Reconstructing China's Religious Past: Textual Criticism and Intellectual History

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In this article, I examine the role of textual criticism in the study of Chinese religion and thought. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the techniques of textual criticism (including source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism) have revolutionized our understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition. What do these techniques have to offer to Sinologists? Below I will examine two contemporary scholars who have employed distinctive styles of textual criticism to provide radically new approaches to the study of two key periods in Chinese intellectual history, the Warring States (475–221 BCE) and the Six Dynasties (227–589 CE). Kobayashi Masayoshi's 小林正美 *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū* 六朝道教史研究 [A study of the history of the Daoist religion during the Six Dynasties] brings together a series of previously published articles that analyze and date most of the major texts of Daoism during the first half millennium of its existence. E. Bruce Brooks, in collaboration with his wife A. Taeko Brooks, has presented in *The Original Analects* and other writings[1] a new approach to the analysis of the philosophical writings of the Warring States era. Both scholars have provided us with formidable works of scholarship that merit serious consideration by anyone working in their respective fields. In this article I will look at the methods each scholar uses and assess the conclusions each arrives at, then try to put these findings in the context of textual criticism as a practice.

Daoism

The academic study of Daoism is recent and much basic foundational work remains to be done. To understand the historical development of this religion, we must first get a handle on the literary remains that are its primary source. References to Daoism in the Chinese historical tradition were mined first, in part because that tradition was well mapped and there were useful reference works to guide the researcher in exploring the dynastic histories and other historical compilations. Thus we now know a good deal about the historical events surrounding the founding of Daoism in the second century, of imperial patronage during the Tang, and the rise of new Daoist movements during the Song. Insofar as Daoist figures during any period left traces in these historical works, we can readily look them up, assign dates to their activities, and assess their importance within the context of court-centered events that

[1] Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors*. See also Brooks, "The Present State and Future Prospects of Pre-Han Text Studies."

form the backbone of the Chinese historical record. We have also seen innovative use of local histories, gazetteers, and notebooks to tease out the details of regional traditions, particularly for the period beginning in the Song, when these sources proliferated. The picture presented by such sources is, however, limited by the nature of Chinese historiography: only figures of political significance are recorded, their lives are often molded to fit stereotypical historical models of religious leaders, and surviving records seldom make reference to the content of their teachings or the nature of their religious activity.

We are, therefore, fortunate that we need not rely solely on the historical record to reconstruct the development of the Daoist religion. We have a rich selection of primary sources, including hundreds of scriptures, ritual manuals, hagiographic collections, and other writings. They have not come down to us in pristine form—there has been considerable editing and revision of some of them—and they represent only a small portion of the total number of works composed. Still, we have a patrimony of texts at our disposal that is surpassed only by that of the Buddhologists. Our problem has been what to do with them.

There have been attempts to assess the Daoist canon. Perhaps the most substantial early work was Yoshioka Yoshitoyo's 吉岡義豐 *Dōkyō kyōten shiron* 道教經典史論 [Discourse on the history of the Daoist canon], which surveyed the canon and catalogued titles cited in a large number of early, datable works and in Daoist bibliographies. A few years ago PRC scholars published a guide to the canon under the title *Daozang tiyao* 道藏提要 [Essentials of the Daoist canon] and a handbook compiled by European scholars under the direction of Kristofer Schipper and funded by the European Science Foundation is currently in press.[2] Such works will be invaluable aids to our study of Daoism. Still, their multiple authorship raises questions about whether they truly offer a synthetic, unified view of the Daoist corpus of literature.

Kobayashi Masayoshi's *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū* attempts just such a consistent, thorough assessment of early Daoist sources. Uniting a large number of articles originally published in a variety of journals, this hefty volume analyzes works from the Celestial Master 天師道, Shangqing 上清 and Lingbao 靈寶 traditions. Because of the comprehensive nature of its treatment, this single source provides rather specific datings for a variety of Daoist scriptures, Kobayashi's work has been quite influential. It is, therefore, important that his conclusions and the methodology that supports them be addressed in detail.

Kobayashi's methodology is essentially that of intellectual history. He starts with the early scripture catalogs and references in dated works such as Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 *Zhengao* 眞誥. His primary innovation has been to set up an outline of the development of key concepts in Daoist doctrine then use the absence or occurrence of these concepts to date surviving and lost scriptures. This approach raises obvious questions of circularity, since the redating of any text containing a key concept threatens to topple the entire system.

Essential to Kobayashi's scheme are certain assumptions concerning the sociological background to the scriptures discussed, their *Sitz im Leben*. There is always a model envisioned, explicitly or implicitly, concerning the social reality of the people who produced,

[2] Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*.

circulated, and used literary products. In the case of religious texts, their production is intimately tied to religious groups functioning at the time, the way they self-identified, and the way they conceived their relationship to other groups that we might today consider co-religionists. As for early Daoism, we may conceive of a single unified and continuing tradition, a myriad of similar but unrelated, independent groups, or some mixture of the two. These assumptions will significantly color the way Daoist history is reconstructed and determine the number and type of different groups to which specific scriptures can be linked. Here Kobayashi is relatively conservative. He accepts the Celestial Masters as a continuing force throughout the period, though he sees a split between north and south and considerable doctrinal development along the way. He also accepts the group behind the Shangqing revelations as a significant contributor to Daoism. He posits another group of importance, the Ge Family Dao 葛家道, which encompasses Ge Hong 葛洪 and his teachers as well as his relatives such as Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫. This Ge Family Dao is, according to Kobayashi, the source of numerous scriptures and of important doctrinal innovations. It is unclear, however, whether it ever represented a sociological reality of individuals who came together periodically to practice.

Rather than continue with a series of abstract characterizations of Kobayashi's work, let us look at a few examples. Below I will focus on his understanding of three concepts, their development within Daoism, and their significance for dating the Daoist corpus. The topics are: the number of heavens, terms for the high god, and the characterization of Daoism as the Greater Vehicle.

The Three Heavens

Cosmology, and specifically the number and nature of divine or demonic realms, is key to the understanding of many world religions. Traditionally, Chinese have referred to the divine realm as Tian 天, which can be translated as the physical "sky" but can also refer to Heaven or Heavens or to a deity or group of deities that inhabit this realm or realms. Sources from the Warring States or Han refer to the Nine Heavens or perhaps Ninefold Heavens [*jiutian* 九天].[3] Within Daoism it became common to differentiate within these nine celestial realms three exalted heavens populated by true perfected entities and six lower, profane heavens populated by blood-thirsty, demonic beings characterized as "stale breaths" [*guqi* 故氣]. Six Dynasties sources such as *Lu Xiansheng Daomen kelüe* 陸先生道門科略 agree that this distinction was integral to the initial revelations of the "Correct and unitary covenant with the powers." Kobayashi is not so sure.

[3] See for example *Sunzi*, "Xingpian" 形篇, p. 64: "He who is adept at attacking acts above the Nine Heavens and therefore is able to preserve himself and win every battle." Sima Qian 司馬遷 refers to "Spirit mediums of the Nine Heavens" who worship the Nine Heavens (*Shiji* 28.1379). There are lists of the Nine Heavens in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 and *Taixuanjing* 太玄經.

According to Kobayashi, the earliest source to refer to the Three Heavens is the *Lingbao wufu xu* 靈寶五符序.[4] He notes that the term does not occur in the *Taipingjing* 太平經, *Huangdi waijing* 黃帝外經, *Cantongqi* 參同契, *Laozi bianhuajing* 老子變化經, or *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, apparently the Daoist texts he is willing to accept as being from the Western Jin (265–316) or earlier.[5] He further argues that the term could not be borrowed from the Celestial Masters, noting that of the three elements we can definitely associate with them—the Correct and Unitary Covenant with the Powers [*zhengyi mengwei* 正一盟威], the Three Offices [*sanguan* 三官], and the system of twenty-four parishes [*zhi* 治]—only the Three Offices are mentioned in the *Lingbao wufu xu;* further, that passage is found in a late portion of the text and links the Three Offices with the term *diyu* 地獄 "earth prison," which Kobayashi believes to be of Buddhist origin and not consonant with early Celestial Master belief. Finally, he notes that the Three Heavens in this text does not seem to have special significance, being used in collocation with Nine Heavens as a qualifier of exalted deities or texts with no clear distinction being made between the two.[6]

Kobayashi maintains that the mature Three Heavens belief entailed three elements: that at the time of Zhang Ling 張陵 (fl. 142 CE), control over the gods and spirits of the heavens and the earth was transferred from the Six Heavens to the Three Heavens, that Taishang Laojun demanded that Zhang Ling reject the Six Heavens and obey the commands of the new Three Heavens, and that when the Way of the Correct and Unitary Covenant with the Powers was bestowed upon Zhang Ling in order to aid the Three Heavens in their rule, he was appointed Master of the Correct and Unitary Equanimity Pneuma [*zhengyi pingqi* 正一平氣].[7] He notes that all three points are not explicitly stated in every source advocating this Three Heavens belief, but even when not stated, all three are implicit.

Kobayashi finds this Three Heavens belief represented in the following scriptures: the *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經, the *Zhengyi Tianshi gao Zhao Sheng koujue* 正一天師告趙昇口訣, and *Lu Xiansheng Daomen kelüe.* In addition, he uses the presence of the term Three Heavens to date texts like the *Dadao jialing jie* 大道家令戒 to the Liu Song (420–479) and speaks of texts which he dates to the late Eastern Jin (317–420), such as the *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律, as knowing of the Three Heavens but not possessing the full complex.

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[4] The term does occur in the Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 commentary to the *Shangshu* 尚書 Apocrypha. See Nakamura and Yasui, *Isho no kisoteki kenkyū,* 69.

[5] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 490.

[6] For example, Kobayashi (*Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 489) cites the phrase, "numinous writing of the Three Heavens, true treasure of the Nine Heavens," which he maintains refers to a single text. It is unclear how a text that attaches no special significance to a term can be the source of such a term. One would expect the term to be used in a meaningful way and lose that meaning only when borrowed into a text remote from its original context.

[7] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 484.

The High God

The specific titles by which the high god and other divine personages are designated have long been considered important indicators when analyzing and dating texts. Kobayashi makes significant use of this criterion in evaluating a number of scriptures.

In his analysis of the Xiang'er commentary to the Laozi [Laozi xiang'er zhu 老子想爾註], Kobayashi notes the presence of the term Most High Lord Lao [Taishang Laojun 太上老君].[8] He points out that the term is not present in the "old Daoist canons" of the *Taiping jing,* the *Laozi bianhua jing,* Bian Shao's 邊韶 *Laozi ming* 老子銘, the *Huangting waijing jing* 黃庭外景經, or the *Baopuzi,* and rejects as the earliest occurrence a passage in the *Zhengao* dating to the mid-fourth century that appears to conflate the names of three separate deities.[9] Kobayashi finds the earliest example in the *Taishang zhengyi zhougui jing* 太上正一咒鬼經, which he dates to the late Eastern Jin. By this time, he argues, "Most High" had become simply an honorific qualifier which could precede the names of exalted deities. Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 uses the same term in describing his revelation from Laozi of 415.[10]

A related point concerns the identification this Most High Lord Lao as the "Newly Emerged Lord Lao." Again, we find the term associated with texts that Kobayashi dates to the Liu Song, such as the *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經, the *Dadao jialing jie,* and the *Huangshu guodu yi* 黃書過度儀. Kobayashi argues that the Newly Emerged Lord Lao was created by Southern Celestial Master Daoists to emphasize that this Lord Lao, rather than any other, was responsible for the revelation of the new Three Heavens, the rejection of the old Six Heavens, and the linking of this concept with the original Way of the Correct and Unitary Covenant with the Powers.[11]

Finally, Kobayashi maintains that the identification of a personified Dao with the divinized Laozi, the Most High Lord Lao, is a significant, datable feature of some scriptures. This feature is found in the Xiang'er commentary to the Laozi and in the *Dadao jialing jie.* On the other hand, scriptures such as the *Nüqing guilü* and the *Taishang zhengyi zhougui jing,* dated by Kobayashi to the late Eastern Jin, and the *Santian neijie jing,* dated to the early Liu

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[8] The Xiang'er commentary to the tenth chapter of the *Laozi* reads, "The One disperses its form, becoming pneuma; coagulating its form, it becomes the Most High Lord Lao." See Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 304.

[9] *Zhengao* 5.14b. The passage states that one who would study the "Tradition of the Great Simplicity" [Taisuzhuan 太素傳] should worship "Taishang Laojun Shangqing Huangren" 太上老君上清皇人. Based on a line earlier in the same chapter that explains that Laojun is the disciple of Taishang (5.1b), Kobayashi argues that this names three distinct deities. Tao Hongjing's commentary to the passage identifies the Laojun in that case as the Central Yellow Laojun, Perfected of the Left of the Supreme Ultimate [Taiji Zuo Zhenren Huang Lao Jun 太極左眞人黃老君] and the Taishang as the Most High Exalted Sage Great Dao Lord of the Jade Dawn [Taishang Gaosheng Yuchen Da Dao Jun 太上高昇玉晨大道君]. The application of this earlier passage to the latter seems reasonable but the latter passage certainly reads as if it is naming a single deity, rather than three.

[10] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 306, citing *Weishu* 魏書.

[11] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 334.

Song, clearly distinguish the Great Dao from the next highest deity, the Most High Lord Lao. Kobayashi argues that texts that do not differentiate the two figures are later than those that do.[12]

Mahāyāna Daoism?

Another good example of Kobayashi's methodology is found in his treatment of the Lingbao scriptures. It has been traditional to follow comments made by Tao Hongjing in his monumental *Declarations of the Perfected* [Zhengao] (also repeated in the *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要) to the effect that the original Lingbao scriptures were fabricated by Ge Chaofu at the end of the fourth century. Kobayashi argues that these texts could not be so early.

Kobayashi's primary objection is that these Lingbao texts refer to their type of Daoism as the Greater Vehicle [*dasheng* 大乘], a term taken from Buddhist Mahāyāna scriptures. Kobayashi acknowledges that there were Mahāyāna scriptures in China before this, but maintains that the superiority of the Mahāyāna over the Hīnayāna was not understood by the Chinese until the translations of Kumārajīva appeared in the fifth century. Since they make use of this new understanding imparted by Kumārajīva, they must be later than him. We know that Kumārajīva, despite being installed in the far Northwest, was in contact with figures in South China, as demonstrated by his epistolary exchange with Huiyuan 慧遠, therefore this realization could have been made rather quickly. This is important because their existence is confirmed by a passage in the *Santian neijie jing,* which Kobayashi dates to 420.

Analysis

Kobayashi's approach raises a variety of questions. One concerns the degree to which it reflects a believable real-world interaction of human agents over time. For example, in discussing the development of Three Heavens thought, Kobayashi posits that it is only after spreading into South China and coming into contact with the Ge Family Dao that Celestial Master adherents began to adopt this concept.[13] We know that the Celestial Masters were a church with a hierarchical organization and an ordained priesthood. What was this Ge Family Dao? There are texts mentioned in Ge Hong's *Baopuzi,* transmitted to him by his teacher, and texts credited to his nephew Ge Chaofu. Does this justify speaking about a Ge Family Dao? What sort of group would it have been? How large? To speak of such a nebulous entity in terms wholly comparable to the Celestial Masters, with their church hierarchies, parishes of believers, ordinations, pantheon, and rituals raises many questions. A similar construct is the Sandong 三洞 or Three Grottoes sect that Kobayashi distinguishes during the Liu Song.[14] It is vital to see a social reality behind the creation and transmission of scriptures, but such identifications are at best tenuous and should be supported by direct evidence, not merely inferred in order to explain distinct origins for all conflicting evidence in surviving texts.

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[12] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 298–302.

[13] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 493.

[14] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 222ff.

The picture Kobayashi paints of the development of the Daoist literary corpus is, I submit, also inherently unlikely. The Celestial Masters burst upon the historical record as a full-fledged theocratic state with all the administrative, ritual, and doctrinal complexities that we would expect of a mature, self-cognizant religious movement. We know from an inscription of 173 that they possessed already a number of texts that were transmitted during ordination.[15] Indeed, the entire social order of the Celestial Master community, which survives even today, was based upon the systematic, hierarchic transmission of texts, the titles of which were recorded on registers of ordination. We should expect that from its inception the Celestial Masters possessed a number of sacred texts. Under Kobayashi's analysis, however, only one of the hundreds of Daoist scriptures actually dates back to that early community, the *Rite for the One Thousand Two Hundred Officers* [Qian erbai guan yi 千二百官儀], and it is preserved only in short quotations.[16] He does not even acknowledge a version of the *Laozi* that can be associated with the movement, though we know that the text was recited communally and Boltz has shown that the text associated with the Xiang'er commentary is early, with a unique relationship to the Mawangdui texts.[17]

Kobayashi sometimes misses important evidence because of his attention to specific wording. When he argues that texts identifying Laozi with the Dao are late, he ignores the arguments of Anna Seidel that Laozi is already identified with the Dao in Latter Han sources like the *Laozi bianhua jing* and, implicitly, the *Laozi ming*.[18] The title Most High, according to Kobayashi, was originally a distinct and more exalted deity than Laozi, as reflected in the mid-fourth century Maoshan revelations, but the Suo Dan 索紞 manuscript of the *Laozi*, dated 270 CE, styles itself the *Mysterious and Primoridial Scripture of the Dao and its Virtue of the Most High* [Taishang xuanyuan daode jing 太上玄元道德經].[19] Deity names may be useful indicators of date and provenance but they must be used with exceeding care and the awareness that a single deity may be referred to by a variety of epithets simultaneously.

Kobayashi's treatment of the Lingbao scriptures and the "Mahāyāna" issue raises another question. Kobayashi admits that Mahāyāna scriptures circulated in China before Kumārajīva. He gives little indication of just how many there were. It seems safe to assume that something over one hundred fifty Mahāyāna scriptures were translated into Chinese by the end of the third century. Most of these are now lost and we cannot know whether or how they addressed the question of the relationship between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. We must also question Kobayashi's position that Mahāyāna-ism involves "a full understanding of the doctrinal differences between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna."[20] Could not a Chinese adherent of Daoism, hearing that rival Buddhists claimed a Greater Vehicle and a Lesser Vehicle, simply assume

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[15] *Lixu* 3.8b, discussed in Kleeman, *Great Perfection*, 69. This stele records the conferral of twelve scrolls of scriptures on a group of libationers.

[16] For a list of surviving citations of this work, see Ishii and Ōfuchi, *Rikuchō, Tō, Sō no kobunken shoin dōkyō tenseki mokuroku, sakuin*, 599.

[17] Boltz, "Religious and Philosophical Significance of the Hsiang-erh."

[18] See Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu*, 85.

[19] Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu*, 89n4.

[20] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū*, 159.

that the Greater was the better and claim it for his own new variant of Daoism? The supposed ignorance of a such a doctrinal distinction seems a slender thread on which to date a whole body of scriptures, especially in light of testimony from informed individuals that directly contradicts this line of reasoning.

Finally, because of the circular, self-reinforcing nature of much of Kobayashi's argumentation, the reconsideration of a single text will invalidate many of his conclusions. The key text in this regard is the *Dadao jialing jie*. Kobayashi is quick to seize on the presence of even implied dates to categorize texts like the *Santian neijie jing* and the *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* 洞淵神咒經. The *Dadao jialing jie* is explicitly dated to the third century. The last date contained therein is 255 and the text speaks with some immediacy about the fall of the theocratic state in 215 and the travails of the church in the ensuing transitional period.[21] Moreover, the text is written in the voice of Zhang Lu 張魯, was no doubt transmitted through some form of spirit possession, and addresses contemporary events of immediate concern; there is no text like it among productions of the fifth century or later. Further, the text uses the term Qin 秦 for China, another indication of its early date and its origins in the Northwest. There is no reason not to accept this as a valid third-century product of the church.

If one accepts the *Dadao jialing jie* as an authentic document from around 255, most of Kobayashi's other arguments melt away. The *Dadao jialing jie* mentions both the Xiang'er commentary and the *Huangting jing*, if somewhat elliptically, so those texts must also date from the second or early third century. It mentions the Three Heavens, so their existence and their opposition to the Six Heavens was an element of early church doctrine, though we cannot say for certain that the concept was borrowed into the *Lingbao wufu xu*. The high god is referred to simply as the Dao or the Great Dao and is to be equated with Laozi. The doctrine of an impending apocalypse, prominent already in Han apocrypha, and the salvation of a small number of Seed People, was also part of early church teachings and was no doubt an important factor in winning adherents to this revolutionary movement. The presence of some of these ideas among the Shangqing revelations is not surprising, since Yang Xi was a Celestial Master libationer and Celestial Master teaching were widespread in South China by that time. Moreover, texts like the *Lu Xiansheng Daomen kelüe*, which summarize Celestial Master teaching in the fifth century, do not merely reflect recently developed theories but rather are a compendium of surviving teachings from centuries past with some comments as to modern observance.

Finally, the dating of so many important scriptures to the Liu Song, a relatively short period not otherwise heralded as a period of religious ferment, is inherently suspicious. If none of these scriptures were present for the first three centuries of church history, we must wonder what scriptures were in circulation.

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[21] Ōfuchi, *Shoki no dōkyō*, 263–272. See the fuller treatment of this text in Kleeman, *Great Perfection*, 78–80 and Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 149–164.

Confucius

We are presented with another interesting application of textual criticism to Chinese sources in the work of E. Bruce Brooks. Brooks's area of interest is the Warring States era; he is the founder of the Warring States Working Group and the moderator of its listserve. His methodology is expressed most fully in his study of the *Analects* or *Lunyu* 論語 attributed to Confucius, published in collaboration with his wife Taeko under the title *The Original Analects*.[22]

Accretion Theory

Brooks adopts a radically new approach to the *Analects,* citing "our finding that the *Analects* is not one text but a *series of texts* of different date, containing a few sayings that may go back to the historical Confucius, along with many others that were added in the next two centuries by his successors."[23] Of course, criticism of the received text of the *Analects* is not new; Waley distinguished an early core, consisting of chapters 3–9, which he distinguished from later additions in chapters 1–2 and 10–20.[24] Lau concluded that the last five chapters are late, together with chapter 10, and separates out chapters 1, 8, and perhaps 2 as distinguished by a lack of internal organization.[25] But Brooks proposes a much more penetrating analysis that considers each chapter individually and looks within the chapter for additions and interpolations.

Brooks's theory of the incremental development of the text is laid out in an appendix titled "The Accretion Theory of the *Analects*."[26] According to this theory, the text of the *Analects* developed from a single core chapter, chapter 4, through a process of continuing accretion over two and a half centuries, directed by the successive leaders of the Lu 魯 school of Confucius. Moreover, this process is seen as regular, producing roughly two chapters from the hand of each leader of the school mentioned in the *Shiji.*

Brooks uses a variety of types of evidence in producing this analysis. Some are quite traditional and well-accepted, having been applied to other historical and philosophical works. For example, Brooks points out that Duke Ai of Lu 魯哀公 is referred to by a posthumous

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[22] Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). It is in some ways an infuriating work, requiring that the reader learn Brooks' idiosyncratic personal system for romanizing Chinese and equally esoteric ways of expressing dates. See the review by B. J. Mansvelt Beck in the *IIAS Newsletter* 17 (December 1998): 33. For a very different reconstruction of the history of the text, see Makeham, "The Formation of *Lunyu* as a book." Note that although I will refer to Brooks in the singular below, much of the conceptual framework and its detailed application seems to have been developed working closely with his wife and co-author, Taeko.

[23] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 1. Emphasis in original.

[24] Waley, *The Analects of Confucius,* 21.

[25] Lau, *Confucius—The Analects,* 220–233. Brooks reviews some of the earlier theories concerning the composition of the *Analects* in Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 201.

[26] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 201–248.

epithet in chapter 6, indicating that this chapter must postdate his death.[27] Similarly, a passage describing the death of Zengzi 曾子 (d. 436 BCE) in chapter 8 means that that chapter must have reached final form after 436; Brooks takes this one step further, reasoning that it was probably written in or shortly after that year in commemoration of his death. The extra step, going beyond textual evidence to offer greater specificity on the basis of a supposed historical situation, is typical of the Brooks approach.

Other historical datings are far more tenuous, deriving from supposed correlations between rather obscure references in the text and historical events. Thus, Brooks maintains that *Analects* 9:15, which records Confucius's return from Wei 衛 to Lu and his subsequent reform of the ritual use of the Ya 雅 and Song 頌 poems, reflects a shift from Qi 齊 to Wei as the source of ceremonial models.[28] He then links this shift to a series of battles between Lu and Qi in 412, 411, and 408 B.C.E, leading to a proposed date for the chapter of 405. Another example: The first passage of chapter 16 protests an impending attack by Lu on Zhuanyu 顓臾.[29] Brooks can do nothing with this because the event is not recorded in other sources, so he assumes instead that the passage is a veiled reference to the impending conquest of Song 宋 by Qi in 286, hence datable to 287.

Linguistic evidence is sometimes marshaled in defense of the Brooks position. For example, Brooks finds in chapter 4, which he believes to be the earliest, several distinctive linguistic features, including the use of *yu* 於 as a full verb rather than a coverb, the Lu dialect use of *si* 斯 as the conjunction "then," and the use of *chu* 處 as a full verb meaning "to take one's place in."[30] There is no systematic attempt to show that these usages do not occur in other contexts outside the *Analects*. Moreover, the absence of these features in the last eight passages of the chapter, together with the occurrence of the supposedly non-Lu dialect word *ze* 則 for "then" in 4:21, indicate to Brooks that this portion of the chapter is a later addition.[31] Individual passages within the "core" of this chapter (4:1–17) which display no distinctive dialectal features are not questioned.

More common are conclusions based upon considerations of form and structure. Brooks determines an ideal length for an *Analects* chapter, consisting of twenty-four passages. His earliest chapters (chapter 4) reached this only with the addition of a body of later material (passages 18–25) and the elimination of one passage on the basis of its naming a figure other than Confucius. Throughout the work he manipulates chapters, adding and subtracting

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[27] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 205.

[28] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 54, 205. I see no indication in this passage that Confucius's actions were in any way inspired by Wei. *Analects* 7:14 does seems to express admiration for the Qi ritual program.

[29] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 153–154.

[30] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 204.

[31] This despite the fact that *ze,* with its *-k* final, is not strictly comparable to *si* but rather belongs in a series of words possessing the *-k* final and other phonological similarities that have been interpreted as either a fusion with an accusative pronoun or a grammaticized marker of accusative case. See Pulleyblank, *Outline of Classical Grammar,* 130, for a discussion of other members of this class.

passages to reach the magic twenty-four or, when this proves impossible, a "double chapter" of forty-eight. There is no external reference that supports this "ideal" chapter length.

An interesting component of Brooks's formal analysis is the discernment of paired sayings. Although one sometimes finds grammatical parallelism and shared vocabulary linking two phrases, the pairings are admittedly "often based on trivial features." Brooks maintains that such paired sayings are characteristic of the text as a whole.[32] In Brooks estimation, once we pair up the sayings within a chapter, anything interfering with this pattern can be regarded as a later interpolation. The "section principle" finds groups of these paired sayings, often ending in a unpaired saying, that speak to a certain theme. Again, passages within a group determined to constitute a "section" that do not agree with the theme of the section can be classified as interpolations.

Other formal features include length and format. Thus, chapter 4, the earliest by Brooks's reckoning, is characterized by brevity and narrative simplicity, traits which confirm its early date. It also shares a common format: all but two of the passages are introduced by the formula "The Master said . . ." [*zi yue* 子曰]. Such formal characteristics do not, however, seem as important in the Brooks method as other factors. Passages 18–25 of chapter 4 share all the formal features of the preceding "original" passages (brevity, narrative simplicity, and the introductory formula), yet they are judged of different, later origin because they "emphasize domestic and personal virtues," whereas passages 1–17 are characterized as having an "official focus."[33]

Something like a history of ideas is the criterion for other decisions. Some ideas are judged earlier than others, therefore chapters containing these ideas are also considered earlier. For example, the discussion of public ritual in chapter 3 is considered a later development than the "rules of personal protocol" discussed in chapters 11 and 12, so 3 is assigned a later date.[34]

An expansion of this type of standard seems to be at work in the assessment of chapter 2. Brooks discerns an "astral symbolism" in this chapter, exemplified by the first passage, which compares the ideal ruler to the North Star. He associates this stellar metaphor with the state of Qi and hence with chapters 12 and 13, which he also finds influenced by Qi.[35] Since 12 and 13 have no astral imagery, Brooks pronounces them earlier. No explanation is given as to why the generations before 320 B.C.E could not have conceived of comparing the ruler to the North

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[32] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 207.

[33] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 208. Brooks's own summary (p. 209) indicates that the first set of passages include comments on where one should dwell, hating others, conflicts between benevolence and desire, and the fear of death and shame. In fact, it is passages 11–17, which deal explicitly with conduct in office, that seem out of place in the context of the personal focus of passages 1–7 and 18–25.

[34] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 206.

[35] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 206. On the preceding page, however, he identified chapters 12 and 13 as representing the Lu Confucian school source for Mencius's ethical thought. In fact, despite supposed Qi influence, these chapters are dated as being prior to Mencius's departure from Lu in 321.

Star, nor do we learn why later chapters, written in a world now pregnant with astral symbolism, made no use of it.

Analysis

Although we have examined in depth the Brooks position on the composition of the *Analects,* his goal is far grander, aiming at a wholesale change in the way we assess and use Warring States texts. The conclusions he draws concerning other texts are touched upon only briefly in *The Original Analects* (pp. 8–9) but are set out at greater length in other publications and various electronic communications of the Warring States Working Group.[36] If his methodology is justifiable and his conclusions concerning the nature of Warring States authorship are correct, we will have to revise of understanding of that key period in Chinese intellectual history.

There are, however, serious doubts about the application of his methodology. Perhaps the strongest of his arguments are those based on formal characteristics. If a distinctive grammatical usage can be isolated and tied to a specific time or locale, this is persuasive evidence. But the absence of a certain term, such as *yu* used as a full verb, in a relatively small body of text, such as passages 18–25 of chapter 4, should be considered insignificant unless it can be demonstrated that a context existed within this body of text in which such usage would be expected. Moreover, since all the chapters derive from the state of Lu over a period of roughly two centuries, the presence of a dialectal indicator, such as *si* in the sense of "then," in some chapters but not in others is intriguing but puzzling and of uncertain significance.

The structural argument, based on pairs of passages with occasional concluding statements, also raises questions when more closely examined. There are no clear criteria set forth for establishing pairs. Take, for example, the first five passages of chapter 4, which are set forth in graphic fashion to "show their parallel structures."[37] Brooks pairs passages one and two together and similarly links three and four. But it seems obvious from inspection that the closest parallel is between passages two and three. Further, there is close internal parallelism between phrases that constitute passage five. There are numerous other examples where claimed pairs seem at best tendentious and other alternatives seem at least as attractive.[38]

As in the case of Kobayashi, one serious objection involves circularity or the mutual dependency of untested (often untestable) hypotheses. Passages that are initially linked quite tentatively to specific historical events are soon transformed into reliable mileposts by which

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[36] See in particular Brooks's review of Michael Loewe's *Early Chinese Texts,* entitled "The Present State and Future Prospects of Pre-Han Text Studies." Because of the semi-private nature of the posting to the Warring States Working Group listserv, I cannot cite here statements made in that forum.

[37] Arrayed with the Chinese text on pages 17–18.

[38] For example, Brooks pairs 4:18 with 4:19 and 4:20 with 4:21, but 4:18 and 4:20 deal with obedience toward a parent whereas 4:19 and 4:21 expound on how to serve them in their old age, suggesting an ABAB pattern. Similarly, in 3:15–18, Brooks pairs 3:15 with 3:16 and 3:17 with 3:18, but 3:15 and 3:18 deal with knowledge of ritual detail whereas 3:16 and 3:17 argue for performing specific rituals according to traditional methods, a seeming ABBA pattern.

to date other passages or chapters. These chains of dating leap from text to text in a dizzying progression that is difficult to keep track of. Consider the interaction that is claimed between the author(s) of the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 and the ever-expanding *Analects* concerning the Lu officer Zang Wuzhong 臧武仲. Although no one previously has been able to specify an exact century for the final compilation of the *Zuozhuan* or decide upon the antiquity of its sources, Brooks confidently states that compilation began in 350 and was completed in 312.[39] The disparaging reference to Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 and Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 in 14:15 is then assumed to be a criticism of their favorable treatment in the *Zuozhuan,* consequently, chapter 14 is assigned to 310.[40] If a different date is posited for the final compilation of the *Zuozhuan* (no evidence is presented here for 312), or for that specific passage in the *Zuo,* the dating of this chapter must be rethought, and with it the analysis of the *Analects* as a whole.

Conclusion

Textual criticism has played a vital role in our understanding of the historical origins of the Bible and the development of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It is still the focus of continued debate, despite the monumental amount of scholarship already devoted to this topic. Traditional Chinese textual criticism has an august background, but has been slow to adapt to these new theoretical developments.[41] What might we gain from an application of the fruits of Biblical textual criticism to the two cases treated herein?

Source criticism seeks to ascertain the underlying sources drawn upon in the formation of a given text.[42] The classic case is the identification of the J, E, D, and P sources for the Pentateuch. The closest parallel in the works under review here is no doubt Brooks's reconstitution of the original structure of the *Analects*. Brooks is convinced that there has been substantial movement of passages between chapters and is not reticent to "return" them to their rightful place.[43] In so doing, he is reconstructing sources with a specific author and date for different parts of the *Analects*. Kobayashi gives us a similarly detailed analysis of some texts, such as the *Lingbao wufu xu,*[44] but tends to accept most texts as integral. This simplifies his analysis considerably, since the presence of a single feature he considers late is enough to relegate the entire text to that period, but it is doubtful that this reflects the true way archaic texts like the *Nüqing guilü* took shape.

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[39] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 8.

[40] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects,* 119, 121, 257. Brooks argues that a derogatory statement in the *Zuozhuan* attributed to Confucius in fact reflects a response to the *Analects* comment.

[41] This is not to deny the continuing importance of the achievements of Qing *kaozheng* 考證 scholars, who pioneered serious textual criticism of many of the texts that Brooks treats.

[42] Viviana, "Source Criticism," 35ff.

[43] See the chart on pp. 329–330. Twenty-three passages were moved from chapter 14 to chapters 15, 17, and 18; twenty from chapter 8 were moved to chapters 14, 16, and 18.

[44] Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū,* 45–104.

Form criticism focuses on the patterns of language within a text that arise because of the social and literary settings in which it was produced.[45] Brooks makes some use of this approach in discussing the formal characteristics of each chapter, especially in his finding of the presence or absence of such qualities as brevity and narrative simplicity. The introit, "The Master said" is a good example of the sort of formulaic expression that marks a certain category of speech. Unfortunately, Brooks seldom goes beyond this to ask what sort of discursive practices are reflected in this use of this expression. Kobayashi, on the whole, makes little use of this approach. Given the variety of textual formats encompassed by the texts Kobayashi treats, a form critical analysis of them would likely yield positive results. In particular, formal features of the works might resolve ambiguities concerning the filiation of texts, the direction of borrowing, and so on. Neither author evinces an interest in the original goal of form criticism as practiced by Gunkel and his students: to trace complex literary narratives back to a simpler, oral form of transmission.

Perhaps the most relevant methodology to the material discussed by Kobayashi and Brooks is redaction criticism. This is a movement that developed within New Testament scholarship as an attempt to see the gospel redactors as authors and theologians in their own right.[46] Brooks's analysis of the *Analects* into multiple, chronologically distinct layers associated with named redactors reveals a series of active contributors to and shapers of the Confucian legacy, as it would become enshrined in the *Analects*. If he is correct, we can begin to speak of these figures as significant thinkers and creative theologians, each of whom merits individual recognition and study. A good example is Zengzi, credited with the composition of chapters 7 and 8. Brooks compares him to Saint Paul, a fervent convert who never met the founder yet was instrumental in spreading his message.[47] Kobayashi's study raises similar possibilities, particularly in his identification of hitherto unknown groups such as the Ge Family Dao and the Sandong sect. If these terms reflect some historical reality, we should be able to trace the anonymous representatives of these groups as they devised their own sacred texts and augmented others to bring them in line with their own beliefs. It is fair, I think, to say that Kobayashi is not as far along to this goal as Brooks.

Although the forays into textual criticism examined in this essay have resulted in ambiguous results, other attempts to apply these methods have met with more success. Harold Roth, for example, has offered a definitive textual analysis of the *Huainanzi* and has explored how redaction criticism might be applied to other texts as well.[48] One of the most fascinating and potentially rewarding objects of redaction criticism is the narrative history of the Spring and Autumn period known as the *Zuozhuan*. This text was the subject of a pathbreaking examination by Bernhard Karlgren that located its final redaction in the fourth century B.C.E, but this begged the question of whether any of the materials contained therein derived from

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[45] Sweeney, "Form Criticism," 58; Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond."

[46] Streete, "Redaction Criticism," 105.

[47] Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects*, 45.

[48] See Roth, *Textual History of the Huai-nan Tzu*, "Redaction Criticism and the Early History of Taoism," "The Yellow Emperor's Guru."

authentic documents of the Spring and Autumn period that the text treats.[49] In recent studies, Yuri Pines has argued convincingly that much of this material derives from scribal records deriving from the individual feudal states of the era.[50] His argument is based upon clues indicating that individual passages derived from different states and he is able to cite at least one example where two records of the same event derive from accounts recorded in different states. Much work remains to be done in first identifying, then determining, the geographical origin and dating of various strata of the text, but here at least we have a path forward. Once a better chronology for the text is established, it may be possible to delineate a genealogy of ideas for the Spring and Autumn period that will permit us to further refine our dating criteria and determine just what the values and assumptions of pre-Confucian China were.

In conclusion, the detailed textual analysis of Brooks and Kobayashi has opened new vistas on the intellectual and religious world of ancient and medieval China. As a result of their studies we can envision a much more complex, interactive world of ideas and identify a number of significant thinkers who had once been thought mere transmitters, even if we cannot associate with them a specific name or exact date. Significant questions remain concerning the text critical methodology employed by both scholars. It is up to us now to pursue this path, to test their claims rigorously by employing the best modern methods of textual analysis, by placing these results within the context of the most accurate reconstruction of pre-modern Chinese society we can manage, and by measuring our results against those derived from other cultures, similar and disparate, to determine their inherent probability. This is one major challenge that confronts the study of Chinese religion in the twenty-first century.

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[49] Karlgren, *Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan.*

[50] See Pines, "Intellectual Change in the Chunqiu Period," *Foundations of Confucian Thought,* "Lexical Changes in Zhanguo Texts."

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