Lexical Changes in Zhanguo Texts

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This article explores lexical differences among several historical and philosophical texts composed between the fifth and the third centuries B.C. By tracing the changing usage of seven major terms of philosophical and political discourse, clear patterns of temporal change are demonstrated. These findings may suggest a new and reliable means of dating pre-imperial texts, or, more precisely, of dating their Ur-texts.

THREE QUARTERS OF A CENTURY AGO Bernhard Karlgren undertook a bold attempt to analyze grammatical differences among major pre-imperial texts in order to verify their dating and authenticity. His studies, among which the article "On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Tso Chuan*" was the most influential, had a profound impact on scholarly discourse in China and in the West. Numerous scholars have followed Karlgren's lead, modified or criticized his methodology, and tried to propose alternative ways of dating pre-imperial writings.[1]

Attempts to develop new approaches toward the dating of Chunqiu 春秋 (722–453 B.C.) and Zhanguo 戰 國 (453–221 B.C.) texts were aimed at resolving one of the most controversial issues in the history of Chinese thought. Establishing a chronological sequence of pre-imperial texts might allow us to discern lines of intellectual influence among contemporary thinkers and resolve many enigmas of their intellectual legacy, which shaped China's traditional culture. Yet despite the great scholarly importance of this issue, attempts to establish a general chronology for pre-imperial texts were less popular among Western scholars in the last quarter of the twentieth century. W. A. C. H. Dobson's efforts in the 1960s were the last to propose a comprehensive chronological framework for pre-imperial writings,[2] until the more recent and ongoing work of E. Bruce Brooks.

Several factors may have contributed to a reluctance to continue systematic exploration of the dating of pre-imperial texts. Aside from certain flaws in Karlgren's methodology, which raised doubts in his results, a more important factor that discouraged later researchers from continuing his efforts was the deep reappraisal of the nature of Chunqiu and Zhanguo writings. Modern studies, of which Mark E. Lewis's magnum opus *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1999) may be most representative, question the previous monochromatic picture of major historical and philosophical texts as being products by a single author, compiled within a short period of time. To the contrary, it is widely accepted today that these texts resulted from a long period of accretion, which included not just adding, but also editing out or modifying large portions of a text. Thus, the mere presumption of the fixed dating of a single text seems methodologically untenable. Instead we should prefer to discuss the dating of each passage,

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[1] Karlgren first presented his views in "On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Tso Chuan*," *Göteborgs Högscholas Årsskrift* 32 (1926): 1–65. His attempt to attribute grammatical differences to dialectical discrepancies was immediately criticized in reviews by Albert Forke (*Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 6 [1928]: 514–15) and Henri Maspero (*Journal asiatique* 212 [1928]; 159–65), to which Karlgren angrily replied in "The Authenticity of Ancient Chinese Texts," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 1 (1929): 165–83 (see particularly pp. 176–82). Later critics focused on Karlgren's neglect of stylistic differences between the surveyed texts, and on inaccuracies in his calculations of the distribution of particles. See, for instance, W. A. C. H. Dobson, "Authenticating and Dating Archaic Chinese Texts," *T'oung Pao* 53 (1967): 233 n. 1; Sin Chou-yiu (Shan Zhouyao) 單周堯, "Gao Benhan *Zuo zhuan* zuozhe fei Lu ren shuo zhiyi" 高本漢左傳作者非魯人說質疑, *Journal of Oriental Studies* 29.2 (1991): 207–36; Jens Østergård Petersen, "The Distribution of 於 and 于 in *Zuozhuan* 左傳: A Stylistic Approach" (forthcoming).

[2] See the summary of Dobson's research in his "Authenticating and Dating," 233–42.

and such discussion in all but a few instances cannot but remain very speculative.[3] So, if the dating of a single text proves to be largely undeterminable, then attempts to establish a general chronological framework may appear to be hopeless.

Despite the above reservations, which I generally share, I believe that there is potential benefit in reconsidering the dating of pre-imperial texts. Statements like "it is impossible to date pre-Han texts with any degree of accuracy" lead the research of the pre-imperial intellectual legacy to a dead end.[4] While almost every received Western Zhou (1046–772), Chunqiu, and Zhanguo text indeed contains later additions and interpolations, this does not mean necessarily that the text becomes entirely non-datable. Unmistakable linguistic differences among pre-imperial texts, observed by Karlgren, Dobson, and others, strongly suggest that at least certain Ur-texts had been produced at a fixable time and space, and while these Ur-texts were later edited and modified, their role as the milestones in the development of pre-imperial discourse cannot be easily dismissed. In what follows I shall try to marshal additional evidence for the identifiable temporal difference between Chunqiu and Zhanguo (Ur-)texts, in the hope that this evidence might stimulate renewed interest in establishing a general chronological framework for pre-imperial writings.

Unlike Karlgren and Dobson, I shall focus not on grammatical aspects of supposed chronological change in Zhanguo texts, but rather on lexical changes.[5] My preference for a lexical rather than grammatical focus derives primarily from the higher reliability of this method. Tra-

ditional Chinese forgers were aware of grammatical peculiarities of ancient texts, and skillfully employed their knowledge in producing faked texts attributable to earlier times. Karlgren was the first to notice that the forged chapters of the so-called "old text" *Shu jing* 書經 are grammatically nearly indistinguishable from the authentic chapters of the "modern text."[6] The fourth-century A.D. *Shu jing* forgers were able to falsify the ancient grammar; but they were much less aware of lexical changes, which resulted in their use of certain anachronistic terms. For instance, the term *ji* 機 (trigger of a crossbow), which as we shall discuss below did not exist before the fourth century B.C., is used in the "Tai Jia" 太甲 chapter that spuriously claims Shang 商 (ca. 1600–1046) provenance. Another Zhanguo term, discussed below, *wanwu* 萬物 (ten thousand things, all the things), appears in the putative early Zhou chapter, the "Tai shi" 泰誓.[7] These mistakes of the forgers suggest that analyzing the text's vocabulary may serve as a more reliable method for determining its dating than analysis of grammatical peculiarities.[8]

While grammatical differences may often be explained stylistically, as Karlgren's critics have convincingly shown, certain changes in the vocabulary of texts have a demonstrable temporal parameter. In some instances, as in the case of the crossbow-related terms discussed below, we may fix with a high degree of certainty the earliest date of the term's possible introduction into discourse. In other instances, as in the case of the term *li* 理 (inner structure, principle), semantic changes over time are also easily observable. In these cases we can plausibly assume that changes in vocabulary derive from different dates, rather than from stylistic or dialectic reasons.

Aside from the above advantages, investigating vocabulary poses several problems for determining the text's dating. While massive occurrences of certain terms in a given text may indeed indicate that the text was composed after these terms had been introduced into dis-

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[3] For an interesting, albeit not very convincing attempt to trace separate authorship for almost every layer of the *Lunyu* 論語, see E. Bruce Brooks and Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1998).

[4] See David C. Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2001), 315.

[5] Maspero was the first to notice that Karlgren's analysis of grammatical differences among the texts should be substantiated by search for differences in vocabulary (see his review, p. 165). Karlgren grudgingly agreed with his opponent's remark, but argued that to fix changes in the vocabulary of the texts, "we need hundreds or rather thousands" pages of these texts, and that these are unavailable ("Authenticity of Ancient Texts," 181). It should be noted that Karlgren's study was done before the age of concordances and indexes, which greatly facilitate our work. Current research is aided even more by electronically available texts, which now largely supersede paper concordances.

[6] Indeed, the forger "overdid it" in Karlgren's words, eliminating possible particles, which would not be consistent with the standard grammar of the "new text" chapters ("On the Authenticity," 53).

[7] See *Shang shu zhengyi* 尚書正義 (*Shisanjing zhushu*), "Tai Jia" 8.164a; "Tai shi" 11.180b.

[8] Of course, we cannot entirely rule out the possibility that a shrewd forger would refrain from using anachronistic terms in his text, but the extant evidence does not support this assumption. It seems that the forgers were relatively unaware of lexical changes throughout history.

course, the opposite part of the equation requires reliance on a problematic *argumentum ex silentio*. Can we be sure that absence of several terms from a certain text really suggests the text's early provenance? The answer may be positive only when we speak of relatively wide-spread terms, the absence of which cannot be explained stylistically or dialectically. But even then certain problems remain unresolvable: a relatively short text (of a thousand characters or less) may just incidentally avoid using anachronistic terms, partly invalidating thereby the *argumentum ex silentio*. Thus, lexical analysis, while helpful in discussing the dating of lengthy texts is much less beneficial when short texts are in question, and it is rarely useful in determining later interpolations or additions to the early Ur-text. I do not claim therefore that the method I propose will resolve all doubts regarding the dating of every Zhanguo text. I believe, however, that when properly applied, lexical analysis may contribute significantly toward determining the dates of major texts, thereby bolstering scholarly efforts to establish a reliable chronology of pre-imperial writings.

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Investigating a text's vocabulary as the means of establishing its dating is not a novel method. Centuries ago some Chinese scholars suggested that anachronistic usage of certain terms could serve as an indicator of a text's date. For instance, the Song scholar Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162) argued that certain administrative terms employed in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 indicate the late Zhanguo or even Qin 秦 (221–207) provenance of this text, much later than presumed by traditional chronology. While Zheng Qiao's examples of putative Zhanguo anachronisms in the *Zuo zhuan* are not necessarily accurate, and later scholars criticized his findings, his methodology remained influential.[9] For instance, the Yuan scholar Zhao Fang 趙汸 (1319–1369) used a similar method to defend the early dating of the *Zuo zhuan*:

> The *History of the Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書) was compiled by Fan Yu 范煜 (i.e., Fan Ye 范曄, 398–445) and thus it became as terse as [writings] of the Jin 晉 (265–420) and Song 宋 (420–479) times; the history of Yao 堯, Shun 舜, and the Three Dynasties was compiled by Sima Qian 司

馬遷 (ca. 145–86 B.C.), and thus it became as coarse as [writings] of the Qin and Han 漢 (206 B.C.–A.D.220) times. Though Mr. Zuo is considered a Zhanguo individual, his style has absolutely no Zhanguo flavor. For instance, terms depicting warfare in Zhanguo books completely differ from those in the *Zuo zhuan*. The *Zuo* has no expressions like "storming a fortress" 拔其城, "seizing a city" 下其邑, "crushing [an enemy]" 大破之, "inflicting a sudden raid" 急擊. The term "General" 將軍 is seen only once in the later *Zuo*; perhaps it was the first time that this term was heard.[10]

Zhao Fang might have been one of the first to use the *argumentum ex silentio* for the dating of ancient texts, assuming that if a certain term is not seen in the text, then the text might have been compiled prior to the introduction of this term into general discourse. However, as mentioned above this assumption is problematic: absence of a certain term from the given text may sometimes be explained otherwise, dialectically, stylistically, or just by the relative shortness of the text. Nonetheless, when properly modified, Zhao's observation may serve as a useful departure point.

In the twentieth century several scholars in China and Japan analyzed lexical differences among pre-imperial texts in order to establish their dates. Particularly Yoshimoto Michimasa 吉本道雅 in several studies, in addition to employing Karlgren's methodology, also tried to determine the ways in which certain terms in pre-imperial texts had been modified and replaced by synonyms in the later texts.[11] Yoshimoto's approach has, however, certain weak points. First, his examples are confined to the few instances in which a certain sentence occurs in two or more texts, such as the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Guoyu* 國語; in all these cases Yoshimoto suggests that text B cites text A. This may not necessarily be the case, and at least in some cases it is possible that two

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[9] For Zheng Qiao's views, see his *Liu jing aolun* 六經澳論 (*Siku quanshu*), 4: 92–93; for criticism of his work, see Yong Rong 永瑢, Ji Yun 紀昀 et al., *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (rpt. Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 1999), 143; Zhang Menglun 張孟倫, *Zhongguo shixueshi* 中國史學史 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1983), 66–83.

[10] See Zhao Fang, *Chunqiu shi shuo* 春秋師説 (*Siku quanshu*), 1: 261.

[11] See his "*Kokugo shôkô*" 國語小考, *Tôyôshi kenkyû* 東洋史研究 48.3 (1989): 421–51; "*Shunjû jigo kô*" 春秋事語考, *Sen'oku hakkokan kiyô* 泉屋博物館紀要 6 (1990): 37–52; "*Dankyû kô*" 檀弓考, *Kodai bunka* 古代文化 44.5 (1992): 38–46; "*Kyôkurei kô*" 曲禮考, in *Chûgoku kodai reisei kenkyô* 中國古代禮制研究, ed. Kominami Ichirô 小南一郎 (Kyoto: Kyoto Univ. Press, 1995), 117–63. Lexical differences were employed also by A. C. Graham in his attempt to trace separate origins of the *Mozi* chapters: *Divisions in Early Mohism Reflected in the Core chapters of Mo-tzu* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1985), 3.

texts may be citing a common source. Second, most of Yoshimoto's examples involve relatively rare terms, the number of occurrences of which is too small to establish meaningful statistical patterns of their distribution in pre-imperial texts. Finally, Yoshimoto refrained from developing a comprehensive framework of linguistic changes throughout the Zhanguo period.[12]

In what follows I shall make use of the approaches of Zhao Fang and Yoshimoto, while trying to improve on their methodology. By analyzing the distribution of several common philosophical and military terms throughout eight pre-imperial texts, I hope to show that these terms, which became ubiquitous by the late Zhanguo period, were introduced into discourse at a relatively late date, either the fifth or the fourth century B.C., and hence that the absence of these terms from certain texts indicates a relatively early date for those texts. My findings, I hope, may provide a first step toward reestablishing a temporal framework for Zhanguo writings.

Seven of the eight texts I have chosen are traditionally dated to the period from the fifth to the third century B.C. My working hypothesis is that these texts should reflect changes in the vocabulary used during this period. I am well aware of the possible (and justifiable) objections to the use of traditional chronology and, moreover, to treat-ment of the received texts as if they existed in their present form from the moment of their compilation. It is not my intention, of course, to restore the credibility of traditional dating; I resort to it only as a matter of convenience, as a departure point for discussion, and to avoid circularity in my arguments. I have furthermore chosen texts for which traditional dating has been approved at least by some modern independent studies. Finally, I shall generally avoid distinguishing later additions from the original "Ur-text," because should I make such distinctions, I might be accused of manipulating the results.

The eight texts used in this comparison can be divided into four groups. The earliest group is represented by two fo the most controversial texts, the *Zuo zhuan* (hereafter *Zuo*) and the *Lunyu* 論語. The dating of the *Zuo* has been one of the most hotly debated issues in Chinese scholarship for at least thirteen centuries. Whether or not this text was compiled in the fifth century B.C. is of minor importance for my discussion. The *Zuo*, as I have argued elsewhere, is largely based on the scribal records from various Chunqiu states, and thus its vocabulary, except for the narrator's remarks, should reflect that of the Chunqiu period.[13] The putative fifth-century B.C. provenance of the *Lunyu* has been and continues to be questioned by scholars both inside and outside China. Again, putting aside the issue of when the received text gained its final form, I adopt the view that insofar as the *Lunyu* reflects sayings by Confucius (trad. 551–479 B.C.) and the first two generations of his disciples, the vocabulary of this text should belong to the fifth century B.C. or slightly later, but is still akin to that of the bulk of the *Zuo*.[14]

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[12] I shall give one example of Yoshimoto's difficulties. In his discussion of the dating of the "Tan Gong" 檀弓 chapter of the *Liji* Yoshimoto compares accounts about Prince Shensheng 申生 of Jin 晉 in the "Tan Gong," the *Zuo zhuan*, and the *Guoyu*. In a sentence "you should better leave," or "why are not you leaving?" the *Zuo zhuan* and the "Tan Gong" use the term *xing* 行 for "to leave," while *Guoyu* uses the term *qu* 去 (Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981; hereafter *Zuo*], Xi 4, 299; Sun Xidan 孫希旦, *Liji jijie* 禮記集解 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996], "Tan Gong shang" 7.174; *Guoyu* [Shanghai: Guji, 1990], "Jin yu 2" 8.291). Yoshimoto, who estimates that the *Guoyu* is the later of the three texts (see "*Kokugo* shôkô"), has great difficulties explaining why this text uses *qu*, which according to Yoshimoto is an earlier term for the word "to leave" ("*Dankyû kô*," 44 and 46 n. 19). Had Yoshimoto been more systematic in his discussion, he would have found that in earlier texts *qu* appears mostly as a transitive verb "to expel," "to eradicate" (80 of 122 verbal usages in the *Zuo zhuan*, 66 percent; eight out of thirteen times in the *Lunyu*, 62 percent) only in late Zhanguo texts does the intransitive meaning "to leave," "to abandon" become dominant (54 of 60 verbal usages in the *Mengzi*—83 percent; 78 of 134 times in the *Lüshi chunqiu*—58 percent). Hence, it is more reasonable to assume that, if anything, the *Guoyu* language is later than that of the "Tan Gong" and the *Zuo zhuan*.

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[13] See the detailed discussion about the dating and the nature of the *Zuo* and its sources in Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2002), 14–26. Alternatively, Schaberg has suggested that the *Zuo* was compiled from both written and oral sources, and the relative weight of the latter was considerably higher (*A Patterned Past*, 315–24). My disagreement with Schaberg is twofold. First, I believe that he exaggerates the extent of the oral tradition's role in the composition of the *Zuo*. Second, and most importantly, I believe that most of the orally circulated anecdotes were incorporated into the *Zuo* not directly, but from the Chunqiu scribal records, which largely mediated between Chunqiu (real or imagined) historical events, and the text of the *Zuo* (for details, see Pines, *Foundations*, 21–26).

[14] The framework of the current discussion does not allow me to deal adequately with the complicated nature of the *Lunyu* (for recent discussion of this topic, see, e.g., Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects*; cf. David C. Schaberg, "Confucius as Body

The second group is represented by a single text, the *Mozi* 墨子, or, more precisely, by the core chapters of that work. Wu Yujiang has convincingly argued that these chapters may have originated within Mozi's lifetime (ca. 460–390 B.C.) or shortly thereafter.[15] I concur with Wu's research, leaving aside for the time being the question of the possible separate origin of each of the triple sections into which the core chapters are divided.[16]

The third group, is represented by the text datable to the late fourth century B.C., namely the *Mengzi* 孟子, a book widely believed to have been compiled by Mencius's (ca. 379–304) disciples, and the texts recently unearthed in Guodian 郭店, including the Guodian version of the *Laozi* 老子. The Guodian tomb is usually dated to the last quarter of the fourth century B.C., although proposed dates have ranged from 350 to 278 B.C.; the texts deposited in the tomb should have been compiled therefore in the second half of the fourth century B.C. or slightly earlier. Of course, it is not necessary that all the texts deposited in the same tomb must have been produced at the same period of time; and the Guodian texts may reflect temporal discrepancies of more than one generation.[17]

These texts are useful, however, for our discussion, because the tomb's date serves as a irrefutable *terminus ante quem* for their compilation. Unless some of these texts had been compiled a century or more before the date of the burial (an assertion that is not supported by their content), they can be considered products of the fourth century B.C., and the temporal parameters of their language should not differ considerably from those of the *Mengzi*.

Finally, three texts from the second half of the third century B.C. are the *Xunzi* 荀子, *Han Feizi* 韓非子, and *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋. These texts are the least controversial (although of course they may contain certain Han interpolations), and they serve as a control group for the present study. It is my assertion that the terms under discussion here should be common in these texts, otherwise these terms might not belong to the Zhanguo milieu.

The present comparison considers seven cases, for which the temporal parameters of change are most easily observable. This choice was dictated by several factors. First, I looked for terms that either were not used, or at least remained marginal, before the Zhanguo period. Second, I chose terms that became common no later than the third century B.C., so that their absence from certain texts would reasonably suggest these texts' early provenance. Third, I focused on terms with demonstrable temporal parameters regarding their introduction into philosophical discourse. These factors severely limited the selection of suitable terms, and I have left aside many terms for which merely one of the above preconditions does not hold.[18]

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and Text: On the Generation of Knowledge in Warring States and Han Anecdotal Literature," paper presented at the conference "Text and Ritual in Early China," Princeton, October 2000; Guo Yi 郭沂, "*Lunyu, Lunyu* lei wenxian, Kongzi shiliao: cong Guodian jian tan qi" 論語、論語類文獻、孔子史料：從郭店簡談起, at *http://www.bamboosilk.org/Wssf/Guoyi6–01.htm*). Certainly, I do not intend either to question the existence of later layers in the *Lunyu* (or for this matter in the *Zuo* as well), or to deny that both books took their final form much later than the fifth century B.C. Yet, *pace* Brooks and Brooks, I follow the well-grounded suggestion of Yang Bojun, that the bulk of *Lunyu* sayings should have been recorded within a few generations of Confucius' disciples, and hence the language of this text should basically reflect fifth-century B.C. vocabulary (See Yang Bojun, "Dao yan" 導言, in idem, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1991], 26–30).

[15] Wu Yujiang 吳毓江, "*Mozi* gepian zhenwei kao" 墨子各篇真偽考, in *Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1994), 1025–55.

[16] For this hypothesis, see A. C. Graham *Divisions*; cf. Erik W. Maeder, "Some Observations on the Composition of the 'Core Chapters' of the *Mozi*," *Early China* 17 (1992): 27–82.

[17] For the dating of the Guodian tomb, see articles collected in the 20th issue of *Zhongguo zhexue* 中國哲學, viz. *Guodian Chujian yanjiu* 郭店楚簡研究 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu, 1999). To my knowledge, the only attempt to argue for a post-278 B.C. date for the texts is that of Wang Baoxuan 王葆玹, "Shi lun Guodian Chujian ge pian de zhuanzuo shidai ji qi beijing: Jian lun Guodian ji Baoshan Chu mu de shidai wenti" 試論郭店

楚簡各篇的撰作時代及其背景：兼論郭店及包山楚墓的時代問題, *Guodian Chujian*, 366–90. Wang's analysis contains many interesting arguments, but it is based on a series of quite problematic assertions. Alternatively, we should consider the possibility of an earlier dating for the Guodian texts, which might have been compiled long before their being deposited in the tomb. For the present study, however, I tentatively concur with the majority view that dates most (or all) of the Guodian texts to the second half of the fourth century B.C.

[18] Among the terms left out of the present discussion are those mentioned by Zhao Fang in the passage cited above, since they are largely, albeit not exclusively, confined to the military texts, as well as such terms as *qian* 錢 (coins), *baixing* 百姓 and *qianshou* 黔首 in the meaning of "all the people," *chuan* 船 ("a boat"), or *qi* 騎 (to ride a horse). All these terms are demonstrably late, and their occurrence may indicate a late provenance of a text; but since they are employed rarely even in late Zhanguo texts, their absence cannot be regarded as significant for our discussion.

The cases I shall discuss below are: crossbow-related terms (*nu* 弩, *shu* 樞, and *ji* 機); the compounds *renyi* 仁義, *wanwu* 萬物, *wansheng* 萬乘, and *buyi* 布衣; the term *li* 理 (inner structure, pattern, principle), and the pair *yin-yang* 陰陽 in its meaning as basic cosmic forces or binary opposites. In all these cases temporal parameters of change can be observed with a high degree of certainty. All these terms are absent from Western Zhou and Chunqiu texts, while by the late Zhanguo period they became relatively widespread. Their omnipresence in late Zhanguo writings suggests that their absence from relatively lengthy texts cannot be attributed merely to stylistic or dialectical reasons.

CROSSBOW (*NU* 弩) AND TRIGGER (*JI* 機 OR *SHU* 樞)

We begin with a term that albeit not very common, may serve as an excellent *terminus ante quem non* for Zhanguo texts. Mentions of the crossbow and crossbow-related technology indicate unmistakably a mid- to late-Zhanguo provenance for a text. Although the crossbow might have been invented in the late Chunqiu period, and crossbow-related mechanisms were unearthed from an early Zhanguo tomb in the state of Lu 魯, the spread of the crossbow in the early Zhanguo period seems to have been relatively slow. Only in the second half of the fourth century B.C. did the crossbow become a commonly used weapon for Zhanguo armies, bringing about deep changes in military thinking and military practice.[19] This spread of the crossbow is reflected in Zhanguo vocabulary. Not only are crossbow and crossbow-related terms mentioned in late Zhanguo texts, but it is noteworthy that some of the terms are used metaphorically. Of these the most important is the "trigger," designated in Zhanguo texts either as *ji* 機 or *shu* 樞. This term quickly

acquired metaphorical meanings such as "pivot," "key," "crucial link"; and these meanings predominate among the occurrences of *ji* and *shu* in late Zhanguo writings.[20]

Expectedly, neither *nu* nor *shu* nor *ji* is mentioned in the *Shi jing* 詩經 or the "modern text" chapters of the *Shu jing*.[21] These terms are also absent from the *Zuo*, the *Lunyu*, the core chapters of the *Mozi*, and the Guodian texts. *Mengzi* contains a single reference to the trigger, speaking of "a craft of [seizing the] trigger of change" (i.e., adapting to change).[22] This usage suggests that the trigger had become sufficiently widespread by the age of Mencius to acquire a metaphorical meaning.[23]

In late Zhanguo texts, the terms *nu*, *ji*, and *shu* appear more frequently, both in their literal and their metaphorical meanings. Xunzi mentions the crossbow once, while the trigger appears altogether six times in different compounds: four times as *shu yao* 樞要 (pivotal principle), once as *shuji* 樞機, and once as *ji* 機. Han Feizi mentions the crossbow four times and the trigger (*ji*) eight times, both in literal and metaphorical meanings. In the *Lüshi chunqiu*, the crossbow is mentioned twice and the trigger six times: four times as *ji*, twice as *shu*. By the late Zhanguo period, crossbow-related terms had become

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[19] According to popular theory, the crossbow first appeared in the late Chunqiu period in the state of Chu 楚 (see Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, *Zhongguo qingtongqi* 中國青銅器 [Shanghai: Guji, 1988], 79), but it entered the Central Plain only in the mid-Zhanguo period (Yang Kuan 楊寬, *Zhanguo shi* 戰國史, rev. ed. [Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe 1998], 304). The earliest archaeologically attested remnants of the crossbow are from an early Zhanguo tomb in the state of Lu, and from mid-Zhanguo tombs in Changsha, in the state of Chu (see Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, *Gudai Zhangguo qingtongqi* 古代中國青銅器 [Tianjin: Nankai daxue, 1995], 274). For the impact of the crossbow on the Zhanguo armies, see Mark E. Lewis, "Warring States: Political History," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 622–23.

[20] Both *shu* and *ji* carried other meanings, which are not discussed here. *Shu* appears in the *Shi jing* as a "thorn-elm" (*Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 [*Shisanjing zhushu*], 6.361c [Mao 115]); *ji* also meant a funerary stretcher (see, e.g., *Liji jijie*, "Tan Gong xia" 11.281).

[21] Scholarly consensus holds that some of the "modern text" chapters of the *Shu jing*, particularly those that deal with the pre-Zhou period, were composed in the Zhanguo period. How then can we explain the absence of our terms from these late chapters? Their absence might be incidental, as the *Shu jing* documents are relatively short. It is also possible (and is widely accepted) that most of the forged chapters were compiled in the early Zhanguo period, hence we should search not for late Zhanguo but for late Chunqiu lexical anachronisms. Finally, the expansion of terms under discussion (including those mentioned in n. 18 above) may also help to discern late layers of the *Shu* chapters: for instance, the "Yu gong" 禹貢 chapter, attributed traditionally to the legendary founder of the Xia dynasty, mentions iron among the normal tribute items of Liangzhou 梁州; this undeniably indicates the Zhanguo provenance of this chapter (see *Shang shu zhengyi* 6.150a).

[22] See Yang Bojun, ed., *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1992), "Jin xin shang" 13.7, 303.

[23] Predictably, the earliest texts to employ crossbow-related terminology are those connected with military specialists, most importantly the *Sunzi*, discussed separately in the epilogue of this article.

common even in non-military texts. Thus, the absence of these terms from the *Zuo*, *Lunyu*, and the core chapters of the *Mozi* seems to indicate a textual provenance prior to mid-Zhanguo times.

RENYI 仁義 (BENEVOLENCE AND PROPRIETY)

Recently, David S. Nivison has claimed that the compound *renyi* preceded "the age of [Zhanguo] philosophers."[24] The extant evidence does not support this observation. While both terms, *ren* and *yi*, were quite common in ethical and philosophical discourse since the late Chunqiu period, the compound *renyi* is of relatively late origin. In the *Shi jing* and the "new text" chapters of the *Shu jing* the terms *ren* and *yi* are never mentioned in conjunction with each other. In the *Zuo* the terms are mentioned together several times when multiple virtues are enumerated by the speakers, and twice *ren* and *yi* appear in close conjunction as the major virtues to be used as standards of moral behavior. Interestingly, one of these latter cases appears in the latest portion of the *Zuo*, in a speech allegedly made in 479 B.C.; another is a saying by the *Zuo* narrator, the so-called "superior man" (*junzi* 君子).[25] These occurrences suggest that by the late Chunqiu period *ren* and *yi* were aleady semantically connected. The compound *renyi* seem not to have appeared yet, as it is not attested either in the *Zuo* or in the *Lunyu*.

The compound *renyi* might have been introduced by Mozi, who elevated the position of the term *yi* at the expense of Confucius's emphasis on ritual (*li* 禮).[26] In the core chapters of the *Mozi*, *renyi* becomes a standard term designating the foundations of personal morality. It appears no less than nineteen times in these chapters and hereafter continues to dominate mid- and late-Zhanguo texts: twenty-seven occurrences in the *Mengzi*, four in the Guodian texts,[27] thirty-two in the *Xunzi*, forty-seven

in the *Han Feizi* and nine in the *Lüshi chunqiu*. Since the mid-Zhanguo period, then, the term *renyi* is pervasive in philosophical texts, and its absence from the *Zuo* and the *Lunyu* further strengthens the probability of the early provenance of those texts.

WANWU 萬物 (TEN THOUSAND THINGS, ALL THE THINGS)

The earliest meaning of the term *wu* 物, as attested already in the Shang oracle inscriptions, is a "multi-colored cow" or, more generally, "sacrificial item." Thus, in the *Shi jing* and the "new text" *Shu jing* chapters, *wu* appears predominantly in ritual context, and in all but one case it lacks its later abstract meaning of "a thing."[28] In the *Zuo*, *wu* appears eighty-four times, and it has no less than thirteen meanings ranging from "a sacrificial item" to "color," "a person," and "a thing."[29] Among eighty-four occurrences of *wu*, in thirty-one instances it may be identified as "a thing"; in an additional four cases *wu* refers to natural phenomena. Significantly, the majority of these instances (27 of 35, i.e., 77 percent) are located in passages datable to the second half of the sixth century B.C.,[30] which may suggest that it was in the late Chunqiu period that the term *wu* acquired its largely "secular" meaning as "a thing" unrelated to sacrificial activities. Yet the compound *wanwu* does not appear in the *Zuo*, and it is likely that it was introduced at a later stage, when the meaning of *wu* as "a thing" had become predominant.

The *Zuo* contains a compound *baiwu* (百物, "a hundred things"), an approximate synonym of *wanwu*; here it refers to the multitude of concrete "things" (*wu*) from the distant lands that were depicted on the Xia 夏

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[24] See his chapter on "The Classical Philosophical Writings," in *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 751.

[25] See respectively *Zuo*, Ai 16, 1700; Zhuang 22, 221.

[26] For Mozi's use of *yi* as the counterpart of *li*, see Yuri Pines, "Disputers of the Li: Breakthroughs in the Concept of Ritual in Preimperial China," *Asia Major*, 3rd ser. 13.1 (2000): 22–23. For more about the compound *renyi* as based on a complementarity of morally "constant" *ren* and "relative" *yi*, see the insightful discussion of William G. Boltz in his review of John Knoblock's *Xunzi* (*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 54 [1992]: 416).

[27] Once in the *Laozi*, once in the "Wu xing" 五行, and twice in the "Liu de" 六德 chapter.

[28] For a single exception, in which *wu* may refer to "a thing" or "a phenomenon," see *Mao shi zhengyi*, 18.568a (Mao 260). Altogether *wu* is mentioned seven times in the *Shi jing* and four times (of which one is a place name) in the "modern" text of the *Shu jing*.

[29] For details of the meaning of *wu* in the *Zuo*, see Yang Bojun and Xu Ti 徐提, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan cidian* 春秋左傳詞典 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 419–20.

[30] This observation must be modified, should we take into account those speeches of the *Zuo* that I have identified elsewhere as Zhanguo interpolations (Pines, *Foundations*, 233–46); in addition we should count the narrator's remarks and comments as a separate, later layer of the *Zuo*. Modified results for the *Zuo* text would give six occurrences of *wu* as "a thing" in the first century and a half of the *Zuo* (722–572 B.C.) and fourteen (70 percent) for the later period (all of these occurrences are scattered in the speeches of 541–510 B.C.).

cauldrons to distinguish between beneficial and harmful creatures.[31] The same term appears once in the *Lunyu* as well, and there it refers to "all the things"; it is possible that the compound *baiwu* preceded *wanwu* as the designation of the material world.[32] The first occurrence of the term *wanwu* is in two passages of the *Mozi*, in which the term *wu* has already acquired its predominant abstract meaning as "a thing." The compound *wanwu* appears only once in the *Mengzi*, but it is recorded no less than nine times in the Guodian texts. The Guodian texts also contain one reference to *baiwu* and two other to the synonymous *qun wu* 群物 (multitude of things). It should be noticed that among the nine occurrences of *wanwu* in the Guodian texts, eight appear in the *Laozi* and the related text "Taiyi sheng shui" 太一生水.[33] This may suggest that the term *wanwu* was introduced into broad intellectual discourse by those thinkers who sought inspiration in the world of nature for maintaining human order; and it is possible that the texts associated with the (eventual) *Laozi* were instrumental in this process.

In the late Zhanguo texts surveyed in this study *wanwu* figures prominently; it appears no less than forty-nine times in the *Xunzi*, twenty-three in the *Han Feizi*, and thirty-four in the *Lüshi chunqiu*. We may conclude that by the late Zhanguo period the term was commonplace, and its absence from other texts strongly indicates their pre-third-century B.C. provenance.

WANSHENG 萬乘 (TEN THOUSAND CHARIOTS)

Chariots were the major power on the battlefields of the Central Plain until they were obliterated by the Zhanguo military revolution that saw large infantry armies

replace aristocratic chariot units. In the Chunqiu period, the size of an army was routinely calculated according to the amount of chariots it employed. During the Chunqiu period, however, we rarely witness the designation of a state's strength according to the number of its chariots, as was common in Zhanguo texts. Only once the *Zuo zhuan* calls the state of Lu a "thousand-chariot state," and even this occurrence takes place at the very end of the *Zuo* narrative, suggesting perhaps that this was a new usage.[34] But whereas a thousand chariots represented a notable military strength in the late Chunqiu period, possessing ten thousand chariots was beyond the capability of even the largest states. Even the superpower of Jin 晉 could display no more than five thousand chariots at the end of the Chunqiu period, and the number of chariots possessed by other states was evidently smaller.[35] That the term "ten thousand chariots" is absent from the *Zuo zhuan* comes, therefore, as no surprise.

The *Lunyu* similarly does not mention "ten thousand chariots." This term appears first in the "Fei gong zhong" 非攻中 chapter of the *Mozi* as a designation of powerful states.[36] In the Guodian texts, which rarely discuss political affairs, the term *wansheng* does not appear; but it is frequently employed in later texts: it appears eight times in the *Mengzi*, seven in the *Xunzi*, and twenty-six and twenty-four times respectively in the *Han Feizi* and *Lüshi chunqiu*. Paradoxically, it seems that the designation of a large state as a state of "ten thousand chariots" came into existence at the period when chariots were largely abandoned, having been su-

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[31] See *Zuo*, Huan 3, 670.

[32] See *Lunyu yizhu*, "Yang Huo" 17.19, 188. Significantly, the fourth century B.C. text *Guoyu*, which is partly based on Chunqiu materials, contains no less than eight instances of the term *baiwu*, but never mentions *wanwu*. This may strengthen our assumption that the term *baiwu* preceded *wanwu*. If so, then the replacement of "hundred things" by "ten thousand things" may reflect a kind of rhetorical inflation in pre-imperial texts.

[33] The term *wanwu* appears also once in the text "Tang Yu zhi dao" 唐虞之道 that cites an earlier, unknown text "Wu shi" (or, perhaps, "Yu shi" 虞詩); *baiwu* is mentioned in *Yu cong* 語叢 1; the term *qunwu* appears in the text "Zhongxin zhi dao" 忠信之道. The Guodian texts are cited according to their arrangement in Jingmenshi Bowuguan 荊門市博物館, *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998), unless otherwise specified.

[34] *Zuo*, Ai 14, 1682. It is not implausible that the new trend of designating the power of the state in military terms reflected the transformation from state to military machine, as described by Mark E. Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence* in Ancient China [Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1990], 53–96.

[35] In 537 a Chu courtier, Wei Qijiang 薳啟疆 discussed in great detail the power of the state of Jin, arriving at the conclusion that after Jin sends nine hundred chariots against Chu, it will be able to leave behind four thousand more to protect its territory (*Zuo*, Zhao 5.1269). Other late Chunqiu powers, such as the southern states of Chu or Wu could not have possessed a larger number of chariots because chariots in general were less applicable to warfare on the southern terrain. Generally, Chunqiu armies engaging in military campaigns did not exceed several hundred chariots; in 555 Jin threatened to send two thousand chariots to invade Qi's 齊 capital, and this threat sufficed to frighten the army of Qi into retreat (*Zuo*, Xiang 18, 1037).

[36] See *Mozi jiaozhu*, 18.203.

perseded by infantry and later by cavalry.[37] Is it possible that the aesthetic appeal of the magnificently displayed chariots dictated an anachronistic resort to chariots instead of "shields" for calculating the power of contending armies in the late Zhanguo? And that the relative paucity of this term in *Xunzi* reflects Xunzi's understanding that the age of chariots was gone? We cannot answer these questions definitively; but it is clear that absence of the term *wansheng* suggests a pre-300 B.C. provenance.

LI 理 (INNER STRUCTURE, PATTERN, PRINCIPLE)

The term *li* is one of the latest in pre-imperial philosophical vocabulary. It does not appear in the "new text" chapters of the *Shu jing*; in the *Shi jing* it refers to arranging or ordering the fields;[38] *li* has this same meaning in the *Zuo*, where it also refers occasionally to a "messenger" (*xingli* 行理).[39] The term *li* does not appear in the *Lunyu*, and it is mentioned only once in the core chapters of the *Mozi*, where it refers to "ordering chaos" (*li luan* 理亂). This verbal usage may well indicate a shift of *li*'s semantic meaning from concrete to abstract ordering and arranging.

After the late fourth century, *li* gradually gains importance in scholarly discourse. In *Mengzi* it appears seven times in three different passages; four times in the compound *tiao li* 條理 "to order," once with the meaning "to be approved," and twice (in a single passage) with the meaning of "pattern" or "principle,"[40] which would later

become dominant. In the Guodian texts *li* appears six times; thrice in verbal form ("to order"), and thrice as a noun ("pattern/principle").[41] We may assume that by the late fourth century B.C., *li* was already introduced into philosophical discourse, although its role remained relatively insignificant when compared to such pivotal terms as *dao* or *yi* 義.

The real change in the position of *li* in Zhanguo intellectual discourse occurred in the third century B.C. In late Zhanguo texts we observe a dramatic increase in the use of the term. It appears no less than 106 times in the *Xunzi*; seventy-four times in *Han Feizi*, and seventy-five times in *Lüshi chunqiu*.[42] Here I shall not discuss the reasons for this increase, which may be related to the activities of the so-called Jixia 稷下 academy,[43] but it is clear that the frequency of use of the term *li* may serve as a useful dividing line between mid- and late-Zhanguo texts.

YIN-YANG 陰陽 AS COSMIC FORCES AND BINARY OPPOSITES

Our next example of lexical change in pre-imperial texts deals with the much disputed terms *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽. Several eminent scholars, particularly Xu Fuguan and

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[37] According to the *Zhanguo ce*, the state of Chu, one of the most powerful Zhanguo "hero states" possessed by the third century B.C. a million infantrymen, ten thousand cavalrymen, and only a thousand war chariots (He Jianzhang 何建章, ed., *Zhanguo ce zhushi* 戰國策注釋 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1991], "Chu ce 1" 14.17, 508); the state of Zhao possessed "several hundred thousands" of infantrymen, and a number of chariots and cavalrymen similar to those of Chu ("Zhao ce 2" 19.1: 656); similar proportions apply to other late Zhanguo armies.

[38] See *Mao shi zhengyi*, 13.470, 16.510, 17.543, 18.573 (Mao 210, 237, 250, 262).

[39] For *li* as arranging the fields, see *Zuo*, Cheng 2, 798; Zhao 14, 1366; for *xingli* see Zhao 13, 1359.

[40] See respectively *Mengzi*, "Wan Zhang xia" 10.1, 233; "Jin xin xia" 14.19, 330; "Gaozi shang" 11.7, 261. I generally concur with William Boltz's observation (op.cit., 415) that the term *li* in pre-imperial texts should not be translated as abstract "principle" or "reason" but rather as "internal order" or "inner structure" (a meaning that derives from its earliest semantic

layers outlined above). Here I preserve a dual translation only as a matter of convenience.

[41] The text "Cheng zhi wen zhi" states: "Heaven let down great constants to arrange (*li*) human relations" 天降大常以理人倫 (For a better rearrangement of the relevant slips into a text named "Tian chang" 天常, see Chen Wei 陳偉, "Guanyu Guodian Chujian *Liu de* zhupian bianlian de tiaozheng" 關於郭店楚簡六德諸篇編連的調整, in Wuhan daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiuyuan 武漢大學中國文化研究院, *Guodian Chujian guoji xueshu yantao hui lunwenji* 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集 [Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000], 67–68). Twice *li* appears as a verb in the texts "Xing zi ming chu" 性自命出 and "Yu cong 1"; it appears as a noun in the recommendation "to follow propriety and accumulate [proper] pattern" 踵義集理 in the text "Zun de yi" 尊德義, rearranged by Chen Wei to the text "Shang xing" 賞刑 ("Guanyu Guodian," 70–71). It appears also as a noun in "Yu cong 1" and (possibly twice) in "Yu cong 3" slips 17–18 (*Guodian*, 209).

[42] In these texts *li* is used predominantly as a noun: in *Lüshi chunqiu*, for instance, sixty-nine of seventy-five occurrences of *li* are in its nominal form.

[43] The Jixia activities and their contribution to the sophistication of Zhanguo discourse are discussed in a recent study by Masayuki Sato, "Confucian State and Society of *Li*: A Study on the Political Thought of Xun Zi" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Leiden, 2001), 45–116.

A. C. Graham, have traced the evolution of the concepts of *yin* and *yang* from the denotation of shade and sunshine to basic cosmic forces and the ultimate binary opposites of the cosmos. According to Graham's scheme, which basically corresponds with that of Xu, prior to 300 B.C., *yin* and *yang* referred primarily to shade and sunshine, and were considered part of the six heavenly *qi* 氣; then "philosophical schools came to accept the *yin* and *yang* as the *qi* which are assimilating and differentiating influences behind chains of pairs." By the third century, as cosmology entered into the broad philosophical discourse, *yin* and *yang* were assimilated into an intricate system of correspondences that became the foundation of the classic Chinese form of correlative thinking, and came to dominate late pre-imperial and early imperial thought.[44] I generally accept this scheme, with slight modifications suggested below. The most important question for the present discussion is the extent of assimilation into general philosophical discourse of the notion of *yin* and *yang* as basic cosmic forces and binary oppositions. If these terms indeed became ubiquitous in the third century B.C., then we may suggest that texts that do not employ *yin-yang* terminology can be dated prior to that time.

The year 300 B.C. is a useful date *ante quem* for the evolution of the *yin-yang* concept to the level of philosophical abstraction. The tomb of King Xiang of Wei 魏襄王 (r. 318–296 B.C.), looted in 280 A.D., yielded among other texts, a copy of the *Zhouyi* 周易, which, according to Du Yu 杜預 (222–284 A.D.), contained an unknown commentary written according to *yin-yang* theory.[45] Thus, when that text was deposited in the tomb, *yin* and *yang* had already become important philosophical terms as an explanatory framework for worldly phenomena. Another important piece of evidence suggests that the

transformation of *yin-yang* from two of the six *qi* into the basic cosmic forces might have occurred in the second half of the fourth century. This may be discerned from the Guodian text named by the editors "Taiyi sheng shui," which presents a surprisingly neat cosmogonic theory.[46] According to this text, *yin* and *yang* appeared at the early stage of creation of the cosmos; they were produced by the "sacred numinous" (*shen ming* 神明), and then generated the four seasons. This is the earliest undeniable evidence that by the late fourth century *yin* and *yang* were differentiated from other *qi* and had evolved into basic cosmic forces.

It is possible that ideas about the nature of *yin* and *yang* developed originally among a group of specialists in scientific and occult matters, such as diviners, scribes, physicians and so on. At least in the *Zuo zhuan* most mentions of *yin-yang* are confined to such persons.[47] Aside from those instances in which *yang* and *yin* are correlated with sunshine/shadow or heat/cold, the *Zuo* contains two important invocations of these terms. In 541, in a speech which became a *locus classicus* for early *yin-yang* etymology, Physician He 醫和 identifies these terms as two of the six *qi*, together with wind, rain, darkness, and light. Nothing in his speech suggests the priority of *yin* and *yang* above other *qi*, and the early origins of the speech are indicated also by its unusual identification of women with *yang*.[48] Another invocation of *yin* and *yang* occurs in 644, when Lord Xiang of Song 宋襄公 (r. 650–637) requests the Zhou scribe, Shu Xing 叔興, to explain the possible influence of extraordinary meterological phenomena on the fortunes of contemporary rulers. Shu Xing satisfies the lord's request, but later remarks:

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[44] See A. C. Graham, *Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 91–92; cf. Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 "Yinyang, wuxing ji qi youguan wenxian de yanjiu" 陰陽五行及其有關文獻的研究, in idem, *Zhongguo sixiangshi lunji xubian* 中國思想史論集續編 (Taibei: Shibao wenhua, 1982), 41–111; also a complementary discussion by Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1998), 139–68. Aside from sunshine/shade, in pre-Zhanguo texts *yin* and *yang* refer to related meteorological phenomena, such as cold/heat and sun/rain, and also to the north/south directions.

[45] See Du Yu, "Houxu" 後序, in *Chunqui Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 (*Shisanjing zhushu*), 2187c.

[46] See Jingmenshi Bowuguan 荊門市博物館, *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998), "Taiyi sheng shui," 113–14. For the nature of "Taiyi sheng shui" and its possible relations with the 42nd chapter of the *Laozi*, see Wuhan daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiuyuan, *Guodian Chujian guoji xueshu yantao hui lunwenji*, 524–61; and 21st issue of *Zhongguo zhexue*, viz. *Guodian jian yu Ruxue yanjiu* 郭店簡與儒學研究 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu, 2000), 189–226.

[47] See Graham, *Yin-Yang*, 91. The only "secular" speaker in the *Zuo* to employ the notion of *yang*, is the leader of the state of Zheng 鄭, Zichan 子產 (Zhao 7, 1292), who often displays extra-political sagacity throughout the narrative (see, e.g., Zhao 1, 1217–20; Zhao 7, 1289–90).

[48] See *Zuo*, Zhao 1, 1222, and the analysis by Raphals, *Sharing*, 146–47.

"The ruler has asked the wrong question. These [phenomena] are affairs of *yin* and *yang*, not something from which good and bad fortune derive. Good and bad fortune derive from [the conduct of] human beings."[49]

This answer apparently suggests that the notion of *yin-yang* as prime movers of natural phenomena might have existed already by the year 644, or at least by the age of the compilation of the *Zuo*, between the fifth and the fourth centuries B.C., which is earlier than usually assumed. Xu Fuguan has tried to show that in Shu Xing's speech *yin* and *yang* refer purely to meteorological issues, but his explanation remains disputable.[50] If the speech was not interpolated at a later stage of the *Zuo* transmission, and there is no reason to assume it was, then it suggests that the notion of *yin* and *yang* as primary cosmic forces may indeed be of fairly early origin. If so, it remained confined to a small group of professionals and was not disseminated to the broader group of educated elite, since it is completely absent from the rest of the *Zuo* text.[51]

Other fifth and fourth-century texts surveyed in this study, namely *Lunyu, Mozi*[52] and *Mengzi*, do not contain the notion of *yin-yang* as either basic cosmic forces or binary opposites. In the Guodian texts, aside from the "Taiyi sheng shui" discussed above, the notion of *yin* and *yang* does not appear; this further strengthens our assumption that the concept of *yin-yang* was employed primarily by those who dealt with cosmology, divination, and other proto-sciences, but it was not related to political thought or general philosophy; and this situation evidently remained intact until the late fourth century B.C.

However, this situation changed in the third century B.C. with the advance of correlative thinking.[53] *Yin-yang* concepts began entering into philosophical discourse, and they appear even in texts that do not necessarily endorse correlative ideas. Thus, *Xunzi* mentions *yin-yang* as basic cosmic forces six times, while *Han Feizi* does so four times. We should notice that these numbers are relatively low, particularly when we take into account the impressive length of both texts. This may indicate that the notion of *yin-yang* was absorbed in general philosophical discourse at a relatively slow pace.

Not surprisingly, the highest rate of occurrence of *yin* and *yang* is supplied by the late Zhanguo encyclopedia of correlative thinking, *Lüshi chunqiu*; no less than twenty-six times this text mentions *yin* and *yang* as basic cosmic forces, or as the active/passive forces of the universe. I do not include here the numerous occurrences of *yin-yang* in their earlier meaning as the *qi* of sunshine/shadow.

The pattern of distribution of the term *yin-yang* as basic cosmic forces or binary opposites in our texts is not as unequivocal as those of the previously surveyed terms. Its possible occurrence in the *Zuo*, just as the relative paucity of its appearance in *Xunzi* and *Han Feizi*, suggests that we must be cautious in treating the notion of *yin-yang* as an indicator of a text's date. Nonetheless, the observable increase in the appearance of *yin-yang* in third-century B.C. texts implies that the absence of this term from other texts increases the probability of their pre-300 B.C. provenance.

BUYI 布衣 ("PLAIN-CLOTHED")

The term *buyi* is usually glossed as an equivalent of the term *pifu* 匹夫 (ordinary fellow), that is, a commoner. The first-century B.C. *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 explains the origins of this designation of the commoners: "In ancient times, commoners wore silk only at the age of seventy and above; others simply wore hemp, hence they

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[49] *Zuo*, Xi 16, 329.

[50] See Xu Fuguan, "Yin yang," 45–46.

[51] The *Zuo* contains also two cases of metaphorical use of the term *yang*. In 623, Ning Wuzi 甯武子 of Wei 衛 said "The Son of Heaven occupies the *yang* [position]" (*Zuo*, Wen 4, 535). This saying is strongly reminiscent of later correlative philosophy, but in the context of the speech it merely refers to Ning Wuzi's exegesis of the "Zhan lu" 湛露 ode of the *Shi jing*, in which *yang* means "sun"; the supreme position of the Son of Heaven is compared, therefore, to that of the sun (see Yang Bojun's gloss, p. 535). Elsewhere, Zi Chan argues that the *hun* 魂 soul belongs to the *yang* force (*Zuo*, Zhao 7, 1292). It is possible that we are observing here proto-correlative thinking, although without further evidence it is again difficult to know how widespread such ideas were.

[52] The *Mozi* contains one reference to *yin-yang* as sunshine and shade (*Mozi*), 27.304; Graham, *Yin-Yang*, 70–71).

[53] For the nature and development of correlative thinking in the late Zhanguo period, see A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1989), 313–70; Nivison, "Classical Philosophical Writings," 808–12; Donald Harper, "Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought," in *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, 820 ff; cf. Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 75–128.

were called 'plain-clothed.'"[54] This explanation is not en-
tirely correct: in early texts the term *buyi* does not nec-
essarily refer to commoners, but rather to low-ranking
members of the *shi* 士 stratum.[55] Actually, "plain" clothes
are mentioned in the early texts not as descriptive of
commoners, but rather as a manifestation of the ruler's
frugality. *Zuo zhuan* tells us that Lord Wen of Wei 衛文
公 (r. 659–635), under whose leadership the state of Wei
recovered from a disastrous defeat inflicted by the Di 狄
tribesmen in 660, displayed unusual frugality by wear-
ing garments made of "a large piece of cloth" (*da bu zhi
yi* 大布之衣); according to the *Mozi* similar garments
characterized the court of Jin during the time of the arch-
frugal Lord Wen 晉文公 (r. 636–628).[56] Yet prior to the
third century B.C. we have no evidence of plain-cloth
garments being standard attire either of commoners or
any other social group. The term *buyi* does not appear in
any of the pre-300 B.C. texts surveyed in our study.

By the third century the situation had evidently
changed. While it is difficult to verify whether the mem-
bers of the *shi* stratum actually began wearing plain
clothes, the term *buyi* gained increasing popularity as
descriptive of poor, yet self-confident *shi*. Plain clothes
symbolized the low status and economic strains of a *shi*,
but also his independence of the ruler. The term *buyi*
thus came to identify highly-minded independent *shi*,
whose aspirations no ruler could satisfy.[57] This term is
first attested in *Xunzi*, where it appears still relatively
rarely (only twice);[58] but it appears no less than nine
times in *Han Feizi* and fifteen times in *Lüshi chunqiu*. In
the latter text the term *buyi* becomes the most presti-
gious self-designation of the proud *shi*.[59] We may cau-

tiously assume therefore, that the term *buyi* became
widespread only in the second half of the third century
B.C., later than the other terms we have discussed. Its ab-
sence from a text suggests, then, a pre-300 B.C. (or per-
haps pre-250 B.C.) provenance.

TENTATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The above discussion shows, that *pace* Karlgren's
doubts, we may discern clear changes in philosophical
vocabulary from the fifth to the third century B.C. Fur-
thermore, as these changes are evidently affected by tem-
poral parameters, they may be used as convenient tools
for determining the dating of major re-imperial texts.
Table 1 shows a clear progression from the beginning to
the end of the period under discussion. None of the sur-
veyed terms (with the possible exception of the term
yin-yang in the *Zuo*) appears in the earliest texts, the *Zuo*
and the *Lunyu*; this may support the assertion that these
two texts indeed reflect earlier linguistic layers than do
other Zhangguo writings. The core chapters of the *Mozi*
lack the notion of *yin-yang* and of crossbow-related ter-
minology, while the term *li* appears in these chapters only
once as a verb; the compound *wanwu* appears only twice,
and *wansheng* once. Another compound, *renyi*, occurs
with high frequency in *Mozi* and later texts, which sug-
gests that its occurrence may serve as a convenient di-
viding line between fifth and the fourth-century B.C. texts.
In *Mengzi* and the Guodian texts we observe a further
increase in the use of *li* and *wanwu*; *Mengzi* also fre-
quently employs the term *wansheng*, and once mentions
the trigger of the crossbow, indicating that by the age of
its compilation the crossbow was well known in China.
The term *buyi* is not mentioned in any pre-300 B.C. text.
Finally, the three third-century B.C. texts frequently em-
ploy all seven surveyed terms, which strongly suggests
that by the late Zhangguo period these terms (with the pos-
sible exception of *yin-yang*) had become common.

Having ascertained a pattern of temporal change in
the vocabulary of Zhangguo texts, let us see whether our
findings can help us in dating other pre-imperial texts.
For this exercise I have chosen two controversial texts:
Sunzi 孫子 and *Shang jun shu* 商君書. Scholars con-
tinue to debate the dating of both of these texts and their
relation to their putative authors.

The *Sunzi* is traditionally attributed to a legendary Wu
吳 military commander, Sun Wu 孫武. Long ago scholars

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[54] See Wang Liqi, ed., *Yantie lun jiaozhu* 鹽鐵論校注
(Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 29.350.

[55] For similarities and differences between *buyi* and *pifu*,
see Hong Chengyu 洪成玉 and Zhang Guizhen 張桂珍, *Gu
Hanyu tongyi ci bianxi* 古漢語同義詞辨析 (Hangzhou: Zhe-
jiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), 9–13.

[56] See *Zuo*, Min 2, 273; *Mozi*, 16.180 and 48.703. The "Yu
zao" 玉藻 chapter of the *Liji* requires the ruler to wear plain-
cloth garments when drought occurs, apparently to display the
ruler's frugality (*Liji jijie*, 29.784).

[57] For the intellectual atmosphere of the late Zhangguo period
and *shi* self-confidence, see Yuri Pines, "Friends or Foes:
Changing Concepts of Ruler-Minister Relations and the Notion
of Loyalty in Pre-Imperial China," *Monumenta Serica* 50 (2002).

[58] See *Xunzi*, 10.196, 27.513.

[59] For instance, the authors of the *Lüshi chunqiu* repeatedly
identify their Masters—Confucius and Mozi—as "plain-
clothed *shi*" (Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷, ed., *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* 呂

氏春秋校釋 [Shanghai: Xuelin, 1990], 12.5: 640; 24.5: 1618);
elsewhere the authors even claim that the sage emperor Shun
was just a "*buyi* who attained All under Heaven" (19.5: 1280).

began questioning this attribution; for instance, in a comprehensive study Qi Sihe 齊思和 suggested that *Sunzi* was compiled in the fourth century B.C. Later, however, the 1972 discovery of military texts, including portions of the *Sunzi* and of *Sun Bin bingfa* 孫臏兵法 at Yinqueshan 銀雀山, led to renewed debates, with Zheng Liangshu 鄭良樹 and others suggesting a fifth-century B.C. dating for *Sunzi*, and Li Ling 李零 reinforcing Qi Sihe's views.[60] Can we resolve the controversy through lexical analysis of the *Sunzi*?

Sunzi twice mentions the crossbow, and twice its trigger (*ji*). As we have seen, these terms characterize late fourth-century B.C. texts on. In the case of *Sunzi*, however, a reservation should be made: one might expect that a military text would be among the first to employ crossbow-related terminology. Just as the occurrence of the *yin-yang* pair in the "Taiyi sheng shui" chapter does not imply a late provenance for this text, so mentions of the crossbow do not suffice to fix the *Sunzi*'s date. While the text certainly was compiled after the introduction of the crossbow, this could have been earlier than the weapon's triumph on Zhanguo battlefields and earlier than the time when crossbow-related terms were adopted into tradition discourse. Note also that the crossbow plays an insignificant role in the *Sunzi*, in marked contrast with the allegedly later *Sun Bin bingfa* text. Hence, while the appearance of the crossbow in the text of *Sunzi* evidently refutes the work's attribution to Sun Wu from the Chunqiu period, it is insufficient to determine the *Sunzi*'s date with greater precision.

What about our other terms? The compound *renyi* appears once, while *wanwu* and *wansheng* are absent from the text. *Li* appears twice, once as "a *pattern* of move-

ment and rest," and the second time as "the *structure* of the terrain."[61] The term *buyi* is absent from the text. As for the term *yin-yang*, the situation is more complicated. While throughout the text *yin* and *yang* appear in an unmistakable connection of "sunshine/shadow," in one case the identification is more problematic. The "Shi ji" 始計 chapter states: "Heaven is *yin* and *yang*, heat and cold, and the regulation of the seasons."[62] Does this saying refer exclusively to light and shadow, as Roger Ames has translated it, and as other chapters suggest? I tend to think so, although the possibility that the pair *yin-yang* here refers to the more significant philosophical notion of dualism and change cannot be entirely dismissed.[63] In any case, there are no other hints of *Sunzi*'s awareness of *yin-yang* theory, and this lends further plausibility to Ames's translation.

To summarize our findings: the language of the *Sunzi* is akin to that of *Mozi* and the Guodian texts. Aside from the crossbow-related terminology, which might have appeared in *Sunzi* and other military writings much earlier than it entered general philosophical discourse, we have no hint of post-300 B.C. language. On the other hand, crossbow terms, as well as the compound *renyi* and the term *li* indicate a post-400 B.C. provenance. *Sunzi*, therefore, should perhaps be considered a mid-fourth century B.C. text, in accord with Qi Sihe's and Li Ling's analysis.

The nature of the *Shang jun shu* is more problematic. Although tradition ascribes this text to the great Qin reformer, Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338), it is widely agreed that the *Shang jun shu* contains significant portions added by Shang Yang's anonymous followers. The precise amount of these late additions remains highly controversial. For instance, two leading Western authorities on Chinese intellectual history, A. C. Graham and David Nivison, have dismissed any connection of *Shang jun shu* with its putative author, arguing that the book should be considered a third-century B.C. compilation, roughly

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[60] For the early debates regarding *Sunzi*'s dating, see Zhang Xincheng 張心澂, comp. *Weishu tongkao* 偽書通考 (Changsha: Shangwu, 1939), 797–801; for Qi Sihe's views, see his "Sunzi bingfa zhuzuo shidai kao" 孫子兵法著作時代考 (1939), in idem, *Zhongguo shi tanyan* 中國史探研 (rpt. Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu, 2001), 415–33. For later supporters of the early dating, see Zheng Liangshu 鄭良樹, "Sunzi de zuocheng shidai" 孫子的作成時代, in idem, *Zhujian boshu lunwenji* 竹簡帛書論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 68–71; Robin D. S. Yates, "New Light on Ancient Chinese Military Texts: Notes on their Nature and Evolution, and the Development of Military Specialization in Warring States China," *T'oung Pao* 74 (1988): 217–18; for an alternative approach, see Li Ling, "Guanyu Yinqueshan jianben *Sunzi* yanjiu de shangque: *Sunzi* zhuzuo shidai he zuozhe de chong yi" 關於銀雀山簡本孫子研究的商榷：孫子著作時代和作者的重議 (1978), in idem, *Sunzi guben yanjiu* 孫子古本研究 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue, 1995), 207–23.

[61] For *renyi* see Li Ling, *Wu Sunzi fawei* 吳孫子發微 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 13.126; interestingly, in the bamboo copy from Yinqueshan the parallel phrase employs only *ren* without *yi* (a ruler who is not benevolent is not able to make use of spies—see *Wu Sunzi*, 167). For *li*, see *Wu Sunzi*, 6.70, 11.108.

[62] *Wu Sunzi*, 1.29.

[63] For Ames's translation, see his *Sun-tzu: The Art of Warfare* (New York: Ballantine, 1993), 103. In his review of Ames's book, Edward L. Shaughnessy emphatically exclaims: "Can it really be that *yin yang* here is intended only to refer to 'light and shadow'?" ("Military Histories of Ancient China: A Review Article," *Early China* 21 [1996], 173).

contemporary with *Han Feizi*. Nivison in particular has all but refrained from discussing *Shang jun shu* in the context of the evolution of pre-imperial thought.[64]

Can we check the *Shang jun shu* dating on the basis of its vocabulary? If the bulk of the text is related to Shang Yang and his immediate disciples or followers, we might expect similarities in language to that of *Mengzi*; if, alternatively, Nivison and Graham are right, the book's vocabulary should be similar to that of *Xunzi* and the thematically close *Han Feizi*. Let us check the distribution of our seven terms in *Shang jun shu*. The book once mentions a crossbow and once uses the term "trigger" in a metaphorical sense. The compound *wanwu* appears five times in three different passages; the compound *renyi* is mentioned four times; *wansheng* is mentioned five times.[65] The scarcity of the term *li* is striking: it appears only four times, thrice in a single passage in the "Hua ce" 畫策 chapter.[66] This strongly suggests that by the time of compilation of the bulk of the *Shang jun shu, li* had not yet become common in intellectual discourse. The term *buyi* is absent from the text. Finally, the term *yin-yang* appears in *Shang jun shu* only as indicating directions (north/south) and never in the sense of cosmic forces or binary opposites.

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[64] See Nivison, "Classical Philosophical Writings." 806–7. Graham confined himself to a single remark: "the chapters of *Shang-tzu* [i.e., *Shang jun shu*] datable by historical references come from about 240 B.C." (*Disputers*, 268). Graham evidently referred here to the "Lai min" 徠民 chapter of the *Shang jun shu*, which is indeed of unmistakable post-250 B.C. origin (Jiang Lihong 蔣禮鴻, *Shang jun shu zhuizhi* 商君書錐指 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996], 15: 86–96); I have found no clear evidence for the late provenance of other chapters. Unlike Nivison and Graham, Benjamin I. Schwartz apprehended that although the *Shang jun shu* was put together by Shang Yang's disciples, its style "conveys the spirit of one strong personality," and hence the book bears Shang Yang's personal imprint (*The World of Thought in Ancient China* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985], 331). For detailed discussion of the dating of each of the *Shang jun shu* chapters, see Zheng Liangshu, *Shang Yang ji qi xuepai* 商鞅及其學派 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1989); for alternative views, see Zhang Jue's 張覺 notes in his *Shang jun shu quanyi* 商君書全譯 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1993). Yoshinami Takashi 好并隆司 partly agrees with Zheng's analysis, and dates more than half of the *Shang jun shu* to the mid-third century B.C. (see his *Shōkun sho kenkyû* 商君書研究 [Hiroshima: Keisuisha, 1992]).

[65] For trigger and crossbow, see *Shang jun shu* 9.63, 22.128; for *wanwu*, see 3.23, 17.105, 23.129; for *renyi*, see 13.80 and 82, 18.113. 25.138; for *wansheng*, see 6.46; 7.54; 17.97, 25.138.

[66] See *Shang jun shu*, 7.53, 18.113.

This sample of distribution in *Shang jun shu* unmistakably resembles that of *Mengzi* or the Guodian texts, and differs markedly from *Xunzi, Han Feizi*, or *Lüshi chunqiu*. It is highly likely, therefore, that *pace* Graham and Nivison, *Shang jun shu* should not be considered a third century B.C. text, but in all likelihood belongs to an earlier intellectual milieu. These findings, although not decisive, do suggest that the text merits more scholarly attention as an important milestone in the early development of "Legalist" thought.

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We may now briefly summarize our findings. Undeniable temporal changes in the vocabulary of major pre-imperial texts suggest that lexical analysis may serve as a useful tool for establishing a text's dating. However, we must be aware of two major problems that dictate utmost caution while employing this method. First, certain terms, such as crossbow-related terminology or *yin-yang* as a pair of binary opposites, might have first appeared in "professional" (military, proto-scientific) texts, to be introduced into general discourse only much later. Thus, their appearance in a certain text does not suffice to determine the text's late provenance, unless the content of the text is considered. Second, insofar as lexical analysis requires resort to *argumentum ex silentio*, it remains useful only insofar as we discuss relatively long texts. For brief texts or for brief additions to an early text, we can never be sure that avoidance of anachronistic terms is not merely incidental. It is worth emphasizing therefore that lexical analysis may help us to establish the dating only of the Ur-texts, on which most of the received texts are based, but it is not able to solve the problem of dating every passage or every sentence in a given text. Yet as the evidence marshaled above suggests, far from being a mishmash of unrelated sentences and passages, most Zhanguo texts are based to a large extent on an Ur-text produced at an identifiable date. Establishing a chronological framework for these Ur-texts may help us to restore a generally reliable picture of pre-imperial intellectual dynamics.

The present study is but a first step toward constructing a comprehensive pattern of lexical changes in pre-imperial texts. I have confined myself to the most common terms, the distribution of which in Zhanguo texts is primarily determined by the text's dating. Further studies should expand the scope of the terms introduced into intellectual discourse throughout this period, allowing us, I hope, to determine with higher precision the dating of pre-imperial texts and significant portions thereof. At the next step, this approach should be combined with earlier philological studies done by Karlgren and others, and, of course, with analysis of the texts' contents.

Text/ term	Crossbow (*nu* 弩) or trigger (*shu* 樞 or *ji* 機)	*renyi* 仁義	*wan wu* 萬物	*wan sheng* 萬乘	*li* 理 (inner structure, pattern, principle)	*yin-yang* 陰陽 (cosmic forces or binary opposites)	*buyi* 布衣
Zuo zhuan	—	—	—	—	—	1 (?)	—
Lunyu	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mozi (core chapters)	—	19	2	1	1	—	—
Guodian	—	4	9	—	6	3 (in "Taiyi sheng shui")	—
Mengzi	1	27	1	8	7	—	—
Xunzi	7	32	49	7	106	6	2
Han Feizi	13	47	23	26	74	4	9
Lüshi chunqiu	8	9	34	24	75	26	15