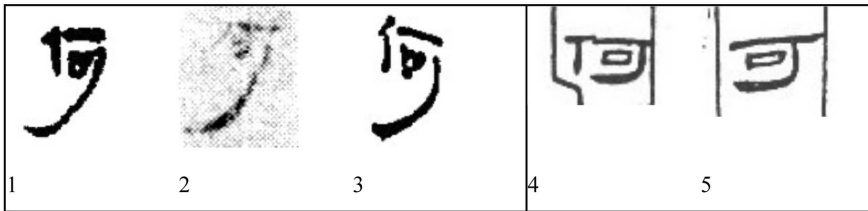


FIGURE 6.10 The graphs 何 and 可 in Han dynasty manuscripts

There are major differences between manuscripts from these tombs and manuscripts from the Dingzhou tomb. Note, for instance, how 道 *dao* (the Way) is written in the various manuscripts (fig. 6.9).⁶² In manuscripts from Mawangdui (no. 1), Fuyang (no. 2), and Yinqueshan (no. 3), the graph is written with two distinct elements: a *chuo* 辵 (go) component on the left and a *shou* 首 (head) component on the right. In the Dingzhou manuscripts (nos. 4 and 5), by contrast, the 辵 component is simplified to 辵 and occupies the left and bottom parts of the graph, with the 首 component resting on top of its final stroke.

Figure 6.10 provides another example. In manuscripts from Mawangdui (no. 1), Fenghuangshan (no. 2), and Yinqueshan (no. 3), the graphs *he* 何 (what) and *ke* 可 (possible) are normally written with a long, elongated final stroke that gradually curves from the upper-right corner to the lower-left corner. In all Dingzhou manuscripts (nos. 4 and 5), by contrast, the final stroke of these graphs is written with a sharp hook to the left. Of course, this may reflect regional variation or scribal preference, but the Dingzhou manuscripts' rectilinear style, which demands the final stroke to bend to the left rather than to the bottom, more likely signals a development over time, and hence a later date.⁶³

62 In figure 9 the graphs from Mawangdui, Fuyang, Fenghuangshan, and Yinqueshan are taken from, respectively, Chen Songchang et al. 2001; Hu and Han 1988; Jilin Da xue 1976; and Pian 2001. Dingzhou graphs are taken from the tracings provided with the transcriptions of the various manuscripts.

63 My use of the word "style" is based on Richter's (2006) typology of handwriting, which distinguishes three levels: types, styles, and hands. Style, the middle level, refers to the



FIGURE 6.11 The graphs 何 and 可 in the P'yöngyang *Analects*

Now let us have a look at the P'yöngyang *Analects*, the manuscript that was placed in a tomb in 45 BCE. On those bamboo strips, the graphs 何 *he* (what) and 可 *ke* (possible) are written as shown in figure 6.11. Regrettably, high-resolution photographs have not yet been made available. That said, even these blurry images make it clear that, much like with the Dingzhou handwriting, the final stroke ends horizontally to the left.

To be sure, these select comparisons are not ironclad proof. They do, however, highlight how similar the Dingzhou and P'yöngyang manuscripts are to each other, and how distinct they are from manuscripts dating from the first century of the Han dynasty. If the calligraphic style of the two *Analects* manuscripts is unlike any manuscript from the first century of the Han dynasty, scholars who argue that they were copied under Liu Bang would have to account for this discrepancy. In sum, while evidence is scarce, I would argue that, contrary to the prevailing sentiment in *Analects* studies, the two bamboo manuscripts date from the mid-first century BCE.

Where were the Manuscripts Copied?

The two *Analects* manuscripts were discovered in tombs located in present-day Dingzhou and P'yöngyang, but that does not necessarily mean the texts were copied onto the bamboo strips at these locations. If we examine where the manuscripts could have been produced, the two most likely possibilities are at places that were either central (at the imperial court in Chang'an) or local (at the seats of power in Zhongshan and Lelang). There is something to be said in favor of both possibilities but none of the arguments are particularly persuasive.

In favor of a local manuscript production, one could point to the differences between the two *Analects*, such as the different ways in which they ascribe quotations to "Master Kong" or "the Master," as discussed earlier. A centralized reproduction would likely yield more homogeneous results, so a local repro-

fashion in which a certain type of script is executed. In Richter's understanding, a style can be typical of a certain school of scribes or even of an entire region or period.

duction could explain the heterogeneity. That said, the differences between the manuscripts could also be explained as temporal (copied in different periods) or even personal (preferences of different scribes).

In further favor of a local manuscript production, one could point to the fact that the tomb in P'yŏngyang yielded a household register in addition to the *Analects*. The data for such a document must have been gathered in Lelang Commandery, and it would therefore be odd if the text was not composed at the local level. However, the argument that both the *Analects* and the household register were produced locally would hold only if their manuscripts had similar physical features. This is not the case, if only because the household register was inked on wooden tablets whereas the *Analects* was written on bamboo. The different writing materials could reflect different values attached to these documents, cheaper wood used for practical administrative documents and bamboo reserved for venerated canonical texts. Yet it could equally reflect different provenances, the wooden document produced locally and the bamboo document sent from elsewhere, perhaps from the capital city.

In favor of a central manuscript production, one could point to two documents found in the Dingzhou tomb that must have come from elsewhere. The first document, *Record of the King of Lu'an's Visit to the Imperial Court*, is said to tell of the journey made by Liu Ding 劉定, King Miu of Lu'an 六安繆王 (r. 73–50 BCE), to Emperor Xuan's court in 56 BCE. In this travelogue, King Miu mentions the places he passed through and the distances between them, and he describes the court activities he witnessed or participated in. One could imagine that King Miu sent copies of the travelogue to his peers for them to enjoy. One could also imagine that the document was copied in the capital city and distributed to all kings as a model for their dealings with the emperor. Regrettably, a transcription of the document has not yet been published, so its precise contents are unknown. The second document, also unpublished, is a memorial written by the aforementioned Xiao Wangzhi, the tutor of the imperial crown prince and a known transmitter of the *Analects*.⁶⁴ Xiao Wangzhi was a senior scholar at the imperial court who spent most of his adult life in the capital city, and since his memorial was directed to the imperial throne, the document was in all likelihood drawn up in Chang'an and, for whatever reason, taken to Zhongshan as a copy. If these two documents were sent to Zhongshan from the capital city, one could speculate as to whether the same might hold true for the *Analects*.

64 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo 1997b: 61. See Loewe 2000: 606–608 for a biography of Xiao Wangzhi.

Given the lack of materials available to us, all we can do, unfortunately, is speculate. We have only a limited number of manuscripts from the Dingzhou and P'yŏngyang tombs, and only two of them are *Analects*. Furthermore, what is true for one manuscript need not necessarily be true for another, as we saw in the case of the household register and the *Analects* of P'yŏngyang. Even if the handwriting is strikingly similar, as is the case with the Dingzhou manuscripts, that still does not mean that all the manuscripts have the same provenance, for it could simply mean that the various scribes who copied the manuscripts were trained in the same place.⁶⁵

Why were the Manuscripts Copied?

In his article on Confucius and the *Analects* in the Han dynasty, Csikszentmihályi mentions renewed interest in the canonical text in the 50s and 40s of the first century BCE.⁶⁶ This vogue, Csikszentmihályi explains, may have something to do with the shift that Loewe observed from a modernist to a reformist ideology, that is, from an expansionist and extravagant rule to a more sober, humane, and inward-looking style of government.⁶⁷ The *Analects* provided the moral foundation for this new government and was actively promoted for this purpose by Emperors Xuan 漢宣帝 (r. 74–49 BCE) and Yuan 漢元帝 (r. 49–33 BCE).

In his article on the spread of Confucianism and Chinese script, Kim Kyŏng-ho formulates it a little more strongly. He argues that the two documents discovered in the P'yŏngyang tomb testify to the growing influence of a Chinese-script-based bureaucracy and culture. The one document, the household register, uses formulaic expressions (such as “more than the previous [year]” 多前) that were also used in similar inventories of households and populations elsewhere in the Han empire, thus showing a standardized bureaucratic language throughout the empire.⁶⁸ The other document, the *Analects*, resembles the canonical text discovered in the Dingzhou tomb. Since both tombs are located far away from the Han dynasty capital city of Chang'an, Kim Kyŏng-ho argues that the two *Analects* “should be understood in the milieu of Chinese rulers' heightened efforts to spread Confucianism throughout the empire.”⁶⁹

It is a well-attested fact, Nylan shows, “that certain emperors, empresses, and ministers were anxious to promote Confucian values,” but that does not

65 I thank Ken-ichi Takashima (personal communication) for this observation.

66 Csikszentmihályi 2002: 146.

67 Loewe 1986: 198.

68 Kim 2011: 63.

69 Kim 2011: 67.

mean Confucianism existed as a well-defined, uniform state ideology.⁷⁰ It also does not necessarily mean, I would add, that copies of the *Analects* were distributed from Chang'an to be read as a vessel of that ideology. Two tomb manuscripts simply do not provide enough evidence for that. The limitations of the evidence obtained from the two tombs demand that we be cautious in our formulations. Yet it is probably safe to say that the two unearthed *Analects* copies bear witness to the newfound interest in the canonical text in the mid-first century BCE. The documents may have informed the political views of the occupants of the tombs and hence played a part in their political lives. Then again, the deceased may also have read the *Analects* for personal moral self-cultivation. They may have cherished the text for being part of the education they had received in the early years of their lives. Or the trendy *Analects* might have been placed in the tombs simply to show that the tomb owners were au courant with their social echelon.

Conclusion

We are fortunate to have two Han dynasty *Analects* manuscripts at our disposal.⁷¹ They offer a fascinating glimpse into the manuscript culture of the Western Han dynasty, and they bear witness to the popularity of the *Analects* in that period. While the manuscripts provide valuable insights, the current state of the manuscripts, the shortcomings of official publications, and the limitations of the field of early Chinese manuscripts at large force us to be careful in our analyses. Consequently, this present essay explores many different possibilities and offers more questions than positive conclusions. We can only hope that as the study of early Chinese manuscripts advances and more high-quality publications of the two *Analects* manuscripts appear (with color photos and methodologically accurate transcriptions), we can come to more definitive conclusions. Meanwhile, rather than building shaky hypotheses on scanty premises, it may be preferable to clearly delineate the boundaries of our present state of knowledge. While this may be somewhat disappointing, it is consonant with the views espoused by Confucius, who is believed to have said, “to recognize what you know as what you know, and recognize what you do not know as what you do not know, this is true knowledge” (知之為知之，不知為不知，是知也).⁷²

⁷⁰ Nylan 1999: 22.

⁷¹ As mentioned above, a recent discovery may have yielded a fragmentary third bamboo-strip *Analects* manuscript from the same period (mid-first century BCE).

⁷² *Analects* 2/17. Translation based on Slingerland 2003: 13.

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