CHAPTER ONE

The Laozi the Book

We have stated in the introduction that Sima Qian was possessed of some degree of certainty concerning the person Lao Zi and his book. Whether or not his opinion and his record are correct is another question, with which I will deal in Chapter Two of this work. In Chapter One, we will be content to examine the book called Laozi. In this study the bamboo slips Laozi discovered in 1994 at the Jingmen archaeological site has been referred to.

The problems surrounding the Laozi 老子 or the Daodejing 道德經, are complex and controversial. Chan Wing-Tsit says: "Perhaps it is more so because it deals with such intangibles as literary style and ideas, and as a book it has many irregularities." Many scholars differ concerning the versions, the titles and structure, the authorship, the date, and the entire nature of the book. These are all problems with which we must concern ourselves in this work.

The History of the Former Han Dynasty mentions the Laozi in the ancient script, but no one knows now what constituted the work to which this history refers. When Liu Xiang 劉向 and his son Liu Xin 劉歆 (c. 46 BC—AD 23) compiled the first Chinese bibliography, Qilüe 七略, in the first century BC, the Laozi was included; but we know nothing of its text or structure.

1.1 The editions of the Laozi

Before the discovery of the Mawangdui 马王堆 silk Laozi in 1973, various editions of the Laozi were in circulation, but the earliest principal versions were referred to as "the traditional version" and "the ancient version". The former refer to the versions, which were those associated with the commentaries of Yan Zun 嚴遵 (fl. 53-24 BC), Wang Bi 王弼 (AD 226-249), and He shang gong 河上公. This dated traditionally from the reign of Emperor Wen of the Han 漢文帝 (179-157 AD), though many set the date at the third or fourth century AD. The latter refer to the versions of Fu Yi of the Tang Dynasty and Fan Yingyan of the Song Dynasty, which were later versions that were based on those written as early as 200 BC.

Below are considered the five principal versions of the Laozi. They are given in chronological order:

58 Ban Gu's Hanshu 漢書, ch. 53, second biography.
59 Liu Xiang's Qilüe. This was completed by his son, Liu Xin. It now exists only in fragments.
1.1.1 Five principal transmitted versions of the *Laozi*

1.1.1.1 The Yan Zun 嚴遵 version

The Yan Zun version of the *Laozi* text was originally accompanied by a commentary in essay form by Yan Zun called *Daode zhigui lun* 道德指歸論. Extant now is only the *Dejing* of the text. When the present work refers to the 'Yan Zun version' or the 'Yan Zun *Laozi*', it means only that this is the text of the *Laozi* that has been transmitted together with the Yan Zun essays *Daode zhigui* lun. It does not mean to imply, much less to claim, that Yan Zun himself had any hand in editing the *Laozi* text, or in establishing the version that accompanies his *Zhigui* lun. This is also the meaning of the 'Yan Zun version' when the term is generally mentioned. ⁶¹

Yan Zun was a figure of the end of the Former Han Dynasty. Apart from short citations of the *Laozi* in other Former Han works, that of Yan Zun can claim to be the earliest transmitted version of the *Laozi*. ⁶² Some argue, however, that Yan’s version and his commentaries are false. ⁶₃ Concerning the details of this writing, the present work will discuss it in the section on "the commentaries of the *Laozi*", which will be included in the next stage.

1.1.1.2 The Heshang Gong 河上公 version

The Heshang Gong *Laozi* is the version that has been transmitted with the Heshang Gong commentary, *Laozi Heshang Gong zhangu* 老子河上公章句. As with the Yan Zun version, no one named Heshang Gong had anything to do with the actual editing of the *Laozi* text. In fact, the name Heshang Gong is probably fictional. ⁶⁴ Nothing is known about the person responsible for the Heshang Gong commentary. It’s details will also be discussed in the section on "the commentaries of the *Laozi". ⁶⁵

1.1.1.3 The Wang Bi 王弼 version

Unlike the circumstances of the Yan Zun and Heshang Gong commentaries, there is no doubt that Wang Bi commentary is the work of the famous and the third century scholar Wang Bi (226-249), who is best known perhaps for his commentary to the *Yijing* 易經 "Book of changes". He was one of the most important figures of the post-Han intellectual milieu. The Wang Bi *Laozi* has 81 chapters, but no names ⁶⁶ are given to them as titles.

These three versions are called "the traditional versions of the *Laozi*".

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⁶⁴ Boltz says: "In fact the name Ho-shang Kung is, like the name Lao tzu, clearly fictional..." Cf. Loewe 1993: p. 273. But in this case Boltz has no clear evidence to support his assumption. Concerning Lao Zì the person, I show in chapter two that Lao Zi was not a fictional character.


⁶⁶ Ibid.
Sample of version A of the Mawangdui Laozi text.
Sample of version B of the Mawangdui Laozi text.
1.1.1.4 The Guben 古本 version
There are two distinct but closely related redactions of the so-called Guben ("old text" or "ancient version" of the Laozi): A) One is edited and established by Fu Yi 傅奕 (c.558-c. 639) of the Tang 唐 Dynasty, and, B) the other is edited and established by Fan Yingyuan 范應元 of the Song 宋 Dynasty.

A. The Fu Yi 傅奕 redaction
Fu Yi served as Taishiling 太史令 "Grand Astrologer" in the court of the early Tang Dynasty. He had a reputation for being avidly interested in the Laozi text and is reported to have gathered as many different versions of the text as he could. Xie Shouhao 謝守瀭 (1154-1212), says in his Hunyuan shengji 晁元聖紀 (the Daozang 道藏, HY 769), "among the versions of the Laozi text to which Fu Yi had access there was one which was reputed to have come from the tomb of Xiang Yu's 項羽 consort, which had been opened in 574. Xiang Yu died in 202 BC, and it is likely that his consort died before him, otherwise she would probably not have had a tomb of any note".67 If we can trust Xie Shouhao's report, then, Fu Yi would have had access to a manuscript copy of the Laozi dating probably from slightly before 200 BC, a version of clear importance in establishing a critical edition.

The Fu Yi text is preserved in the Daozang as HY 665 and is reproduced in facsimile in Yan Lingfeng's 嚴靈峰 Wuqiu beiichai Laozi jicheng, first series, volume 17. Bi Yuan 毕沅 (1730-1797) relied heavily on the Fu Yi text in the course of preparing his Daodejing kaoyi 道德經考異.

B. The Fan Yingyuan 范應元 redaction
Fu Yi's Guben Laozi was edited anew in the Song Dynasty by Fan Yingyuan, a person sometimes described as a "Daoist master" (daoshi 道士) but otherwise an obscure figure about whom little is known. The opening page of Fan's redaction of the Guben Laozi identifies him as the "former Instructor-in-charge at the Yulong wanshou temple" (前玉龍萬壽宮掌教), and the "Senior Lecturer of the Shouning Abbey at Nanyue" (衡山南嶽) (南岳壽寧觀長講). Fan provides his redaction with collated notes and exegetical comments in connection with the Yan Zun, Wang Bi, Heshang Gong, and Fu Yi versions of the text. He also provides notes reflecting other, later commentators, including Liang Jianwen 屠簡文帝 (503-551), Lu Deming 陸德明, Cheng Xuanying 陳玄英 (fl. 630-660), and Su Zhe 苏轡 (1039-1112). The title of his work is Laozi Daodejing guben jichu 老子道徳經古本集注.

Boltz says:

Fan's redaction of the Ku pen Lao tzu differs from the Fu I Ku pen text in about one hundred places, according to Wagner's study (1989 p. 37). At least one of the reasons that Fan's version differs from Fu Yi's is that Fan uncritically adopted a number of Hsuan tsung's idiosyncratic emendations to the text.

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Fan's Guben Laozi was published by the Han fen lou 洪芬楼 library of rare books in volume 17 of the Xugui congshu. This text was based on the Song woodblock print that was in the Jiang'an Fushi Shuang qian lou 江安傅氏雙麗樓 collection, i.e., the personal library of Fu Zengxiang 傅增湘 (1872-1949). He is known to have provided a number of rare Song and Yuan woodblock prints to the Han fen lou for facsimile reproduction in the early part of this century. The text of Fan's Guben Laozi is not included in the Daozang. For a facsimile of the Xugui congshu copy, see Wu qiubei chai Laozi jicheng, vol. 59. Apart from Wagner’s study discussed above, which identifies the Guben Laozi with the original Wang Bi text, the most extensive modern study of the Guben version is that of Lao Jian in 1941.

1.1.1.5 The Tang yu zhu 唐御注 “Imperial commentary” version

The so-called “bibliographic controversy” at the court of Tang Xuan Zong 唐玄宗 (cf. Hung, 1957) involved, a competition between the commentary of the Wang Bi Laozi and that of the Heshang Gong Laozi. Because no clear criterion emerged at the termination of the debate for choosing between these two, Xuan Zong 玄宗 opted to produce his own commentary and sub-commentary (shu 疑). These were published in 735. At the same time he established an “edited” version of the Laozi text based largely on his personal choice of readings from either the Heshang Gong version or the Xiang Er 想爾 version (cf. below). Concerning the value of this version, Boltz says:

Because his text was not critically established in any scholarly way, and combines readings capriciously from other versions, it has no independent value for the establishment of a critical edition (Shima 1973, summarized in Herforth 1989 (1980), p.19). Still, because of the nature and stature of the source of the Imperial commentary, Huang tsung’s Lao zu 素注 supplanted both the Wang Pi and Ho-shang Kung versions for Tang civil service examination purpose, and to a considerable extent as well (Hung 1957, n.146).

To enforce his order that Yuzhu Laozi should be the version of choice Xuan Zong had both text and commentary inscribed on an eight-sided stone zhuang 碑 and erected it in 738 in front of the Long xing guan 龍興觀 of Yizhou 易州. (This relic is not to be confused with the bei 碑 of 708 found at the same site, which carried only the text of the Laozi. Nor should it be confused with the zhuang carrying both the text of the Laozi and the Imperial commentary which was erected in 739 at the Long xing guan of Xingzhou)

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68 Loewe 1993: p. 279.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Loewe 1993: p. 280.
These are the five principal textual versions of the *Laozi* proper. However, as Henricks says, "all traditional versions of these three editions are 'received' texts, having been copied many times over the centuries and thus passed down to the present." The copies of these "early" texts which we possess today, therefore, undoubtedly do not represent the text as it was seen by the commentators whose names they bear. 

1.1.2 The Mawangdui silk text of the *Laozi*

Before the discovery of the Jingmen bamboo slips in 1994, the Mawangdui silk version was the earliest edition of the *Laozi* and dates from around the beginning of the second century BC. These were the oldest extant manuscripts which we know to be free of later errors or other changes. In December of 1973 in a Han tomb at Mawangdui in Hunan province two manuscript copies (designated jia ben 甲本 “A” and yi ben 乙本 “B” by modern editors) of the *Laozi* were discovered. Of these two manuscripts, A observes no Han taboos at all, while B observes as taboo only the character bang 邦. This means that A was probably made before the death of Gao Zu 高祖 in 195 BC, and that B was made before the death of Emperor Hui in 180 BC. And the possibility that A was made before the Han cannot be ruled out. These two manuscripts thus antedated the Tang stone inscriptions by 900 years and the earliest fragment by nearly 500 years. 

Boltz says, texts A and B "represent a genuine textual lineage, rather than being just an isolated textual anomaly." Gao Heng 高亨, Chi Xizhao 池曉朝 and Xu Kangsheng 許抗生 argue that A and B do not come from the same textual tradition. The evidence is mainly as follows: 1) At the end of the first part of B are the character de 德 and the number character representing "three thousand and forty one"; at the end of the second part of Book B are the character dao 道 and the number character representing "two thousand four hundred twenty six". Book A lacks these characters. 2) The text in B is not divided into chapters at all. But in A, dot markings seem to be a sign for the division of the text into sections. 3) The two texts A and B read differently in

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72 Ibid.
74 For this point, see the article by William Boltz 1985.
76 Loewe 1993: p. 284.
79 D. C. Lau argues that "The curious fact is that the practice in the two books of the A, text is very different. In the te ching there are 15 such marks, but only one at the beginning of the tao ching. Of the 15 marks in the te ching, 11 coincide with chapter division in the transmitted text while 3 are found within chapters." Cf. D.C. Lau 1982: p. 161. I think, however, that Lau's argument cannot deny the
about one hundred and eighty places.\textsuperscript{30}

Gao Heng and Chi Xizhao, therefore, draw the conclusion that a number of versions belonging to different textual traditions were probably in existence at that time. Thus, the two early Han manuscripts, though only two, cannot be said to be closer to the original.\textsuperscript{31} D.C. Lau as well agrees with Gao and Chi on this point.\textsuperscript{32}

Yan Lingfang, however, thinks that the Mawangdui form of the text is simply the result of packaging. As Robert G. Henricks has noticed, Yan suggests that the Mawangdui texts or their predecessors "were copied from texts written on strips of bamboo that were tied together in bundles, one for part I of the text and one for part II. But when the copyist was finished, he put the part I bundle into a box first with part II on top of it; the next copyist opening the box would naturally begin with the bundle of slips on top, which would be the part II bundle."\textsuperscript{33} This is a possibility, but it has not yet been proven.

D. C. Lau does not agree, however, that texts A and B come from two different traditions. He centers his argument around three points:

1) Lau interprets the differences in the reading of texts A and B as a contamination from another textual tradition and thinks that they do not necessarily constitute evidence that A and B coming from different traditions.\textsuperscript{34} He then divides the differences in reading between A and B into two kinds: "They involve either particles or the use of loan characters. Besides these, there are cases where a passage is missing in one or other of the manuscripts."\textsuperscript{35}

Lau lists as well some examples which he believes illustrate his case. But Lau's argument here is weak, since without proper evidence the question remains open whether this difference in the readings is in fact due to contamination from another textual tradition. His argument, then, cannot be used as a basis for attacking the theory of Gao and Chi. Xu Kangsheng, based on certain observations concerning these differences, has drawn the conclusion that text A is closer to Yan Zun's 嚴遵 Daode zhigui 道德指歸; and B, similarly, is closer to Fu Yi's 傅奕 version.\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{30} D. C. Lau also agrees with this number of the differences between texts A and B. Cf. D. C. Lau 1982: p. 156.


\textsuperscript{32} D. C. Lau 1982: p. 184 reads: "There probably existed at the same time a number of versions belonging to independent textual traditions. That being the case, we cannot hope that with the discovery of two early Han manuscripts we are nearer to the original, if, indeed, we can talk about an original."


\textsuperscript{34} D. C. Lau 1982: pp. 158-159.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.: p. 156.

\textsuperscript{36} Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 157.
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2) Lau says, "Far more significant than these differences are cases where A and B share the same mistakes." He then lists some examples from chapters 2, 11, 23, and 57. Finally, he says: "That A and B share these mistakes in common argues strongly for their having been descended from the same exemplar. This argument far out weighs the counter-argument from differences in the two texts, for, as has been pointed out, the differences could have come from textual contamination. Since A and B come from the same textual tradition, it is justifiable to conflict the two texts. This gives a reasonably complete text with only the occasional lacuna to be filled with the help of the transmitted text."

However, this position is weak as well, since the earlier version that is the source of texts A and B may contain these so-called "same mistakes". This statement, of course, is an unwarranted assumption; but in that respect my position is equal to that of Lau. And clearly one cannot propose one possibility in order to deny another without any further evidence.

Possible, then, is that some other ancient manuscript possessed these "mistakes". And when they were copied, different readings were introduced into different copies. Under these circumstances Lau's argument could still hold, but the "same exemplar" to which he referred must have existed long before. The crucial question, however, concerns the differences between the "mistakes" and the "different readings". If the "mistakes" have something in common, something which separates them as a group from the "reading", then Lau's argument holds. D.C. Lau, however, did not succeed in proving this. On the other hand, if the "different readings" are considered "mistakes", then the two books of the Mawangdui manuscripts must have been descended from two different exemplars. In other words, if the "mistakes" are only different "readings", which happen to be the same in A and B, then statistically Lau's argument is wrong, for many different "readings" emerge compared to the "mistakes".

This issue needs to be studied in details, and Lau's statement remains still open, since nearly two hundred reading differences can be found in comparison to the few similar mistakes that obtain between texts A and B.

3) Lau's third argument is weaker than the above two, because he tries to deny the difference in the division of chapters between texts A and B. I will show in this chapter, however, in the section entitled "The chapter division" that, in the silk text, Book A has chapter divisions (in the first part), while Book B has no chapter divisions.

Before the discovery of the Mawangdui silk text, the oldest text in existence was

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88 Ibid.: pp. 159-160.
89 Ibid.: p. 160.
90 Ibid.
inscribed in 708 on a tablet in the Long xing Temple in Yizhou, Hubei province.⁹²

The book as it stands now is divided into two parts, the first consisting of 37 chapters and the second of 44 chapters. Of the two common texts, the one used by Wang Bi for his commentary has no titles for either the two parts or the chapters. The one used by Heshang Gong for his commentary, however, calls the two parts the "Classic of Dao" and the "Classic of De", respectively, and has a title for each chapter.⁹³

In comparing the Mawangdui texts of Laozi to these and later editions, they appear in the main similar. Henricks says, "let us state clearly at the outset that the Mawangdui texts do not differ in any radical way from latter versions of the text. That is to say, there are no chapters in the Mawangdui texts that are not found in later texts and vice versa, and there is nothing in the Mawangdui texts that would lead us to understand the philosophy of the text in a radically new way."⁹⁴ Concerning the difference among them, Henricks says, "The differences tend to be more subtle. A different word is used here and there, or a word, phrase or line is added in or left out, or the syntax of a phrase or line is not the same. One of the striking features of the Mawangdui texts of Laozi in fact is that they are much more "grammatical" than later editions, using many more grammatical particles than later editions, but for that very reason being grammatically much more precise."⁹⁵

1.1.3 The bamboo slips of the Laozi discovered in No. 1 Chu State Tomb in
Guodian Village, Jingmen, Hubei province.

The earliest version of Laozi is the new archaeological discovery of the Laozi written on bamboo slips discovered in 1994 in No. 1 Chu State Tomb in Guodian Village, Jingmen, Hubei province.⁹⁶ The texts are written in classic Chinese character, which was an old style of writing used in the Zhanguo Period and was formally between the ancient character (guwenzi 古文字) and the "small seal" (xiaozhuan 小篆). (The small seal was abandoned in the Han dynasty.) This version is presently in the process of being studied, and thus far we know concerning it only: that it is shorter than the normal version possessed by us, and that this Laozi is from a version which was similar to the Mawangdui silk Laozi.⁹⁷

Many reports such as that found in the Beijing review and the Zhongguo wenwu bao have said the Bamboo Slips Laozi is in the form of dialogue. However, according to the interview of the leader of the Jingmen museum Liu Zuxin 劉祖信 by Chinese senior

⁹³ These titles have been translated by Wilhelm, Carus, Heysinger, Au-young Sum Nung, Old, Lin Yutang, etc., in their translations. See Chan 1963: p. 90 note 106.
⁹⁴ Henricks 1993: xviii-xix.
⁹⁵ Henricks 1993: xix.
⁹⁷ See also Beijing Review. Apr. 3-16. 1995: p. 33.
lecturer Huang Xiuli 黄秀礼 (information possessed by the present author personally), reporters have made mistakes in reporting the form of the Bamboo Slips Laozi. Liu Zuxin said that the Bamboo Slips Laozi was not in the form of dialogue but poetry, and it is similar to the version of Mawangdui Laozi and probably comes from the same tradition.99 This Laozi consists of over two thousand characters, and the bamboo slips varied in length from 20 to 40 cm.99

The normal versions of the Wang Bi, Heshang Gong and Yan Zun, which are usually called "the traditional versions" in this work, all have the Daodejing before the Dejing. The Mawangdui silk texts of the Laozi, however, has the Dejing before the Daodejing and was probably completed around 200 BC during the latter part of the Warring States Period.100 The version of Fu Yi was based on the ancient version. The Bamboo Slips Laozi, however, is the oldest version yet discovered. One can reasonably suppose, therefore, that the silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the Laozi were from two different traditions. They are, however, from the same tradition as the Mawangdui text and the traditional version of the Laozi.101 According to the report, the Bamboo Slips Laozi dated at least to the middle of Warring States Period.102 Thus, in this case, the Bamboo Slips Laozi was earlier than both silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the Laozi or at least was completed in the same period as they were. One can suppose, then, that the silk text and Fu Yi version were developed from the Bamboo Slips Laozi.103 We cannot decide yet, however, whether or not this assumption is true, since we cannot know whether the Jingmen Bamboo Slips Laozi was a part of the Laozi's traditional version or its earlier version. Needed here is a new study and translation of the Laozi based on the Bamboo Slips texts, which is the task of forthcoming analysis.

1.2 The titles and structure of the Laozi

1.2.1 The titles
The Laozi 老子, called as well the Daodejing 道德經 (Classic of the Way and Its Virtue), is a comparatively short work. It is sometimes called the Wu qian wen 五千文 "The Five thousand character (classic)", and is in fact of about that length. "The number of its words varies from 5227 to 5722, although it is usually called 5000-word classic.104

98 Huang Xiuli interviewed Liu Zuxin, the leader of the Jingmen Museum, on October 16th, 1995 in Jingmen city, Hubei province. The present author was given this information by Huang on the 23rd of October, 1995 by telephone.


101 See footnote 43.

102 Hubei ribao 湖北日报 1994年 12月15日.


The followers of the Daoist religion have actually made attempts to reduce the number to exactly 5000.\(^{105}\)

In the Mawangdui Laozi, the two parts of the B text end, one with De and the other with Dao, but do not use the term jing (classic). The A text has no titles at all. In Sima Qian's Shiji, he calls them simply shangxia pian (the Former and Lower parts).\(^{106}\)

Chan Wing-Tsit says, the book was merely called the Laozi and not a classic (jing 经) up to the beginning of the Han Dynasty.\(^{107}\) According to Jiao Hong, it was called a classic during the reign of Emperor Jing 景 (reigned 156-141 BC).\(^{108}\) Whether or not this statement is true, we know that the bibliography compiled by Liu Xiang lists three commentaries on the Laozi as those on the "classic," although the Laozi itself is not listed.\(^{109}\) This is repeated in the bibliographical section of the Hanshu, i.e., the History of the Former Han Dynasty, by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), where Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 BC—AD 18) has been quoted as saying that Lao Zi wrote the Classic of Dao.\(^{110}\) In the same book the History of the Former Han Dynasty: the Biography of Yang Xiong, Huan Tan 欢谭 has been quoted as saying: "Once Lao Dan wrote the words of void in two pian 篇 (parts)."\(^{111}\) Here the Laozi was called liang pian (two parts) other than jing (classic). Ma Xulun says that the title Daodejing appears in a number of works in the Former Han Period (206 BC—AD 8).\(^{112}\) The Heshang Gong version of the Laozi, which we have today, uses the name Daodejing; and Heshang Gong is said to be a figure in the Former Han Dynasty (the period of Jing 景 Emperor), though his version cannot be found in Ban Gu's Hanshu. Xu Kangsheng says that the present Heshang Gong version dates probably from the time of the Latter Han Dynasty, thought this statement cannot be taken as evidence. The earliest title upon which we can rely today, therefore, is that of the B text of the Mawangdui silk Laozi, called Daopian and Depian.\(^{113}\)

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105 For the variation of the numbers, see Chan 1963: pp. 83-84 note 1. Cf. Jiao Hong (1541-1620), Laoziyi, 5:13a; Kimura Eichi, Rôshi no shindenkyû (New Study of the Lao Zi): pp. 219-220; Takeuchi Yoshio, Rôshi no kenkyû (Study of the Lao Zi), I, 127, 131, 136, 220; and Kojima Kenkichiro, Shina shoshi kyakkakuro (Inquiry on the Hundred Schools of Ancient Chinese Philosophy), p. 142. The Heshang Gong text, SPTK (1929), has 5268 words, and the Wang Bi text, SPPY (1927), has 5281. In reducing the total number to 5000, Daoist followers replaced the phrase sanoshi 三十 ("thirty") with the colloquial san ("thirty") in the Laozi (ch. 11). For further information on the reduction to 5000 words, see Rao Zongyi 覃常頤, Laozi xiangerzhuhu jiaojian: p. 4.


108 Jiao Hong a.s.: 5:11b.

109 Ban Gu’s Hanshu, ch. 30, cf. the section on the Daoist school.

110 Li Fang: Taiping yulan, 191:7a.


113 Xu 1985: p. 135.
1.2.2 The structure
There are two issues concerning this point: parts and chapters.

1.2.2.1 The two parts: Daojing 道經 and Dejing 德經
The text of the Laozi is divided into two parts. The first is known as Book I, the Former Part, and is also called the Daojing (nos.1-37). The second, Book II or the Lower Part, is called the Dejing (nos. 38-81). And this division of the Laozi into books is responsible for the alternative name Daodejing 道德經 for the work as a whole. All of the chapters are short; none are more than two printed pages, and most are less than one. The division of the work into the Daojing and the Dejing does not vary from edition to edition, though the Han silk manuscript versions from the Mawangdui 馬王堆 reverse their order and vary the sequence of a few of the individual chapters.114

As already indicated, in his biography of Lao Zi, Sima Qian refers to the Laozi as consisting of two parts (see the introduction to the present work). The "Xiang Er" commentary, which may antedate Wang Bi’s commentary, also divides the text into two parts.115 Thus, the division into two parts goes back to early times. In both A and B of the Mawangdui silk text, the order is reversed, the Dejing coming before the Daojing. Neither text designates the books as Dejing and Daojing, though in B the end of the first book is marked by the character de 德, and the end of the second book by the character dao 道.116

Gao Heng and Chi Xizhao say, according to the records before the Qin Dynasty, there were probably two kinds of versions of the Laozi: in one, influenced by the Daoist tradition, the Daojing precedes the Dejing. According to this tradition, Dao is always discussed before de. And this is the case also in the Zhuangzi. In the other type, influenced by the legalist tradition, the Dejing comes before the Daojing. Chapter 20, the Jielao 解老 of the Hanfeizi 韓非子, for example, comments on the Laozi text in the following order, according to the numbering of chapters in the transmitted (traditional) text: 38, 58, 60, 46, 1, 50, 67, 53, 54. Because the Jielao begins with chapter 38, which is the opening chapter of the Dejing, some have thought that in the Laozi text used by the author the Dejing probably came before the Daojing.

D. C. Lau argues, however, that the Jielao perhaps cannot stand on its own as evidence for the order of the two books of the Laozi.117 He says: “This is by no means certain. First, the chapters quoted are not in strict sequence. Second, chapter 1 is quoted amongst chapters that all belong to the te ching. If this is originally so in the Chieh Lao, then we cannot argue that for the author the whole of the te ching comes before the

115 This has been reproduced in Rao Zongyi’s Laozi Xiang Er zhu jiaojian.
whole of the *tao ching*. If the passage containing the quotation from chapter I got in by mistake, then the *Chieh Lao* could have been a commentary on the *te ching* alone, there being perhaps, a separate commentary on the *tao ching*. If that were the case, then *Chieh Lao* on its own cannot be used as evidence for the order of the two books of the *Lao Tzu*. Whatever the case with the *Lao Tzu* text used by author of the *Chieh Lao*, the fact is, in A and B the *te ching* comes before the *tao ching*. There is a suggestion that this might have been the order in the Legalist tradition, but as this was made probably with some ulterior political motive, it is best taken with due reservation.118

Despite what modern scholars may argue, however, the Mawangdui silk text still has the *Dejing* coming before the *Daojing*. And the tradition of the *Daojing* preceding the *Dejing* must also have appeared in the middle or later period of the Former Han Dynasty. For according to the quotation in Dong Sijing's 董思靖 *Daode zhenjing jijie* 老子道德真經集解序, Liu Xin's 劉向 *Qiulue* 七略 says: "Liu Xiang 劉向 sets two books (pian 篇) in eighty-one chapters, the former classic is thirty-four chapters, the Lower is forty-seven chapters."119 Examining the *Laozi*’s chapters and contents, one finds that the Former classic set by Liu Xiang is probably the *Daojing*, and the Latter classic the *Dejing*.120

1.2.2.2 The chapter division

As to the division into chapters, since the bibliography section of the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* does not in mentioning the Heshang Gong commentary give the number of chapters,121 and since no chapter division is found in Lu Deming’s 魯德明 (556-627) *Laozi yinyi* 老子音義 (Pronunciation and Meanings of the *Laozi*), many scholars believe the division originated in the Sui 隋 (581-618) or Tang 唐 (618-907) Dynasty.122 The discovery of the Mawangdui silk text of the *Laozi* in 1973 has supported this theory.

In neither the A or B texts of the silk *Laozi* is the text divided into numbered chapters; but while in B the text is not divided into chapters at all, in A dots are placed in a manner which seems to be a sign for division of the text into sections. Curious, however, is that the practice in the two books of the A text is very different. D.C. Lau remarks that the *Dejing* possesses 15 such marks, but only one at beginning of the *Daojing*.123 And this lack suggests that no chapter division were ever made in the

118 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
122 Chan 1963: p. 75.
Lau says: "Of the 15 marks in the *te ching*, 11 coincide with chapter divisions in the transmitted text while 3 are found within chapters." He Jiejun and Zhang Weiming say: "there are six places which are different in the chapter division in the transmitted version." Gao Heng and Chi Xizhao say: "The exceptions are (1) chapter 24 is found between chapters 21 and 22, (2) chapter 41 is found between chapters 38 and 39, and (3) chapters 80 and 81 are found between chapters 66 and 67."

The *Laozi* consists of eighty-one 章 (section or chapter). And this is the division in the traditional versions of Heshang Gong 河上公 and Wang Bi 王弼, etc. According to tradition, Heshang Gong divided Part One into 37 chapters to conform to the odd number of heaven and Part Two into 44 chapters to conform to the even number of earth. Yan Zun 嚴遵 (*fl. 53-24 BC*) divided the book into 72 chapters in view of the notion that 72 the product of eight, the way of *yin*, (the passive force of the cosmos), and nine, the way of *yang* (the cosmic active force). He thus proposed 40 chapters for Part One and 32 for Part Two. Ge Hong 葛洪, supposing heaven to consist of the four seasons and earth of the *wuxing* 五行 (the Five Agents or Elements, which are Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth) assigned 36 chapters (4x9) to Part One, and 45 (5x9) to Part Two. In this way, he got the number 81, the product of 9x9. This scheme was followed by Emperor Minghuang of the Tang Dynasty 唐明皇 (*reigned 713-55*), who, in his *Daodejing zhujie* (Commentary on the *Classic of the Way and Its Virtue*), further grouped chapters 1-9, 10-18, 19-27, and 28-36 of Part One in a way which corresponds to the four seasons. He grouped chapters 37-45 of Part Two in a way which corresponds to the general notions of humanity, propriety, righteousness, wisdom, and faithfulness (which correspond to the Five Agents). Some say that he was the first to fix the order of the chapters and their sentences.

Wu Cheng (1249-1333) combines in his commentary chapters 5 and 6, 17 to 19, 23 and 24, 30 and 31, 39 and 40, 42 and 43, 57 and 58, 63 and 64, 66 and 67, 68 and 69, 70 and 71, and 73 and 74. He does this because they deal with similar subjects, and he

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127 Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 75. Cf. Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: p. 119. D. C. Lau 1982: p. 161 says, "In the main, the order of the text within the book is the same as in the transmitted text. Th exceptions are (1) chapter 41 is found between chapters 39 and 40,..." This is different from Gao Heng's and He Jiejun's saying, the present work follows the latter, because they have got this conclusion through a study on the original silk text. Cf. Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 137.
128 See Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 1976: p. 117.
130 In the preface of his commentary. Cf. Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 75.
gives us a total of 68 chapters. The Daode zhenjing zhu (Commentary on the Pure Classic of the Way and Its Virtue) by Emperor Taizu 太祖 (reigned 1368-98) of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), however, gives a total of only 67 chapters. But Yao Nai’s Laozi zhanyi, still gives 81 chapters, 31 in Part One and 50 in Part Two. Ma Xulun has divided the book into 114 chapters, the shortest having six words (line 3 of the traditional chapter 70) and the longest having 104. The newer arrangement, by Yan Lingfeng, has 54 chapters: chapters 1-4 on the substance of Dao, 5-8 on the principle of Dao, 9-23 on the functioning of Dao, and 34-54 on the technique of Dao.

1.3 The nature of the Laozi

1.3.1 The style of the Laozi

Some scholars argue that all of the chapters are rhymed, though the rhyming scheme occurs in various patterns. Most scholars do agree that many rhymes occur in the Laozi, though, concerning whether the work has the style of poetry as such, opinions differ.

Ren Jiyu argues that the style of the Laozi is poetry. According to Barbara Hendrischke, Ren says: "The Laozi, being poetry, is naturally full of metaphors, which has led many interpreters astray who did not bother to reflect on the specific language of this book."

Feng Youlan says that the style of the Laozi is clearly that of "canon" jing 经. But he is unable to give any standard by which to judge what the style of the canon is. Hu Shi argues that Feng believes the style is that of the proverb; for, except in the case of the dialogues, almost all of the Analects are proverbs.

Qian Mu 錢穆 takes the Laozi as rhymed prose (yunhua zhi sanwen 韻化之散文) and thinks that the rhymed prose cannot precede the dialogue, such as we have in the

132 Chan 1963: p. 76.  
133 Ibid.  
134 Ibid.  
135 Chan 1963: p. 90 note 116 says: "This rearranged text is found in his Lao Tsu chiao-ku: pp. 203-16."  
137 Chapters 31, 49, 50, 61, 74, and 75 are not rhymed, while only small parts of chapters 7, 11, 23, 32, 34, 42, 60, 66, 72, and 81 are rhymed. Hu Yuanchun, in his Laozi shiji (p. 3) goes so far as to say that the whole book is in rhyme. See Chan 1963: p. 84 note 2.  
138 For a complete list of rhymes, see B. Karlgren, "The Poetical Parts in Lao-Tsi," Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift, XXXVIII (1932), 6-20, and Chen Zhu, Laozi jixun: passim. For some examples of the rhyming scheme, see Qian Mu, Laozi babian: pp. 29-34.  
141 See the quotation in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 85.
Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚 takes the Laozi as a style of 鬼, which appeared in the end of the Warring States Period.\(^{143}\)

Ma Xulun 马敟倫 notes that the brief words of the Laozi are like poetry. On one hand it is like the yao ci 爻辞 of Yi 易 and the Ya 雅 and Song 歌 of the Shijing 詩經; on the other hand, it is like the Analects 論語. No paper and ink existed at that time, so brief words were favored. And most of the ancient books were transmitted orally, so they were usually rhymed. The Laozi fits both of these two conditions. Therefore, he says, the Laozi must have been transmitted before the Warring States Period.\(^{144}\)

Many parts of the Laozi are rhymed, but the Laozi is not really poetry. Looking the book as a whole, its nature can be described as follows:

The work as a whole is sometimes referred to as poetry, because all of the sections are short, sometimes rhymed, and are sparing in their use of grammatical particles (especially in the transmitted versions). But this style of writing has never been formally classed as a type of poetry in the Chinese tradition. The Laozi is found traditionally in the 子 category of the 四部 classification scheme.\(^{145}\)

Its sentences, many containing couplets,\(^{146}\) may be long or short, difficult or easy, simple or complex, and its expression may be concise or elaborate.

Its several quotations\(^{147}\) complicate rather than simplify matters, because their sources are not certain and they may not be quotations at all. There is not a single dialogue, historical event, or proper noun to provide a clue concerning its date or author, it contains some repetitions and contradictions,\(^{148}\) some sayings attributed to Lao Zi in other books are not found here.\(^{149}\)

1.3.2 The issue of anthology
Based on some aspects of the Laozi's nature, some people argue that the Laozi is an anthology.\(^{150}\) D. C. Lau, for example, says:

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\(^{142}\) Qian Mu 1957: pp. 101-102.

\(^{143}\) Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚 1933: IV: pp. 462-519.

\(^{144}\) Quoted from Zhang Yangming 張陽明 1985: Laozi kaozheng 老子考證: p. 260.

\(^{145}\) Loewe 1993: p. 269.


\(^{147}\) Chapters 22, 36, 41, 42, 57, 69, 78, and 79.

\(^{148}\) For the repetitions one can refer to Chan Wing-Tsit's notes on the respective parts in his book, The Way of Lao Tzu. For a good list of contradictions, real or imagined, see Tsudô, Sôkichi, Dôke no shisô to sono tenkai (Taoist Thought and Its Development): pp. 34-35.

\(^{149}\) Chan 1963: p. 61.

\(^{150}\) Laozi zhixue taolun ji: pp. 6-7.
In my view not only is the *Lao Tzu* an anthology but even individual chapters are usually made up of shorter passages whose connection with one another is at best tenuous. It also follows from our view of the work as an anthology that we cannot expect the thought contained in it to be a closely knit system, though the greater part of the work may show some common tendency of thought which can be described as Taoist in the broad sense of the term.\(^{151}\)

Kaltenmark has a similar opinion that the *Laozi* is an anthology. He says: "All things considered, the *Laozi* appears to be an anthology of apothegms borrowed partly from the common stock of wisdom, partly from various proto-Taoist schools. The anthology was built up gradually and did not take on a more or less definitive form until the third century BC."\(^{152}\) Kaltenmark has no clear explanation for his so-called "all things considered". Benjamin I. Schwartz also supports this opinion, saying the *Laozi* "is nothing but a handbook of a prudential mundane life philosophy, a treatise on political strategy, an esoteric treatise on military strategy, a utopian tract, or a text which advocates 'a scientific naturalistic' attitude toward the cosmos."\(^{153}\) He has not, however, provided any evidence to prove his hypothesis, either.

As for D. C. Lau, he supports his hypothesis mainly by three items of evidence:

- First, "Many chapters fall into sections having, at times, little or no connection with one another."\(^{154}\) Concerning this point, Lau gives two examples: one is in chapter five, where it reads:

  Heaven and earth are ruthless, and treat the myriad creatures as straw dogs;  
  the sage is ruthless, and treats the people as straw dogs. (14)

This is followed by

  Is not the space between heaven and earth like a bellows?  
  It is empty without being exhausted:  
  The more it works the more comes out. (15)

Lau says: "It is a different point that is made in each passage. In the first passage, the point is that heaven and earth are unfeeling, while in the second it is that they are inexhaustible though empty. There is no connection between the two passages other than the fact that they are both about 'heaven and earth'."\(^{155}\) Another example Lau gives is in chapter 64, which reads:

\(^{155}\) Ibid.
Whoever does anything to it will ruin it; whoever lays hold of it will lose it. (154)
Therefore the sage, because he does nothing, loses nothing. (154a)

This is followed by

In their enterprises the people
Always ruin them when on the verge of success.
Be as careful at the end as at the beginning
And there will be no ruined enterprises. (155)

Lau says: "Here we can see that the two passages have been placed together because they both deal with how things come to be ruined and how this can be avoided. But beyond this the point made in each passage is, once again, quite different. In the first passage, the sage avoids failure by not doing anything, while in the second the common people are exhorted to avoid failure when on the verge of success by being as careful at the end as at the beginning. In the one case, action is condemned as the cause of failure, because true success lies in not taking any action at all. In the other, it is assumed that success can be achieved through action, provided that one can be careful throughout the duration of the action. The two points of view are not simply unconnected; they are inconsistent." (156)

Since passages which are placed together in the same chapter are sometimes unconnected or even inconsistent, many scholars in the past have felt dissatisfaction with the existing arrangement of the text, and some have even attempted to have the text rearranged. Concerning this one can refer to the section above concerning the division of the chapters. D. C. Lau, however, disagrees with them and says: "... I am unable to share their assumptions that the present text is not in the proper order and that there is a proper order which can be restored by rearrangement." (158) Lau has dealt with this problem by a different method, as he says, "In the translation, the division into chapters in the traditional text has been adhered to, but sections numbers have been introduced. These serve to separate existing chapters into parts which, in my view, need not originally have belonged together." And he also says: "If the reader can see connection between parts that I have separated, he can simply ignore my section marks." (159)

Lau’s argument here cannot be correct, firstly, what D. C. Lau argues has not been proved as authoritative yet, since it is very possible for other people to see the connection between parts that Lau separates. On the other hand, what D. C. Lau assumes concerning

157 D. C. Lau 1982: p. 136 reads: "... are very often unconnected or even inconsistent..." This is not true, since contradictions actually occur very seldomly in the Laoei. For a good list of contradictions, real or imagined, one can see Tsuda Sookichi, Dôke no shishô to sono tenkai (Taoist Thought and Its Development): pp. 34-35.
158 Ibid.: p.xl.
159 Ibid.: p.xl.
the text can also be explained as later additions to the book of Laozi.\textsuperscript{160}

- As a second piece of evidence, Lau says: "In the Lao Tzu the same passage is often to be found in different chapters."\textsuperscript{161} And he gives several examples which show that certain passages do not seem to belong to any context. Chapter 27 of the Laozi reads:

When there is not enough faith, there is lack of good faith. (40)

He says, "This is found also in chapter XXIII (53). In neither case is this passage connected with its context. In fact it has more affinity with the passage in chapter XLIX which says,

Those who are of good faith I have faith in. Those who are lacking in good faith I also have faith in. In so doing I gain in good faith. (111)"\textsuperscript{162}

Following this he says: "there is the passage which seems to belong to more than one place," and he gives three examples from chapters 4, 52, and 56.\textsuperscript{163} His conclusion is: "As the work is so short it is exceedingly unlikely that a single author should be so much given to repeating himself, but if we look upon the work as an anthology it is easier to see how this could have happened."\textsuperscript{164}

Lau's conclusion is more like an assumption than a fact, and his conclusion can be denied by regarding the Laozi as the book of single author, a book to which later additions have in some cases been appended.\textsuperscript{165} This hypothesis is more reasonable than that of Lau. It also fits the traditional opinion concerning Lao Zi, the person. Lau's attempt to deny Lao Zi as a historical figure at all is actually the reason for such a wrong assumption concerning the book of Laozi. Concerning Lau's assumption concerning the historic figure Lao Zi, the next chapter of the present work will prove it wrong.

- As a third piece of evidence, Lau says: "there are cases where we find slightly different formulations of what is essentially the same passage." He then gives examples of such varied repetitions from chapters 22 and 24, 70 and 78.\textsuperscript{166} But this so-called repetition can also show only that the same saying, in the process of oral and written transmission, assumed slightly different forms in different contexts while retaining essentially the same moral. And thus it only shows that Lao Zi just discussed the same

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.: pp. 136-137.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.: p. 137.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.: p. 136.
\textsuperscript{166} D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: pp. 138-139.
things from two aspects. Therefore, D.C. Lau's argument here cannot be relied on as evidence for taking the Laozi as an anthology.

If some one argues this part has not demonstrated that Lau's arguments are wrong, it does show that they are not compelling enough to overthrow Sima Qian position maintained concerning the Laozi's nature.

1.3.3 The Laozi is from one hand rather than many
Departing from D. C. Lau, many scholars, e.g., Feng Youlan,¹⁶⁷ and Zhang Jitong,¹⁶⁸ argue that the Laozi is from one hand rather than many, although it has been added to and rearranged by later people.

1.3.3.1 The systematization of the Laozi's thought
Many scholars have argued that the thought of the Laozi is systematic, though they have had difficulties in employing systematization as a standard by which to describe the nature of the Laozi.

Kaltenmark, for example, has a confused opinion concerning the systematic degree of the Laozi's thought. In one place, he says: "neither the style nor the thought of the book is internally consistent...As for the content, a considerable number of passages are closer to the tenets of such schools as the Legalists, the Politicians, and the Strategists than to Lao Dan's thought as the ancients understood it, which is the dominant strain of the book. These passages are not clumsy interpolations, however, but a result of the way the Laozi was compiled."¹⁶⁹ When in another place he draws his conclusion, however, Kaltenmark says: "Clearly, however, its (the book of Laozi's) ideas are carefully worked out and form a coherent whole. We must, then, posit the existence of a philosopher who, if he did not write the book himself, was the master under whose influence it took shape."¹⁷⁰

Related to the Laozi's thought system, Benjamin I. Schwartz also says:

Some argue that many of its aphorisms and maxims may have been drawn from a common fund of well-known sayings, and D.C. Lau even calls it an anthology. Yet here again I inclined to remark that, however disarrayed the sources of the text, whoever finally molded it into one composition did succeed in projecting a remarkably unified poetic vision of the world. The recent discovery of what may be the oldest extant versions of the text—the Ma Wang Dui silk scrolls—on the whole affirm this view.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Feng Youlan 1964: p. 251 reads: "老子書是一部正式的私人著作。它不是問答式的語錄，而是作者以簡單的文體表達自己的思想。The book of Laozi is a real, individual work. It is not a collection of questions and answers, but rather that the author uses his brief language to express his own thought."


¹⁷⁰ Ibid.: p. 15.

The thought of the *Laozi* is indeed very systematic, its main content concerning the concept of *Dao* and the theory of valuing weakness. This has been mentioned in the biography of Lao Zi in Sima Qian's *Shiji* and in the *Zhuangzi: tianxia* and, this can also be proven to some extent both by the transmitted version and by the Mawangdui silk texts of the *Laozi*. Thus, the book "has had an influence on Chinese thought through the ages out of all proportion to its length." Lau, however, because of some repetitions and inconsistences in the book, argues that the *Laozi*’s thought is not systematic. We must keep in mind, however, that the repetitions and inconsistences are really just a very small part of the book.

Systematization is, after all, a difficult conception to explain. Comparing D. C. Lau's argument with that of his opponents, one finds that none of them can offer satisfactory evidence proving their hypotheses concerning the question of system in the *Laozi*, mainly because different people have different definitions for the term "systematic", each of which varies from the other. Thus, no particular concept of what constitutes "system" can be relied upon to prove that the *Laozi* comes from one hand. Some other means must be found to do that. An investigation into the work’s use of the first personal pronoun is just such a way.

### 1.3.3.2 The use of the first personal pronouns *wu* 吾 and *wo* 我 "I"

The first personal singular pronouns such as *wu* 吾 and *wo* 我 appear many times in the *Laozi*. This fact can be taken as evidence to support the theory that the *Laozi* was from one person's hand rather than many, since these first personal singular pronouns refer to the author himself.

A famous Chinese contemporary philosopher Zhang Dainian 張岱年 is of this opinion. He says the pronouns *wu* 吾 and *wo* 我 have been used many times, and most of them do refer to the author of the book. For example, only in chapter 20 of the *Laozi* does the first personal pronouns *wo* 我 appear, and there it appears seven times. We can find in the *Laozi* the following examples:

有物混成
先天地生。

......

吾不知其名，
字之曰道。

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174 These are the Lau's words concerning the influence of the *Laozi* in China. See D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: ix.
There is a thing confusedly formed,  
Born before heaven and earth.  
......  
I know not its name  
So I style it “the way”. (Chap. 25)

吾不知誰之子。  
象帝之先。  

I know not whose son it is.  
It images the forefather of God. (Chap. 4)

These passages show that the concept of the *Dao* was taught by the author of the *Laozi* himself.  

人之所教，  
我亦教之。  
強梁者不得其死。  
吾將以為教父。  

What others teach I also teach.  
The violent will come to a natural end.  
I shall take this as my percept. (Chap. 42)

吾是以知無為之有益。  
That is why I know the benefit of resorting to no-action. (Chap. 43)

我有三寶，持而保之。  
I have three treasures  
Which I hold and cherish. (Chap. 67)

All of these examples show the author's attitude toward the *Dao*. Both *wu* and *wo* are also used as a genitival attribute to refer to the author's way or words:

天下皆謂我道大似不肖。夫唯大，故似不肖......  

The whole world says that my way is vast and resembles nothing,  
It is because it is vast that it resembles nothing... (chap. 67)

吾言甚易知，甚易行。  
My words are very easy to understand and very easy to put into practice. (chap. 70)

In this way the author's way and his words can by this means be distinguished from that of others. Therefore, chapter 70 says:

吾言甚易知，甚易行。而天下莫之能知，莫之能行。  
言有宗，事有君。夫唯無知，是以不我知。知我者希。  
則我者貴。是以賜人以賜賜玉。  

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179 *Ibid.*: p. 79.
My words are very easy to understand and very easy to put into practice, yet no one in the world can understand them or put them into practice. Words have an ancestor and affairs have a sovereign. It is because people are ignorant that they fail to understand me. Those who understand me are few; Those who imitate me are honored. Therefore the sage, while clad in homespun, conceals on his person a priceless piece of jade. (Chap. 70)

This can be viewed as a complaint by the author, a similar one to that of Confucius and Qu Yuan 屈原. According to Shiji: the biography of Confucius, Confucius before he died said: "No one under the heaven can follow me." (天下莫能宗予。) At the end of Li Sao 謝驥, Qu Yuan says: "There is no one in the state, none know me!" (已矣哉！國無人，莫我知兮！) In all these cases, the authors assert that "No one knows or follows me". Therefore, the first personal pronoun in the Laozi should be interpreted as referring in a similar manner to the author himself.

These have shown, then, that the Laozi was from one person's hand, a person who was an independent thinker.  

1.3.3.3 Rhyme as a feature of the Laozi

Some scholars who believe that the Laozi is the product of a single author emphasize certain consistent features such as rhyme.  

Since Wu Yu 吳歴 of the Song Dynasty, many scholars have studied the rhyme of the Laozi. The following are examples: Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, Jiang Yong 江永, Jiang Yougao 江有謙, Yao Wentian 姚文田, Deng Tingzhen 鄧廷楨, Bi Yuan 毕沅, Bernhard Karlgren, Luo Zhengyu 羅振玉 and Zhu Qianzhi 朱箋之. And some scholars have pointed out that the rhyme characteristic of the Laozi is similar to that of the Shijing 詩經; though no one has studied this issue comprehensively.

Kaltenmark argues: "Scholars have observed, moreover, that neither the style nor the thought of the book is internally consistent. Some passages are in rhyme and others not; in the rhymed passages there are several very different meters. An examination of the rhymes reveals anomalies that can be accounted for only by assuming that they occur in passages written down in different periods or different regions." Kaltenmark, however, does not give any proof in his book for this assumption.

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181 See Sima Qian's Shiji: Kong Zi shijia 史記: 孔子世家.
184 Chan 1963: p. 73.
186 Ibid.
The characteristic and the date of the Laozi cannot, however, except perhaps with great difficulty, be established only through the rhyme. For the difference in the finals system (yun bu xitong 韻部系統) of Chinese language between the time of Shijing and the time of Chu ci 楚辞 was not very obvious. According to Wang Li 王力, a famous Chinese contemporary linguist, just one part of dong 冬 was separated from the part of qin 奏. Liu Xiaogan has in view of this linguistic fact concluded from his study of the Laozi's rhyme that its form is much closer to that of Shijing than to that of Chu ci. This will be discussed in greater details in our consideration of the date of the Laozi. See 1.5.5.3 C "The Laozi is similar to the Shijing in its rhyming pattern".

1.3.3.4 The additions by later people to the Laozi
Generally believed is that the Laozi is the work of one person which has been added to by work of others during the long time of its circulation from generation to generation. Since no paper or printing means existed in ancient times, books were handed down orally and through handwriting. Thus, the Laozi could easily come to lose some parts or to have some words added. Some reduplications become possible as well.

Chan Wing-Tsit wrote in 1963, "Actually, throughout the whole controversy, it has not always been clear whether the debaters were talking about doctrines, sayings transmitted orally or written down and circulated separately, or sayings collected in book form. The time that had elapsed between the enunciation of the doctrine and the compilation of the book may have been centuries. Certainly that was the case with the Analects, the Mo Tzu, the Chuang Tzu, the Book of Changes, and many others. In the process extraneous material, whether ideas or words, must have crept in, through unintentional mistakes and sometimes through deliberate forgery. Practically no ancient Chinese classic is free from these."

Considering all of these things, then, the traditional opinion that the Laozi came from the hands of Lao Zi should be accepted as truth.

1.3.4 The regional cultural background of the Laozi
Barbara Hendrischke says, "there is also the regional cultural background which, according to Ren Jiyu, deserves attention. He explains that during the Chunqiu and Zhanguo Periods China consisted of at least four different cultural regions and that the use of metaphor was particularly common in the state of Chu, where the Laozi, the Zhuangzi and the Chu ci originated."

190 Chan 1963: pp. 72-73.
191 ibid.: p. 29. See also Zhang Zhengming 1995: the part of Chu characteristic.
1.3.4.1 The characteristics of Chu

Chu was a large state on the southern periphery of the civilized China of ancient times, occupying much of present Henan 河南, Hunan 湖南, Hubei 湖北, and Anhui 安徽. Feng Youlan says, according to the Mencius, "at that time, persons of Ch'u who wished to acquire the Zhou culture, had to travel northward to obtain it."

The chapter on geography in the Qian Han Shu states: "Ch'u has an abundance derived from the Chiang (Yangzijiang) and Han rivers, and from streams, marshes, mountains and forests...Its food products are always sufficient. Therefore (its people) make little exertion, delight in life, and neglect to store anything. They have sufficient for food and drink, without thought for cold or starvation; on the other hand, there is no family worth one thousand ounces (of gold). They believe in witches (wu 巫) and spirits (kuei 鬼), and lay emphasis on excessive sacrifices" (ch. 28b, pp. 3-6).

It was in this state, according to the Shiji, that Confucius met most of the recluses who are mentioned in the Analects. "The Japanese scholar, Koyanagi Shikita, lists a large number of recluses, all natives of Ch'u, mentioned in such works as the Ch'ien Han Shu, Lun Yu, Han-fei-tzu, Lu-shih Ch'iu Chi'u, etc. He then goes on to indicate a number of similarities in thought between passages in the Yuan Yu and the Yu Fu (poems by Ch'u Yuan or his followers), and between the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu." And "the so-called Taoists who lived during the latter years of the Zhou Dynasty and the beginning of the Chin, were also men of this type, and their most important writings are contained in the two books called the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu."

Besides Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, Qu Yuan 屈原 (died c. 288 BC), was also a native of Chu. He has described in his Li Sao 鳥巢, one of China's most imaginative poems, how during his long wanderings he was pulled along by supernatural beings. His attitude toward such beings is poetical rather than religious. The Tian Wen, "Questions on Heaven", another poem in the collection of Chu poems of which Li Sao forms a part, shows even greater skepticism by asking all sorts of questions about how the universe came into being and about the movements of the sun and moon. Perhaps it was precisely because the people of Chu were fervent believers in witches, shamans, laying much stress on sacrifice, as described in the Qian Han Shu quotation, that a certain group of their intellectuals arose in revolt.

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193 Quoted from ibid : p. 176.
194 Fung Youlan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 175.
196 Ibid. : p. 176.
197 Ibid.
1.3.4.2 The historical records and Lao Zi's Chu 諸 nationality
According to the historical records, e.g., the Shiji, Lao Dan was a native of Chu, as will be shown in the following chapter "Lao Zi the Man".

1.3.4.3 The Chu dialect and the Laozi’s language
Many scholars have noticed the Chu cultural characteristics of the Laozi. Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, for example, has studied in particular the relationship between the Chu dialect and the Laozi’s language. Chapter 70 of the Laozi reads: "是以聖人被褐懷玉" ("Therefore the sage, while clad in homespun, conceals on his person a priceless piece of jade"). The word he 被 is in the Chu dialect, as can be proved by Huainanzi: Qinhu 淮南子: 齊俗, which says: "楚人謂袍為短褐大衣。" ("The people of Chu use pao to denote a short type of coat, normally called he.").198

Liu Xiaogan says that Karlgren referred to the terms YU 於 and yu 于 as evidence to prove the difference between the dialects of Lu 魯 (the northern language) and Zuo 左 ("Zuo" refers to the non-northern language).199 They have also been useful in showing that the Laozi is also a work of Chu. Yu 於 and yu 于 appear (respectively) in the following books: 19 and 17 times in the Zuozhuan 左傳, 9 and 2 times in the Guoyu 國語, 21 and 1 times in the Analects 論語, 96 and 1 times in the Mencius 孟子, 849 and 1 times in the Zhuangzi 莊子, and 51 and 0 times in the Laozi 老子.200 In the Laozi only YU 於 (not yu 于) is used. Thus, the use of YU 於 and yu 于 in the Laozi shows that it was a work of Chu.

1.3.4.4 The Laozi and the custom of Chu
Chapter 31 of the Laozi says:

君子居則貴左，用兵則貴右。兵者不祥之器，非君子之器。不得已而用之，恬淡為上。聖人不祈天以祷民，而祈天以祷民，是與殺人者。夫殺人者，則不得志於天下矣。吉事尚左，凶事尚 右。偏將軍居左，上將軍居右。

The gentleman gives precedence to the left when at home, but to the right when he goes to war. Arms are instruments of ill omen, not the instruments of a gentleman. When one is compelled to use them, it is best to do so without relish. There is no glory in victory; and to glorify it despite this is to exult in the killing of men. One who exults in the killing of men will never have his way in the empire. (c) On occasions of rejoicing precedence is given to the left; on occasions of mourning precedence is given to the right. A lieutenant’s place is on the left; the general’s place is on the right. (Chap. 31)201

The speech concerning the right and left here was in fact in reference to the custom of Chu. Chan Wing-Tsit says: "It is also true that the custom of honoring the right (31) did not begin in the Warring States Period, but in Tso chuan it is remarked that the people

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198 For Zhu Qianzhi’s opinion, see Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV: p. 436.
199 For Karlgren’s method, see also Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV: p. 436.
of Ch'u, who were barbarians, honored the left, implying that Chinese people honored the right. Thus, this passage can be taken as evidence that the Laozi is a work of Chu.

1.4 The authorship of the Laozi

We must define what we mean by "the authorship of the Laozi" and "the date of the Laozi". For the various versions of the Laozi, without explanation concerning which version is meant, will otherwise give rise only to confusion.

In the following, the terms "the authorship and date of the Laozi" will refer to the hypothesis that Lao Dan, i.e., Li Er, was a real person. He was a contemporary of Confucius, living in the 6th century BC. Furthermore, an original version of Laozi, quite possibly different on some points but similar on the whole to the traditional version of the Laozi, was a historical entity. The issue concerning the authorship and date of this original Laozi cannot be clarified, however, before the second part of this study is completed. Clearly, though, some or most (?) of the speeches and words of Lao Zi can be found in the traditional version of the Laozi. Concerning this traditional version, this study will deal with it in the following two sections §1.4 and §1.5.

The discussions of many scholars sometimes confuse the question of the authorship of the Laozi's original version with that of the Laozi's traditional version. They usually mean to refer by the terms "the authorship and date of the Laozi" to the Laozi's original version, but they handle this subject based usually on the Laozi's traditional version. In more recent times, the Mawangdui version has also been a basis for such discussion. It is my intention in the following to avoid this confusion through a clear statement concerning the meaning of "authorship" and "date" in respect to the Laozi.

1.4.1 The meaning of "the authorship of the Laozi"

As stated previously, I refer by the terms "the authorship of the Laozi" to the author of the original version of the Laozi. Unfortunately, as above indicated in the section on "The editions of the Laozi", we know nothing about the original version at the present time. We might suppose, however, that the Jingmen Bamboo Slips Laozi, which dates to the middle of the Warring States Period (about 350 B.C), is closer to the original version; but as yet we have no specific evidence for this hypothesis.

If the Jingmen Bamboo Slips Laozi is the original version of it, and the original version of the Laozi was transmitted by the disciples of the master after his death, and they usually reflected his thought quite closely; then the authors of the Laozi (original version) were his disciples rather than Lao Zi himself. His thought, however, is well preserved in the Laozi. This hypothesis sounds reasonable and has been also supported.

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202 Zuoqiuian, Duke Huan, 8th year.


200 Whether some or most of Lao Zi's speeches or words have been kept in the Laozi's present version is a question that cannot be answered before the study on the Jingmen bamboo slips Laozi is completed. This will be done in the next part of the present study.
by some scholars, such as Zuo Peng. But such hypothesis remains in the realm of imagination without sure evidence. And we must await an investigation of the bamboo slips *Laozi* before this issue can be clarified.

Because of this situation, the present work is forced to consider only the authorship and date of the traditional version of the *Laozi*, which refers to that of Yan Zun, Heshang Gong and Wang Bi. For these were usually named the traditional or normal versions before the discovery of the Mawangdui Silk texts (1973) in Hunan province.

The authorship and date of the Jingmen Bamboo Slips version of the text (and its original version), will be clarified in a later part of this research project.

1.4.2 The various opinions concerning the authorship of the *Laozi*

Concerning authorship, Liang Qichao, Feng Youlan, D. C. Lau, Kaltenmark, and many Western scholars differ from the traditional opinion. Some scholars even think that the *Laozi* is an anthology of Daoist writings and sayings created by different persons at different times rather than the work of a single person. Kaltenmark, e.g., is of this opinion; however disparate the sources of the text of the *Laozi*, whoever finally molded it into one composition did succeed in projecting a remarkably unified poetic vision of the world.

Bi Yuan, Hu Shi, Gao Heng, and other scholars have insisted that the author of the *Laozi* was Lao Zi, a contemporary of Confucius. Cui Shu thought Lao Zi was a follower of Yang Zhu at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. And Guo Moruo believes the book actually contains the sayings of Lao Zi which were collected by his follower Huan Yuan, a contemporary of Mencius. Guo’s argument is that the Shi ji says that Lao Zi and Huan Yuan each wrote a book in two parts and that Lao Zi encountered Kuan Yin, the officer at the pass through which Lao Zi was supposed to have gone. Guo thinks that Kuang Yin and Huan Yuan were actually the same person, the two names being pronounced almost alike. But his theory is more assumption than fact and must be taken as unreliable. Whoever these scholars believe the author to be, however, he lived during the Spring and Autumn Period.

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206 See He Jiejun’s 何介君’s and Zhang Weiming’s 張維明’s 1982: pp. 84-93.


210 Bi Yuan s.a.: Preface, 1b.


213 See Chan 1963: p. 73.

Chan Wing-Tsit says: "Almost without exception, scholars who believe the book was written by one man in the Warring States Period have assigned it to Lao Tan, the fourth-century historian." Early scholars of this opinion include Ye Shi and Wang Zhong as well as many contemporary scholars like Luo Genze.

Qian Mu is of the opinion that the author was perhaps Chan Ho or an unknown person who lived in the early third century BC. His idea was that, since the pronunciation of chan (ho) in ancient times was "similar" to dan, this man was confused by historians with Lao Dan. Qian was just making assumptions here without any basis in evidence. Related to his theory, Chan Wing-Tsit says: "Ch'ien was at pains to put the author in this period in order to conform to his theory that the book is later than the 'inner chapters' of the Chuang Tzu, and he did so reluctantly."

1.4.3 The authorship of the Laozi's traditional version
The author of this study believes that the Laozi is the work of one person rather than many. This opinion is supported by modern Chinese scholars such as Chen Guying, Dong Guangbi and Liu Xiaogan who have expressed their opinions as recently as the 1990s.

Below is a summary of D. C. Lau's Chronological Table, which is useful in putting the books which quote the Laozi into historical perspective:

Confucius, 551-479 BC,
Mo Zi: the fifth century BC,
Mencius: the fourth century BC,
Yin Wen: from the second quarter to the end of the fourth century BC,
Zhuang Zi: from the middle of the fourth century to the beginning of the third century BC,
Xun Zi: From the latter half of fourth to middle of the third century BC,
Lüshi chunqiu, a postscript dated 240 BC, Hanfei Zi dates it in 233 BC.

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214 Chan 1963: p. 73.
216 Ye Shi: 15:1b.
217 Cf. the mention of Wang Zhong in the previous chapter of this work.
218 Concerning Luo's opinion, see Chan 1963: p. 73.
220 Chan 1963: p. 73.
222 Dong 1992: Dangdai xin daojia 當代新道家.
One may note here that short periods separate Mencius, Yin Wen, Zhuang Zi, and Xun Zi. In the following, this study will examine the quotations from the *Laozi* found in their books with the intent of clarifying whether Lao Dan was the author of the *Laozi*. For both Lao Zi and Lao Dan have been taken as the author of the *Laozi* during the Warring States Period.

1.4.3.1 Quotations from the *Laozi* in the time of Confucius

The earliest person who formed this opinion was Shu Xiang 叔向, who lived in the period of Jin Ping 公 and was a contemporary of Confucius. He was thus a contemporary of Lao Zi, according to traditional opinion. Shu Xiang’s 叔向 quote occurs in the time of Confucius. *Shuoyuan* 張孔 reads:

叔向曰："老聃有言曰：天下之至柔，動而貴天下之至堅。又曰：
人之生也柔弱，其死也剛剛。萬物草木生也柔弱，其死也枯槁。"

Shu Xiang says: 'Lao Dan has words to say: The softest, most pliable thing in the world runs rough out over the firmest thing in the world.' And he (Lao Dan) says again: 'When people are born, they are supple and soft; when they die, they end up stretched out firm and rigid. When the ten thousand things and grasses and trees are alive, they are supple and pliant; when they are dead, they are withered and died out.'

The two passages quoted above can be found in chapters 43 and 76 of the traditional version of the *Laozi*. Shu Xiang was a contemporary of Confucius and was traditionally considered a younger contemporary of Lao Zi. Thus, the quotation by Shu Xiang should be accepted as a contemporary reference to the *Laozi*. Those who argue that the *Shuoyuan* is a later work of Han Dynasty, however, must note that its reliability has been generally accepted by scholars and surely has good grounds when it quotes Shu Xiang’s words.

1.4.3.2 Quotations from the *Laozi* from the beginning to the middle of the Warring States Period

The second person who quoted the *Laozi* was Mo Zi 墨子, whose name was Mo Di 墨翟. He lived in the fifth century BC. Mo Zi actually claims that he is quoting the words of Lao Zi. Thus, the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 531 reads:

墨子曰：‘老子曰：道沖而用之有弗盈’

Mo Zi says: 'Lao Zi says: 'The way is empty, yet use will not drain it.''

This quotation can be found in chapter 4 of the *Laozi*’s present edition and indicates that, according to Mo Zi, the sentence is from the book which is called *Laozi*. Thus, Lao Zi is the author of the book.

This quotation, however, cannot be found in the *Mozhi*’s traditional version. Gao

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224 Confucius lived from 551-479 BC.
225 *Shuoyuan*juan shi 说苑 卷十.
226 See the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽: Bingbu: Sheng 兵部: 胜 531.
Heng says that it must be in the lost part.\(^{228}\) One can argue with Gao’s point here, since no one has proved that this quotation is really in the lost part of the *Mozi*. But his opinion has not been proved to be wrong either, since no one has been able to prove that this quotation in the *Taiping yulan* is false. It is also possible that Mo Zi has quoted this sentence from the *Laozi*, but Mo Zi's disciples did not write this into the book of *Mozi*. Therefore, before we assume that this quotation has been proved a false one, we would be more reasonable to believe *Taiping yulan*'s record and take it as really from the *Laozi*. Professor Xu Kangsheng 許抗生 has argued that Mo Zi might have seen the *Laozi* as an elder man. And this means that the book was written during the Warring States Period, because Mo Zi died c. 380 BC, during the Warring States Period.\(^{229}\) Mo Zi's *Mozi* quotation probably occurred, then, either in the beginning or the middle of the Warring States Period, since he died 91 years after the death of Confucius (479 B.C.).\(^{230}\) If Mo Zi had quoted this passage when he was young, he would have done so at the beginning of the Warring States Period; otherwise, the quotation occurs in the middle of the Warring States Period. Thus, this passage is clear evidence that the *Laozi* had been quoted before the Jingmen Bamboo Slips *Laozi* was put into the Chu State No. 1 Tomb (dated about to 350 B.C).

Other philosophers who lived after Mo Zi and closer to the times of Mencius and Zhuang Zi also mentioned or quoted the *Laozi*. They also prove that Lao Zi is the author of the *Laozi*. The scholars of Jixia 襄下 are examples of these. Song Xin 宋軾,\(^{231}\) Yin Wen 尹文 visited Jixia during the time of King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 (319-301 BC).\(^{232}\) And the quotations that emerge from this visit are remarkable.

### 1.4.3.3 Quotations from the *Laozi* during the middle of the Warring States Period

#### A. The quotations in the *Yinwenzi* 尹文子

Yin Wen 尹文 lived from the second quarter to the end of the fourth century BC, not very distant in time from Mencius. The more comprehensive studies of the Mawangdui silk scrolls have shown that the *Yinwenzi* 尹文子 is not a false book. Concerning this issue, one can refer to Hu Jiacong's 胡家聰 studies of 1992 and 1994.\(^{233}\) The *Yinwenzi* quotes the *Laozi*'s chapter 57 saying:

\(^{228}\) Gao Heng 1973: p. 172.

\(^{229}\) See Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 143 note 1.


\(^{231}\) See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: p. 121.

\(^{232}\) See Ying Shao 應劭 *Fengsu tongyi* *Qiongtong* 風俗通義異國, says: "房卿年十五, 始來學儒". Sima Qian's *Shiji*: *Meng Zi Xun Qing liehuan* 史記孟子荀卿列傳 says: "荀卿、趙人，年五十始來上魯學儒", which is incorrect. Cf. Hu Jiacong "Yin Wen huang lao sixiang yu Jixia baijia zhengming 尹文黃老思想與稷下百家爭鳴" in Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: p. 121.

\(^{233}\) See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994: IV.
The Laozi says: "Govern the state by being straightforward; wage war by being crafty; but win the empire by not being meddlesome." (Chap. 57)

The Yinwenzi also quotes the words of chapter 74 of the Laozi:

The Laozi says: "When the people are not afraid of death, wherefore frighten them with death?" (Chap. 74)

This quotation shows that Yin Wen believed that Lao Zi was the author of the Laozi.

B. Quotations in the Shizi 戰子 and the Wenzi 文子

Ma Xulun says that both the Shizi and the Wenzi have quoted from the Laozi. Shi Zi lived at the beginning of the Warring States Period and was a guest of Shang Yang 商鞅. Wen Zi was a contemporary of King Ping of Chu 楚平王 and learned from Lao Zi. Thus, clearly Lao Zi lived at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period and was the author of the Laozi.

C. The Quotations in the Zhuangzi 莊子

The Zhuangzi quotes directly from the Laozi, reporting the very words of Lao Dan (Lao Zi). For instance, the chapter Tianxia 天下 reads:

Lao Dan says: 'Know the male, but keep to the role of the female; and be a ravine to the empire; (...) Know the white, but keep to the role of the black; and be a model to the empire.' (Chap. 28)

The sources of these quotations can be found in the traditional version of chapter 28 of the Laozi. This is further evidence that Lao Dan was the author of the Laozi. And Lao Siguang says that the quotations in the Tianxia fit those found in the traditional version of the Laozi. This coincidence can be explained in only two ways: the author of the Tianxia had seen the Laozi; or later scholars who had seen the quotations of the Laozi in the Tianxia added false passages to the traditional version of the Laozi. In either case, clearly the text of the Laozi existed before that of the Zhuangzi, Tianxia.

The Zhuangzi, considered as a whole, clearly shows that Lao Dan was the author of

234 See the Wenzi: Diwujuan.
236 Quoted from Gao Heng 1973: p. 172.
237 Quoted from D. C. Lau 1963 and 1982: pp. 41-42. (...) occurs in the present version between the Tianxia's quotations.
the *Laozi*. Its *Inner chapter Yangshengzhu* reveals a record of the death of Lao Dan, and its *Outer and Complex chapters* records the meeting between Lao Dan and Confucius. Beyond these pieces of evidence, it abounds with quotations which can be found in the traditional version of the *Laozi*. Following are several other passages that are quoted from the *Laozi*.

The *Quqie* says:

\[
\text{故曰：魚不可淵於淵，}
\text{國之利器不可示人。}
\]

Therefore it is said: The fish must not be allowed to leave the deep; The instrument of power in a state must not be revealed to anyone.

This can be found in chapter 36 of the *Laozi*. And in the same chapter,

\[
\text{故曰：大巧若拙。}
\]

Therefore it is said: Great skill seems awkward.

This can be found in chapter 45 of the *Laozi*.

*Zhibeiyou* 知北游 reads:

\[
\text{故曰：失道而失德，失德而失仁，失仁而失義，失義而失禮，}
\text{德者道之華僞之首也。}
\]

Therefore it is said: when the way was lost there was virtue; when virtue was lost there was benevolence; when benevolence was lost there was rectitude; when rectitude was lost there were rites. The rites are the wearing thin of loyalty and good faith and the beginning of disorder.

This can be found in chapter 38 of the *Laozi*. The following passage is in the same chapter:

\[
\text{故曰：為道者日損，損之又損，以至於無為，無為而無不為也。}
\]

Therefore it is said: in the pursuit of the way one does less every day. One loses every day until one does nothing at all, and when one does nothing at all there is nothing that is undone.

This can be found in chapter 48 of the *Laozi*.

*Yuyan* 寓言 reads:

\[
\text{老子曰：大白若辱，盛德若不足。}
\]

The sheerest whiteness seems sullied; Ample virtue seems defective.

\[239\] The reader can refer to the part of Zhuangzi' s record concerning Lao Dan in the next chapter of this work.
This can be found in the Laozi, chapter 41.

1.4.3.4 Quotations from the Laozi in the later period of the Warring States

A. The mention of Lao Zi in the Xunzi

The Xunzi, in the 3rd century BC, reads:

老聃有見於德，無見於信.
Lao Zi had some insight into bowing down, none into stretching out. (Xunzi 17/51)

莊子遠於天而不知人
Zhuang Zi had a vision limited to Heaven and was ignorant of man. (Xunzi 21/22)

Gao Heng says, "有見於詤，無見於信" can be seen in Zhoulaozi 周老籍. This indicates that Xun Zi must have seen the Laozi.240

B. The quotations found in the Lüshi chunqiu

Lüshi chunqiu has quoted many passages from the Laozi. However, Gu Jiegang 郭鈞剛 views the quotations in the Lüshi chunqiu as unreliable. He observes that a "rule" in that book is that, whenever a quotation is made, its source or author is always mentioned. But no such mention is made of Lao Zi, even though "two-thirds" of the Laozi has been incorporated into it.241 But, as Hu Shi has shown, no "rule" of any kind can actually be found concerning quotations in the Lüshi chunqiu. It mentions the Book of Filial Piety in connection with one quotation from it but not with any other. Of the 53 passages which Gu Jiegang has claimed to be identical with or similar to Lao Zi's sayings, only three are actually quotations from the Laozi.242 Gao Heng also criticizes Gu. He refers to the following passages in the Lüshi chunqiu concerning which he is critical of Gu.243

Lüshi chunqiu says:

老聃貴柔
Lao Dan valued yielding. (Lüshi Chunjqiu 177: Bu er 不二)

孔子學於老聃
Confucius learned from Lao Dan. (Lüshi Chunqiu: Dangran 當然)

These sources do prove that Lao Dan’s theory of a government based on a strategy of yielding in order to conquer can be found in the Laozi. Therefore, Gu's argument notwithstanding, the Lüshi chunqiu has not only quoted from the Laozi but has also said

241 Gaštibian IV: p. 481.
clearly that Lao Dan's thought is that of the *Laozi*. Thus, clearly suggested is that Lao Dan is the author of the *Laozi*.

C. The quotations from the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子
Besides the two parts of the commentary on the *Laozi*, *i.e.* the *Jielao* 解老 and the *Yulao* 應老, the chapter of *Liufan* 六反 quotes the *Laozi* as well:

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老聃有言曰：知足不辱，知止不殆。夫以辱辱之故而不求於足之外者。

Lao Dan has words to say: "Know contentment, and you will suffer no disgrace; know when to stop, and you will meet with no danger."
```

Here the *Hanfeizi* says directly and clearly "Lao Dan has words to say". And this quotation can be found in the traditional version of *Laozi*, chapter 44. Following this quotation is Hanfei Zi's commentary on it.

```
Nechushuo xia: Liuwei 內儲說下: 六微 says:

權勢不可以借人，……其實老聃之言失魚，……故言執著之於魚。

Power and right cannot be borrowed from others, ... this theory is from Lao Dan's speech about losing fish. ... It was difficult for the ancient people to express directly, thus it has been expressed in terms of fish.
```

What Hanfei Zi quotes is from chapter 36 of the *Laozi*, which reads: "魚不可脫於淵 "The fish must not be allowed to leave the deep." And Hanfei Zi says clearly that these are the words of Lao Dan.

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Nan san 難三 reads:

老子曰：以智治國家之賊。

Lao Zi says: To rule a state by cleverness will be a boon to the state.
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This can be found in the *Laozi*, chapter 65.

These mentions, commentaries, and quotations have indicated that Lao Dan (or, Lao Zi) was the author of the *Laozi*.

D. The quotations from the *Zhanguoce* 戰國策
Zhanguoce: *Qice* 戰策 says:

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頭潛日：老子曰：雖貴必以賤為本，雖尊必以下為基，是以僕主稱孤寡不穀是其賤之本與非？
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Zhanguoce: *Qice* s.n.

69
Yan Chu says: Hence Laozi says: the superior must have the inferior as root; the high must have the low as base. Thus, lords and princes refer to themselves as 'solitary', 'desolate', and 'hapless'.

The quotation here can be found in the Laozi, chapter 39. Yan Chu lived in the time of King Xuan of Qi (320-302 BC), which indicates that the Laozi must have existed in that time. And this fact suggests as well that Lao Zi was the author of the book.245

In Weice 魏策 when Gong Shu Zuo 公叔痤 was mentioned, it says:

故老子曰：聖人無積，盡以為人己愈有，盡以與人己愈多。246

Therefore, the Laozi says: The sage does not board. Having bestowed all he has on others, he has yet more; having given all he has to others, he is richer still.

The quotation here can be found in the Laozi, chapter 81. Gong Shu Zuo lived in the time of King Hui of Wei 魏惠王 during the first quarter of the Warring States Period.247

Besides all of the above, the biography of Lao Zi in the Shiji is also an important item of evidence proving that Lao Dan was the author of the Laozi.

1.4.3.5 Conclusion concerning the authorship of the Laozi's traditional version

All the above quotations and references have been strong enough to prove that the thought of the Laozi's traditional version stems from Lao Zi, i.e., Lao Dan. Whether Lao Dan was the author of the version of the Laozi which we now possess, however, is difficult to know with certainty. For the most recent archaeological discovery248 in Jingmen shows that the version of the Laozi that comes from the middle of the Warring States Period (about 350 BC) was shorter than the normal version which we now possess.249

Quite possibly the Jingmen Bamboo Slips Laozi came directly from the hands of Lao Dan in the 6th century BC, though the actual writing onto the bamboo slips may have taken place only during the middle of the Warring States Period for the purposes of placing them permanently in a tomb. Possible also is that the bamboo slips Laozi date only from the middle of the Warring States Period (about 350 BC). If the latter case is true, then Shu Xiang (a contemporary of Confucius in the 6th century BC) and Mo Zi (died c. 380 B.C) could have not seen this version.

245 Ibid.
246 Quoted from Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 93.
247 Ibid.
248 This was discovered in No.1 Chu state Tomb in Guodian village, Jingmen, Hubei province, in 1994.
In either case, the quotations and references above still prove that a man named Lao Dan 老聃, *i.e.*, Li Er 李耳, who was also called Lao Zi 老子, did exist and that he was a contemporary of Confucius (in 6th century BC). Shown also is that a book called the *Laozi*, which was the original version of the present *Laozi*, did exist. It may have been different in some respects from the traditional version, but it was on the whole similar to it. For clearly most (?) of the speeches and words of Lao Zi as well as his main thought can be found in the *Laozi*'s traditional version. But we cannot now decide who was the author of the *Laozi*'s traditional version.

The traditional version of the *Laozi* was based on the *Laozi*'s original version, but, the book has also been possibly added to by some other people, and they were quite successful at arranging the passages of the original Lao Zi and at understanding his spirit.

1.5 The date of the *Laozi*

The date of the *Laozi* is an old and difficult question. Why should we concern ourselves with it again today?

One answer is that "the most difficult problem in dealing with the history of Chinese thought in the ancient period is how to establish the approximate dates of the various philosophers and philosophical works so that a rough chronological order may be decided on, which is essential to an understanding of the historical development." D. C. Lau is indicating here that "given two philosophical works, A and B, the way the thought contained in them is interpreted if A is earlier than B often has to be radically changed if it is shown that B is, in fact, earlier than A."251

The interpretation of the *Laozi* is a case in point. If we accept the traditional view that it was written by Lao Zi, an elder contemporary of Confucius, we thus view it as a work of the sixth century BC.252 But if we favor the view of modern scholars like Liang Qichao and Feng Youlan in China and D. C. Lau, Needham, and Kaltenmark in the West, we place the work in the late fourth or early third century BC. The wide difference in dates here makes a difference concerning the question of authorship as well. Thus, this question has been important to reconsider in the 1990s by such Chinese scholars as Zhang Dainian, Chen Guying and Xiao Xiaogan.253

Concerning the date of the *Laozi*, some scholars such as Feng Youlan254 and D. C.

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250 Whether some or most of Lao Zi's speeches or words have been preserved in the *Laozi*'s present version is a question that cannot be answered before completion of a study of the Jingmen bamboo Slips *Laozi*. This will be done in the next part of the present study.


252 See Sima Qian's *Shiji the biography of Lao Zi*.

253 See Chen Guying (General ed.): 1992-1994, I-IV.

254 Feng Youlan 1964: p. 249.
Lau\textsuperscript{255} think that it was written not long before 300 BC. The recently discovered bamboo scripts \textit{Laozi} proves that the \textit{Laozi} existed already in the mid-Warring States Period, \textit{i.e.}, about 350 BC (the middle of fourth century BC). For we know that Confucius died in 479 BC and that 100-150 years separate his death from the date of the No.1 Chu State Tomb of Guodian village in Jiangmen, Hubei Province. If the book of \textit{Laozi} has been discovered in this tomb, it must have been completed earlier than the date of the tomb. For certainly some period must also separate the completion of such a book and its becoming famous enough to be collected for placement in so important a tomb. Thus, while the exact date of the \textit{Laozi} may be still difficult to know with any certainty, it cannot be later than 350 BC.

Besides this consideration concerning the date of the \textit{Laozi}, the debate concerning ancient history in China (\textit{gushibian 古史辨}) which took place in the 1920s and 1930s has also raised many questions in respect to the history of Chinese philosophy. Books such as \textit{Sunzi bingfa 孫子兵法}, \textit{Yanzi chunqiu 晏子春秋}, \textit{Weiliaozi 魏缭子}, and \textit{Wenzi 文子}, had been considered spurious. But now, since the archeological discoveries of the 1970s in Yinque 銀雀 mountain in Shandong 山東 province, the discoveries of the silk texts of the Han Dynasty tomb in the Mawangdui 馬王堆漢墓 in Hunan 湖南 province, and the discoveries in Ding county 定縣 in Hubei 湖北 province, these books have been proved not to be spurious.\textsuperscript{256}

Although the hypotheses of Liang Qichao and his followers seem unreasonable today, the doubt they engendered concerning the early date of the \textit{Laozi} remains and continues to be functional in shaping conclusions in the West. And this makes it very difficult to establish the historical order of many other Chinese classics. The present work, therefore, considers vital the resolution of this question.\textsuperscript{257}

\subsection*{1.5.1 The background of the debate concerning the date of the \textit{Laozi}}

Concerning the date of the \textit{Laozi}, various opinions abound. For many centuries, however, the tradition that the book was written by Lao Zi in the sixth century BC\textsuperscript{258} was accepted without question. Skepticism concerning the book grew up much earlier than that concerning the man, for its authorship was questioned as early as the fifth century.\textsuperscript{259} Later as well, when the Neo-Confucianists raised doubts concerning the dates of Lao Zi

\textsuperscript{255} \textit{Laozi} 's text, according to D. C. Lau, seems to have been "still in a fluid state in the second half of the third century BC or even later, but by the middle of the second century BC, at least, the text already assumed a form very much like the present one. It is possible that this happened in the early years of the Western Han Dynasty." See D. C. Lau 1982: p. 134.

\textsuperscript{256} Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994 IV: pp. 411, 415, and 411-418.

\textsuperscript{257} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{258} See the beginning part of the previous chapter in the present work.

\textsuperscript{259} By Cui Hao (d. 450), according to Wang Shipeng (1112-71), \textit{Meisi Xiansheng wenji}, 13:17a.
himself, they were forced also to doubt the date of the book.\textsuperscript{260} Chan Wing-Tsit says, "Wang Chung, Ts'ui Shu, and other eighteenth-century critical scholars carried the skepticism to a higher degree."\textsuperscript{261} Saitō Setsudō (1787-1865) in Japan claimed that the book could not have been written earlier than the Warring States Period, because it contains the combined term renyi 仁義 (humanity and righteousness), and this term does not appear earlier than this time. Furthermore, the work opposed ruinous wars and oppressive laws, which would have been too dangerous to speak about at a time when such things were current.\textsuperscript{262}

These observations had subjected the tradition to serious question, but it was not until 1922, when Liang Qichao threw overboard the entire tradition concerning Lao Zi, that the foundation of the tradition about the book was thoroughly shaken.\textsuperscript{263}

Liang directed two of his six arguments against tradition specifically at the book. One argument is that the ideas in the Laozi are too radical for the Spring and Autumn Period, and the other is that the book contains terms which surely date it in the Warring States Period.\textsuperscript{264} Since his famous attack, scholars have been divided into two camps: those who place the book in the Spring and Autumn Period and those who assign it to the age of the Warring States. From 1919 to 1936, the main disputants concerning the date of the Laozi, are as follows: Liang Qichao 梁啟超, Zhang Xu 張煦, Huang Fanggang 黃方剛, Zhang Shoulin 張壽林, Tang Lan 唐蘭, Gao Heng 高亨, Qian Mu 錢穆, Hu Shi 胡適, Su Chi 素痚, Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, Zhang Jitong 張季同, Luo Genze 魯振常, Gu Jiegang 郭濟剛, Ye Qiang 叶青, Tan Jiefu 田牧甫, Ma Xulun 馬叙倫, Zhang Fuqing 張福慶, Xiong Wei 雄偉, Guo Moruo 郭沫若.\textsuperscript{265}

Scholars who have favored the later period have each chosen their own date within that period. Indeed, they have tried to outbid each other in proposing as late a date as possible. Some like Luo Genze\textsuperscript{266} and Hou Waiyu 侯外盧,\textsuperscript{267} have placed the Laozi after Confucius (551-479 BC) and Mo Zi (fl. 479-380 BC) but before Mencius (371-289 BC) and Zhuang Zi (between 399 and 295 BC). Chan Wing-Tsit thinks Lao Zi was a contemporary of Confucius but that the book called the Laozi was completed during the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{260} For the opinion of these Neo-Confucianists, see Luo Genze, Zhuzi kaosuo: pp. 258-261.
\item \textsuperscript{261} Chan 1963: p. 62.
\item \textsuperscript{262} Saitō Setsudō: Röshi ben (An Examination on the Laozi ), sec. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{263} See also Chan 1963: p. 62.
\item \textsuperscript{264} See his review of Hu Shi's Zhongguo zhexue shi dagang, which is found in Liang Rengong xueshu yanjiu ji, 1. 1-41. The arguments are presented on pp. 19-21. For Liang's attack on the traditions concerning Lao Zi, see the previous chapter in the present work.
\item \textsuperscript{265} Zhang 1977: p. 79.
\item \textsuperscript{266} Luo 1958: pp. 267-281.
\item \textsuperscript{267} Hou 1950: Zhuzuo gudai sixiang xueshu shi: pp. 11-17, 1591-61, and 1957: Zhuzuo sixin tongshi, 1. 257.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
fourth century BC.\footnote{268} Others have assigned it to the later part of the Warring States Period, or about 250 BC. This group includes scholars like Liang Qichao, Qian Mu, Feng Youlan, Duyvendak (1889-1954), and Arthur Waley. Qian Mu specifically puts it after the completion of the "inner chapters" of the *Zhuangzi*.\footnote{269} Feng Youlan at first dated it after Mencius, or about 300 BC, but later postponed the date to the time following Hui Shi 惠施 (308-305? BC) and Gongsun Long 公孫龍 (b. 380? BC), or about 250 BC.\footnote{270} In 1964, in his *Zhongguo zhexue shi xinbian* 中國哲學史新編, he changed his mind and placed Lao Zi in the time following Confucius and Mo Zi, placing the *Laozi* after Mencius but before Zhuang Zi.\footnote{271} Duyvendak dates the *Laozi* after 300 BC, and Waley puts the date at about 240 BC.\footnote{272} Victor H. Mair puts it also in the 3rd century BC.\footnote{273} Gu Jiegang\footnote{274} has gone so far as to place it between the *Lishi chunqiu* and the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, or between 200 and 150 BC.\footnote{275} D. C. Lau, however, says: "Taking all factors into account, I am inclined to the hypothesis that some form of the *Lao tzu* existed by the beginning of the third century BC at least."\footnote{276}

Concerning these various opinions, one can also refer to the table at the beginning of the next chapter.

Departing from those who have denied the traditional views concerning the dates of Lao Zi and the *Laozi*, Hu Shi,\footnote{277} Guo Moruo,\footnote{278} Ma Xulin,\footnote{279} Gao Heng\footnote{280} and many

\footnote{268} Chan 1963: p. 74.
\footnote{269} Qian Mu 1956: p. 224.
\footnote{271} Feng 1964: p. 255.
\footnote{272} Duyvendak: *Tao Te ching*: p. 6; Waley 1958: p. 86.
\footnote{273} Mair 1994: p. 57, where Mair says: "Although the text is held by Taoist believers to have been composed by Lao Tzu in the sixth century BC, the available evidence indicates that it was actually not committed to writing until sometime in the third century."
\footnote{274} Gu Jiegang 1933 IV: pp. 462-519.
\footnote{278} Ma Xulin 1924: pp. 18-19.
others have upheld the tradition that the *Laozi* is a product of the Spring and Autumn Period.

Nowadays many scholars in China have begun again to argue for the acceptability of the traditional opinion, simply because the skepticism concerning it created by Liang Qichao and Feng Youlan has never been effective enough to thoroughly disestablish the position.\(^\text{281}\) For the recent discussion of the 1980s and 1990s concerning this issue, one can refer to Chen Guying’s *Lao Zhuang xinlu* 老莊新論, *Laozi jinzhu jinyi* 老子今註今譯, and "*Laoxue xianyu kongxue* 老學先于孔學" in *Zhuxue yanjiu* 哲學研究 9.1988; and *Daojia wenhua yanjiu: Diviji-Disiji* 道家文化研究第一至四輯 1992-1994.

The main questions involved in the debate concerning the date of the *Laozi* are: the contemporary references to the *Laozi*, the terminology of the book, the style of the book, and the ideas expressed in the book. Considering all these things, the author of this work is of the opinion that the *Laozi*’s present version was completed at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or in the beginning of the Warring States Period. The reasons for taking this position will be clarified in what follows.

First, however, we should avoid misunderstanding the term Chunqiu (the Spring and Autumn Period) and Zhanguo (the Warring States Period). The Warring States Period in the present work is viewed as beginning in 481 BC. Thus, the Spring and Autumn Period is previous to 480 BC.

For the purposes of fixing the date of the *Laozi*, we will explore the question under four rubrics: 1) The contemporary references of the *Laozi* (§1.5.2); 2) The terminology of the *Laozi* (§1.5.3); 3) The idea of the *Laozi* (§1.5.4); and 4) The style of the *Laozi* (§1.5.5).

### 1.5.2 The contemporary references of the *Laozi*

In regard to the references to the *Laozi* in works that were its contemporary, the sayings of *Laozi* were widely known in ancient China. As we discussed in the section on "The authorship of the *Laozi* ", twenty-two of these sayings are quoted in the *Zhuangzi*.\(^\text{282}\) The *Xunzi*, e.g., criticizes Lao Dan for "having insight about being but not about expending,"\(^\text{283}\) showing that Xun Zi was familiar with the thoughts of Lao Zi. Han Fei wrote two chapters commenting on Lao Zi’s sayings\(^\text{284}\) and quotes him several times.\(^\text{285}\)

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\(^{281}\) See Chen Guying (General ed.): 1992-1994, I-IV.


\(^{284}\) *Hanfeizi*, chs. 20-21.

\(^{285}\) Ch. 31, SPTK, 10:1a, alludes to *Laozi*, ch. 36 (see Liao (tr.), *The Complete works of Han Fei Tzu*, II, 1); ch. 38, SPTK, 16:3a (twice), 4b, quotes *Laozi*, chs. 63, 17, and 65 (Liao, II, 178, 179, 183); and ch. 46, SPTK, 18:4a, quotes the *Laozi*, ch. 44 (Liao, II, 246).
The Zhanguoce$^{256}$ and Lüshi chunqiu$^{257}$ also quote from him. Except the quotations by Shu Xiang and the Mozi, however, all of the other works belong to the Warring States Period and not to the Spring and Autumn Period in which tradition has placed the Laozi. The Huainanzi quotes the Laozi 89 times,$^{258}$ but this book appeared only in the early Han Period. Most of the above mentioned classics were from the beginning, middle or later period of the Warring States.

Many scholars argue, therefore, that no contemporary references were ever made to the Laozi. And, on the basis of this supposed lack of references, some scholars deny the traditional date of the Laozi. One of Cui Shu’s arguments against the traditional date of the Laozi, for example, is its lack of contemporary references.$^{259}$ Liang Qichao has repeated the same argument: "Why is there no trace of it in the Analects, the Book of Mencius, and the Mo Tzu?" he asks.$^{260}$

I shall deal with the issue of the contemporary references in the following three sections.

1.5.2.1 Contemporary references made to the Laozi

We have shown that both Lao Zi and Lao Dan were taken as the author of the Laozi during the period of Warring States. The reader can refer to my section on “Lao Zi and Lao Dan” in the present work’s next chapter. An examination of the Chinese classics will show clearly that quotations were taken from the Laozi both by the contemporaries of Lao Zi and by later scholars.

A. Quotations from the Laozi by two contemporaries of Lao Zi

Shu Xiang, a contemporary of Confucius, and Mo Zi, who died c. 380 BC, as well as many other ancient scholars and classics also quoted or referred to the Laozi. See my section on “The authorship of the Laozi” in the present work.

Many indirect references to the Laozi occur as well among Lao Zi’s contemporaries. Confucius, for example, made such indirect references.

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$^{256}$ At 11:5a, quotes the Laozi, ch.39, and 22:3a, quotes the Laozi, ch. 81. The Zhanguoce was compiled by Liu Xiang 録向 (77-6 BC), but much of the material long antedated him.

$^{257}$ Ch.6, sec.4, SPPY, 6:1a, quotes Laozi, ch.51; ch.16, sec.5, SPPY, 16:10a, quotes Laozi, ch.41; ch.17, sec.2, SPPY, 17:4a, quotes Laozi, ch.47. See Wilhelm (tr.), Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We: pp. 74, 248, 266, respectively.

$^{258}$ See the Huainanzi, ch.1 (15 times), 2 (3), 6 (2), 7 (3), 8 (2), 9 (5), 11 (4), 12 (52), 14 (1), and 18 (2). But this book appeared in the early Han period. According to Karlgren, no less than 1767 words out of a version of 5247 are quoted in pre-Han and Han texts (“The Poetical Parts in Lao-Tsi”, Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift, XXXVIII (1942), 26).

$^{259}$ Shu Xiang, a contemporary of Confucius, quotes them and so does the Mozi. But Cui Shu did not mention them; perhaps because he had not seen them.

$^{260}$ Liang Rogong zhexue yanjiangji, I, 18-19.
B. The Confucian references to the Laozi

Confucius made several references to the Laozi. These are found in:

a) The Analects 論語 Xianwen 憲問 says:

或曰：以德報怨，何如？子曰：何以報德？以直報怨，以德報德。

1. Some one said, 'What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?'
2. The Master said, 'With what then will you recompense kindness?'
3. 'Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness.'

Chapter 63 of the Laozi uses these words: "報怨以德." Confucian words have been believed as those based on the words of Lao Zi.

b) The Analects: Taibo 崔伯 says:

若子曰：能問於不能，能多問於寡，有若無，實若虛，犯而不校，昔者吾友曾不同斯長也。

The philosopher Tsang said, 'Gifted with ability, and yet putting questions to those who were not so; possessed of much, and yet putting questions to those possessed of little; having, as though he had not, full, and yet counting himself as empty; offended against, and yet entering into no altercation: formerly I had a friend who pursued this style of conduct.'

This statement concerning the practice of life has been attributed to Lao Zi. Thus, these words are also believed as those based on the thought of Lao Zi.

c) The Wei ling Gong 衛靈公 reads:

子曰：無為而治者，其舜也與？...

The Master said, 'May not Shun be an example of having governed efficiently without exertion? What did he do? He did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat.'

The conception wuwei 無為 was first expressed in the Laozi, chapters 37 (Dao chang wuwei er wu bu wei 道常無為而無不為), 43 (wuwei zhi youyi 無為之有益), and 48 (wuwei er wu bu wei 無為而無不為), etc.

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d) Lao Zi has also been identified with the person called Lao (or, Lao Peng) to whom Confucius refers. He says:

\[ ... \]

In transmitting and refusing to innovate, and in faithfully caring for antiquity, I venture to compare myself with our Lao Peng. (Analects 7:1).\(^{297}\)

Zhang Xuan 鄭玄\(^{298}\), Wang Bi 王弼 (226-49),\(^{299}\) Ma Xulun 馬紱倫 and many others reason that the Lao or Lao Peng spoken of here refers to Lao Zi. But opinions differ concerning on this point, and no authoritative conclusion has settled the issue concerning the identification between Lao Zi and Lao Peng.\(^{300}\)

But if the scholars who support the traditional opinion cannot employ this point concerning identification as evidence, neither can those who are against the traditional opinion afford to ignore it.

e) The Zhongyong 中庸 says:

\[ ... \]

The Master (Confucius) says: to teach with Dao broadens and makes yielding; no response without Dao, is the strength of the South, where gentlemen live.

Some scholars say that this idea was prominent in Chu during the time of Confucius. Lao Zi was a native of Chu, and Chu belonged to the South in the time of Confucius. Thus, this teaching possibly refers to the thought of Lao Zi.\(^{301}\) Although the Zhongyong is a later work, it is a Confucian one and should be reliable when it talks about Confucian speech.

The Confucian references to the Lao Zi and the identification between Lao Zi and Lao Peng, however, may well lack authority for claiming that they come from the Laozi. For one can argue that Confucius mentions only the thought or the person of Lao Zi rather than the book of the Laozi itself. Thus, this evidence is not strong enough to prove the existence of the Laozi in the time of Confucius, though, again, neither can it be ignored.

Just the same, we should not ignore the quotation from the Laozi preceded by "Laozi says" in the Mozi. This quotation, at least, should be taken as strong evidence to prove the existence of the Laozi in the time of Mo Zi (fl. 479-380 BC).

\(^{298}\) Quoted by Lu Deming (556-627) in his Jingdian shiwen, ch. 24, explaining Analects, 7:1.
\(^{299}\) Quoted by Xing Bing 邢ホテ (932-1010) in his commentary on Analects, 7:1.
\(^{300}\) Cf. the section on 'Lao Zi and Lao Peng' in the previous chapter of this work.
\(^{301}\) See Feng Youlan 1964: pp. 253-254.
C. Other quotations from the Laozi

Concerning the references to the Laozi found in Wenzi, Shizì, Yinwenzi and Zhuanzi, see my section on "The authorship of the Laozi" in the same chapter.

Wei Wuhou 魏武侯 quoted the Laozi. Zhanguoce 戰國策 reads:

魏武侯曰："老子曰：聖人無積・盡以為人・已愈有・既以與人・已愈多。"

Wei Wuhou says: "Lao says, The Sage accumulates nothing. Having used what he had for others, he has even more. Having given what he has to others, what he has is even greater." 302

This quotation can be found in chapter 81 of the Laozi. Wei Wuhou died in 371 BC, i.e., Zhou Liewang 周烈王 5th year,303 which was 108 years after the death of Confucius.

Yan Chu 顏斶 quoted the Laozi, Zhanguoce: Qíce 齊策 reads:

顏斶曰：老子曰：雖富必以頭為本。雖貴必以客為基。是以侯而稱孤寡不穀是其積之本與非。304

Yan Chu says: Hence Lao says: the superior must have the inferior as root; the high must have the low as base. Thus lords and princes refer to themselves as 'solitary', 'desolate', and 'hapless'. (.....) is it not?

The quotation here can be found in chapter 39 of the Laozi. Yan Chu lived in the time of Qi Xuanwang 齊宣王 (King Xuan of Qi, ruled 320-302 BC). The latter died in 324 BC,306 so this passage is evidence of the early existence of the Laozi.306

1.5.2.2 The reason for the lack of contemporary references

Tang Lan 唐蘭 says that the reason that Mo Zi does not mention Lao Zi307 is that Lao Zi belongs to the Southern school (Chu), while Mo Zi belongs to the Northern school. During the time of Mo Zi, neither the school of Lao Zi nor that of Mo Zi were prosperous; they did not, therefore, contact each other. But Lao Zi's disciple Yang Zhu 楊朱 became prosperous enough to become a representative of his school during the time of Mencius. And, thus, he was a worthy target for the attacks of Mencius.308

304 Zhanguoce: Qíce, s.a.
306 See ibid.
307 Perhaps Tang Lan had not seen the quotation of the Laozi by the Mozi in Taiping yulan when he said this.
308 See Tang Lan "Lao Dan de xingming he shidai kao 老聃的姓名和時代考" quoted in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: pp. 82-83.
Tang's argument here involves assumption and cannot be taken as conclusive. It leaves open considerable room for argument. However, this argument is not necessary any more, since Mo Zi did quote from the *Laozi*, which Tang Lan did not notice, but the present work has made it clear above. Cf. My section on "The authorship of the *Laozi*" in the present work.

1.5.2.3 The logical problem of the methodology

The methodology under discussion here suffers from a logical problem: clearly, merely because book A does not mention book B, such silence cannot prove that book B does not pre-exist book A. Arguments to the contrary are *Ad Ignorantium*.

Tang Lan argues, e.g., that Mencius never mentions the *Yi*, but this silence cannot indicate that the *Yi* does not pre-exist it. Similarly, the *Zhuangzi* does not mention Mencius, but based on this one would be hard put to conclude that Mencius did not exist in the time of the *Zhuangzi*. On the contrary, Huang Fanggang says that Mencius was in Liang from 320-318 BC. Zhuang Zi knew the business of Liang quite well and was a good friend of Hui Zi, often commenting on his work. Why did he never mention Mencius? Does his silence here indicate that Mencius never existed? Related to this argument, Chan Wing-Tsit in 1963 says:

The answer is if one argues that the *Lao Tzu* did not exist because the *Analects*, for example, contains no trace of it, one can also argue the other way, that the *Analects* did not exist because the *Lao Tzu* makes no mention of it.

Two other points are germane to this issue. On one hand, many ancient works which might have referred to the work have been lost. Concerning this point, Chan says:

The *Mo Tzu*, for example, once had 71 chapters but now has only 53. It happens, however, that a missing part of it did quote the *Lao Tzu*.312

On the other hand, cases occur in which quotations are not included in the present text. Mencius quotes sayings of Confucius, e.g., which are not found in the *Analects*. Chan goes on to say:

We are sure that Mencius and Chuang Tzu lived in the same time but neither one refers to the other. Nor

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310 Ibid.: p. 83.

311 Chan 1963: p. 64.

312 According to Ban Gu's *Han shu*, ch. 30, section on the Moist school.

313 According to *Taiping yulan*, 322:5b, a saying from *Laozi* ch.4. was quoted in the *Mozi*. Cf. above the section concerning what the *Mozi* has quoted from the *Laozi*.

314 Book of Mencius, 2A:1.4; 4A:7, 8; 4B:21; and 5A:6.
does Mencius mention Hsün Tzu although Hsün Tzu criticizes him at length. Neither Mencius nor Chuang Tzu is quoted or mentioned in the Han Fei Zi or the Zhanguoce.

Based on this examination of the logical fallacy involved in such historical thinking, we must judge as well that the argument of Qian Mu is unreasonable. Qian's chief argument is that, since the quotations of the Laozi in the "inner chapters" of the Zhuangzi are not found in the present Laozi and since all quotations from the present Laozi occur in the "outer" and "miscellaneous" chapters (8-33), which are generally considered as later works, then the Laozi did not exist prior to these later works. This line of reasoning is just an example of the fallacy we have noted above. Besides this, in any case, as Chan Wing-Tsit says: "whether the outer chapters are authentic or not is still an open question."

From the above we conclude that we cannot judge that a work did not exist at a certain time in history simply because contemporary works do not refer to it.

- Summary: The contemporary references to the Laozi prove that it is more reasonable to place the date of the Laozi during the Spring and Autumn Period. And, though contemporary references are lacking, this lack cannot be viewed as contrary evidence for this dating, since we have noted such thinking is fallacious in regard to historical facts.

1.5.3 The vocabulary of the Laozi
Concerning the terminology of the Laozi, two questions arise. One concerns the use of certain function words, and the other concerns the use of certain terms.

1.5.3.1 The use of certain function words
Some scholars have argued that certain words used in the Laozi prove it to be a product of the third century BC.

Chan says that some Chinese scholars have held that 于 originally expressed a preposition and 于 an exclamation, though at beginning of the Spring and Autumn Period both were used interchangeably as a preposition. The term "于" however, appears increasingly less frequently, so that the later the work, the less frequently does "于" appear in it. Since "于" occurs 52 times in the Laozi and "于" not at all, the

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315 See Xunzi, especially ch. 23.
316 Chan 1963: p. 64.
317 Zhuangzi, chs. 5, 7, SPTK, 2:36b-37b and 3:31a, respectively (Giles (tr.), Chuang Tzu pp. 66 and 87-88.
318 Qian Mu 1956: p. 224.
319 Chan 1963: p. 64.
320 Chan says 52 times, but Wei says 51 times. See the part concerning Chu dialect and the language of the Laozi in this same chapter above.
argument goes, the Laozi must have been written not during the Spring and Autumn Period but during the Warring States Period.\textsuperscript{321}

Zhang Shoulin 張壽林, in his article "Laozi Daodejing chuyu ru hou kao 老子道德經出於儒后考", refers to the terms "YU" 於 and "yu" 子 in his search for the date of the Laozi.\textsuperscript{322} He claims that, generally speaking, "YU" 於 seldom appeared as a preposition prior to the Mencius, though "yu" 子 was so employed. The later the work, however, the more often does "YU" 於 appear as a preposition. Zhang argues that just as "yu" 子 appears very seldom in the Zhuangzi, and such is the case also in the Laozi, while "YU" 於 appears 51 times in the Laozi. Then the Laozi cannot have been produced earlier than the Warring States Period.\textsuperscript{323}

Zhang Shoulin's argument, however, is not correct. If Zhang's logic is correct, Chan, therefore, says,

If the argument is carried to its logical conclusion, the Book of Mencius must have preceded the Analects since the latter uses fewer yu 's and the Lao Tzu must have come even after the Huai-nan Tzu of the second century BC, since yu is used in it but not in the Lao Zi.\textsuperscript{324}

And the form of this argument to which I shall now pay attention is that of Karlgren, since this theory concerning "YU" and "yu" in fact relies on him. Karlgren devised nine tests through which he found that the Zhuangzi, the Lushi chunqiu, the Zhandouco, the Xunzi, and the Hanfeizi have a common language.\textsuperscript{325} One of the nine tests is to determine whether any trace obtains among them of the peculiar distinction between "YU" 於 (on, with) and "yu" 子 (at, to, in).\textsuperscript{326} Karlgren employs the "YU" 於 and "yu" 子 distinction as evidence for whether a work is in a dialect of Lü 魯 (northern language) or Zuo 左 (Zuo dialect refers to any non-Northern language).\textsuperscript{327}

Wei Juxian 魏聚賢 tried to prove the date of the distinction between these two words. Wei says that the appearances of "YU" 於 and "yu" 子 in the following books occur respectively as: 19 and 17 times in the Zuo zhuan 左傳, 9 and 2 times in the Guoyu 國語, 21 and 1 time(s) in the Analects 論語, 96 and 1 time(s) in the Mencius 孟

\textsuperscript{321} See Guishibian, IV, 326-30. The tabulation there does not agree with the Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, but it is still true that the Analects, Book of Mencius, and the Zhuangzi use very few "yu" 's but many "YU" 's. See Chan 1963: p. 87 note 52.

\textsuperscript{322} See Lao Siguang 1968: p. 152. See also Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 82.

\textsuperscript{323} Quoted from Lao Siguang 1968: p. 152.

\textsuperscript{324} Chan 1963: p. 67. See also Chan 1963: p. 87 note 53.

\textsuperscript{325} B. Karlgren: "On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso chuan," Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift, XXXII (1926), 63.

\textsuperscript{326} Chan 1963: p. 66.

\textsuperscript{327} Ibid.
Based on the theory of Zhang Shoulin, as Chan has said above, this analysis should indicate that the Zhuangzi, the Laozi, and many other works were produced later than the Zhuangzi. But clearly this is not true. "YU" 而 and "yu" 子 can be used as evidence to prove what is absurd concerning regional dialects. Thus, the function words "yu" and "YU" are not reliable for establishing the date of the Laozi.

Waley found in applying Karlsgren's nine tests that the grammar of the Laozi is typical of the third century, except for the case of "ssu" in chapter 2. But, as Erkes has pointed out, "hu" is not used in the Laozi as a preposition at all. Concerning the final interrogative particle "yeh", it appears only once in the Zhuangzi, which is not enough to be typical. And Karlsgren himself admitted that the Moxi, a book earlier than these texts by more than a century, has very much the same grammar. He explains this contrary evidence to his theory as a possible instance of editing that took place in the third century. Even if one accepts this extraordinary solution, however, the fact still remains that, according to Karlsgren, the language of the Xunzi and the Lu dialect in which the Book of Mencius written were fundamentally different.

Karlsgren's method, then, cannot prove that the Laozi is a work of the Warring States Period, since the vocabulary issues it raises are supposed to indicate not only the historical characteristics of a work but also its regional characteristics; and this method is not in the case of the Laozi effective enough. Beyond this point, the reliability of this method as a whole presents us a big problem, because a few words cannot determine

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328 Quoted from ibid: pp. 152-153.
330 B. Karlsgren, "On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso chuan," Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift XXXII (1926), 63. See also Chan Wing-tsit 1963: p. 66: Karlsgren showed by using these nine tests that the Chuang Tzu, the Li-shih ch'un-ch'ü, the Chan-kuo ts'e, the Hsün Tzu, and the Han Fei Tzu have a common language. (1) they have both "jo" and "ju" for "like" and "as." (2) They do not employ "ssu" for "then" and "thereupon", nor they employ this same "ssu" for "this," both of which are salient features of the Lu dialect in which, he says, the Analects and the Book of Mencius were written. (4) They have the preposition "hu" and (5), to a small extent, the final interrogative article "yä". (6) They lack the preposition "chi" for "and", and (7) they have no trace of the peculiar distinction between "YÜ" (on, with) and "yu" (at, to, in). (8) their first person pronoun is the same as that of the Lu dialect. And, finally, He found (9) their language possesses the final interrogative article yeh, which is entirely unknown in the Lu dialect. He says that these facts make it possible to speak of a general third-century literary language.
333 Ch.21, SPTK, 7:31a. See Giles (tr.), Chuang Tzu : p. 201.
335 Chan 1963: p. 66.
with certainty anything about the date of a book when they might well be the product of a later addition. This opinion is also favored by many scholars.336

1.5.3.2 The use of certain terms
Jiao Hong 焦竑 in his Jiaoshi bicheng 焦氏筆乘 says: "兵者不祥之器以下，似古之義疏，繫於於經者。" (chap. 31) was added to by later people. Therefore, some scholars such as Liang Qichao, began to view certain terms as proving that the Laozi cannot be a work of the Spring and Autumn Period. The related terms are mainly as follows:

A. The terms pian jiangjun 偏將軍, shang jiangjun 上將軍 and sangong 三公.
These three terms have been employed by Liang Qichao to support his hypothesis.337

Chapter 31 of the Laozi says:

偏將軍居左，
上將軍居右。

A lieutenant's place is on the left; the general's place is on the right. (chap. 31)

Chapter 62 says:

故立天子，
置三公

Hence, when the emperor is set up and the three ducal ministers are appointed. ...(chap. 62)

Liang asserted that the term sangong (three ducal ministers) was unknown before the Period of the Warring States.338 But actually this term is encountered many times in the Mozi, which was a product of Spring and Autumn Period.339 As to the other terms here mentioned, Chan Wing-Tsit says: "It is true that there was neither lieutenant general nor senior general (mentioned in chapter 31) in the Spring Autumn Period, but the term "general" was used many times."340


339. The Concordance to Mo Tsu of the Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series gives 15 instances. For other examples, see He Dunweng, Laozi xinyi, Supplement: p. 9. See also Chan Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 67 and p. 87 note 60.

As to the honoring of the right, Chan says: "It is also true that the custom of honoring the right did not begin in the Warring States Period, but in the Zuozhuan it is remarked that the people of Ch'ü, who were barbarians, honored the left, implying that the Chinese honored the right. Besides, it is stated in the portion of the Book of Changes that when an army operates toward the left, there will be no error." For example, the Zuozhuan: Zhaogong 左傳: 昭公 28th year reads:

將軍食之而不足。

Generals eat them but they are not enough.

This defense concerning of titles of generals and the custom of honoring the right therefore, is admittedly weak.  

B. The term shangxian 尚賢

Some scholars argue that, since the term shangxian (honoring men of worth) in the Laozi is a criticism of the thought of Mo Zi, the Laozi must be later than the Mozi. Chapter 3 of the Laozi says, for example, "不尚賢, 使民不爭。Not to honour men of worth will keep the people from contention."

Chen Guying says concerning this argument that it makes two methodological mistakes. One is a logical mistake, and the other is a fall into subjectivism. In the former case, certain terms which are also found in the Warring States Period cannot prove that the entire book of the Laozi stems from that time. For these terms might be later additions. No one can prove or deny either case. Thus, this method does not provide adequate evidence for making a claim about the date of the Laozi. Concerning the other mistake, Chen says that modern scholars have in recent times been limited by Hegelian theory, i.e., by the notion that a thesis must be evolved as a synthesis of a former thesis and its antithesis. This antithesis may be spawned from certain books or from the social conditions. Concerning the term shangxian, one can say that the Laozi's criticism was aimed at certain social conditions at the time already of Confucius, rather than at anything in the book of Mozi. Chen's argument here is correct, since we know that the conditions which Lao Zi criticized existed long time before him. Zhang Dainian notes, for instance, that the saying of juxian occurs 舉賢 in the Spring and Autumn

341 Cf. above in the same chapter of this work. Cf. Zuozhuan, Duke Huan, 8th year.
342 Hexagram no.7. Cf. Legge 1935: pp. 72 and 275. Legge's translation does not bring out the idea of the left. See also Chan 1963: p. 69, and pp. 68-69 note 63.
343 Chan 1963: p. 68.
344 See also Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 141.
Period, and Confucius has also noted this in the Analects: Zilu 论语子路. Based on this one can see that shangxian is current as a conception earlier than its expression in the Mozi. 347

Thus, the term shangxian does not prove that the Laozi is a work of Warring States Period.

C. The term houwang 侯王

Some people argue that the term houwang (barons and kings) is a term of the Warring States Period. 348 Referring to chapters 32 and 37 of the Laozi, which say, "侯王若能守之" (If barons and kings can hold it), and to 39, which says: "侯王得一以為天下貞 (Barons and kings to the One as the truth of the world)," they take this as evidence that the Laozi is a work of the Warring States Period. 349 This argument is not correct, however, since the Yizhuan 易傳, i.e., shiyi 十翼 (Ten flies) provides examples of the combined term wang gong 王公. For instance,

Yi: kan 易坎 says: "王公被賊以守其國 (Kings and dukes bear the dangers to hold their kingdom.)."

Yi: li xiang 易離象 says: "六五之貞，離王公也." 350 (The luck of six and five, is to leave kings and dukes.)

Tradition holds that the Yizhuan, i.e., shiyi, was given by Confucius, though others argue that the period of this work is difficult to establish. 351 But scholars are certain, at least, that the gua 卦 and yao 爻 of the Yijing were current before the time of Confucius. 352 The Yijing Hexagram 易經: 爻卦 says: "上九，不事王侯，高尚其事." 353 (The highest nine, not serving kings and boons, highly appreciate its things.)

Here the combined term wanghou occurs. This is important evidence supporting the traditional opinion and should be beyond question, because the book of Yijing was compiled before the time of Confucius. Thus, this term cannot prove the Laozi as a later work either.

D. The term wancheng zhi zhu 萬乘之主

Some scholars argue that wancheng zhi zhu is a term that comes from the Warring States Period. For chapter 26 of the Laozi says: "奈何萬乘之主，而以身軽天下;" (How

can you do anything for the wancheng zhi zhu, because they take the world as unimportant because of their bodies.) Such scholars argue, then, that the Laozi is a work of the Warring States Period. Liang Qichao\textsuperscript{354} and Xu Kangsheng were of this opinion. In the 1980s, based on a study of the Mawangdui silk text of the Laozi, Xu says:

The appearance of wancheng occurred only in the Warring States Period. The Mozi mentioned first the word wencheng (Feigong reads: Now the state of wancheng); then the books of Mencius, Sunbing bingfa, etc., started to use widely the term wancheng. Therefore the Book of Laozi could not be from the Spring and Autumn Period but the Warring States Period.

The arguments of Liang and Xu, however, are not conclusive. Zhang Dainian argues that the chapter called Xianjin 先進 of the Analects already says: "千乘之國，繪乎大國之間." The state of thousand carriages was classed as one among the large countries." Zhang says that when the state of a thousand carriages was not taken as large, Jin 箕 and Chu楚 were possibly being called "wancheng 萬乘 (ten thousands carriages)". \textsuperscript{357} Important for interpreting this sentence is the verb she 攝, which means: "to be close to," "to be classed or to be counted among". \textsuperscript{358} Based on this definition of the verb, Zhang Dainian is correct when he says the state of thousand carriages was not taken as large. Thus, the arguments of Liang Qichao and Xu Kangsheng do not provide adequate evidence for denying the traditional opinion.

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\textsuperscript{354} See Zhang Chenhui 1977: p. 80-81.
\textsuperscript{355} Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 139.
\textsuperscript{356} Xu Kangsheng 1985: p. 143.
E. The term renyi 仁義
Liang Qichao asserts that the combined term renyi first began to be used in the book of Mencius. The Laozi, chapter 18, for instance, says: "to lose the great Dao, to have benevolence and righteousness"; chapter 19 says: "rejecting benevolence and righteousness, the people again become filthy and kindness"; and chapter 38 says: "losing the people again become filthy and kindness". (Therefore, losing Dao and then having de, losing de and then having benevolence, losing benevolence and then having righteousness, losing righteousness and then having ceremony.)

Some scholars, Liang Qichao among them, argue that the use of the combined term renyi occurs neither in the Analects nor in the Zuozhuan. The use of renyi in the Zuozhuan, however, has now been found. Thus, this argument is no longer valid.

The use of the term renyi does not originate from the book of Mencius. Indeed, the term was already used in the Mozi. For instance, the Mozi: Guiyi 墨子貴義 says:

子墨子曰：... 必為聖人，必去喜怒，去樂去悲，去愛，而用仁義。

Master Mo Zi says: ... to be as sage, one must not be joyful or angry, neither happy nor sorrowful, must not love, but should practice renyi (benevolence and righteousness).

The Mozi: feigong 非攻 says:

...取人馬牛者。其不仁義。

...those who take another's horse and ox do not practice benevolence and righteousness.

And the Mozi: Shangtong xia 尚同下 says:

子墨子曰：今天下王公大人士君子，中貨將欲為仁義...

Master Mo Zi says: Nowadays in the world, the hearts of kings, dukes, great people and gentlemen are to practice renyi...

Liu Jianguo 劉建國 has compared the meaning of renyi in the Mencius with that in the Mozi. His result was that the single term ren appears over 120 times in the Mencius and over 100 times in the Mozi; and the term renyi occurs 9 times in the Mencius but 19

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359 See the quotation in Zhang Chengqiu 1977: p. 81.
times in the Mozi.362

The important point here is that if Mo Zi used the term renyi, why could not Lao Zi, who slightly precedes him, have used the same term? Clearly, arguments which reject that the Laozi is a work of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period based on the use of term renyi in Chinese literature are weak and unconvincing.

Zhang Dainian claims that Zeng Zi 曾子 was the one who began to use the term renyi, since the Mengzi: Gongsun Chou xia 孟子: 公孫丑下 quoted the words of Zeng Zi, which employs renyi as follows:

曾子曰：昔楚之宮不可及也，彼以其富，我以吾仁，彼以其爵，我以吾義。563

Zeng Zi says: The richness of Jin and Chu cannot be reached, they use their richness, and I use my ren (benevolence); they use their jue (the rank of nobility), and I use my yi (righteousness)...

Zeng Zi lived during a time that intervened the end of the Spring and Autumn Period and the beginning of the Warring States Period.364

The term ren has been also used in the Shujing (Book of Historical Documents) and in the Shijing (Poetry Classic).365

No matter who began the first use of the term renyi, therefore, it clearly appears before its use in the Mencius. Thus, arguments based on a theory concerning the use of the term renyi cannot provide enough evidence to deny the Laozi as a work of the Spring and Autumn Period.

F. The terms bang 邦 and guo 國

The two terms bang and guo have been used together in both Text A and Text B of the Mawangdui Laozi. The term bang occurs 22 times in Text A of the Laozi, but all of these have been replaced by term guo in Text B. This replacement indicates that Text A was copied onto the silk text before the accession of Emperor Liu Bang 劉邦, the founder of Han Dynasty. Text B, then was produced after the Emperor, since Text A avoided using Liu Bang's taboo name bang.

An examination of the two terms bang and guo in Texts A of the Laozi, will disclose that the two terms have been used in tandem, guo being a secondary use: "無知其極，可以有國。有國之母可以長久。". In over 20 other cases only the term bang has been used. But in Text B only the term guo appears, and bang does not appear at all. Thus, both bang and guo have been used in Text A, but only guo appears in Text B. This structure shows that the Laozi was a work of the end of the Spring and Autumn


364 Ibid.

563 Shangshu: Taiji  商書太甲 reads: "慎於有善"; Shijing: Zhengfeng; Shuyutian 詩經.鄭風. 叔於田 reads: "謹善且仁".

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Period rather than one of the period of the Warring States. For from the end of the time of Xi Zhou (Western Zhou), when the Great Zhou began to be divided into many small states, to the end of Spring and Autumn Period, the term bang was employed to refer to the state or the country. In the Dayuding 大孟鼎, for example, which dates from the beginning of Xi Zhou, bangsi 邦司 refers to the official head of a big family. The Shijing 詩經, however, uses the term bang to refer to the "country" or the "state", e.g., "王此大邦, to be as the king of such a big state." The term bang is in these cases similar to guo. The term bang was usually employed during the period of West Zhou to refer to the state or the country, and this was continued to the end of Spring and Autumn Period. This use is evident in the Confucian Analects, where the term bang was employed together with guo, and the former term was used more often than the latter.

The Analects and the Laozi are similar, therefore, in their use of the terms bang and guo: at first the two terms were used in tandem; then, the term bang was used more often than guo. This similar pattern indicates that the Analects and the Laozi were works of same period, i.e., the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. After the end of Spring and Autumn Period, the term bang has been all but abandoned as a reference to the state or the country by all the classics, such as the Xunzi and the Hanfeizi. In the Mencius bang appears once, and it was quoted from the Shijing directly: "刑於寡妻, 致於兄弟, 以御家邦。The Poetry reads: Punishment to the widow wife, and to brothers, is to protect the home and the state."

Summary: The examination of terms upon which Liang Qichao and his followers rely to deny that the Laozi is a product of the Spring and Autumn Period are not effective. Instead, a proper examination of these terms proves that the traditional version of the Laozi is a product of the end of that period, i.e., of the fifth century BC.

1.5.4 The idea of the Laozi

Some scholars argue as well that the ideas of the Laozi date it to the Warring States Period.

Opponents of the tradition feel that the ideas of the Laozi are on an absolutely sure ground under this assumption. This argument did not become well known until Liang Qichao's attack on the traditional opinion.

1.5.4.1 Liang Qichao's 梁啟超 argument

Liang spoke with confidence when he said that the attack on filial piety, deep love (chap. 18), and the like in the Laozi are "too radical" to suppose that the work was done

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367 Liu Jiaqiao says, in the Analects that "guo" occurs several times, but "bang" appears over 20 times. Detailed discussion on this point can be found in Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1317.

368 Liu Jiaqiao has been of a similar opinion on this point. See Zheng Liangshu 1984: pp. 1316-1317.
during the Spring and Autumn Period. He believes that the combined term renyi (humanity and righteousness) was initiated by Mencius; thus, its use in the *Laozi* (chaps. 18, 19) reveals its date to be later than that of Mencius. He claims that the *Laozi's* opposition to the exaltation of the worthy (chap. 3), its attack on law and punishment (chaps. 57-60, 74-75), and its criticism of rules of propriety (chap. 38) seem to be specifically directed against the Moists, Legalists, and Confucianists of the Warring States Period, respectively.

Concerning the combined term renyi, Liang has been proved wrong by our findings concerning the term in *Zuozhuan* and in the *Mozi*. But his argument that the ideas of the *Laozi* are "too radical" for the Spring and Autumn Period has been pursued by many scholars. Hou Wailu, for example, is of the same opinion.

Liang Qichao and his followers are not correct in this argument, however, because they seem to assume that such ideas are limited to this particular period. And this assumption is incorrect. Many ideas of the *Laozi*, such as the exaltation of the worthy, the use of law and punishment, etc., were current also in the Spring and Autumn Period, though perhaps they do not occur so frequently as in the age of the Warring States. Concerning this, two examples can be given here.

The *Zuozhuan* Duke Xuan 章公, 25th year, records that Bo Zong of Jin 舜伯宗 says: "國君含垢，天之道也. The ruler of the state takes on himself humiliation, which is the way of Heaven." This is similar to the *Laozi*, chapter 78, which reads:

受國之垢，
是謂社稷主；
受國不祥，
是謂天下正。

One who takes on himself the humiliation of the state
Is called a ruler worthy of offering sacrifices to the gods of earth and millet;
One who takes on himself the calamity of the state
Is called a king worthy of dominion over the entire empire. (chap. 78)

Another example is, according to the quotation from the *Zhoushu* 周書 in the *Hanfeizi*: *Shuolin shang* 韓非子. 謂之曰, the *Zhoushu* says: "將欲敗之，必姑輔之；將欲取之，必姑與之. If you would have a thing fail, you must first help it; if you would take a thing, you must first give to it." This is similar to the *Laozi*, chapter 36, which reads:

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370 See Qian Mu 1956: p. 110. This part is not translated in L. T. Chen's translation, *History of Chinese Political Thought During the Early Qin Period*.
371 See the section on the "Term renyi" in the present chapter of this work. Cf. Hu, in the *Journal of Asiatic Studies*,II (1937), 386. See *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhuang, 22nd year, and Duke Xi.14th year. Xu Dishan 許地山 (1893-1941), *Daojiaoshi*: p. 26, mentions many ancient texts that quote the Confucian discussions concerning humanity and righteousness, but he considers these quotations to be forgeries.
372 Hou Wailu (General editor) 1957: pp. 257-263.
If you would have a thing shrink,
You must first stretch it;
If you would have a thing weakened,
You must first strengthen it;
If you would have a thing laid aside,
You must first set it up;
If you would take from a thing,
You must first give to it. (chap. 36)

Both Zuo zhuan and Zhoushu were the product of the Spring and Autumn Period. They prove that some thoughts of the Laozi have existed already in the Spring and Autumn Period.

Many ancient books have been lost, of course, and perhaps many other examples could be found in the lost books to prove more clearly that ideas such as the exaltation of the worthy and the use of law and punishment were current among other thinkers during the Spring and Autumn Period. But then this same evidence might also prove the opposite theory correct. In any case, one cannot throw overboard the traditional opinion without evidence, merely asserting that they are not current in the Spring and Autumn Period. If one argues that this study has not yet provided enough evidence to prove that all of the ideas of the Laozi were current during the Spring and Autumn Period, I respond that this issue cannot be closed until the lost books are discovered. And, even if they are found, the non-traditional opinions concerning the Laozi would not be supported by any silence they might maintain concerning these ideas.

Further, a methodology based on the notion that any idea contrary to another must stem from an opposition that occurs later in time than the original idea suffers from a logical problem. This notion has already been proved incorrect above and has been criticized recently again by Chen Guying. Chen says as well that, if a contrary idea necessarily means a stated opposition to an idea and implies the conclusion that it occurs later in time, one can argue that Confucius lived after Mo Zi. For the latter advocated serving spiritual beings, whereas Confucius puts serving human beings first and prefers not to talk about spiritual beings.

Again, some scholars such as Liu Jiangguo argue that the Laozi, as a work of a

374 Mozi, ch.31.
375 Analects, 11:11 and 7:20.
certain historical stage, did reflect the situation of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period.

- A. The Laozi displays material which reflects war and unrest among many of the states. For example, chapter 46 of the Laozi reads:

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天下有道，
郤走馬以處;
天下無道，
戎馬生於郊。
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When Dao prevails under the heaven,
Galloping horses are turned back to fertilize (the fields with their dung).
When Dao does not prevail under the heaven,
War horses thrive in the suburbs.576

This was the situation of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, which has also been reflected in the Analects:

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天下有道，
則禮樂征伐自天子出；
天下無道，
則禮樂征伐自國侯出。
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There is Dao under the heaven,
Ceremony, music, and the order of war, come from the King;
There is no Dao under heaven,
Ceremony, music and the order of war, come from the dukes.

- B. The Laozi shows the decaying of the high class and their officers. For example, chapter 53 of the Laozi says,

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朝甚除，
田甚萊，
倉甚虛，
服文彩，
事利劍，
政飲食，
財貨有余，
是謂珍寶。
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The courts are exceedingly splendid,
While the fields are exceedingly weedy,
And the granaries are exceedingly empty.
Elegant clothes are worn,
Sharp weapons are carried,
Food and drink are enjoyed beyond limit.
And wealth and treasures are accumulated in excess.

This is robbery and extravagance.\textsuperscript{377}

These lines reflect a similarity to the speech in the \textit{Analects}, when Confucius says, upon observing Ji Shi having Eight Lines dance in his home: "是可忍，孰不可忍也! If this can be accepted, what cannot be accepted?"

- C. The \textit{Laozi} reflects the system of taxation in use at the end of the Spring and Autumn, called "che 徽". Chapter 79, for example, says:

有德司興，
無德司敗。

The one who has virtue uses Qi,
the one who lacks virtue uses Che.

Here the \textit{Laozi} is speaking about the Che tax system, which has also been referred to in the \textit{Analects}. \textit{Yanyuan}:

哀公問於有若曰："年饑，用不足，如之何？" 有若對曰："蓋徵乎？" 曰："二，吾猶為不足，如之何其徵也？"

Ai Duke asks You Ruo: "In a famine year there is not enough money to buy things. How can I make out?" You Ruo answers: "Why do you not use the tax system of ten percent?" Ai Duke says: "Even in employing the system of twenty percent tax, I still feel it not enough. How can I reduce it to the ten percent tax system?"

This passage indicates that "Che" was the tax system of Zhou.\textsuperscript{378} Zheng Xuan notes, for example, that "Che was the method of taxation of the Zhou Dynasty, which was ten percent."\textsuperscript{379}

These three analyses of ideas and situations contemporary to the \textit{Laozi} shows that the \textit{Laozi} did reflect the situation at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. Thus, its ideas are surely not too radical to be understood as a work of this period.

\textbf{1.5.4.2 The arguments of Gu Jiegang 鲁頤剛 and Feng Youlan 潘友蘭}

Since Confucius taught that correcting oneself is the best way to govern,\textsuperscript{380} and since the \textit{Laozi} teaches the same idea (chap. 57), Gu Jiegang has concluded that the \textit{Laozi} must have derived the idea from Confucius.\textsuperscript{381} Hu Shi says concerning this point that one can

\textsuperscript{377} Quoted from Rump 1987: pp. 152-153.
\textsuperscript{378} Zheng Liangshu 1984: p. 1317.
\textsuperscript{379} See \textit{Lunyu Zheng Xuan zhu: Yan Yuan} 論語：鄭玄注：顏淵.
\textsuperscript{380} The \textit{Analects}: 12:17.
\textsuperscript{381} \textit{Gushibian} IV: p. 488
argue just as well that Confucius learned from Lao Zi.\textsuperscript{382} Feng Youlan placed the date of the \textit{Laozi} after the time of Hui Shi 惠施 and Gongsun Long 公孫龍 because the \textit{Laozi} contains considerable discussion about the \textit{nameless}. He says concerning this point that such a discussion is possible only if men "first have become conscious of the existence of names themselves."\textsuperscript{383} Chan says in relation to this point, "He seems to imply that Hui Shih and Kung-sun Lung were the first to become conscious of them. Evidently he has forgotten the Confucian doctrine of the rectification of names, a doctrine he has stressed very strongly. Quite aside from this, his shift is puzzling. Hui Shih and Chuang Tzu were contemporaries. If Fung puts the \textit{Lao Tzu} between the times of Hui Shih and Chuang Tzu and calls the Taoism of Chuang Tzu a later phase than that of the \textit{Lao Tzu}, does that mean that the Taoism of the \textit{Lao Tzu} was formulated or came into maturity some time between Hui Shih's pronunciation of his theories in his youth and Chuang Tzu's pronunciation of his old age? Is this assumption reasonable?"\textsuperscript{384}

1.5.4.3 Qian Mu'的究研 argument
Qian Mu has selected 33 concepts from the \textit{Laozi}, such as Dao, Heaven, the One, names, and the eternal. In each case, he has attempted to prove that the concept developed from primitive beginnings to its maturity in the \textit{Laozi}, with the \textit{Zhuangzi} as the transition. In the case of Dao, for example, Qian says that the \textit{Dao}, or the Way to Confucius, concerns only human affairs. The Dao, he points out, is seldom discussed in the \textit{Mozis} and then only superficially. This doctrine, however, he notes, becomes profound and subtle in the \textit{Laozi}. It is well developed in the \textit{Zhuangzi}, of course, but it is still not yet well defined. Hence, he concludes that the \textit{Zhuangzi} serves as a transition.\textsuperscript{385}

Qian has presented his case with profound erudition and extensive learning, as is usual with him, but his thesis relies on the notion that concepts evolve systematically and chronologically. And this thesis remains to be proved. Chan Wing-Tsit says:

By Ch'ien's formula, one can claim that the \textit{Lao Tzu} appeared long before the \textit{Chuang Tzu} because certain concepts are absent in the former but are fairly well developed in the latter. Take that of principle (\textit{li 理}), for example. It is not mentioned in either the \textit{Lao Tzu} or the \textit{Analects}: In the Book of Mencius it is understood as order.\textsuperscript{386} But in the \textit{Chuang Tzu} it occurs in many places and is understood in a higher sense, namely, that of principle. The same things can be said about concepts of nature (\textit{hsing 性}) and feeling (\textit{ch'ing 情}), both of which are not found in the \textit{Lao Tzu}, but are much discussed in the \textit{Chuang Tzu}.\textsuperscript{387} One may add that the terms the Great One" (\textit{Tai-i 太一}), "perfect man" (\textit{chih-jen 智人}), and so

\textsuperscript{382} Hu Shi: \textit{Journal of Asiatic Studies}, II (1937), 377.
\textsuperscript{383} Quoted from Chan 1963: p. 69.
\textsuperscript{384} Chan 1963: p. 69.
\textsuperscript{385} Qian Mu 1957: pp. 21-102, 287-314. See especially, pp. 22-23.
\textsuperscript{386} \textit{Book of Mencius}, 5B:1.
\textsuperscript{387} These concepts have been advanced by Yan Lingfeng, \textit{Laozhuang yanjiu}: pp. 227-31. In connection
forth are not found in the Lao Tzu but are prominent in the Chuang Tzu and therefore one could argue that the second must be later. 388

Thus, Qian's systematic interpretation of intellectual history is neat and attractive but is not supported by facts. Qian contends that the works of Confucius and Mo Zi should be understood as preceding those of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Otherwise, he says, since Lao Zi had already originated the doctrine of Dao preceding the Lord (chap. 4), Confucius and Mo Zi should not still have held to the doctrine of the order of heaven and the will of Heaven. 389 This conclusion is necessary, he adds, because the thread of thought does not run this (i.e., any other) way 390 (than toward this conclusion).

Hu Shi responds to Qian's argument in the following way:

According to your way of inference and conclusion, is it to be declared that after the birth of Lao Zi and Chuang Zi, there should be no more talk of Heaven's order and Heaven's will? Is it conceivable that those who in the last two thousand years have talked of Heaven's order and Heaven's will--and the rest--should all be regarded as prior to the time of Lao Zi and Chuang Zi? 391

Some scholars argue, based on Qian Mu's theory, that the Laozi is later than the Mencius. They point out that a sort of progress occurs from the individual through the family, the community, to the country and to the world. This progress seems to be defined as a systematic development. This concept is not found in the Analects, is only hinted at by Mencius, 392 but is quite clear in the Laozi (chap. 54). Cao Rulin 393 thinks for this reason that the Laozi is later than Mencius. Chan, however, says: "it must not be forgotten that Mencius was quoting what he himself said was a common saying. Who can tell how long it takes for a saying to become common? So far as the basic concepts of the Lao Tzu are concerned, they were already known in the Spring and Autumn days. Those of taking no action, Tao, vacuity, and repaying evil with virtue, for example, are all found in the Analects." 394 Concerning this, Chen Guying's recent research should be mentioned here.

with the concept of 4, and one may include that found in the Hanfeizi, ch. 20, SPTK, 6:7a-8a (Liao (tr.), The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu, I, 191-94), it has developed to an even higher degree, for here principle is definitely a metaphysical concept and has acquired specific characteristics. See Chan 388 Wing-Tsit 1963: p. 88 note 77.


392 Book of Mencius, 4A:5.

393 This is the claim of Cao Rulin, in his Zhou Qin zhi zao, pp. 52-53.

1.5.4.4 Chen Guying's 陳鼓應 argument

After studying the Laozi's influence during the middle of the Warring States Period through an examination of books such as Huangdi sijing 黄帝四經, Yinwenzi 尹文子, Shenzi 慎子 and Guanzi 管子, Chen Guying says that he is surprised to find that the Laozi had a very strong influence in the middle of the Warring States Period. This proficiency of influence, he says, must stem from a long term of transmission. The transmission of a philosophical idea also requires quite a long time even in the twentieth century, as we can see in the case of existentialism. This philosophy originated in Europe in the 1930s-1940s, but it did not come to Taiwan until the 1960s or to the mainland of China until the 1980s (Thus taking over 30 to 40 years.). Imagine the time required for a general transmission and shifting down of an idea in ancient times when no paper or means of printing were available. Even if the Laozi took only the 40 years that existentialism took to be transmitted in the twentieth century, the book of the Laozi should still be classed as a product of the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or at least at the beginning of the Warring States Period.295

- Conclusion: the arguments aiming at establishing a later origin for the ideas of the Laozi do not succeed in proving that it is a product of the Warring States Period. Instead, they show that it is a work from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period.

1.5.5 The style of the Laozi

To Cui Shu, the style of the book is similar to those which stem from the Warring States Period (480-222 BC) and utterly different from that of the Analects, which stems from the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 BC).296

Feng Youlan argues as well that the style of the Laozi shows that it is a product of the Warring States Period. Feng says it was "generally" believed that the Laozi was composed after Confucius, that is, sometime during the Warring States Period.297 But this is not true. When Feng wrote his book in the 1930s, according to Chan Wing-Tsit, "It may safely be said that those who believe Lao Zi lived in the Spring and Autumn Period and those who believe he lived in the Warring States Period are about equal in number."298 And the same point carries in respect to the date of the Laozi. According to Zhang Chengqiu's review of the debate on the history of the work, there was no authentic

296 Cui Shu: Zhuzi kaoxin, I:13a-14a.
297 Fung Yu-lan Vol.1, Derk Bodde (tr.) 1952: p. 170 reads: The book known as the Lao-tzu 老子, but popularly called the Tao Te Ching 道德經, is traditionally said to have been written by an older contemporary of Confucius, Lao Tan 老聃. To-day, however, it is generally believed that the Lao-tzu 老子 was composed after Confucius, that is, sometime during the Warring States period. This has already been discussed in detail by many scholars and so need not be gone into at length here.
298 Chan 1963: p. 53.
conclusion concerning the date of the *Laozi*. 399

Two reasons can perhaps account for Feng’s statement that the opinion that the *Laozi* was composed during a later time is "generally believed". 1) Skepticism in regard to the tradition was in vogue during the 1920s and 1930s. 2) Liang Qichao, who was the pioneer of the new intellectualism in China and influential on scholars was of this opinion. Those who reject the tradition, however, do not have sufficient evidence to support their theories or arguments. Liang’s evidence consists of two main items: one is the use of terminology in the *Laozi*, which, as I have already shown, was criticized by many scholars even in the 1920s and 1930s; and the other concerns the radical nature of the ideas in the *Laozi*, which has also been discussed above.

Apart from the above, Feng has also offered three other items of evidence to support his theory. He says:

What has already been said in the present book about conditions in the world of learning in ancient China, moreover, proves that the *Lao-tzu* must be a product of this later time, because: (1) Prior to Confucius there was no one writing in a private, non-official capacity; hence the *Lao-tzu* cannot be earlier than the *Lun Yu*. (2) The literary form of the *Lao-tzu* is not that of question and answer, and therefore, is probably later than the *Lun Yu* and the *Mencius*. (3) The style of the *Lao-tzu* is clearly that of a ‘canon’ (ching ¼), for which reason it probably dates from the Warring States Period. If one were to bring forward but one of these three points, in addition to the proofs already give by earlier scholars, one might be justly accused of committing the fallacy of begging the question. Taking them together, however, it is surely no accident that the style and doctrines of the *Lao-tzu*, with the other evidence, all point to its being a product of the Warring States Period. 400

Feng’s three items of evidence which he lists here raise doubts concerning their legitimacy under close scrutiny. They are each discussed below.

1.5.5.1 The various reasons related to style for taking the *Laozi* as a later work

A. The individual authorship of books before Confucius

Feng’s argument that before Confucius no one had individually authored a book simply repeats Zhang Xuecheng （章學誠, 1738-1801), who said that the purpose of writing in ancient times was fulfilled in writing down governmental records and that writing was never employed as a private pursuit of authorship. 401 Feng noted that ancient aristocrats did not write, because they had to govern and, therefore, had no time for writing. Besides, he says, writing was a superfluous act, since their ideals were to be carried out in governmental measures. 402 He dismisses all private writings attributed to ancient writers before Confucius, therefore, as spurious and comes to the bold conclusion that

402 Ibid.
there was no private writing took place at all before Confucius!  

Chan says: "Obviously Fung is begging the question." And Hu Shi pointed out already in the 1930s, "Mr. Fung ought to have proved first that the Lao Tzu actually came out after Confucius' time before he advanced the premise that before Confucius' time there was no such thing as individual authorship." On the other hand, Hu Shi argues, when Confucius was three years old, Shu Sun Bao took liyan 立言 (to set up words or to leave words) as one of the three immortals, saying: "In Lu 蘧 there was a previous master who was called Zang Wen Zhong 存文仲. He died and settled his words (for the later generations)." Hu raises the question, were all of these liyan transmitted only orally? And were the quotations from Zhou Ren 周任 by Confucius also only oral? How could this be possible?

Previous to Feng, Luo Genze presented four items of "evidence" to prove the absence of individual authorship before the Warring States Period. He says, first, that no mention occurs of any individual writings in the Zhuangzi, Xunzi, Hanfeizi, and other books of the period. Second, he claims that the individual writings prior to the period that are recorded in the bibliographical section of the History of the Former Han Dynasty are false. Third, no books in the early Warring States Period quote any individual writing prior to the period; and, finally, no private writing was employed during the Spring and Autumn days for public instruction. The reasons for the absence of individual authorship, according to him, are that before Confucius all books were kept in official archives and that before the Warring States Period all philosophers emphasized rules of propriety as a means for social reform. Hence, writing was unnecessary. He later added to this that aristocrats had no need of writing and even opposed it, while serfs were too ignorant to write.

Concerning this argument of Luo, Chan Wing-Tsit is able to criticize it. He says: "Not that ancient writers or books were not mentioned, or ancient philosophers quoted, in the books of the Warring States Period. But the books are regarded by him (Luo) either as official documents or as forgeries, and the quotations as from oral transmission instead of private writings. He is virtually saying, 'There was no private writing, for all private writings are false!'"

Ma Xulun argues, Luo notwithstanding, that the custom of pursuing individual

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403 Ibid.


408 Ibid.

authorship did obtain during the Spring and Autumn Period. And these books have been recorded very often in the *Hanshu: Yiwenzi* 漢書·藝文志; the *Laozi*, considered as a work of individual authorship, is not necessarily later than the works of Confucius.\(^{410}\)

**B. The literary form of question and answer**

Feng argued as well that, since the literary form of the *Laozi* is not that of question and answer, it is probably later than the *Analects* and the *Mencius*.\(^{411}\)

If, as Feng says, the *Laozi* must be later than *Analects* and the *Book of Mencius* because it is not in the dialogue style, then, Hu Shi counters, the ancient odes must be also later.\(^{412}\) Besides, most of the *Analects* itself is not in dialogue form. As Hu has pointed out, only one of 16 chapters in Book I, one out of 26 in Book II, and seven out of 37 in Book IV are conversations.\(^{413}\) Thus, Feng's this argument is not correct.

**C. The style of canon**

Feng also says that the style of the *Laozi* is clearly that of a “canon” (*ching* 續), for which reason it probably dates from the Warring States Period.

No one really knows, however, what constitutes a “simple style of classic”. If chapter one of the *Laozi* does comprise such a style, Hu Shi argues, then *Analects* 2:3 is of the same style.\(^{414}\)

Feng committed an even more egregious error logically when he said: "If one were to bring forward but one of these three points, in addition to the proofs already given by earlier scholars, one might be justly accused of committing the fallacy of begging the question. Taking them together, however, it is surely no accident that the style and doctrines of the *Lao-tzu*, with the other evidence, all point to its being a product of the Warring States Period."\(^{415}\) For this is the fallacy of composition. Feng thinks that begging the question three times in one statement provides validity for his argument when doing it once would be an error!

**D. The employment of rhyme and the practice of beginning the sentence with the subject**

Besides these arguments of Feng, some scholars have also contended that the employment of rhyme and the practice of beginning a sentence with the subject originated during the

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\(^{412}\) See Chan 1963: p. 65.

\(^{413}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{414}\) *Ibid.*

Warring States Period. Since these are features of the *Laozi*, it is argued, it must be a product of that period.

Uncertain, however, is that the use of rhyme began during the Warring States Period. Hu Shi, based on the characteristic of rhyme, argues to the contrary, for example, that “most of the *Laozi* is rhymed. And if we suppose as a general world principle that rhyme precedes prose, then the *Laozi* should be considered as preceding the *Analects*.”

Chan says also that aside from ancient odes, many passages in the *Book of History* and in the text of the *Book of Changes*, and even some chapters in the *Analects*, are rhymed.

As for beginning the sentence with the subject, many of the Møzi's essays show this feature.

Thus, the employment of rhyme and the practice of beginning a sentence with the subject did not originate during the Warring States Period. This cannot prove the *Laozi* as a product of the Warring States Period.

E. The style of poem and prose

Gu Jiegang contends that since the *Laozi* is in the style of a prose-poem, it must be a product of the Warring States Period. But he never proves this thesis, so his conclusion is not valid for dating the *Laozi*. On the contrary, as above has indicated, the rhyme of the *Laozi* proves only that it is a work of Chu and does not confirm a date.

1.5.5.2 The mistakes of the new opinion

All these arguments above considered together, we can judge that none of the recent, anti-traditional opinions offer good reasons for acceptance. This judgement is based on the following two facts: First, we cannot easily determine the style of the *Laozi*; and, second, we cannot easily determine just when a certain style come into use, for any development of style emerges only after a long period of evolution.

A. The various opinions concerning the style of the *Laozi*

This work lists above, in the section on the style of the *Laozi*, various opinions concerning its style.
Some scholars argue that almost all the chapters are rhymed but that the rhyming scheme occurs in many patterns. Most scholars indeed accept that many rhymes occur in the Laozi, but they all differ concerning their judgment on the overall style of the work. For example,

Ren Jiyu argues that the style of the Laozi is poetry. Feng Youlan says that the style of the Laozi is clearly that of 'canon' ching (jing). Qian Mu 錢穆 takes the Laozi as rhymed prose (yunhua zhi sanwen 韻化之散文), and he thinks that such rhymed prose cannot precede the dialogue form that we find in the Analects. Gu Jiegang 魯頤剛 takes the Laozi as the style of fu赋, which appeared at the end of the Warring States Period. Ma Xulan 馬敘倫 says that the brief words of the Laozi are like poetry, though it is also like the yao ci 爻辭 of Yi易 and both the Ya 雅 and the Song 歌 of the Shijing 詩經; apart from this, he says, it is like the Analects論語.

In ancient times, brief words were favored over long disquisitions. And, since most of the ancient books were transmitted orally, they were usually rhymed to assist the memory. The Laozi is both brief and rhymed. And, since such material was common before the Warring States Period, the Laozi must surely have been transmitted before this period. The Laozi traditionally has been placed in the zi 子 category of the sibu 四部 classification scheme.

B. The major premise that these styles belong to the Warring States Period is by no means proved

As stated above, the evolutionary movement of the emergence of style means that we cannot easily determine just when a certain style came into use. This concept of evolutionary development has been generally accepted by scholars such as Hu Shi, Chan Wing-Tsit, Zhang Chengqiu and Tang Lan.

423 Chapters 31,49,50,61,74, and 75 are not rhymed, while only small parts of chapters 7,11,23,32, 34,42,60,66,72, and 81 are rhymed. Hu Yuanchun goes so far as to say that the whole book is in rhyme. See Hu s.a.: p. 3. Cf. Chan 1963: p. 84 note 2.

424 For a complete list of rhymes, see B. Karlsgren, "The Poetical Parts in Lao-Tsi," Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift,XXXVIII (1932), 6-20, and Chen Zhu 1928b: passim. For some examples of the rhyming scheme, see Chen Chu 1928a: pp. 29-34.


430 Loewe 1993: p. 269.

Zhang Fuqing 張福慶 says in respect to this notion of evolutionary emergence: 1) The evolutionary emergence of a particular style is difficult to determine, since different styles often coexist during the same period. 2) The evolution of style does not always follow the movement of: poem (shi 詩) —> history (shi 史) —> argument (liun 論). For one must note in regard to such a notion of development, a) that the style of the writings in the tomb of the Shang Dynasty (oracle characters) are all for the purpose of recording (history) and b), that the oldest writings possessed to-day is Shangshu 尚書 (The Book of History) rather than Sanbaipian 三百篇 (The Book of Poem or Odes). Thus, history itself refutes the notion of this “straight line” development of poetry to argument. 3) we cannot, therefore, date the Laozi, which is brief and simple in style, after the Zhuangzi and Xunzi, which are long and complex in style.422

1.5.5.3 Style contrast among the Laozi, the Shijing 詩經 and the Chuci 楚辭
Liu Xiaogan 劉家駒 has compared the Laozi’s style comprehensively with that of the Shijing and Chuci. He found that the Laozi is similar to the Shijing in three aspects: the sentence pattern, the method of rhetoric, and the rhyme pattern; at the same time, it differed from the Chuci in all three of these aspects.423

Many scholars have touched on several aspects of the Laozi’s style, but none has studied it comprehensively before Liu Xiaogan. And because the previous scholars studied only some aspects of the Laozi’s style, various poorly formed opinions developed concerning it, as indicated above in the present chapter.

We can first attend to Liu’s comparison of the Laozi with the Shijing: The basic materials of the Laozi employed in Liu’s study are its 51 rhymed chapters, i.e., chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 41, 44, 45, 47, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 78, and 79.424 The characteristic of the rhyme pattern of the Shijing is mainly based on Wang Li’s 王力 Shijing yundu 詩經論韻; and the rhyme pattern of the Laozi is based mainly on Zhu Qianzhi’s 朱謙之 Laozi yunli 老子論韻.425

A. The Laozi is similar to the Shijing in the sentence pattern
The Shijing’s main sentence pattern is that of including four characters (sizi 四字句), and Chuci’s is mainly that of six and seven characters (liuyan 六言 and qiuyan 七言). In


423 See Chen Guying (General ed.) 1994, IV: p. 419.

424 Ibid.: p. 422. According to Jiang Yougao, 52 of the chapters are rhymed; according to Zhu Qianzhi, over 70 chapters are rhymed, and, according to Karlgren, 75 chapters are rhymed. Liu Xiaogan thinks 51 chapters are rhymed.

425 Ibid.: p. 422.
this aspect, the *Laozi* is similar to the former and is different from the latter.\(^{436}\)

The *Shijing* has 305 poems, 152 of which are the poems of the four-character-sentence (*siyan shi* 四言詩). This number accounts for 50% of the whole, 140 of them contain poems of the four-character-sentence as their main pattern (though some other sentence patterns are included), and this number accounts for 46% of the whole; only 13 of them are poems of other sentence patterns, which accounts for 4% of the whole.\(^{437}\) The *Shijing* has been rearranged by later scholars, but one can safely assert that the Chinese poem in the time of the *Shijing* was mainly of the type of containing the four character sentence.\(^{438}\) The first poem of the *Shijing*, for example, is representative of this type:

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Guangguang juju, zai he zhi zhou,
Yaotiao shunü, junzi hao qiu. (Guanju)
Over the Guanguan go the ospreys,
The modest, retiring, virtuous, young lady: --
For our prince a good mate is She. (Junan)\(^{439}\)
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The *Laozi* is not actually a poem, however, there are 27 chapters containing mainly the sentence of four characters in the general transmitted version.\(^{441}\) In the *Mawangdui* silk text version, 23 chapters are rhymed.\(^{442}\) These account for nearly 50% of the 51 chapters involved.

The standard for recognizing the sentence of four characters consists of two criteria: one is that the chapter contains mainly sentences of four characters, and the other is that no other neat sentence patterns are found in the text.\(^{443}\) Chapter 45 of the *Laozi* is the standard example:

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\(^{436}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{437}\) *Ibid.*: p. 423.

\(^{438}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{439}\) In this section are several Chinese quotations without English translation. The translations will be added at a later time.

\(^{440}\) This translation is quoted from Legge 1935: Volume 4: p. 1.

\(^{441}\) This is based on Zhu Qianzhi's *Laozi jiaoshi* 老子校釋. These chapters are 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 33, 36, 41, 45, 47, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59, 64, and 67.

\(^{442}\) According to Liu Xiaogan, Chapter 1 in the *Ma Wang dui* silk text version is also rhymed, but chapters 2, 20, 24, 26, and 33 are not rhymed. See Liu Xiaogan, *"*1994: in Chen Guying (General ed.)* 1994 IV: p. 423 note 2.

What is most perfect seems to be incomplete;
But its utility is unimpaired.
What is most full seems to be empty;
But its usefulness is inexhaustible.
What is most straight seems to be crooked.
The greatest skill seems to be clumsy.
The greatest eloquence seems to stutter;
But its usefulness is not crooked. 444

An example consisting mainly of the four character integrated with other sentence types is as follows:

谷神不死，
是謂玄牝。
玄牝之門，
是謂天地根。
綿綿吿其若存，
用之不勤。
(chap. 6)

The spirit of the valley never dies.
It is called the subtle and profound female.
The gate of the subtle and profound female
Is the root of Heaven and Earth.
Use it and you will never wear it out. 445

In the general transmitted version 綿綿吿其若存 is also written as 綿綿若存 (four characters-sentence).

Thus, the sentence pattern of the Shijing and the Laozi is XX XX. If we use 0 to represent particles such as xi 可, zhi 之 and er 而, the Liao's 綿綿 the sentence pattern is XXX 0 XX 0 (seven characters-sentence), XXX0XX (six characters-sentence).

444 This translation has been referred to Rump 1987: p. 133.
445 This translation is quoted from Rump 1987: p. 21.
(I am) the descendant of the emperor Di,
my father's name was Poyong.
When he was in Mengzou,
(I was) born in the time of Gengying.

In Wang Li's Chuci yundu, there are 28 poems of Chuci, only four of which are poems of the four character sentence. These are Tianwen, Jiuqiang, Jusong, Jian. Clearly, the four character sentence poem is not the main type of the Chuci. The Chuci has four characteristics: 1) The poems are usually quite long, a characteristic lacking in the Shijing and the Laozi. 2) The sentence patterns and rhyme patterns are neat, following the principle of odd sentence rhyming. 3) The Chuci does not have the rhetorical method of circular sentences, which will be introduced later. 4) They are not the style of free songs (ziyou yingchang).

In relation to the sentence pattern, then, the Laozi is similar to the Shijing rather than to the Chuci.

B. The similarity between the method of rhetoric used in the Laozi and that of the Shijing

While the rhetorical method of circular sentences (xunhuan wangfu) employed by the Shijing is not used often in later works or in the Chuci, it is quite often used in the Laozi.

The rhetorical method of circular sentences refers to the repeated occurrence of certain Chinese characters or sentences in poems or in the chapters of a written work.

For example,

**Type one: "XXX 0, YYY 0, YYY 0, ZZZ 0" and "XX 0, YY 0 0"**

The X, Y, and Z refer to the characters which are not changed, and 0 refers to the ones which are changed.

**Shijing: Xiangshu** 詩經 相鼠 reads:

相鼠有皮,
人而無儀。
人而無儀,
不死何為。( 歌譜)

相鼠有齒,
人而無錐。
人而無錐,
不死何俟。 (之類)

I. Look at a rat, -- it has its skin;
But a man shall be without dignity of demeanor.


**This definition is based on Wang Li's Shijing yundu:** p. 87.
If a man have no dignity of demeanor,  
What should he do but die?

2. Look at a rat. -- it has its teeth;  
But a man shall be without any right deportment.  
If a man have not right deportment,  
What should he wait for but death?  

This can be written as  
XXX 0, YYY0, YYY0, ZZZ 0.  
XXX 0, YYY0, YYY0, ZZZ 0.

The *Laozi*’s chapter 54 reads:

修之身，其德乃真；(真觀)  
修之家，其德有余。(觀德)  
修之鄉，其德乃長；(長德)  
修之邦，其德乃丰；(豐德)  
修之天下，其德乃溥。(溥德)

When one cultivates virtue in his person, it becomes genuine virtue.  
When one cultivates virtue in his family, it becomes overflowing virtue.  
When one cultivates virtue in his community, it becomes lasting virtue.  
When one cultivates virtue in his country, it becomes abundant virtue.  
When one cultivates virtue in the world, it becomes universal.  

This can be written as XX 0, YY 0 0.  
The two books *Shijing* and *Laozi* are similar in this aspect.

**Type two:** "XXX, YY 0 Y; ZZZZ, YY 0 Y. AA 0 A, BB 0 B" and "XX 0, YY 0, ZZZ 0. ZZZ 0, AAA 0. AAA 0, BBB 0 (0)"

The X, Y, Z, A, and B refer to the characters which are not changed, and 0 refers to the ones which are changed.

The *Shijing: Qiangyouci* 艮有茨 reads:

詹姆茨，  
不可誕也；  
申違之言，  
不可誕也。  
所可誕也，  
言之誕也。(誕誕)

詹姆茨，  
不可誕也；  
申違之言，  
不可誕也。  
所可誕也。

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448 The translation is quoted from Legge 1935: Volume 4: pp. 84-85.
Chapter 28 of the Laozi reads:

1. The tribulus grows on the wall,
   And cannot be brushed away.
   The story of the inner chamber
   Cannot be told.
   What might have to be told
   Would be the vilest of recitals.

2. The tribulus grows on the wall,
   And cannot be removed.
   The story of the inner chamber
   Cannot be particularly related.
   What might be particularly related
   Would be a long story.

3. The tribulus grows on the wall,
   And cannot be bound together, (and taken away).
   The story of the inner chamber
   Cannot be recited.
   What might be recited
   Would be the most disgraceful of things.\textsuperscript{459}

This type can be written as "XXX, YY 0 Y, ZZZZ, YY 0 Y, AA 0 A, BB 0 B."

(枝有茨，不可 0 也; 中鵷之言，不可 0 也。所可 0 也，言之 0 也。)

\textsuperscript{459} This translation is quoted from Legge 1935: Volume 4: pp. 74-75.
He who knows the male and keeps to the female
Becomes the valley of the world.
Being the valley of the world,
He will be proficient in eternal virtue.
Such is the essential mystery. (finals kou)

He who knows the white and yet keeps to the black
Becomes the model of the world.
Being the model for the world,
He will never deviate from eternal virtue.
But returns to the state of the Ultimate of Nonbeing. (finals zhi)

He who knows glory but keeps to humanity
Becomes the ravine of the world.
Being the ravine of the world,
He will never depart from the eternal virtue,
But return to the state of infancy.431 (Fantails ge and zhi can replace each other.)

This type can be written as "XX 0, YY 0, ZZZ 0, AAA 0, AAA 0, BBB 0 (0)".
(知其 °，存其 °，為天下 °，為天下 °，存德 °，存德 °，徬歸於 ° (0).)
Thus, the two books the Shijing and the Laozi are similar in this aspect.

**Type three** consists in turning down the first two characters with the latter two characters.
The Shijing: Qifeng: Dongfang weiming 詩經: 齊風: 東方未明 reads:

東方未明，
頤則衣裳。 (單韻)
出之則之，
自公召之。 (常韻)

東方未明，
頤則裳衣。 (微韻)
側之遷之，
自公令之。 (真韻)

Before the east was bright,
I was putting on my clothes upside down;
I was putting them on upside down,
And there was one from the court calling me.

Before there was a streak of dawn in the east,
I was putting on my clothes upside down;

431 This translation refers to Rump 1987: pp. 83-84.
I was putting them on upside down,
And there was one from the court with orders for me. 452

Chapter 21 of the Laozi reads:

道之為物，唯恍唯惚。（爾雅）
忽恍惚啊，中又相有啊。（爾雅）
恍恍惚惚，中有物啊。（爾雅）

The thing that is called Dao is eluding and vague. (Finals zhì)
Eluding and vague, in it are things. (Finals yōng)
Deep and obscure, in it is the essence. (Finals zhì) 453

The two books are similar.

Forty-eight of the 51 chapters of the Laozi in Liu Xiaogan’s study employ the
rhetorical method of circular sentences, which accounts for 94% of the whole. This
percentage is similar to that of the Shijing, in which at least 271 of the 305 poems have
used the rhetorical method of circular sentences, which accounts for 90% of the whole. 454
This phenomenon is very difficult to find again in later works.

Both the Laozi and the Chuci are generally accepted as works of the Chu region.
But if the Laozi does stem from the same period, i.e., the middle or end of the Warring
States Period, we are hard put to explain why the Chuci has not influenced the Laozi.
That it has not been understandable if the Laozi was transmitted before the style of the
Chuci had been formed and when the style of the Shijing was still current. 455

C. The Laozi is similar to the Shijing in its rhyming pattern

The Shijing has two types of patterns of rhyme. One is a varying pattern, and the other
is a high occurrence of rhyme which cannot be found in the later works. 456

The rhyme patterns of the Shijing can be divided into three kinds: rhyming in every
sentence, rhyming in the odd sentences, and the combined form of both of these patterns.
Rhymed are 296 of the 305 poems of the work, 80 of which are rhymed in almost every
sentence. This number accounts for 27% of the 296; 74 of the poems are rhymed in the
odd sentences, which accounts for 25% of the rhymed poems; 457 the other 142 (accounting
for 80%) of the poems are rhymed in the combined form of the previous two patterns

452 This translation is quoted from Legge 1955: Volume 4: p. 154.
453 This translation is quoted from Rump 1987: p. 65.
455 Ibid.: pp. 429-430.
456 See Wang Li’s Shijing yundu: p. 41.
457 Rhyme in the first, third and fourth sentences has been taken as the rhyme in the odd sentence. The
rhyme begins with the first sentence. Rhyme in the second, third, and fourth sentences has been taken
as a rhyme in each sentence, discounting the first.
and of a few other patterns. Liu Xiaogan says that no pattern of rhyme had been well formed at the time of the 
Shijing and that the rhyming patterns of “each sentence” and “odd sentence” rhyming were almost equal in number. Neither pattern had achieved prominence over the other, and the combined form of the two patterns of rhyme was the main one.\footnote{See Chen Guying (general ed.) IV 1994: p. 430.}

Almost every poem of the Chuci is rhymed in the odd sentences; the few four-character-sentence poems have all been rhymed in the odd sentences without exception; and the “each sentence” pattern of rhyme is almost absent.\footnote{Ibid.}

The pattern of rhyme in the Laozi is very different from that of the Chuci. It is difficult to do similar statistical research on the Laozi, because it is not a real poem. Liu Xiaogan has, however, still done some general statistical studies. Among the 51 chapters involved, 24 of them are rhymed in every sentence, which accounts for 47% of the whole;\footnote{Cf. chapters 1, 5, 6, 21, 28, 36, 45, 47, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59 (mainly the four characters-sentences) and 2, 15, 22, 26, 44, 68, 69, 73, 78, and 79.} Nine of the poems are rhymed with comparative neatness in the odd sentences, which accounts for 18% of all of the rhymed passages.\footnote{Cf. chapters 9, 10, 19, 64, 67 and 4, 33, 17, and 56.} The combined form and other patterns involve 18 poems, or 35% of the whole.\footnote{Cf. chapters 14, 29, 30, 41, and 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 25, 27, 32, 35, 37, 39, 57, 62, and 65.}

The main pattern of rhyme in the Laozi is the combined form, which indicates that when the Laozi was written no general rhyme pattern for such work had yet emerged. And this mixture of patterns fits the various patterns of rhyme in the Shijing. On the other hand, in respect to the distinction between “every sentence” and “odd sentence” rhyming, the Laozi distinctly prefers the former over the latter. And this preference fits the high occurrence of rhyme in the Shijing. The Laozi, therefore, is similar to the Shijing in rhyme pattern.\footnote{See Chen Guying (General ed.) IV: p. 431.} And considering the contrast between the Laozi and the Shijing as well as that between the former work and the Chuci, clearly the Laozi bears similarities to the Shijing but shows difference from the Chuci.

The Chuci was written by Qu Yuan 屈原, who was a native of Chu and lived during the latter part of the Warring States Period. The Laozi is also a work of Chu. And if it stemmed also from the middle or the end of the Warring States Period, it would have to have been influenced by the Chuci, or at least, they would be similar. But, as we have seen, the style of the Laozi is different from that of the Chuci; thus, the Laozi cannot be a product of the end of the Warring States Period. Neither can the Laozi be a work dating from the middle of the Warring States Period, because its style is too similar to that of the Shijing. It must, then, be a product the time when the style of the
Shijing was still current, i.e., the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States Period.\textsuperscript{464}

This analysis does not imply that Liu Xiaogan's research has solved the problem of the date of the Laozi. But it does show that Liu's research has provided good evidence to support the traditional opinion concerning the date of the Laozi, which comes also from Sima Qian over two thousand years ago.

1.5.6 The conclusion concerning the date of the Laozi
Concerning the date of the Laozi, this work is of the following opinion:

The discovery of the Bamboo Slips Laozi from Jingmen in 1994 does prove that the Laozi did exist in the middle of the Warring States Period. This version consists of just over two thousand characters and is similar to the version of the Mawangdui text.\textsuperscript{465}

This discovery, of course, cannot solve the problem of dating the Laozi, but it raises anew the question concerning the date of the normal version of the Laozi. If the Mawangdui silk texts Laozi and the normal Laozi were developed from the Bamboo Slips Laozi, then the former two developed after the Bamboo Slips Laozi. Difficult, however, is to know whether they were both developed from the Bamboo Slips Laozi. This problem cannot be solved before a detailed analysis can be done of the Bamboo Slips Laozi, the results of which will comprise the next part of this study.

The contemporary and later quotations of the Laozi have proved that both Lao Zi the man and the book called the Laozi existed in the time of Confucius, i.e., in the 6th century BC. That Lao Zi and Confucius were contemporaries, will be proved in the present work's next chapter. One can refer to my section §2.4.2.2 C, where shows that a person Wu Zhi talks with both Lao Dan and Confucius at the same time, thus it proves that Lao Dan and Confucius were contemporaries. This was recorded in the Inner Chapters of the Zhuangzi, which is generally believed as making by Zhuang Zi himself in the 4th century BC. But what the original Laozi contained cannot yet be known if it is different from the normal version which we possess today. We may, however, be able to fix the date of the traditional version of the Laozi.

All the arguments which aim at establishing the anti-traditional opinion concerning the date of the Laozi have not provided enough evidence to throw the theory of Sima Qian overboard. These have each been analyzed in this chapter and found wanting. On the other hand, we have found various items of evidence which support the hypothesis that the Laozi is a work stemming from the end of Spring and Autumn Period. For example, Sima Qian referred to this period in his Shiji over two thousand years ago, and the Laozi was quoted by many contemporary and later works such as the Mozi, the Yinwenzi, the Zhuangzi.

The contemporary and later quotations of the Laozi, of course, cannot prove with

\textsuperscript{464} Ibid.: pp. 435-437.

\textsuperscript{465} According to the interview with Liu Zuxin, the leader of the Jingmen museum by senior lecturer Huang Xiuli on Oct. 16th, 1995.
certainty that the traditional version of the *Laozi* was completed at that time, since several versions of the book were quite possibly transmitted even before the middle of the Warring States Period. The quotations in the *Mozi*, *Yinwenzzi*, and *Zhuangzi* might be from another version of the *Laozi* which we have not yet seen rather than from the traditional version or the Jingmen Bamboo Slips version. The quotations cannot, therefore, prove that the *Laozi*’s traditional version was a work stemming from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period. The only other helpful ways of giving any probable date for the traditional version of the *Laozi* involves an analysis of the vocabulary and the style of the traditional version of the book.

An analysis of the vocabulary of the *Laozi* has been an effective way proving that the traditional version is a work that originates before the middle of the Warring States Period. So do the characteristics of style. Most parts of the *Laozi* are rhymed, but the style of this rhyming is not easy to determine. If the *Laozi* is from the middle or later portion of the Warring States Period, it would be a contemporary of the *Chuci*’s, so they should be similar to each other in style. But the style and rhetorical characteristics of the *Laozi* are much closer to that of the *Shijing* than that of the *Chuci*. The traditional version of the *Laozi*, therefore, must have been written earlier than the middle of the Warring States Period. The most likely date is either at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States Period.

### 1.6 Summary and conclusion

**The editions:** Before the discovery of the Bamboo Slips *Laozi* from Jingmen, the earliest edition we possessed of the *Laozi* was the Mawangdui silk text, which dates from about 180 BC. Book A and Book B of the silk texts are from two different traditions. In both of them, the *Dejing* precedes the *Daojing*. The first part of book A has chapter divisions, but the second part and the entirety of Book B does not. We cannot easily say whether the Mawangdui silk text is close to the original version of the *Laozi*. For many transmissions have intervened during the years. The Heshang Gong version, however, though a later edition than the Mawangdui edition, might come from an earlier version of the *Laozi* than does the Mawangdui text. But we have no means yet to prove this hypothesis.

The traditional version of the *Laozi*, also called the normal versions in the present work, *i.e.*, the versions of Yan Zun, Heshang Gong and Wang Bi, probably date from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States Period, which places them in the 6th to 5th century BC. The Bamboo Slips *Laozi* comes from the same tradition as the Mawangdui text version of the *Laozi*, but whether it is part of that version or an even earlier version cannot yet be known. Its date is earlier than both Silk texts and the Fu Yi version of the *Laozi*, or else it was completed at least during the same period.

**The titles and structure:** The *Laozi* 老子 is also called *Daodejing* 道德經 and *Wuqianwen* 五千文 or *Wuqianyan* 五千言. It was during the Han Dynasty that the *Laozi* began to
be called a 'classic'.

The book of the Laozi is divided into two parts: Daojing 道經 or Daopian 道篇, and Dejing 德經 or Depian 德篇. We cannot easily know what constitutes the original order of the Laozi, i.e., whether the Daojing precedes the Dejing, or the Dejing precedes the Daojing. According to both the Hanfeizi 韓非子 and the Mawangdui silk text, the Dejing or Depian of the Laozi precedes Daojing or Daopian. But we find the Daojing preceding the Dejing already in the Former Han Dynasty.

Generally believed is that the Laozi originally had no chapter divisions. And we do not know who divided the book into eighty-one chapters. The versions of Heshang Gong 河上公 from the Han 漢 Dynasty, Wang Bi 王弼 from the Jin 晉 Dynasty and Fu Yi 傅奕 from the Tang 唐 Dynasty, and the present, generally transmitted version all consist eighty-one chapters.

The essential character of the work: Various opinions abound concerning the essential character of the Laozi. Many parts of the book are rhymed, but it is not really a poem. Traditionally, it belongs to a part of zi 子部 in Sibu beiyao 四部備要.

It is from one person's hand rather than many, because: 1) Its thought is systematic; 2) The first personal pronouns wo 我 and wu 吾 refer to the author himself, and the complaints of the book are similar to those of Confucius and Qu Yuan 屈原, which are the character of private book. The book has, however, received additions by later scholars in the process of transmission.

The book of Laozi is a work of Chu 楚, because 1) The historical records have shown that this is the case; 2) The book uses Chu dialects; 3) The book demonstrates knowledge of the custom of Chu.

The authorship: A man named Lao Dan 老聃, i.e., Li Er 李耳, or Lao Zi 老子, who was a contemporary of Confucius in the 6th century BC did exist. The book he wrote, the Laozi, once existed as an original version which, while different in some aspects, was on the whole similar to the traditional version we possess today of the work. The evidence shows clearly that most (?) of the speeches and words of Lao Zi as well as the main points of his thought can be found in the traditional version of the Laozi.

The author of the traditional version was Lao Zi himself, and the book has also been possibly added to by some other people, but they were inordinately successful at arranging the words of Lao Zi and at understanding Lao Zi's philosophy.

The date: The exact details concerning the date of the original Laozi cannot yet be known. The date of the Laozi's traditional version, however, should be placed as early as the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or the beginning of the Warring States

*66* Have some or most of Lao Zi's speeches or words been preserved in the present version of the Laozi? This question cannot be answered before a study of the Jingmen bamboo Slips Laozi is completed. This will be done in the next stage of the present study.
Period. Secondarily, one could consider a slightly later date in the middle of the latter period.

Various hypotheses have emerged concerning the date of the Laozi. According to the traditional opinion, the Laozi dates from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, i.e., from the sixth to fifth century BC. Recent scholars, represented by Liang Qichao, have been skeptical toward this early date and have proposed a later date. Their main arguments for dating the work concern the contemporary references, the terminology, the ideas, and the style of the book. In response to these argumentations, this work has argued that: 1) The contemporary references to the Laozi do occur. 2) Terms such as renyi, shangxian, and wancheng zhi zhu, which have been employed by Liang and his followers to deny an early date have been shown to be terms current in the Spring and Autumn Period; thus, they do not provide adequate evidence the Laozi is a later work. 3) The ideas of the Laozi, which Liang and his followers say are too radical for the time of Lao Zi and Confucius, have also been proved to belong to the Spring and Autumn Period. 4) The style of the Laozi, which Liang and his followers claim to prove that the Laozi is a later work, has been shown to indicate instead the Laozi is a work from the end of the Spring and Autumn Period or, at least, the beginning of the Warring States Period. Liang’s handling of the style question was inadequate, as he did not note correctly the characteristics of style and the regional Chu background of the Laozi. Furthermore, the contrasts among the Laozi, Shijing and Chuci point as well to an early date of authorship.

In sum, we can say that a misunderstanding concerning the book called the Laozi has hampered the West in grasping the details concerning it correctly. This misunderstanding is grounded in the hypotheses of Liang Qichao, Feng Youlan and their followers. The arguments of this work have aimed at showing that the above scholars, so influential in the West, actually present only weak and ineffective arguments. Lao Zi the man did exist, and he did author a book called the Laozi. And this fact can be seen from an analysis of the traditional version of the Laozi, which was completed before the middle of the Warring States Period by Lao Zi himself and has been added to by some person who surely knew well the philosophy of Lao Zi.