

*Blackwell
Companions to
Philosophy*

A CONCISE COMPANION TO CONFUCIUS



Edited by
PAUL R. GOLDIN

WILEY Blackwell

A Concise Companion to Confucius

Blackwell Companions to Philosophy

This outstanding student reference series offers a comprehensive and authoritative survey of philosophy as a whole. Written by today's leading philosophers, each volume provides lucid and engaging coverage of the key figures, terms, topics, and problems of the field. Taken together, the volumes provide the ideal basis for course use, representing an unparalleled work of reference for students and specialists alike.

Already published in the series:

1. The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy, Second Edition
Edited by Nicholas Bunin and Eric Tsui-James
2. A Companion to Ethics
Edited by Peter Singer
3. A Companion to Aesthetics, Second Edition
Edited by Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper
4. A Companion to Epistemology, Second Edition
Edited by Jonathan Dancy, Ernest Sosa, and Matthias Steup
5. A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy (two-volume set), Second Edition
Edited by Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit
6. A Companion to Philosophy of Mind
Edited by Samuel Guttenplan
7. A Companion to Metaphysics, Second Edition
Edited by Jaegwon Kim, Ernest Sosa, and Gary S. Rosenkrantz
8. A Companion to Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory, Second Edition
Edited by Dennis Patterson
9. A Companion to Philosophy of Religion, Second Edition
Edited by Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn
10. A Companion to the Philosophy of Language
Edited by Bob Hale and Crispin Wright
11. A Companion to World Philosophies
Edited by Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe
12. A Companion to Continental Philosophy
Edited by Simon Critchley and William Schroeder
13. A Companion to Feminist Philosophy
Edited by Alison M. Jaggar and Iris Marion Young
14. A Companion to Cognitive Science
Edited by William Bechtel and George Graham
15. A Companion to Bioethics, Second Edition
Edited by Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer
16. A Companion to the Philosophers
Edited by Robert L. Arrington
17. A Companion to Business Ethics
Edited by Robert E. Frederick
18. A Companion to the Philosophy of Science
Edited by W. H. Newton-Smith
19. A Companion to Environmental Philosophy
Edited by Dale Jamieson
20. A Companion to Analytic Philosophy
Edited by A. P. Martinich and David Sosa
21. A Companion to Genethics
Edited by Justine Burley and John Harris
22. A Companion to Philosophical Logic
Edited by Dale Jacquette
23. A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy
Edited by Steven Nadler
24. A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages
Edited by Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone
25. A Companion to African-American Philosophy
Edited by Tommy L. Lott and John P. Pittman
26. A Companion to Applied Ethics
Edited by R. G. Frey and Christopher Heath Wellman
27. A Companion to the Philosophy of Education
Edited by Randall Curren
28. A Companion to African Philosophy
Edited by Kwasi Wiredu
29. A Companion to Heidegger
Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall
30. A Companion to Rationalism
Edited by Alan Nelson
31. A Companion to Pragmatism
Edited by John R. Shook and Joseph Margolis
32. A Companion to Ancient Philosophy
Edited by Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin
33. A Companion to Nietzsche
Edited by Keith Ansell Pearson
34. A Companion to Socrates
Edited by Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar
35. A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism
Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall
36. A Companion to Kant
Edited by Graham Bird
37. A Companion to Plato
Edited by Hugh H. Benson
38. A Companion to Descartes
Edited by Janet Broughton and John Carriero
39. A Companion to the Philosophy of Biology
Edited by Sahotra Sarkar and Anya Plutynski
40. A Companion to Hume
Edited by Elizabeth S. Radcliffe
41. A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography
Edited by Aviezer Tucker
42. A Companion to Aristotle
Edited by Georgios Anagnostopoulos
43. A Companion to the Philosophy of Technology
Edited by Jan-Kyrre Berg Olsen, Stig Andur Pedersen, and Vincent F. Hendricks
44. A Companion to Latin American Philosophy
Edited by Susana Nuccetelli, Ofelia Schutte, and Otávio Bueno
45. A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature
Edited by Garry L. Hagberg and Walter Jost
46. A Companion to the Philosophy of Action
Edited by Timothy O'Connor and Constantine Sandis
47. A Companion to Relativism
Edited by Steven D. Hales
48. A Companion to Hegel
Edited by Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur
49. A Companion to Schopenhauer
Edited by Bart Vandenabeele
50. A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy
Edited by Steven M. Emmanuel
51. A Companion to Foucault
Edited by Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary, and Jana Sawicki
52. A Companion to the Philosophy of Time
Edited by Heather Dyke and Adrian Bardon
53. A Companion to Donald Davidson
Edited by Ernest Lepore and Kirk Ludwig
54. A Companion to Rawls
Edited by Jon Mandle and David Reidy
55. A Companion to W. V. O. Quine
Edited by Gilbert Harman and Ernest Lepore
56. A Companion to Derrida
Edited by Zeynep Direk and Leonard Lawlor
57. A Companion to David Lewis
Edited by Barry Loewer and Jonathan Schaffer
58. A Companion to Kierkegaard
Edited by Jon Stewart
59. A Companion to Locke
Edited by Matthew Stuart
60. The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics
Edited by Niall Keane and Chris Lawn
61. A Companion to Ayn Rand
Edited by Allan Gotthelf and Gregory Salmieri
62. The Blackwell Companion to Naturalism
Edited by Kelly James Clark
63. A Companion to the Philosophy of Language (two-volume set), Second Edition
Edited by Bob Hale
64. A Companion to Mill
Edited by Christopher Macleod and Dale E. Miller
65. A Concise Companion to Confucius
Edited by Paul R. Goldin

A Concise Companion to Confucius

Edited by
Paul R. Goldin

WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2017
© 2017 John Wiley & Sons Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by law. Advice on how to obtain permission to reuse material from this title is available at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

The right of Paul R. Goldin to be identified as the author of the editorial material in this work has been asserted in accordance with law.

Registered Offices

John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Office

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, customer services, and more information about Wiley products visit us at www.wiley.com.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some content that appears in standard print versions of this book may not be available in other formats.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty

While the publisher and authors have used their best efforts in preparing this work, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives, written sales materials or promotional statements for this work. The fact that an organization, website, or product is referred to in this work as a citation and/or potential source of further information does not mean that the publisher and authors endorse the information or services the organization, website, or product may provide or recommendations it may make. This work is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a specialist where appropriate. Further, readers should be aware that websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read. Neither the publisher nor authors shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Name: Goldin, Paul Rakita, 1972– editor.

Title: A concise companion to Confucius / edited by Paul R. Goldin, University of Pennsylvania, US.

Description: First edition. | Hoboken : Wiley, 2017. | Series: Blackwell companions to philosophy | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017011112 (print) | LCCN 2017016879 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781118783870 (cloth) | ISBN 9781118783849 (pdf) | ISBN 9781118783832 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Confucius. | Confucianism. | Philosophy, Confucian.

Classification: LCC B128.C8 (ebook) | LCC B128.C8 C573 2017 (print) | DDC 181/.112–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017011112>

Cover image: © Shiwei/Gettyimages

Set in 10/12.5pt Photina by SPi Global, Pondicherry, India

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Notes on Contributors	vii
Introduction: Confucius and Confucianism <i>Paul R. Goldin</i>	1
Part I Representations of Confucius	13
1 Early Sources for Confucius <i>Michael Hunter</i>	15
2 Confucius in Excavated Warring States Manuscripts <i>Scott Cook</i>	35
3 The Unorthodox Master: The Serious and the Playful in Depictions of Confucius <i>Oliver Weingarten</i>	52
4 Representations of Confucius in Apocrypha of the First Century CE <i>Zhao Lu</i>	75
5 Visual Representations of Confucius <i>Julia K. Murray</i>	93
Part II Confucian Ideas	131
6 <i>Le</i> in the <i>Analects</i> <i>Kwong-loi Shun</i>	133
7 Women in the <i>Analects</i> <i>Anne Behnke Kinney</i>	148
8 Confucius' Elitism: The Concepts of <i>junzi</i> and <i>xiaoren</i> Revisited <i>Yuri Pines</i>	164
9 Confucius and Filial Piety <i>Thomas Radice</i>	185

CONTENTS

10	The Gentleman's Views on Warfare according to the <i>Gongyang Commentary</i> <i>Sarah A. Queen</i>	208
11	Comparisons with Western Philosophy <i>Erin M. Cline</i>	229
	Part III The Legacy of Confucius in Imperial China	247
12	From Uncrowned King to the Sage of Profound Greatness: Confucius and the <i>Analects</i> in Early Medieval China <i>Alan K. L. Chan</i>	249
13	The Reception of <i>The Classic of Filial Piety</i> from Medieval to Late Imperial China <i>Miaw-fen Lu</i>	268
14	Kongzi as the Uncrowned King in some Qing Gongyang Exegeses <i>On-cho Ng</i>	286
	Part IV Confucius and New Confucianisms in Modern East Asia	305
15	Confucianism, Capitalism, and Shibusawa Eiichi's <i>The Analects and the Abacus</i> <i>John A. Tucker</i>	307
16	Confucius in the May Fourth Era <i>Q. Edward Wang</i>	330
17	New Confucianism <i>Yong Huang</i>	352
	Index	375

Notes on Contributors

Alan K. L. Chan is Professor of Humanities and Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. With research interests in both Confucianism and Daoism, he is a founding editorial board member of *Oxford Bibliographies: Chinese Studies*. His MOOC, “Explorations in Confucian Philosophy,” will soon be launched on Coursera.

Erin M. Cline is Associate Professor of Comparative Ethics in the Department of Theology at Georgetown University, where she teaches Chinese and Comparative Philosophy and Religion. She is the author of *Confucius, Rawls, and the Sense of Justice* (2013) and *Families of Virtue: Confucian and Western Views on Childhood Development* (2015).

Scott Cook 顧史考 is Tan Chin Tuan Professor of Chinese Studies at Yale–NUS College in Singapore. His works include *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A Study and Complete Translation* (2012) and *Guodian Chujiang xian-Qin rushu hongweiguan* 郭店楚簡先秦儒書宏微觀 (2006), among others.

Paul R. Goldin is Professor of East Asian Languages & Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Rituals of the Way: The Philosophy of Xunzi* (1999); *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China* (2002); *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (2005); and *Confucianism* (2011). In addition, he has edited the revised edition of R.H. van Gulik’s classic study, *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (2003), and has co-edited three other books on Chinese culture and political philosophy.

Yong Huang is Professor of Philosophy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is the editor of *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* and *Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy* (a book series). His research interests include ethics, political philosophy, and Chinese and comparative philosophy.

Michael Hunter is an Assistant Professor of East Asian Languages and Literatures at Yale University. He received his PhD from Princeton University’s Department of East Asian Studies.

Anne Behnke Kinney is Professor of Chinese in the Department of East Asian Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the University of Virginia. Her publications include *Representations of Childhood and Youth in Early China* and *Exemplary Women of Early China: The Lienü zhuan of Liu Xiang*.

Miaw-fen Lu is a Research Fellow in the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica. Her major research interests lie in intellectual and cultural history in late imperial China. She is the author of *The Wang Yangming School during the Ming Dynasty* and *Ruling All under Heaven with Filial Piety* (both in Chinese).

Zhao Lu is Research Fellow on the project “Fate, Freedom, and Prognostication: Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe” at the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities, Friedrich-Alexander-University, Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany. His research focuses on the images of Confucius and classicism in early imperial China.

Julia K. Murray is Professor Emerita of Art History, East Asian Studies, and Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin and is affiliated with the Fairbank Center at Harvard University. She has published extensively on visual and material culture associated with the worship of Confucius and on Chinese narrative illustration.

On-cho Ng is Professor of History, Asian Studies, and Philosophy at Pennsylvania State University, where he also heads the Department of Asian Studies. His many publications address a variety of topics, including late imperial Chinese intellectual history, and Confucian historiography, hermeneutics, religiousness, and ethics.

Yuri Pines, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, focuses on early Chinese political thought and traditional Chinese political culture. Among his publications are *Foundations of Confucian Thought* (2002), *Envisioning Eternal Empire* (2009), *The Everlasting Empire* (2012), and translation and study of *The Book of Lord Shang* (2017).

Sarah A. Queen is Professor of History at Connecticut College. She is the author of *From Chronicle to Canon*, co-translator with John S. Major, of *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn*, and co-editor with Paul van Els, of *Between History and Philosophy: Anecdotes in Early China*.

Thomas Radice is Associate Professor of History at Southern Connecticut State University, specializing in early Chinese intellectual history. He has published articles and book reviews in *Asian Philosophy*, *Dao*, and *Sino-Platonic Papers*, and is currently working on a book manuscript about ritual performance in early Chinese thought.

Kwong-loi Shun teaches philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. His main research interests are moral psychology and Confucian thought. He has been working on a multivolume work on Confucian thought, and the first volume, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, was published in 1997. He has been Professor of Philosophy and a university administrator at the University of California Berkeley, University of Toronto, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

John A. Tucker is Professor of History at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. His research focuses on Tokugawa Confucianism, as well as ways in which

Tokugawa Confucianism and its philosophical byproducts surfaced in later Japanese history. Tucker is the author of a translation study of Itō Jinsai's *Gomō jigi* (1998) and Ogyū Sorai's *Bendō and Benmei* (2006). He edited *Critical Readings on Japanese Confucianism* (2012); and co-edited, with Chun-chieh Huang, *Dao Companion to Japanese Confucian Philosophy* (2014).

Q. Edward Wang is Professor of History at Rowan University and Changjiang Professor at Peking University (2007–present). Among his publications are *Inventing China through History: the May Fourth Approach to Historiography* and *Chopsticks: A Cultural and Culinary History*. He also serves as editor of *Chinese Studies in History*.

Oliver Weingarten, PhD (Cantab), is Research Fellow at the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague. He has published on textual traditions and the intellectual history of the pre-imperial era in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, and the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. His current research focuses on two topics: courage, confrontation and violence in early China, and textual structures, especially potential mnemonic features, of early Chinese writings.

Introduction: Confucius and Confucianism

PAUL R. GOLDIN

Confucius is a Latinization of the Chinese name Kongfuzi 孔夫子, meaning Gentleman or Master Kong (traditional dates: 551–479 BC). Throughout East Asia, he has always been more commonly called Kongzi 孔子, but his status as the premier teacher in the Chinese tradition was crucial to the Jesuits who popularized the Latinized name, and thus they seem to have preferred the even more august locution Kongfuzi (Standaert 1999, 123–27). The accommodationist strategy of Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and other Jesuit missionaries was to declare Confucius' teachings, as well as the tradition on which they rested, as fundamentally congruent with Christianity (e.g., Mungello 1985; Rule 1986, 10–69). One key piece of evidence for Jesuit readers was the presence of multiple variants of the Golden Rule in Confucian texts, such as “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” 己所不欲, 勿施於人 (*Analects* 12.2). This was naturally compared to Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was well intentioned, but misleading in several respects. For example, while Ricci advanced Confucius as the most authentic and praiseworthy embodiment of Chinese wisdom, he denigrated many other traditions, including not only organized religions like Buddhism and Daoism, but also popular practices such as divination, as vulgar superstition (Ricci 1953, 82–105). This has led to the unproductive analytical habit, sometimes discernible even in today's scholarship, of equating all aspects of Chinese culture with Confucianism, which not only overstates the role of Confucian teachings in the organization of Chinese society (e.g., Goldin 2011, 2–4), but has also contributed to a lack of appreciation of other philosophical and religious movements.

Nevertheless, most Chinese literati in Ricci's day would have agreed that Confucius was the most important of their many cultural forebears. One of Confucius' many Chinese appellations is *xianshi* 先師, a powerful term meaning both “former teacher”

and “foremost teacher.” Confucius was similarly venerated in other East Asian cultures influenced by Chinese examples, such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam (even as they recognized, more readily than Ricci, that other traditions were worthy of respect as well).

What did Confucius accomplish that warranted such immense and institutionalized praise? The title *xianshi* offers a good preliminary basis for an answer: he was regarded as first among teachers. He was assuredly not the first teacher in any literal sense, for the cultic rituals of the Bronze Age (manifested by complex assemblages of ritual bronze vessels that were hoarded by leading lineages and interred with prominent men and women upon their deaths) must have required instructors to insure that the ceremonies were properly performed and the finical spirits duly appeased. Over time, it seems, such ritual masters started to include moral and political lessons in their curriculum. For example, in a scene set in 662 BC,¹ occasioned by the appearance of a spirit in a place called Guó 號, two ritual officers are said to have predicted the demise of that state because its ruler “listens to spirits” instead of “listening to his populace,” as an enlightened sovereign would (Yang Bojun 1990, 1.251–53; cf. Xu Yuangao 2002, 28–31). Hardly anything else is ever said about these two officers;² we must surmise that they were masters who would be consulted when the government required an expert opinion on ritual affairs. Their statement that the ruler must above all heed his people suggests an underlying political philosophy that charges the ruler with safeguarding the welfare of his subjects (Pines 2002, 78), and may even anticipate Confucius’ humanistic view that spirits do not offer useful moral guidance (Goldin 2011, 13f.). Another ritual master, Scribe Lao 史老 (fleeting attested in Xu Yuangao 2002, 502), an advisor of King Ling of Chu 楚靈王 (r. 540–529 BC), may be the dimly remembered historical figure who inspired the world-famous text *Laozi* 老子.³

Confucius is the first such master for whom we have substantial evidence of the content his teachings. Remembering that he lived over 2,500 years ago, however, we should not be surprised that the sources leave many open questions. The foremost text purporting to record his teachings is the so-called *Analects* (the Jesuit translation of *Lunyu* 論語, meaning *Selected Sayings*), which was supposedly compiled after Confucius’ death by his disciples – or perhaps disciples of disciples, since some of Confucius’ disciples are identified in the text as masters in their own right. Strangely, however, there is no record of the *Analects* until centuries later (e.g., Makeham 1996). Michael Hunter, in Chapter 1 of this volume, discusses the interpretive consequences lucidly; my view (Goldin forthcoming) is that that whoever was responsible for compiling the *Analects* included an overwhelming proportion of genuine material within it, but at a minimum modern readers must bear in mind that they are not reading the work of Confucius himself – that is to say, the Confucius we are given to see in the *Analects* is the Confucius that some posterior committee wanted us to see. To muddy the waters further, sayings and conversations are often presented with scant context. Reconstructing a coherent philosophy out of such fragmentary material requires considerable creativity. Nor are we alone in this quandary: the varied interpretations of Confucius’ philosophy even in antiquity indicate that there was no authorized ideology shared by all Confucians.⁴

Of Confucius’ life and heritage we know only the barest of details,⁵ especially after eliminating the eager hagiographies that emerged in the centuries after his death.⁶

In reality, his ancestry was murky (Eno 2003); his father, called Shuliang He 叔梁梁 in most sources, may have been a warrior from a place called Zou 鄒. The highlights of his career, according to tradition, were serving his home state of Lu 魯 as Minister of Justice (*sikou* 司寇) and attracting dozens of disciples, some of whom were among the social elite. Latter-day Confucians regarded the position of Minister of Justice as incommensurate with Confucius' prodigious gifts, and were at pains to explain his failure to achieve more. Sometimes posterity called him "the uncrowned king" (*suwang* 素王), alluding to the rank that he *should* have attained (see Alan K. L. Chan, Chapter 12, and On-cho Ng, Chapter 14, this volume). Passages in the *Analects* (e.g., 16.13), similarly, hint at unseemly discord in his household, and it is suggestive that more is known about his grandson, the philosopher Zisi 子思 (483?–402), than his ne'er-do-well son, Boyu 伯魚 (532–483). Confucius died in his seventies, perhaps with a sense of a mission unfulfilled.

As presented in the *Analects*, Confucius' philosophy begins with the premise that one must think for oneself. Confucius continually deconstructs received religion and enjoins his disciples to think through a new moral system with human interaction as its base.

Fan Chi 樊遲 [b. 515 BC] asked about wisdom. The Master said: "To take righteousness among the people as one's duty, and to revere the ghosts and spirits, but keep them at a distance, can be called wisdom."

(*Analects* 6.20)

Confucius is not an atheist—he concedes that there are ghosts and spirits, and that it is advisable not to offend them—but he believes that pondering the afterlife and the supernatural will only impede moral reasoning (*Analects* 11.11).

And how does one instill "righteousness among the people"? Here the Golden Rule, admired by Ricci, comes into play: "What you yourself do not desire, do not do to others" (*Analects* 15.23; cf. also 5.11). This is presented as Confucius' own definition of *shu* 恕, "reciprocity." Sometimes it is called the Silver Rule, so as to distinguish it from the Judeo-Christian Golden Rule, because it is formulated in the negative (cf. Huang 2005, 394). Another qualification is necessary: in practice, *shu* has to be interpreted as doing unto others as you would have others do unto you *if you had the same social role as they* (Nussbaum 2003, 6; Goldin 2005, 1–4). *Shu* is a relation not between two individuated people, but between two social roles. How does one treat one's father, to take a typical Confucian example? In the same way that one would want to be treated by one's son *if one were a father oneself*. Moreover, whether formulated as the Golden or the Silver Rule, Confucius' principle is open to the same doubts that Alan Gewirth (1981) has raised with reference to the Western tradition (see also Ivanhoe 2008).

In *Analects* 15.23, Confucius identifies *shu* as "the one word that one can practice throughout one's life" (cf. also 4.15 and 15.2), and in 6.28 he defines a paraphrase of *shu* as "the method of humanity," or *ren* 仁, which he regarded as the cardinal virtue. Considering how reluctant he is elsewhere to define *ren*, we must apperceive this is a very big hint: the way to become a "humane" person starts with the moral reasoning entailed by *shu*, that is, asking ourselves in each particular situation how we ought to treat other people by imagining ourselves in their shoes and thinking through our relationship to them. Another big hint comes in *Analects* 12.1, where Confucius responds

to a question about *ren* by saying: “Overcome the self and return to ritual in order to practice humanity.” When the disciple presses Confucius further, he says:

Do not look in opposition to the rites. Do not listen in opposition to the rites. Do not speak in opposition to the rites. Do not move in opposition to the rites.

Western interpreters of Confucius (such as Fingarette 1972) have frequently mischaracterized “the rites” (*li* 禮) as something like a code of conduct, leading to serious misconceptions about what Confucius means here by not looking, listening, speaking, or moving in opposition to the rites. One might think there is a discrete and knowable code, called *li*, on which one can rely for guidance in all matters: if you do not know how to act, cleave to the *li*, and you will never be wrong. This might even have been the standard conception of *li* in Confucius’ own day: a practicable code that ambitious young men hoped to learn from experienced ritual masters. The problem is that this understanding of *li* is inadequate for Confucius, because he explicitly *contrasts* the rites with anything like a predetermined code (and, to this extent, the very translation of *li* as “rite” or “ritual” can be misleading). In *Analects* 2.3, for example, Confucius states that laws and punishments are inferior to virtue and ritual because although the former can be effective at molding behavior, they do not cause people to reflect on their conduct and develop a conscience (*chi* 恥, sometimes translated as “shame”). As a philosopher who values moral reasoning above all else, Confucius is wary of anything like a code that one could cheat oneself into practicing unthinkingly and automatically.

Other comments on *li* are in the same spirit. The most revealing passage has to do with rituals in a ceremonial hall (*Analects* 9.3): the contemporary habit of replacing a prescribed linen hat with one of cheaper silk is approved as frugal, but the habit of bowing at the top of the hall, when the rites call for bowing at the bottom of the hall, is criticized as self-aggrandizing. Thus, the rites are subject to emendation in practice, but one cannot depart from them capriciously or groundlessly. Rather, they must be practiced in such a way as to convey and reinforce deeper moral principles. Nor can one simply follow the majority: laudable practice of the rites requires thinking for oneself.

Li is best understood, then, as embodied virtue, the thoughtful somatic expression of basic moral principles, without which the ceremonies are void (cf. *Analects* 3.3 and 17.11). Far from a static code of conduct, *li* is the sum total of all the moral calculations that a thinking Confucian must go through before acting, and must be constantly reinterpreted and reapplied to suit changing situations. Thus, when Confucius tells his disciple not to look, listen, speak, or move in opposition to the rites, he does not mean that one need only memorize a certain body of accepted conventions and take care always to follow them; rather, using the fuller sense of *li*, he means that one must ask oneself how to put the most humane face on the rites in each new situation, and then to carry them out conscientiously. What sounds like a deceptively simple instruction is really a demand not only to act with unflagging moral awareness, but also assess *for oneself* the right course of action at every moment.

Political action relies, likewise, on the thoughtful performance of the moral obligations entailed by one’s position, but here Confucius’ ideas are harder to reconcile with modern preferences because of the heavy emphasis on the figure of the ruler and his decisive influence, positive or negative, on his subjects’ behavior (e.g., *Analects* 12.17–19;

see Olberding 2012 on the importance of exemplary conduct). The key passage is *Analects* 12.11: “May the lord act as a lord, the minister as a minister, the father as a father, the son as a son.” As they were understood by the tradition, the phrases “to act as a lord,” “to act as a minister,” “to act as a father,” and “to act as a son” are moral demands: if a ruler, minister, father, or son are to be reckoned as such, they must act as required by their positions in society. “To act as a lord” means to live up to the moral demands of rulership: to be vigilant about one’s own conduct so as to provide a worthy model for the people to follow in their quest for moral self-cultivation.

Confucius’ pronouncement permits some other inferences. First, modern readers can hardly avoid observing that all four characters – the lord, the minister, the father, and the son – are male. It was a social reality in Confucius’ day that lords and ministers were without exception male, but instead of “the father” and “the son,” he might well have said “fathers and mothers” and “sons and daughters.” Readers must decide for themselves how much to make of this problem (see Anne Behnke Kinney, Chapter 7, this volume). On the one hand, there is little reason why Confucius’ ideas could not be extended today to include women as well (Rosemont 1997; Clark and Wang 2004; Goldin 2011, 115–20); on the other hand, there is also little reason to suppose that he would himself have thought to do so. All his disciples were male, and his few comments about women suggest that he thought most consequential actions were undertaken by men (Goldin 2002, 55–59).

Another inescapable observation is that the four cardinal roles are all relative. No one can be a lord without a minister, a minister without a lord, a father without a son, or a son without a father. By the same token, it is possible for the same person to play more than one of these roles in different situations and in relation to different people. All males are sons, and thus any father is not only a father to his son but also a son to his own father. Similarly, a minister may be a lord in his own right, but a minister to a lord higher than he; indeed, in Bronze Age politics, even the highest king, the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子), is conceived as a lord to all other human beings but only a vicegerent of Heaven above.⁷ These dimensions of Confucius’ saying should not be overlooked. All Confucian morality, as we have seen, emerges from relations with other people. It is impossible to practice *shu* except in relation to other people, just as virtue always has neighbors (*Analects* 4.25). Moreover, the stipulation that we must act in accordance with our social role means that the right way to behave depends on our relationship with the person with whom we are presently engaged (Ames 2011). There are no universally valid moral injunctions because no one is in the same social position at every instant of his or her life.

At the level of state politics, however, merely exhorting the ruler to live up to the demands of his supreme position may seem inadequate to modern readers, because Confucius does not tell us what to do if the ruler fails – as they often do. A Confucian minister is obliged to remonstrate in such cases (Vandermeersch 1994; Schaberg 1997, 2005), but rulers who heed principled remonstrance have always been in the minority. Mencius 孟子 (372–289 bc?), who expanded Confucius’ philosophy roughly two centuries later, confronted such questions more squarely, even implying a right of rebellion in extreme cases of misrule (Tiwald 2008). Confucius, by contrast, suggests that when the state is hopelessly misgoverned, one can scarcely do better than “to avoid punishment and disgrace” (*Analects* 5.1). He was not a democrat (Elstein 2010).

Just as there is no good solution to the problem of serving a reprobate king, Confucius acknowledges that immoral parents can place their children in intractable situations as well. On the one hand, he declares that a son should not turn in his father for stealing a sheep (*Analects* 13.18), because he is misguided if he thinks he owes more to the faceless state than to the father who reared and raised him. On the other hand, he recognizes that serving parents can be difficult:

The Master said: "In serving your parents, remonstrate slightly. If you see that they do not intend to follow [your advice], remain respectful and do not disobey. Toil and do not complain."

(*Analects* 4.18)

The remonstrance is indispensable; "acting as a son" must include raising controversial issues with one's parents whenever necessary. But imperfect parents are not always persuaded to mend their ways, and Confucius does not accept taking parents' mistakes as grounds for losing one's filial respect. "Toil and do not complain": you may know you are in the right, but if you have done everything you can to make your case, and your parents are unmoved, you must endure your lot.

The foregoing summary of Confucius' philosophy is by no means exhaustive; it merely presents the background necessary for understanding why he has been venerated throughout East Asia as the forefather of a distinctive moral and cultural disposition. In Western languages, this has been called "Confucianism," a term with both supporters (for my view, see Goldin 2011, 5–6) and critics (e.g., Nylan 2001, 2n; Elman 2002). The present volume, however, is a companion to Confucius, not a companion to Confucianism, and just as Marx declared that he was not a Marxist (Marx and Engels 1975–2004, 46:356 and 49:7), the two are not identical. A companion to Confucianism would have to survey major Confucian thinkers after Confucius, their philosophical innovations, and so on. While that would be a welcome and useful resource (in English, the only large reference work of this kind is Yao 2003), the subject of this book is the figure of Confucius and his diverse representations down to the present day.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I focuses on early representations of Confucius in both textual and visual sources. In Chapter 1, "Early Sources for Confucius," Michael Hunter begins by surveying the extant sources for Kongzi, concluding that they are so diverse, and of such questionable reliability, that they scarcely combine to paint a coherent portrait of the master. Hunter then considers the text that has traditionally been the most venerated, namely, the *Analects*, and observes that a reader's assumptions about the origins of this collection, which remain disputed, will necessarily inform his or her imagination of Kongzi himself. The historical Confucius may be beyond reconstruction.

In Chapter 2, "Confucius in Excavated Warring States Manuscripts," Scott Cook focuses on Confucius' image in a group of texts that was not available before the 1970s: previously unknown manuscripts, some excavated by archaeologists, some looted by tomb-robbers. After surveying the material, Cook argues that its portrayal of Confucius' philosophical outlook is "largely concordant with what we find ascribed to him in received texts dating from the Warring States period," yet he concludes by reminding us that these new documents await more thorough investigation.

Oliver Weingarten examines creative literary uses of the figure of Confucius in Chapter 3, “The Unorthodox Master: The Serious and the Playful in Depictions of Confucius.” These include satires, parodies, playful misreadings, the use of Confucian utterances as proof texts, and nascent hagiographies. Such appropriations and adaptations, which were often ludic, bespeak broad familiarity with the figure of Confucius at diverse levels of literate society; otherwise one could not find such a variety of depictions, Confucian and non-Confucian alike.

In Chapter 4, “Representations of Confucius in Apocrypha of the First Century CE,” Zhao Lu discusses a particular subset of later appropriation: a corpus commonly translated as “apocrypha” (*chenwei* 讖緯). These texts, which were mostly lost over the subsequent centuries, reflected a growing enthusiasm for an ideal society based on the Five Classics and the restoration of the Han 漢 dynasty. In this context, Confucius became a prophet and messenger of Heaven who not only encoded his political teaching in his work, but also foretold the ascendance of the ruling Liu 劉 family. This superhuman image of Confucius was rooted in knowledge shared amongst scholars of that time.

In the final chapter in Part I, “Visual Representations of Confucius” (Chapter 5), Julia K. Murray discusses Confucius as a subject for visual representation after the Han court formally endorsed his teachings. While the earliest images appeared in schools and offering shrines during the Song 宋 period (960–1279), portrayals became more diverse and some reproduced pictures kept by his descendants. Moreover, pictorial biographies of Confucius brought him more vividly to life and to a wider range of society, and in recent decades new images of Confucius have evolved to serve a range of contemporary purposes, including politics and advertising.

Part II, “Confucian Ideas,” addresses the philosophical perspectives that have been attributed to Confucius over the centuries (some with a more solid historical basis than others). Kwong-loi Shun opens this section with “*Le* in the *Analects*” (Chapter 6), a discussion of a term commonly translated as “joy” (*le* 樂). Shun begins with a survey of usage in early texts, then considers the nature of *le* in the *Analects*: a state akin to tranquility, and anchored in one’s following the ethical path and affirming such a way of life. Because the different elements of the mind are blended together in an ethical direction, there is a sense of harmony and ease. Furthermore, because the external conditions of life are invested with minor significance as compared with the ethical, one is not subject to worries about them.

In Chapter 7, “Women in the *Analects*,” Anne Behnke Kinney focuses on three famous (some might say infamous) comments about women that are attributed to Confucius in that text. Taken together, they demonstrate that in Confucius’ mind, high social status overrides the restrictions of gender. Just as he expresses his frustration with low-ranking men and women of unseemly ambition, he seems willing to regard certain elite women with the same respect usually reserved for elite men. Although such women were extraordinary even among their own peers, it is no less extraordinary that the Confucius of the *Analects* acknowledges their accomplishments and actively engages with them, despite the objections of a narrow-minded disciple.

Yuri Pines focuses on two other keywords, “noble man” (*junzi* 君子) and “petty man” (*xiaoren* 小人), in Chapter 8, “Confucius’ Elitism: The Concepts of *junzi* and *xiaoren* Revisited.” By comparing the usages in the *Analects* with earlier texts, primarily the *Zuo*

zhuan 左傳 (*Zuo Commentary*), Pines argues that Confucius revolutionized the concept of *junzi*, expanding it to include members of his own social class, the *shi* 士. Originally, *shi* denoted the lowest stratum of nobility, but eventually it referred to the elite more broadly, with membership primarily determined by one's qualities rather than one's pedigree. Confucius contributed to this process by allowing a more flexible conceptualization of membership in the elite. This flexibility, coupled with persistently rigid emphasis on sociopolitical hierarchy, became an effective recipe for preserving a highly stratified society while maintaining the possibility of social mobility.

Thomas Radice considers a related concept in Chapter 9, "Confucius and Filial Piety." Rooted in early Chinese religion, Confucius' understanding of filial piety (*xiao* 孝) is, in Radice's words, "an ornamented expression to both the dead and the living." Because parents can be fallible, filial piety requires more than straightforward deference: one must gently remonstrate with them, but also be ready to conceal their misdeeds. These are imperfect solutions for imperfect situations, and they undermine simplistic characterizations of the parent-child relationship in Confucian ethics.

In Chapter 10, "The Gentleman's Views on Warfare According to the *Gongyang Commentary*," Sarah A. Queen focuses on a different Confucian text, namely, a commentary to the canonical *Springs and Autumns* that operated on the assumption that Confucius was the august author. Though often overlooked as a source for understanding Confucius' position on warfare, the *Gongyang Commentary* is replete with relevant material. It articulates a complex set of ethico-ritual principles that provisionally permit certain kinds of military activities for the sake of mediating conflict until the sage rule symbolized by King Wen of Zhou 周文王 (d. 1050 bc) can be restored and peace returned to the realm.

In the final chapter in Part II, "Comparisons with Western Philosophy" (Chapter 11), Erin M. Cline explores similarities and differences between Western philosophy and Confucianism. While works that compare the thought of Confucius and Western philosophy are diverse, they share the view that comparative study is worthwhile and seek to address, in various ways, some of the common challenges that comparative studies face. In light of this body of work, Cline examines different proposed answers to the question of why comparative philosophy is worthwhile, and highlights three sets of challenges that frequently arise in comparative philosophy, which she calls thematic, interpretive, and procedural.

Parts III and IV turn to the legacy of Confucius in later centuries: Part III is devoted to imperial China, and Part IV to the modern world. In Chapter 12, "From Uncrowned King to the Sage of Profound Greatness: Confucius and the *Analects* in Early Medieval China," Alan K. L. Chan limns the concerted effort by literati in the third through the sixth centuries to interrogate tradition afresh. The discourse called *xuanxue* 玄學 (which Chan translates as "Learning in the Profound") juxtaposed the Confucian *Analects* to other texts, especially the *Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), Laozi, and Zhuangzi 莊子. This radical reinterpretation resulted in a Confucius who was a sage of "profound greatness" embodying the fullness of *dao* 道 in his being (*xuansheng* 玄聖). As literati's interests changed, so did their Confucius.

In Chapter 13, "The Reception of *The Classic of Filial Piety* from Medieval to Late Imperial China," Miaw-fen Lu observes that biographies of women indicate the increasing importance of this text in female education, whereas biographies of men

exhibit the opposite. Her explanation is that *The Canon of Filial Piety* played a significant role in political culture before the medieval period, but became mainly a primer after the Southern Song. The marginalization of the text in political and elite circles caused it to figure less prominently in biographies of males until it regained political importance with the support of the Qing dynasty (1636–1912).

On-cho Ng revisits the Gongyang tradition and the concept of the “uncrowned king” in Chapter 14, “Kongzi as the Uncrowned King in Some Qing Gongyang Exegeses.” In their synoptic judgment of the ancient past, Ng maintains, Gongyang commentators of the Qing dynasty not only resisted the destructiveness of time, but also relived, retrieved, and rendered events of yore as transhistorical archetypes that serve as muse and model for contemporary political amelioration. Moreover, the symbolic enthronement of Kongzi as “uncrowned king” introduces a peculiar order of time. Whereas the historical succession of the ancient dynasties is based on a realistic temporality, the mythic systems of Confucius’ reign are built on idealized ethico-moral standards, and thus subvert and claim priority over recorded histories.

The three chapters in Part IV address Confucius and new Confucianisms in modern East Asia. In Chapter 15, “Confucianism, Capitalism, and Shibusawa Eiichi’s *The Analects and the Abacus*,” John A. Tucker discusses Shibusawa Eiichi 渋沢栄一 (1840–1931), who is widely known as the father of Japanese capitalism and was also one of the more outspoken advocates of Confucius’ learning in modern Japan. Tucker examines Shibusawa’s *The Analects and the Abacus* (*Rongo to soroban* 論語と算盤) against the bleak assessment by his contemporary Max Weber (1864–1920) of Confucian cultures and their alleged inability to develop capitalism. Tucker suggests that Shibusawa’s life and thought constitute considerable counterevidence to Weber’s thesis, and also offers a historical contextualization of Shibusawa’s promotion of Confucius.

The negative images of Confucius during the 1910s and the 1920s constitute the theme of Chapter 16, “Confucius in the May Fourth Era,” by Q. Edward Wang. After the fall of the Empire, Confucius was associated with conservative political forces that were regarded as causes for the challenges faced by the newly founded Republic. To many intellectuals, the 1911 Revolution was incomplete because it created a new type of government without a new mindset for the Chinese to become citizens of the Republic. Accordingly, Confucianism was declared obsolete – but the question of how much blame to pin on Confucius himself remained open. There was also the unresolved problem of what should replace it.

In Chapter 17, “New Confucianism,” Yong Huang addresses the Confucian response to the challenge posed by modern Western ideology in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. What is unique about this movement, often called “New Confucianism” (*xin Rujia* 新儒家), is its attempt to show that traditional Confucian values and such modern Western values as rationality, modernity, science, and democracy are not only compatible, but can also significantly enrich each other. Moreover, it is noteworthy that a small but vocal conservative group of Confucians has emerged. These thinkers stress the political dimension of Confucianism, including meritocracy, and some of them advocate a Confucian constitutionalism.

In today’s bustling China, the figure of Confucius is evidently as controversial as ever, sometimes standing for the right things, sometimes standing for the wrong things, but never standing for nothing. With the conviction that only the rarest of personages

can endure as cultural symbols for century after century, we offer this book to readers in search of diverse perspectives on Confucius and all that he has represented.

Notes

- 1 Whether the date can be trusted depends on one's judgment of the text, *The Zuo Commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳). The most even-handed discussion of this issue is now Li (2007, 33–59); see also Blakeley (2004).
- 2 The officers' names are Inner Scribe Guò 內史過 and Scribe Yin 史嚚. Inner Scribe Guò, who must have been a royal official, makes another prescient statement in a record dated 649 BC (Yang Bojun 1990, 1.337; Xu Yuangao 2002, 31–35). A manifestly different Scribe Yin appears in connection with an event in 522 BC (Yang Bojun 1990, 4.1415).
- 3 According to the commentary of Wei Zhao 韋昭 (204–273 CE), his courtesy name was Lao Ziwei 老子聾. In his otherwise thorough study of the legend of Lao Dan 老聃, the archivist who supposedly berated Confucius for his ignorance, Graham (1990, 111–24), does not consider this reference. Scribe Lao is in the right place at the right time: as a member of King Ling's court, he was from Chu, where Laozi is said to have been born (Sima Qian 1959, 2139), and he was probably an older contemporary of Confucius, just like Lao Dan.
- 4 The following overview of Confucius's philosophy is condensed from Goldin (2011, 7–30).
- 5 Useful treatments of Confucius' life include Wilhelm (1931, 3–95); Shigeki (1956); Creel (1960, esp. 25–172); Roetz (1998); Csikszentmihalyi (2001); Lévi (2002).
- 6 On this process, see esp. Jensen (1995 and 2002); also Csikszentmihalyi (2002, 136–44). The changing conceptions of Confucius after his death are explored in Nylan and Wilson (2010).
- 7 On the so-called Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), see, e.g., Kominami (1992); Shaughnessy (1999, 313–17); Deng Peiling (2011, 30–48); Luo Xinhui (2012). The discussion in Creel (1970, 93–100), is marred by his misconception of the political system as feudalistic.

References

- Ames, Roger T. (2011). *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Blakeley, Barry B. (2004). "'On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Zuo zhuan*' Revisited," *Early China*, 29: 217–67.
- Clark, Kelly James and Robin R. Wang (2004). "A Confucian Defense of Gender Equity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 72(2): 395–422.
- Creel, H. G. (1960). *Confucius and the Chinese Way*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Creel, Herrlee G. (1970). *The Origins of Statecraft in China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mark (2001). "Confucius," in David Noel Freedman and Michael J. McClymond (eds.), *The Rivers of Paradise: Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad as Religious Founders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, pp. 233–308.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mark (2002). "Confucius and the *Analects* in the Hàn," in Bryan W. Van Norden (ed.), *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 134–62.
- Deng Peiling 鄧佩玲 (2011). *Tianming, guishen yu zhudao: Dong-Zhou jinwen guci tanlun* 天命、鬼神與祝禱：東周金文緼辭探論. Taipei: Yiwen.
- Elman, Benjamin (2002). "Rethinking 'Confucianism' and 'Neo-Confucianism' in Modern Chinese History," in Benjamin A. Elman et al. (eds.), *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 518–54.

- Elstein, David (2010). "Why Early Confucianism Cannot Generate Democracy," *Dao*, 9(4): 427–43.
- Eno, Robert (2003). "The Background of the Kong Family of Lu and the Origins of Ruism," *Early China*, 28: 1–41.
- Fingarette, Herbert (1972). *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Gewirth, Alan (1981). *Reason and Morality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goldin, Paul Rakita. 2002. *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Goldin, Paul R. (2005). "The Theme of the Primacy of the Situation in Classical Chinese Philosophy and Rhetoric," *Asia Major* (3rd series) 18(2): 1–25.
- Goldin, Paul R. (2011). *Confucianism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Goldin, Paul R. (forthcoming). "Confucius and His Disciples in the *Analects*: The Basis for the Traditional View," in Martin Kern et al. (eds.), *The Analects Revisited: New Perspectives on the Dating of a Classic*. Leiden: Brill.
- Graham, A. C. (1990). *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Huang, Yong (2005). "A Copper Rule versus the Golden Rule: A Daoist–Confucian Proposal for Global Ethics," *Philosophy East and West*, 55(3): 394–425.
- Ivanhoe, Philip J. (2008). "The 'Golden Rule' in the *Analects*," in David Jones (ed.), *Confucius Now: Contemporary Encounters with the Analects*. Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, pp. 81–107.
- Jensen, Lionel (1995). "Wise Man of the Wilds: Fatherlessness, Fertility, and the Mythic Exemplar, Kongzi," *Early China*, 20: 407–37.
- Jensen, Lionel (2002). "The Genesis of Kongzi in Ancient Narrative: The Figurative as Historical," in Thomas A. Wilson (ed.), *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 175–221.
- Kominami Ichirō 小南一郎 (1992). "Temmei to toku," 天命と徳, *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報, 64: 1–59.
- Lévi, Jean (2002). *Confucius*. Paris: Pygmalion/Gérard Watelet.
- Li, Wai-yee (2007). *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Luo Xinhui 羅新慧 (2012). "Zhou dai tianming guannian de fazhan yu shanbian," 周代天命觀念的發展與嬗變, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究, 5: 4–18.
- Makeham, John (1996) "The Formation of *Lunyu* as a Book," *Monumenta Serica*, 44: 1–24.
- Marx, Karl (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) (1975–2004). *Collected Works*, trans. Richard Dixon et al. New York: International.
- Mungello, D. E. (1985). *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.
- Nussbaum, Martha (2003). "Golden Rule Arguments: A Missing Thought?" in Chong Kim-chong et al. (eds.), *The Moral Circle and the Self: Chinese and Western Approaches*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, pp. 3–16.
- Nylan, Michael (2001). *The Five "Confucian" Classics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Nylan, Michael and Thomas Wilson (eds.) (2010). *Lives of Confucius: Civilization's Greatest Sage through the Ages*. New York: Doubleday Religion.
- Olberding, Amy (2012). *Moral Exemplars in the Analects: The Good Person Is That*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Pines, Yuri (2002). *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period, 722–453 BCE*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Ricci, Matteo (1552–1610) (1953). *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci, 1583–1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher, SJ (1885–1972). New York: Random House.
- Roetz, Heiner (1998). *Konfuzius*, 2nd edn. Munich: C. H. Beck.

- Rosemont, Henry, Jr. (1997). "Classical Confucian and Contemporary Feminist Perspectives on the Self: Some Parallels and Their Implications," in Douglas Allen (ed.), *Culture and Self: Philosophical and Religious Perspectives, East and West*, Boulder, CO: Westview, pp. 63–82.
- Rule, Paul A. (1986). *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Schaberg, David (1997). "Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou Historiography," *Early China*, 22: 133–79.
- Schaberg, David (2005). "Playing at Critique: Indirect Remonstrance and the Formation of *shi* Identity," in Martin Kern (ed.), *Text and Ritual in Early China*. Seattle, WA and London: University of Washington Press, pp. 193–225
- Shaughnessy, Edward L. (1999). "Western Zhou History," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 292–351.
- Shigeki Kaizuka (1956). *Confucius: His Life and Thought*, trans. Geoffrey Bownas. New York: Macmillan.
- Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145?–86? BC) (1959). *Shiji* 史記. Beijing: Zhonghua.
- Standaert, Nicolas (1999). "The Jesuits Did NOT Manufacture 'Confucianism'," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine*, 16: 115–32.
- Tiwald, Justin (2008). "A Right of Rebellion in the Mengzi?" *Dao*, 7(3): 269–82.
- Vandermeersch, Léon (1994). "L'institution chinoise de remonstrance," *Études chinoises*, 13(1/2): 31–45.
- Wilhelm, Richard (1873–1930) (1931). *Confucius and Confucianism*, trans. George H. Danton and Annina Periam Danton. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Xu Yuangao 徐元誥 (1876–1955) (2002). *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解, ed. Wang Shumin 王樹民 and Shen Changyun 沈長雲. Beijing: Zhonghua.
- Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (1990). *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, 2nd edn. Beijing: Zhonghua.
- Yao, Xinzhong (ed.) (2003). *Encyclopedia of Confucianism*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Part I

Representations of Confucius

1

Early Sources for Confucius

MICHAEL HUNTER

No discussion of Kongzi's 孔子 life, thought, or significance in the ancient Chinese context can proceed without first confronting two basic problems: (1) what are the earliest sources for Kongzi; and (2) which, if any, of these sources can be relied on for accurate information about him? How one goes about answering the latter question determines to a large extent the version of Kongzi one ends up with. Let us take each question in turn.¹

The Sources

The simplest way to measure Kongzi's impact on the early textual record (with "early" defined as the period ending with the fall of the Eastern Han dynasty in 220 CE) is to count the number of sources² that include Kongzi sayings, stories, and testimonia. Such an approach yields a remarkably large and diverse assortment of texts that might be grouped into the categories below.

Kongzi-centric Anthologies

Far and away the most important collection of Kongzi material in the Chinese tradition is the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), a heterogeneous mix of stand-alone *zi yue* 子曰 (the Master says) sayings, mini-dialogues featuring Kongzi's followers and contemporaries, third-person descriptions of Kongzi's character and conduct, and sayings attributed to his followers. The *Lunyu* comprises approximately 16,000 characters across 500 or so entries in twenty chapters. (For more on the *Lunyu*, see below.)

The received version of the *Kongzi jiaoyu* 孔子家語 (*Family Sayings of Confucius*), a much larger compendium (56,600 characters) of early Kongzi traditions, was compiled by Wang Su 王肅 (195–256) in the third century CE but contains a significant amount

of material from earlier sources. Another third-century compilation that likely includes earlier material is the *Kong congzi* 孔叢子 (*Kong Masters Anthology*).

The “Kongzi shijia” 孔子世家 (“Hereditary House of Kongzi”) and “Zhongni dizi liezhuan” (“Biographies of Zhong Ni’s Disciples”), chapters 47 and 67 of Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (d. c. 86 BCE) *Shiji* 史記 (*Grand Scribe’s Records*), also warrant special mention. As the earliest extant biography of Kongzi, the “Kongzi shijia” in particular has often been relied on to contextualize Kongzi sayings and stories found in other sources.

Canonical Traditions

The classic most closely associated with Kongzi in the early period, and the text most often said to have been “composed” (*zuo* 作) by Kongzi himself (e.g., at *Mengzi* 3B/9), is the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Annals*). However, the *Chunqiu*’s value as a source of Kongzi material is limited given that extant versions of the *Chunqiu* mention Kongzi only once. The version of the *Chunqiu* within the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo Traditions*) recension includes only a brief entry appended to the end of the text and dated to the sixteenth year of the reign of Duke Ai of Lu 魯哀公, or 479 BCE: “Summer, the fourth month, on the day *jichou*: Kong Qiu died” (夏四月己丑: 孔丘卒). Two other *Chunqiu* recensions, those of the *Gongyang* 公羊 and *Guliang* 穀梁 commentarial traditions, include the line “Kongzi was born” (孔子生) in brief entries dated to 552 BCE (note that Sima Qian dated Kongzi’s birth to 551, the twenty-second year of Duke Xiang’s 襄公 reign, not 552).³ Of the three *Chunqiu* commentarial traditions, the *Zuozhuan* (fourth century BCE?)⁴ quotes Kongzi most extensively (×43) and also includes a number of anecdotes in which Kongzi features as a character; the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* quote Kongzi only several times apiece.

The *Zhouyi* 周易 (*Zhou Changes*) includes about thirty quotations prefaced with the *zi yue* 子曰 (“the master said”) quotation marker, material that has traditionally been interpreted as quotations of Kongzi despite the lack of any overt references to him. These quotations are clustered within two sections of the text, the *Wenyan* 文言 (*Patterned Words*) commentary to the first hexagram (*qian* 乾) and the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 (*Commentary to the Appended Phrases*).

The richest source of Kongzi material among the classics is the *Liji* 禮記 (*Ritual Records*). Although the *Liji* anthology was probably compiled toward the end of the Western Han period (Baker 2006), the pre-imperial provenance of at least two of its chapters – “Zi yi” 緇衣 (“Black Robes”) and “Zhongni xianju” 仲尼閒居 (“Zhong Ni at Leisure”) – has been confirmed by recent manuscript finds. Twenty-two chapters of the *Liji* quote or reference Kongzi, with four chapters – “Zengzi wen” 曾子問 (“Zengzi Asked”), “Ai gong wen” 哀公問 (“Duke Ai Asked”), “Zhong Ni yanju” 仲尼燕居 (“Zhong Ni at Leisure”), and “Kongzi xianju” 孔子閒居 (“Kongzi At Rest”) – consisting exclusively of Kongzi material. Three additional chapters – “Fang ji” 坊記 (“Embankment Record”), “Biao ji” 表記 (“Exemplary Record”), and “Zi yi” 緇衣 (“Black Robes”) – are collections of *zi yue* 子曰 (the Master says) sayings. All told, the *Liji* includes more than 300 statements prefaced with *zi yue* or *Kongzi yue* (Kongzi said). The *Yili* 儀禮 (*Etiquette and Ritual*), another canonical ritual compendium, contains only a single Kongzi saying.

The *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*) is a much shorter, 2,000-character, dialogue between Kongzi and his disciple Zengzi 曾子 on the subject of *xiao* 孝 (filial piety).

From the mid-Western Han (202 BCE–9 CE) onward, the belief that Kongzi was responsible for compiling and editing the canonical traditions of the *Yi* 易 (*Changes*), *Shu* 書 (*Documents*), *Shi* 詩 (*Odes*), *Li* 禮 (*Rituals*), *Yue* 樂 (*Music*), and *Chunqiu* into a single, unified canon meant that all of the classics could, in theory, be read as sources of Kongzi's wisdom, regardless of whether they quoted or mentioned him.

Commentaries and Other Scholastic Texts

Within the *Yi* 易 (*Changes*) tradition, these include the several *Kongzi yue* and *zi yue* commentaries discovered in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript find dated to the early part of the Western Han period (see below), in addition to the *zi yue* commentary layers within the *Zhouyi* itself.

Within the *Shi* 詩 tradition, the largest source of Kongzi material is the *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 (*Outward Commentary to the Han Odes*), attributed to Han Ying 韓嬰 (second century BCE). The *Hanshi waizhuan* includes more than seventy sections with Kongzi sayings, stories, and testimonia. The commentary of the *Mao Shi* 毛詩 (*Mao Odes*) also includes a handful of Kongzi sayings. Among pre-Han sources, the so-named “Kongzi shilun” 孔子詩論 (“Kongzi on the Odes”) manuscript from the looted Shanghai Museum collection presents Kongzi as a source of miscellaneous commentaries on the *Shi*.

Within the *Shu* 書 tradition, the Western Han *Shangshu dazhuan* 尚書大傳 (*Great Commentary to the Exalted Documents*), a text traditionally attributed to Fu Sheng 伏勝 (third–second century BCE), contains a few dozen Kongzi quotations. Chapter two of the *Kong congzi*, “Lun shu” 論書 (“Discussing the Documents”), consists of several dialogues between Kongzi and his disciples on the subject of the *Shu*.

Extant commentaries dating to the Eastern Han period, including Zhao Qi's 趙岐 (110–201 CE) *Mengzi* commentary to the *Mengzi*, Wang Yi's 王逸 (fl. c. 120 CE) *Chuci* 楚辭 (*Verses of Chu*) commentary, and the several commentaries attributed to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 CE), frequently invoke Kongzi but tend to borrow overwhelmingly from the *Lunyu*. Other scholastic texts that make liberal use of Kongzi include Xu Shen's 許慎 (c. 55–149 CE) *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*Explanations of Characters Simple and Complex*) dictionary and the *Baihu tong* 白虎通 (*Summary of the White Tiger Hall [Discussions]*), which purports to be a summary of an imperial conference called in 79 CE to resolve disagreements over the interpretation of the classics.

Discrete *Kongzi yue* 孔子曰 (Kongzi said) comments on various canonical traditions can also be found scattered throughout the early corpus within many texts not exclusively devoted to commentary.

Historiographical Sources

In the pre-imperial era, these include the aforementioned *Zuozhuan* and the *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the States*), the latter of which contains only ten or so Kongzi quotations. Its Kongzi-centric biographies aside, the *Shiji* 史記 (*Grand Scribe's Records*) includes a large number of Kongzi quotations scattered throughout the work, particularly within *Taishigong yue* 太史公曰 (His Excellency the Grand Scribe says) comments, the *Shiji* postface, and other passages written in the voice of the *Shiji* author. Ban Gu's 班固 (32–92 CE) *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Han*) and Fan Ye's 范曄 (398–445 CE) *Hou Hanshu* 後

漢書 (*History of the Later Han*) are invaluable sources for the representation and use of Kongzi in the Western Han, Xin, and Eastern Han dynasties, particularly as reflected in imperial edicts and memorials.

Masters Literature

Kongzi figures prominently in the masters texts of the early period, both as a quotable authority and positive exemplar and also as an object of derision and parody. Among sources attributed to the masters of the Warring States era, the pro-Kongzi *Mengzi* 孟子 of Meng Ke 孟軻 (fourth century?) and *Xunzi* 荀子 of Xun Qing 荀卿 (fourth–third century?) contain a substantial number of Kongzi sayings, stories, and testimonia, many of which are clustered within the last five chapters of the *Xunzi*. At the other extreme stands the *Mozi* 墨子 of Mo Di 墨翟 (fifth century?), who quotes or references Kongzi in several passages, all but one of which are polemical. The *Han Feizi* 韓非子 of Han Fei 韓非 (third century) and *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 of Yan Ying 晏嬰 (d. 500 BCE) contain dozens more quotations and references, many of which are critical. The Kongzi material of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, comprising close to a hundred Kongzi quotations and a number of Kongzi dialogues, is a mix of positive and negative portrayals. Particularly noteworthy is chapter 29, “Dao Zhi” 盜跖 (“Robber Zhi”), in which Kongzi fails to persuade a notorious brigand to follow a more virtuous path, with humiliating results.

In the Han period, Jia Yi’s 賈誼 (c. 201–c. 169) *Xinshu* 新書 (*New Writings*), Lu Jia’s 陸賈 (d. c. 150 BCE) *Xinyu* 新語 (*New Sayings*), Dong Zhongshu’s 董仲舒 (c. 179–c. 104) *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*), Huan Tan’s 桓譚 (43 BCE–23 CE) *Xinlun* 新論 (*New Discourses*), Yang Xiong’s 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) *Fayan* 法言 (*Model Sayings*), Wang Chong’s 王充 (d. 100 CE) *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Discourse Balance*), Wang Fu’s 王符 (c. 85–c. 163) *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論 (*Discourses of a Hidden Master*), and Xu Gan’s 徐幹 (d. c. 217) *Zhonglun* 中論 (*Discourses that Hit the Mark*) all contain a substantial number of Kongzi references and quotations. Of particular note are the *Fayan*, a text modeled on the *Lunyu* in which Yang Xiong presents himself in the manner of a latter-day Kongzi, and chapter 28 of the *Lunheng*, “Wen Kong” 問孔 (“Interrogating Kongzi”), which poses a number of objections to the Kongzi of the *Lunyu*.

Other Compendia

In the Warring States period, these include the dozens of sayings, stories, and testimonia within the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*The Annals of Lü Buwei*), a text compiled under the auspices of Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (d. 235 BCE), a powerful minister at the Qin court. Roughly a century later, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 of Liu An 劉安 (d. 122 BCE), the King of Huainan, made frequent use of Kongzi as an exemplar and quotable authority.

In the latter part of the Western Han, the *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (*Iron and Salt Discussions*), a record of a court debate between certain high officials and invited Ru 儒 in 81 BCE, includes dozens of Kongzi sayings and numerous references to various pieces of Kongzi lore. Imperial bibliographer and prolific compiler Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE) included hundreds of Kongzi-related passages within his *Shuiyuan* 說苑 (*Garden of Persuasions*) and to a lesser extent in the *Xinxu* 新序 (*New Arrangement*) and *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (*Traditions of Exemplary Women*).

The *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 (*The Elder Dai's Ritual Records*), a collection attributed to Dai De 戴德 (first century BCE) but which might date as late as the Eastern Han, includes five chapters consisting solely of Kongzi dialogues (39–41, 62, 65) and another seven chapters (68–71, 74–76) that are dialogues with an unnamed “master” (zi 子) who may or may not be Kongzi. One of these chapters is “Wu di de” 五帝德 (“The Virtues of the Five Thearchs”), a dialogue between Kongzi and Zai Wo 宰我 that was cited by Sima Qian in the first chapter of the *Shiji* (1.46).

Early Manuscript Finds

These include the twenty-three *zi yue* 子曰 sayings of the “Zi yi” 緇衣 (“Black Robes”) manuscript discovered within a tomb dating to c. 300 BCE in the village of Guodian 郭店 find (Jingmen, Hubei province). Two tombs dating to the first few decades of the Western Han, the Mawangdui 馬王堆 find (Changsha, Hunan province) and the Shuangudui 雙古堆 find (Fuyang 阜陽, Anhui province), have yielded a number of commentaries on the *Yi* 易 and a list of Kongzi-related anecdote titles, respectively. Another tomb closed in c. 55 BCE in modern-day Dingzhou 定州 (Dingxian, Hebei province) included a fragmentary *Lunyu* manuscript together with a collection of other Kongzi dialogues and stories. A second *Lunyu* manuscript has been discovered in a tomb located outside Pyöngyang, North Korea, which was closed in c. 45 BCE.

The most spectacular cache of Kongzi-related manuscripts is, unfortunately, a looted corpus purchased by the Shanghai Museum in 1994 on the Hong Kong antiquities market. Based on a comparative analysis of the script and on the fact that these bamboo strips became available just months after the discovery of the Guodian materials, it is thought that the Shanghai Museum corpus was looted from the same locale as the Guodian find, perhaps even from the same tomb complex. Sources of *Kongzi yue* material in this collection include the so-called “Kongzi shilun” 孔子詩論 (“Kongzi’s Discussion of the *Odes*”), “Min zhi fumu” 民之父母 (“Father and Mother to the People”), “Zigao” 子羔, “Lu bang da han” 魯邦大旱 (“The Great Drought of Lu”), “Zhong Gong” 仲弓, “Xiang bang zhi dao” 相邦之道 (“The Way of Ministering a State”), “Ji Kangzi wen yu Kongzi” 季康子問於孔子 (“Ji Kangzi Asked Kongzi”), “Junzi wei li” 君子為禮 (“The Noble Man in the Conduct of Ritual”), “Dizi wen” 弟子問 (“The Disciples Asked”), “Kongzi jian Ji Huanzi” 孔子見季桓子 (“Kongzi Had an Audience with Ji Huanzi”), and “Yan Yuan wen yu Kongzi” 顏淵問於孔子 (“Yan Yuan Asked Kongzi”) manuscripts. Two additional manuscripts – “Zi yi” 緇衣 (“Black Robes”) and “Shi Liu wen yu fuzi” 史蒧問於夫子 (“Scribe Liu Asked the Master”) – are sources of *zi yue* material (see Scott Cook, Chapter 2, this volume).

Fragments of Possibly Early Sources known only from Later Collectanea

Many of these fragments were collected by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818) in the *Kongzi jiyu* 孔子集語 (*Collected Sayings of Kongzi*) and by the editors of the *Kongzi – Zhou Qin Han Jin wenxianji* 孔子 - 周秦漢晉文獻集 (*Kongzi – Collected literature from the Zhou, Qin, Han, and Jin*). Of particular note are the numerous fragments of later Han apocrypha or revelatory texts that often quoted Kongzi as a prophet.

To give one a sense of the scale of this corpus, Sun Xingyan's *Kongzi jiyu*, which omits material from the *Lunyu* and several other well-known sources, totals 106,000 characters across 800 or so entries, with a median length of 78 characters. A modern edition of the text, the *Kongzi jiyu jiaobu* 孔子集語校補 (*Collected Sayings of Kongzi, collated and supplemented*), adds another 500 passages from sources omitted by Sun Xingyan and runs to over 600 pages. My own collection of Kongzi-related passages drawn from a digital database of early sources consists of roughly 4,500 entries totaling hundreds of thousands of characters. All told, extant sources preserve close to 4,000 Kongzi quotations and hundreds of stories and dialogues.

Even this cursory overview permits a few rough generalizations about Kongzi and his place within early textual culture. First, and most obviously, Kongzi was important. Beginning at least as far back as the fourth century BCE, early authors did a lot of thinking and writing through and about Kongzi. If the late fourth-century BCE Shanghai Museum manuscript corpus is any indication, interest in Kongzi went well beyond the received textual record, so much so that future manuscript finds might reveal the traditional Kongzi to have been the tip of the iceberg. Second, Kongzi material appears in certain kinds of texts more often than in others. The fact that the list includes no texts of a technical, legal, administrative, or occult nature would seem to indicate that Kongzi's influence was limited to a scholastic sphere. Third, while it is not surprising to find Kongzi quotations in texts associated with the Ru 儒 tradition, Kongzi also appears in texts like the *Mozi*, *Han Feizi*, and *Zhuangzi* with very different ideological commitments. Arguably, Kongzi's most vociferous critic, Mozi himself in a brief dialogue from *Mozi* book 48, "Gong Mengzi" 公孟子, is said to have "cited" or perhaps even "praised" (*cheng* 稱) Kongzi:

Master Mo was engaged in disputation with Master Cheng when he cited Kongzi. Master Cheng asked him, "How can you criticize the Ru and cite Kongzi?" Master Mo said, "This is a case of something being both appropriate and unalterable. When birds learn of vexing heat and drought they fly up high, and when fish learn of vexing heat and drought they swim downward. In situations like these not even the best-laid plans of Yu and Tang could alter this. Although birds and fish can be called foolish, even Yu and Tang would follow them at times. Now, should I never cite Kongzi?"

子墨子與程子辯，稱於孔子。程子曰：“非儒，何故稱於孔子也？”子墨子曰：“是亦當而不可易者也。今鳥聞熱旱之憂則高，魚聞熱旱之憂則下，當此雖禹湯為之謀，必不能易矣。鳥魚可謂愚矣，禹湯猶云因焉。今翟曾無稱於孔子乎？”⁵

Despite elsewhere deriding Kongzi as a hypocrite, a bad influence, and a purveyor of clichés,⁶ even Mozi acknowledged Kongzi's value as a quotable authority. Whoever he was, whatever he might have taught, "Kongzi" was a common rhetorical resource.

The Challenges Therein

Setting aside for the moment the question of their reliability, early sources of Kongzi material present any number of challenges to modern students of these texts. The practical challenge of sorting through these sources to identify the Kongzi-related material

therein is not to be underestimated, especially not for the beginning student. Readers of Chinese can avail themselves of resources like the *Kongzi jiyu jiaobu* 孔子集語校補 or the *Kongzi wenxian ji*; however, despite the plethora of translations of the *Lunyu* in English and various other modern languages, to the best of my knowledge these collections have been translated only into modern Chinese (e.g., Meng Qingxiang and Meng Fanhong 2003).

Even deciding which texts or passages belong to “Kongzi” is complicated by a number of factors, including the widespread use of the undefined *zi yue* 子曰 (a/the Master says) quotation marker. In a text like the *Lunyu* whose interest in Kongzi is obvious, identifying the “Master” of “the Master says” is unproblematic. But the lack of explicit identifiers in a number of other *zi yue* texts (including in the *Zhouyi*; see Li Xueqin 1995, 376–79 and Scarpari 2007, 463) is more suggestive of a generic as opposed to a specific master figure, in which case we might translate *zi yue* as “The following is worthy of a true master” or “The following is masterfully said.” The boundary between *Kongzi yue* and *junzi yue* 君子曰 (a noble man says) sayings, some of which were interpreted as Kongzi sayings as early as the Han period, is similarly porous.⁷

Compounding the diversity of Kongzi-related sources is the diversity of representations within individual texts. Unlike, say, the earliest sources for Socrates, which overwhelmingly prefer the dialogue form, or the biographical narratives of the synoptic gospels, the earliest sources for Kongzi employ a wide range of genres. For instance, the *Lunyu* consists for the most part of stand-alone sayings prefaced with the words *zi yue* 子曰 (The Master said), but also includes a large number of mini-dialogues with his followers and contemporaries, and even a whole chapter devoted to third-person descriptions of Kongzi’s ritual conduct. In the *Zuozhuan*, Kongzi appears most often as a disembodied commenter but also as a character within the main narrative, just as the *Lüshi chunqiu* invokes Kongzi as a source of discrete comments but also includes a number of Kongzi dialogues and anecdotes. The assorted Kongzi-related manuscripts of the late fourth-century BCE Shanghai Museum corpus present Kongzi as a source of various commentaries on the *Odes* (“Kongzi shilun,” “Min zhi fumu”), as a character in dialogues with his students (e.g., “Zigao,” “Dizi wen”), and as a character within a mini-narrative in which he advises Duke Ai of Lu 魯哀公 on the occasion of a drought (“Lu bang da han”). Strikingly, no Kongzi-related manuscript in the collection appears to refer to any other, nor do Kongzi’s quoted utterances exhibit any overlap from one manuscript to the next.

Even when one encounters multiple versions of the same saying or story, those versions tend to vary significantly from one source to the next, especially in the Warring States context. Such examples abound in the early corpus, as when one third-century text includes an anecdote capped with a “Kongzi said” comment, but a roughly contemporaneous text includes the same anecdote and comment without any mention of Kongzi,⁸ or when one text treats a Kongzi saying as an independent proverb, but another treats it as a situated comment on something else.⁹ In such instances, it is usually impossible to determine which of the two versions might have come first. The author of the “Tan Gong” 檀弓 chapter of the *Liji* called attention to this phenomenon in a dialogue featuring the disciples Zengzi 曾子, Youzi 有子, and Zixia 子夏. The episode opens with Zengzi quoting Kongzi on the topic of “loss” (*sang* 喪) – “losing one’s position one should wish for swift poverty; losing one’s life one should wish for swift decay” (喪欲速貧, 死欲速朽) – after which Youzi declares

the saying to be unworthy of a *junzi* 君子, and Zixia confirms that it was intended as a comment on two specific individuals not as a generalizable maxim. Although the episode can be read as evidence of an interest in original, historically situated representations of Kongzi, what prompts that interest in “Tan Gong” is the apparently widespread habit of decontextualizing or recontextualizing Kongzi material.

Probably the best attested piece of Kongzi lore from the Warring States period is the story of his travails “between Chen and Cai” (陳蔡之間), when Kongzi and his followers were trapped and starving far from home. (According to Sima Qian’s version of the story [*Shiji* 47.1930], the leaders of Chen and Cai sent soldiers to surround Kongzi and his followers out of a fear that Kongzi would succeed in becoming an advisor to the state of Chu 楚 and thereby guarantee Chu’s hegemony in the region. Other sources tend not to explain the circumstances of Kongzi’s predicament.) Early sources, including the *Mozi*, *Xunzi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Lüshi chunqiu*, *Shiji*, *Hanshi waizhun*, *Lunyu*, and *Shuiyuan*, preserve at least a dozen versions of the story, with additional references in a number of other texts. A striking feature of these narratives is the extent to which authors agreed about the general outline of the story but not its substance. For instance, there are two versions of the story in the *Lüshi chunqiu*, both of which open with the line “Kongzi was in dire straits between Chen and Cai” (孔子窮於陳、蔡之間). However, one version has Zilu 子路 and Zigong 子貢 asking Kongzi to explain how a truly noble man like himself could meet with such “disgraceful” (*chou* 醜) circumstances, and the other has Kongzi wrongly accusing Yan Hui 顏回 of sneaking food to ease his hunger.¹⁰ Likewise, all three versions in the *Zhuangzi* open with the line “Kongzi was at [in dire straits/surrounded] between Chen and Cai and for seven days had no food to cook” (孔子[窮/圍]於陳蔡之間, 七日不火食). One version closely parallels the first *Lüshi chunqiu* story above, but the second develops as a conversation between Kongzi and Yan Hui, and the third as an encounter between Kongzi and a certain Taigong Ren 大公任, who argues that Kongzi brought his troubles on himself.¹¹ The *Mozi* author used the very same story (“When Kong So-and-so was in dire straits between Chen and Cai” 孔某窮於蔡陳之間) to represent Kongzi as a rank hypocrite who happily threw his morals out of the window when faced with starvation.¹² The variability of these episodes and the Kongzi quotations therein encourages us to read “between Chen and Cai” narratives as “historical romances” (to borrow Jeffrey Riegel’s apt label; see Riegel 1986, 13), as a literary sub-genre of Kongzi anecdote whose details early authors were free to vary as they saw fit.¹³ Although perhaps not as dramatic as those observed in “between Chen and Cai” stories, similar variations can be found across many other Kongzi traditions.

The amount of historical or biographical detail tends to vary considerably from one Kongzi passage to the next. At one extreme stand the numerous instances in which authors quoted Kongzi as a disembodied source of discrete comments on various figures, sayings, and stories from all over the Central States (*zhongguo* 中國). Many of these comments are introduced with the phrase “Kongzi heard this and said” (孔子聞之曰), typically without any additional explanation as to how Kongzi came by his information, as if authors were far more interested in the substance of Kongzi’s judgments than in the circumstances of their origin (Schaberg 2005, 19). Early authors’ seemingly cavalier attitude to biographical detail is also evident in the anachronistic use of Kongzi to comment on events that postdated his death (Henry 2003). A number of Kongzi dialogues, especially those featuring Kongzi’s disciples, are similarly ahistorical, although

the inclusion of a named lord or minister sometimes allows one to infer at least some information about the encounter's purported period and locale. At the other end of the spectrum, a number of anecdotes make reference to specific episodes from Kongzi's life, including his tenure as an official in Lu 魯 and his wanderings around the Central States in search of a lord who would recognize his worth and accept him as an advisor. (The *Lüshi chunqiu*'s statement [SBCK 14/18b] that Kongzi met with over eighty rulers on his travels is a gross exaggeration, at least judging from extant dialogues featuring Kongzi and contemporary political leaders.) On current evidence, the first author to attempt to weave these various strands together into a coherent biographical narrative was Sima Qian in the "Kongzi shijia." Prior to that point, there is little evidence of an interest in relating different versions of Kongzi to one another.

The range of topics that elicited comment by Kongzi is also impressive. These include the practice and theory of ritual (*li* 禮), matters of governance (*zheng* 政), traditional virtues like *ren* 仁 (humaneness) and *xiao* 孝 (filial piety), the praiseworthiness of various (pseudo-)historical figures, the understanding or recognition of others (*zhi ren* 知人), importance of learning (*xue* 學), the value and meaning of the canonical traditions, and the interpretation of extraordinary phenomena like droughts and strange flora and fauna. Although a complete inventory of these topics is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that the question of what Kongzi did or did not speak about was apparently a controversial topic in the early period. The Zigong 子貢 of *Lunyu* 5/13 declares that Kongzi's statements on the subject of *xing* 性 (human nature) "cannot be heard" (不可得而聞), just as the Mengzi of *Mengzi* 1A/7 claims that "later generations have no traditions" (後世無傳) concerning Kongzi's teachings on the hegemon Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 and Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公. However, Zigong's testimony is contradicted by Kongzi's pronouncements on *xing* 性 in the "Kongzi shilun" and *Han Feizi*, not to mention *Lunyu* 17/2 ("The Master said, 'By nature we are close to one another, by habit we are far apart'" 子曰: 性相近也, 習相遠也);¹⁴ those looking for Kongzi's statements on dukes Huan and Wen need look no further than *Lunyu* 14/15 or *Mengzi* 4B/21, where Mengzi characterizes the *Chunqiu* as a text "whose content concerns Dukes Huan and Wen" (其事則齊桓晉文). In light of such contradictions, *Lunyu* 5/13 and *Mengzi* 1A/7 should perhaps be read not as impartial descriptions of contemporaneous Kongzi traditions but as efforts to constrain the range of topics for which Kongzi was invoked.

Without assuming that an earlier source is necessarily a more reliable one,¹⁵ sorting these sources diachronically is no easy task owing to the uncertain chronologies and composite nature of so many early texts, especially those purporting to have originated in the Warring States period, but which were redacted or compiled in the Han or later. In this respect, the problem of producing a timeline of Kongzi-related sources is an extension of the challenges inherent in dating ancient texts generally. Judging from the wealth of Kongzi-related texts within the Shanghai Museum manuscript collection, the "Kongzi" phenomenon seems to have achieved a critical mass by the late fourth century BCE at the latest. However, determining with any certainty which versions of Kongzi pre-date that stage may be impossible in the absence of additional, scientifically excavated manuscript finds dating to the fifth or early fourth centuries.

The possibility that some Kongzi material was added to earlier sources at a later stage is particularly strong in the case of a text like the *Chunqiu*, the first text said to have been

“composed” (*zuo* 作) by Kongzi himself (e.g., at *Mengzi* 3B/9). As noted above, however, Kongzi material within the extant versions of the *Chunqiu* is restricted to a short line apiece. With such a tiny textual footprint, it is difficult to dismiss the possibility that a later editor added Kongzi material to the *Chunqiu* in order to enshrine Kongzi’s association with it. It has also been suggested that Kongzi material within the *Zuozhuan* was added at a later stage by an editor eager to enhance Kongzi’s profile within the text (Henry 1999).

Perhaps most problematically of all, extant pre-imperial sources provide few, if any, indications that the “Kongzi” phenomenon depended on any written sources whatsoever, let alone a specific Kongzi canon. The earliest extant source to have drawn attention to the problem of reconstructing Kongzi’s life and thought is *Han Feizi* chapter 50, “Xian xue” 顯學 (“Showing Off Learning”):

After Kongzi and Mozi [died] the Ru split into eight [factions] and the Mohists into three. What each faction included and excluded contradicted the others’. Nevertheless, they all refer to themselves as the true Kongzi or Mozi. Kongzi and Mozi cannot be resurrected, so who is to settle [the question] of learning nowadays?

孔墨之後，儒分為八，墨離為三，取舍相反、不同，而皆自謂真孔墨。孔墨不可復生，將誰使定世之學乎？¹⁶

Despite its polemical thrust, the passage is noteworthy insofar as it frames the problem in terms of people not sources. The author criticizes others not for claiming to possess the true teachings of Kongzi and Mozi, but for “saying that they themselves are the true Kongzi and Mozi,” as if speaking in the voice of these long-dead masters mattered more than merely transmitting their teachings. The ideal authority is imagined as a fully resurrected Kongzi (or Mozi) as opposed to a lifeless text. In the following episode from the “Zhong Ni dizi liezhuan,” even Kongzi’s closest students are depicted as trying to set up a new Kongzi to replace the old, with predictable consequences:

After Kongzi died his disciples missed him dearly. You Ruo resembled Kongzi and so Kongzi’s disciples cooperated to establish him as their master and attend to him just as they had attended to Kongzi. One day the disciples entered to ask, “Previously when the Master was about to depart he had us carry rain gear, and before long it rained. A disciple asked him, ‘How did you know that it would rain, Master?’ The Master said, ‘Does not the *Ode* say, “When the moon is in the Hyades there will be torrential rains.” Last night wasn’t the moon in the Hyades?’ Another day, the moon was in the Hyades but it didn’t rain. Shang Que was old and childless and his mother arranged another wife for him. Kongzi sent him to Qi but his mother begged him not to. Kongzi said, ‘Do not worry! Shang Que will have five sons after he is forty.’ Sure enough, Kongzi turned out to be right. We ask you, how did the Master know these things?” You Ruo was silent and could not answer. The disciples all arose and said, “Master You should retire. This is not your seat!”

孔子既沒，弟子思慕，有若狀似孔子，弟子相與共立為師，師之如夫子時也。他日，弟子進問曰：昔夫子當行，使弟子持雨具，已而果雨。弟子問曰：夫子何以知之？夫子曰：詩不云乎？月離于畢，俾滂沱矣。昨暮月不宿畢乎？他日，月宿畢，竟不雨。商瞿年長無子，其母為取室。孔子使之齊，瞿母請之。孔子曰：無憂，瞿年四十後當有五丈夫子。已而果然。問夫子何以知此？有若默然無以應。弟子起曰：有子避之，此非子之座也！¹⁷

In a comically pathetic attempt to resurrect their master, the disciples establish You Ruo 有若 – “Having a Likeness” – as their teacher only to realize the futility of their efforts when he proves unable to answer their questions. Within the context of the *Shiji*, the source of the earliest known biography of Kongzi, the episode also reads as a surprisingly bleak assessment of the prospects of understanding the true Kongzi from the scattered accounts of his life and teachings.

Other (ostensibly) pre-imperial authors tended to speak through and about Kongzi without ever naming their sources, let alone pausing to question or defend the legitimacy of any particular representation. Exceptions include polemical texts like “Xian xue” and passages in which an author seeks to defend Kongzi’s reputation against spurious gossip and misquotations. Even at these moments, however, the criterion for assessing the validity of a story was not historical so much as ethical – what was deemed worthy of a “noble man” (*junzi* 君子). For example, the Mengzi of *Mengzi* 5A/8 judges Kongzi sayings and stories primarily according to how well they sustain a certain ideal, as if he cannot entertain the possibility that Kongzi was less than perfectly virtuous: “If Kongzi had stayed with an ulcer doctor and the servant Qi Huan, how could he have been Kongzi?” (若孔子主癰疽與侍人瘠環，何以為孔子).

Mengzi’s handling of a mistaken Kongzi quotation in *Mengzi* 5A/4 is also instructive:

Xianqiu Meng asked, “A saying has it that ‘a lord cannot make a man of resplendent virtue his minister, nor can a father make him a son.’ Shun stood facing south and Yao led all the vassal lords to face north at court. Shun’s father Gu Sou also faced north at court. Seeing Gu Sou, Shun furrowed his brow. Kongzi said, ‘At that time the world was endangered and teetering on the edge.’ I do not know if this story is true or not.”

Mengzi said, “No! This is not the saying of a noble man. It is the talk of rubes from eastern Qi. When Yao was an old man Shun took over the government. The *Canon of Yao* states that ‘after twenty-eight years Fangxun passed away, the people grieved as if they had lost a parent, and all within the four seas gave up music for a time.’ Kongzi said, ‘Heaven does not have two suns; the people do not have two kings.’ If Shun was already the Son of Heaven when he led all the vassal lords to mourn Yao for three years, then there would have been two Sons of Heaven.”

咸丘蒙問曰：語云，盛德之士，君不得而臣，父不得而子。舜南面而立，堯帥諸侯北面而朝之，瞽瞍亦北面而朝之。舜見瞽瞍，其容有蹙。孔子曰：於斯時也，天下殆哉，岌岌乎！不識此語誠然乎哉。孟子曰：否；此非君子之言，齊東野人之語也。堯老而舜攝也。堯典曰：二十有八載，放勳乃徂落，百姓如喪考妣，三年，四海遏密八音。孔子曰：天無二日，民無二王。舜既為天子矣，又帥天下諸侯以為堯三年喪，是二天子矣。¹⁸

Some centuries later, an author like Wang Chong 王充 (d. 100 CE) living in the far more literate milieu of the Eastern Han could dismiss a spurious Kongzi anecdote by pointing out that “when you consult the text of the *Lunyu*, you will not find these words; when you examine the traditions of the Six Classics, they also do not have this story” (案論語之文，不見此言；考六經之傳，亦無此語). But the Mengzi of *Mengzi* 5A/4 does not have recourse to a particular source of Kongzi material. Instead, Mengzi must defend Yao, Shun, and Kongzi with an appeal to ethical standards (“this is not the saying of a noble man”), to logic (“If Shun was already the Son of Heaven ... then there would have been two Sons of Heaven”), to the traditional authority of the *Canon of Yao*, and to an

alternate Kongzi saying (one with parallels in the “Zengzi wen” and “Fang ji” chapters of the *Liji* [SBCK 6/4b & 15/13a]).

Now contrast that response with Mengzi’s handling of a mistaken *Shi* quotation in the continuation of the same episode, after Xianqiu Meng quotes the “Bei shan” 北山 (“Northern Hills”) ode to ask whether Shun’s father served Shun as his subject, the implication being that Shun’s filial piety compromised his royal authority and vice versa. Mengzi refutes Xianqiu Meng’s reading (“This is not what this *Shi* means” 是詩也, 非是之謂也) and then goes on to establish a few guidelines for *Shi* interpretation: “those who would explain a *Shi* should not use the [interpretation of its] words to impair the [interpretation of its] phrasing, or the [interpretation of its] phrasing to impair the [interpretation of its] intent” (說詩者, 不以文害辭, 不以辭害志). Xianqiu Meng’s mistake with the *Shi* is one of misconstruing a text whose legitimacy is taken for granted. As Mengzi cannot reject the quotation itself, he must contradict Xianqiu Meng’s understanding of it, hence his digression on *Shi* interpretation. But when Mengzi disagrees with a Kongzi quotation, he rejects the saying outright and replaces it with an entirely different one that better supports his argument. The content of the *Shi* is given, the substance of Kongzi’s teachings is not, thus Mengzi must establish what Kongzi said before he can proceed with his argument. This is not a problem that would have arisen had the author of *Mengzi* 5A/4 had access to a recognized collection of Kongzi sayings (Hunter 2014).

The *Lunyu*

For the past 2,000 years or so, the standard solution to the superabundance and messiness of Kongzi-related sources has been the one first articulated by the bibliographers of the Han dynasty beginning in the late Western Han: simply rely on the *Lunyu*, the *Selected Sayings* of Kongzi. For Liu Xiang, the official charged by Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r. 33–7 BCE) in 26 BCE with cataloging the imperial library, the *Lunyu* was a source of “fine sayings recorded by Kongzi’s disciples” (孔子弟子記諸善言); for Liu Xiang’s son 劉歆 (46 BCE –23 CE) and for Ban Gu, the *Lunyu* was a text compiled by Kongzi’s disciples in the years immediately following his death from their personal “records” (*ji* 記) of the master’s “sayings” (*yan* 言) and “talk” (*yu* 語).¹⁹ Here the bibliographers’ emphasis on Kongzi’s spoken words is significant given the perception of Kongzi as author of the *Chunqiu* classic. Reading Kongzi’s wisdom from the *Chunqiu* entailed a complicated hermeneutics to decode his “subtle words” (*wei yan* 微言) from the text, thus making it an inconvenient source of Kongzi’s teachings. Not surprisingly, quotations of the “*Chunqiu*” in Han sources are just as likely to borrow from one of the three commentarial traditions as they are from the *Chunqiu* itself. When dealing with the *quotable* Kongzi, the Han bibliographers tell us, no text is more authoritative than the *Lunyu*. Thanks in large part to their account of the text, no source has had a greater impact on the imagination of Kongzi than the approximately 16,000 characters of the *Lunyu*.²⁰

Beginning a conversation about Kongzi with the *Lunyu* has the great virtue of establishing a fixed, convenient, and eminently quotable version of Kongzi, one which exerted a tremendous influence on the East Asian literary and intellectual tradition. On the other hand, the dating and history of the *Lunyu* is not uncontroversial.

Most scholars agree that the *Lunyu*'s conspicuous heterogeneity is indicative of a composite, multilayered text. Many have argued that at least part of the text dates to the early Warring States period and/or accurately reflects the teaching of the historical Kongzi, even if it contains some material added as late as the Han period. Thus, one of the main challenges for modern *Lunyu* scholarship has been to determine which parts date to which periods, the ultimate goal being to identify its pristine core.²¹

Still other scholars (myself included) have taken a more critical view of the *Lunyu*'s traditional dating based in large part on the observation that the earliest evidence of a *Lunyu* text dates to the second half of the second century BCE, a period roughly coinciding with the reign of Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE).²² Not only does the title “*Lunyu*” not appear in any text prior to the Western Han, the earliest verifiable quotations or citations of the *Lunyu* date to roughly the same period. In fact, the received *Lunyu* seems to have exerted little to no influence on the pre-Han imagination of Kongzi. By my count, fewer than 10 percent of Kongzi quotations in pre-Han sources exhibit textual parallels with the Kongzi sayings of the *Lunyu*, the majority of which exhibit variants so significant as to rule out their identification as quotations of a *Lunyu* text.²³

Moreover, there is good reason to think that the *Lunyu*'s rise as the preeminent source of the quotable Kongzi was made possible by the patronage of the Han imperium. Some of the earliest references to a *Lunyu* text describe it as a textbook for the education of Han princes, with mastery of the *Lunyu* cited as a key qualification in Liu Qu's 劉去 appointment as King of Guangchuan 廣川 in 91 BCE and in the nomination of Emperor Xuan 宣帝 in 74 BCE. In 82 BCE, an edict issued in the name of the underage Emperor Zhao also listed the *Lunyu* among the texts he was studying.²⁴ With the *Lunyu*'s value affirmed at the highest level of Han society, the authors of edicts and memorials in the latter half of the Western Han typically looked to the *Lunyu* for their Kongzi quotations, prior to which Kongzi's influence on the imperial stage was minimal to non-existent. Given this backdrop, Han bibliographers' characterization of the *Lunyu* as an authentic record compiled in the fifth century BCE reads as a convenient backstory for an important text with an otherwise problematic history (Hunter 2017).

To be sure, just because we lack evidence for a pre-Han *Lunyu* does not mean that the text did not originate in an earlier period. Indeed, the study of *Lunyu* intertextuality reveals any number of *Lunyu* passages (e.g., the “between Chen and Cai” mini-narrative at *Lunyu* 15/2) with obvious antecedents in pre-Han textual traditions. However, the issue is not whether the *Lunyu* might contain material from the Warring States period, but whether inclusion in the *Lunyu* is itself a sufficient criterion for treating a given piece of Kongzi material as uniquely early or authentic. In light of the Han origins of its canonicity, and in the absence of a pre-Han *Lunyu* manuscript or some other direct evidence of its existence and authority in the Warring States period, the *Lunyu* has no special claim on our imagination of Kongzi.

The Kongzi Problem

For readers who began this chapter hoping to learn something about who Kongzi *really* was, the discussion thus far is likely to be disappointing. Especially for the beginning student, the practical challenges of managing and reading a corpus as voluminous,

scattered, and diverse as this one are formidable, all the more so if one does not begin with a canon like the *Lunyu*. Modern students might take some solace in the knowledge that the scale of Kongzi's wisdom also intimidated some ancient authors, at least judging from the following anecdote from the eleventh chapter of the *Shuiyuan* (SBCK 19b–20a):

Viscount Jian of Zhao asked Zigong, "What sort of man is Kongzi?" Zigong replied, "I am incapable of understanding him." Viscount Jian was displeased and said, "You served Kongzi for several decades before completing your studies and leaving him, so when I ask you [what sort of man he is] how can you say that you are incapable of understanding him?" Zigong said, "I am like a thirsty man who drinks from the rivers and seas: I merely know when I've had enough. Kongzi is like the rivers and seas. How could someone like me be worthy of understanding him?" Viscount Jian said, "Zigong's words are excellent!"

趙簡子問子貢曰：孔子為人何如？子貢對曰：賜不能識也。簡子不說曰：夫子事孔子數十年，終業而去之，寡人問子，子曰不能識，何也？子貢曰：賜譬渴者之飲江海，知足而已，孔子猶江海也，賜則奚足以識之。簡子曰：善哉！子貢之言也。

Despite its eloquence, Zigong's response is unsatisfying for modern readers hoping to learn something about the historical Kongzi, Viscount Jian's concluding praise notwithstanding. If even one of Kongzi's closest followers had such trouble, how are we supposed to go about understanding Kongzi?

Let us step out of the early Chinese context for a moment to consider the parallel case of Socrates (c. 469–399 BCE).²⁵ From an early China scholar's perspective, the sources of Socrates' life and thought are an embarrassment of riches. Socrates' existence is confirmed by one contemporary fifth-century source, Aristophanes' (c. 446–386 BCE) *Clouds*, as well as a number of Socratic dialogues written in the decades immediately following his death in 399 BCE. Although Plato's (420s–348/47 BCE) dialogues are the best known of these, other associates of Socrates also participated in the genre, including Aeschines of Sphettus (430/20–after 375/6 BCE; seven dialogues, all lost), Phaedo of Elis (b. 418/16 BCE; two dialogues, both lost), Euclides of Megara (450/35–c. 365; six dialogues, all lost), Antisthenes (c. 445–c. 365; a number of dialogues, all lost), and Xenophon (430–354), whose *Symposium*, *Memorabilia*, *Oeconomicus*, and *Apology* are extant. Aristotle names yet another figure, a certain Alexamenos of Teos, as the first person to have penned a Socratic dialogue (Döring 2011, 25). Excavators of the Athenian agora in the 1950s even claimed to have confirmed a detail from Xenophon's account of Socrates in the *Memorabilia* and from Diogenes Laertios' (third century CE?) *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* after discovering a cup engraved with the name "Simon" at the site of a leather-working shop. They speculated that this person was the same Simon said to have owned a leather shop frequented by Socrates and who reportedly made notes of their conversations (Lang 1978, 16; Döring 2011, 34–36).²⁶ Even if (as seems likely) such speculation is unfounded, the mere possibility of establishing a material connection with the historical Socrates, however tenuous, illustrates the advantageous position of Socrates studies relative to Kongzi studies.

Extant sources for Socrates more or less agree on a few basic biographical details: Socrates was an Athenian and a conversationalist of some repute who was sentenced to death by his fellow citizens. But scholars of the period continue to disagree

about the historical value of these often contradictory accounts, particularly with respect to Socrates' doxography. The earliest source, Aristophanes' *Clouds*, is an obvious parody, and reconciling the many contradictory accounts even within Plato's dialogues is exceedingly difficult (Dorion 2011, 6–10). Occasionally, Plato even drops hints that his version of events might be less than completely accurate. In the *Phaedo*, the dialogue that purports to recount the circumstances of Socrates' death, he even has the narrator go out of his way to note that Plato himself was absent due to illness (*Phaedo* 59b).

The proliferation of Socratic dialogues in the fourth century BCE is one hint that these texts were, first and foremost, a dynamic genre of intellectual discourse; they were not intended to be read as historically accurate records. As Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar posed the problem in their introduction to the Blackwell *Companion to Socrates*,

Given that Plato, like Xenophon and the other Socratics, were writing in a literary genre well described as “biographical experiments” that aim at “capturing the potentialities rather than the realities of individual lives” (Momigliano 1993: 46), what hope is there for reconstructing the historical Socrates from these representations? The representations conflict at the most basic level: Socrates affirms and denies that the good is pleasure (Plato, *Gorgias* 495a–99b, but cf. *Protagoras* 351b–e, 354de); Socrates does and doesn't investigate questions of natural science (Aristophanes, *Clouds* 217–33; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A.6.987b1–3; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.1.11–16, 4.7.2–10; Plato, *Phaedo* 96d–99e, but cf. *Apology* 26de); Socrates disavows and avows having knowledge (Plato, *Apology* 21b–23b, *Theaetetus* 150cd, but cf. *Apology* 29b). So why suppose that the Socrates of Plato's early dialogues was the historical Socrates, rather than the Socrates of Xenophon's Socratic writings, or the Socrates of Aeschines, or Aristippus, or indeed of the hostile witness Aristophanes?

(Ahbel-Rappe and Kamtekar 2006, xiv–xv)

Ahbel-Rappe and Kamtekar go on to suggest that sources of Socrates “might be better used as guides to the thinking of their authors or for the recovery of philosophically brilliant portraits of Socrates.”

These Western classicists' willingness to acknowledge the impossibility of reconstructing the real Socrates, despite his exalted status in the Western tradition and the (relative) wealth of nearly contemporaneous sources at their disposal, is instructive. At the same time, it seems reasonable to infer that Socrates would not have inspired so many later writers had he not possessed an extraordinary charisma, or at least an extraordinary reputation. Applying that logic to Kongzi, it is easy to imagine “Kong Qiu,” or “Zhongni,” or “Kongzi” as a similarly charismatic individual who personally influenced so many people as to guarantee his legacy in subsequent generations. Perhaps, like Plato and Xenophon, Kongzi's students and acquaintances ultimately deserve credit for generating enough interest in Kongzi for others to begin quoting his sayings and telling stories about his wisdom and exploits. But as with Socrates, there is no need to assume that interest in Kongzi was predicated on the preservation and transmission of historically accurate records (*ji* 記). The Socrates and Kongzi phenomena may have only required reputations (*ming* 名) so extraordinary that they generated a vibrant literary market for stories about “Socrates” and “Kongzi.”