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Ge Hong's *Zhuang zi*

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Abstract: Sinology, as far as textual criticism is concerned, is still in its infancy compared with, e. g., New Testament, classical Greek or European medieval studies. Whereas virtually every ancient Greek, old English, or early German text – to name but a few – has been the subject of text critical scrutiny, in many cases even since Renaissance times, the same does not hold true for Chinese works. In the absence of early manuscripts they could themselves base upon, modern editions of classical Chinese texts usually take as their starting point the earliest extant printed versions which quite often date from Song times and are thus separated by many centuries from the no longer available originals. However, quite often testimonies of ancient texts exist as quotations in works that considerably predate the first printed versions of the texts in question. In view of this fact, virtually every classical Chinese text needs to be systematically re-examined and critically edited by taking into account every available explicit as well as implicit quotation.

As the received version of the *Zhuang zi* 莊子 (Master Zhuang), a text whose origins may lie in the third century BCE, ultimately goes back to Guo Xiang's 郭象 (ob. 312) editorial activities and as Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) was an author active at about the same time, there is a chance that a pre-Guo Xiang version may have been available to him. Therefore, as a case study, this paper examines the explicit as well as implicit *Zhuang zi* quotations to be found within Ge Hong's works, in order to examine this possibility.

Keywords: Zhuangzi, Ge Hong, textual history, lost chapters

1 Introduction

The most serious problem concerning the *Zhuang zi* consists in the fact that we do not know how the original text might have looked like.¹ The earliest testimonies date to around 240 BCE. For the first time explicitly quoted in Lü Buwei's

1 Bumbacher 2016.

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呂不韋 (ob. 235 BCE) *Lü shi chun qiu* 呂氏春秋 (Spring and Autumn [Annals] of Mister Lü) of ca. 239 BCE, the *Zhuang zi* is criticised – together with eleven other philosophers – at about the same time in Xun Qing’s 荀清 (ca. 335–ca. 238 BCE) *Xun zi* 荀子 (Master Xun). It is also explicitly quoted in the *Han fei zi* 韓非子 (Master Hanfei) whose author passed away in 233 BCE. This means that a text entitled *Zhuang zi* was likely to have been in existence around 240 BCE at the latest.

By the time Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–ca. 86 BCE) compiled his *Shi ji* 史記 (Records of the Astrologer), around 100 BCE, the *Zhuang zi* consisted of “chapters” (*pian* 篇, bundles of bamboo slips) with individual titles – some of them are mentioned by Sima Qian² – and comprised “more than 100.000 words”, which means that the text *Zhuang zi* by that time had a well-defined length and an internal structure.

During the reign of Han Emperor Chengdi 稱帝 (r. 33–7 BCE), either Liu Xiang (劉向, 79–8 BCE) or his son Liu Xin (劉歆, ob. 23 CE) collated all available versions of the text and produced a “standardized” (*ding* 定) edition which was stored in the imperial library. It was accompanied by the editors’ memorial to the throne, presenting details about the editorial work. A fragment of the *Zhuang zi* memorial could be identified.³ This imperial edition as it were consisted in fifty-two *pian* or bundles and is listed in the bibliography of the palace library as reproduced in the *Han shu* 漢書.⁴

We know the names of several persons who, during the Han and the subsequent Western Jin dynasties, added their comments to this edition. Sima Biao 司馬彪 (240–306), Director of the Palace Library (*bi shu jian* 祕書監) of the Jin, must have had access to the books which the Jin imperial library had inherited from the Han imperial library. His commented version of the *Zhuang zi* in all likelihood was based on Liu Xiang’s recension. Sima’s text was arranged in seven “inner” (*nei* 內), twenty-eight “outer” (*wai* 外), fourteen “mixed” (*za* 雜) chapters and three interpretative essays (*jie shuo* 解說). We can infer from this that the tripartite division of the *Zhuang zi* may already have been Liu Xiang’s arrangement.

² These are the “Weilei xu” 畏累虛 (The Wilds of Weilei), “Gengsang (zi) [Chu]” 亢[庚]桑(子)[楚] (Master Gengsang), “Yu fu” 漁父 (The Fisherman), “Dao Zhi” (Robber Zhi), “Qu qie” 祛箠 (Rifling Trunks), of which the former does not occur in the *textus receptus*.

³ Bumbacher 2016: 649.

⁴ *Han shu* 30: 1730.

It is essential for our purposes that both this fifty-two chapter edition with Sima's commentary and the Liu Xiang/Liu Xin memorial survived well into the Tang dynasty. Lu Deming 陸德明 (556–627) has had access to them and used them for his *Jing dian shi wen* 景典釋文 (Explained Texts of the Classics) of ca. 625.

Unfortunately, early in the fourth century CE a certain Guo Xiang 郭象 (ob. 312) shortened the text by *about a third*, from 52 to 33 chapters and from perhaps 100.000 words (according to Sima Qian's *Shi ji*) to its present 63.000 odd words.⁵ Guo's report on his activity is still extant as his foreword and attached to the "Tian xia" chapter in the *Zhuang zi* manuscript treasured in the Kôzanji 高山寺 (Temple) in Kyoto, Japan.⁶ An excerpt is also to be found in Lu Deming's *Jing dian shi wen* "xu lu".⁷ The important sentences read as follows:

[...] Thus, I have endeavoured to take from this writing only what is far-penetrating and serves to preserve the main body [of Master Zhuang's thought]. The result is a work of thirty-three bundles [...].⁸

Guo Xiang must have reorganized at least parts of the text since some passages of the *Zhuang zi* which early sources located in the "outer chapters" are now to be found in the "inner chapters" and *vice versa*; some chapters or bundles he separated, and originally separated bundles he united.⁹

Certainly, Guo's text now looks more philosophic than the lost pre-Guo Xiang versions would have. To his abridged version he added his own comment. It is this Guo Xiang version which eventually became the preferred one; Lu Deming, e. g., used it as his basic text. After the Tang dynasty, the Guo Xiang version was the only one that survived and it is the one on which all modern editions are based. However, it is important to notice that the "long version" of 52 chapters was still extant, alongside the Guo Xiang redaction, during the Tang dynasty.

⁵ This means that what is now missing are about 37.000 words or more than seven times the size of the *Dao de jing*.

⁶ Chinese text in Teraoka 1966: 216.

⁷ *Jing dian shi wen* 1: 33b.

⁸ A full translation is provided by Rand 1983: 12, slightly modified by Bumbacher 2016: 655–656. For a different translation see Knaul 1982.

⁹ Wang 1994, 3: 1434–1437; Knaul 1982: 72.

2 Research strategy

It may be suitable to follow two different yet complementary strategies in order to identify lost parts of the *Zhuang zi* and to try to reconstruct its early versions. One consists of a systematic investigation of all extant Chinese texts of pre-Han and Western Han origins. This may eventually lead to sort of a (partial) reconstruction of the pre-Liu Xiang text(s).

The second strategy concentrates on texts composed during the Later Han and subsequent dynasties which were largely neglected by Chinese scholars searching for lost parts of the *Zhuang zi*, such as Wang Yinglin 王應麟 of the Song dynasty, Ma Xulun 馬叙倫 or Wang Shumin 王淑岷 who have mainly based themselves on explicit quotations mostly to be found in “encyclopedias” (*lei shu* 類書). Systematic investigation of this literature may help to reconstruct the pre-Guo Xiang text.

3 Ge Hong

One author whose works may be interesting in this respect is Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343). Born into a family of officials who for generations served the imperial administration, Ge at an early age and during five years studied various Daoist works as a disciple of Zheng Yin 鄭隱 (ca. 215–ca. 302). Later he accepted several secular positions before studying under Bao Jing 鮑靚 (?–ca. 330) whose son-in-law he became. He returned to his native town Jurong (Jiangsu) in 314 to complete his *Bao pu zi* 抱朴子 (Master Who Embraces Simplicity) in 317, the Daoist part or “inner chapters” (*nei pian* 內篇) of which he revised around 335.¹⁰

The main part of the book consists of Ge Hong’s “theory” of immortality. The point of departure is an anonymous critic asking: 神仙不死信可得乎? (“Is it really possible to believe that divine immortals don’t die?”). Ge Hong alias Baopuzi then offers a whole series of arguments not only proving that immortals indeed do exist but also describing the methods by means of which – under certain circumstances – everybody can achieve immortality. In the end the critic,

¹⁰ Ge Hong’s autobiography appears in *Bao pu zi wai pian* 50, translated by Ware 1966: 6–21 and Sailey 1978: 242–272; his official biography is in *Jin shu* 72.

previously bound to Confucianism, comes to believe in immortality, too, and asks for a list of relevant Daoist writings.¹¹

The *Lives* collected in his *Shen xian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Traditions of Divine Immortals) serve to provide his “evidence” of the existence of immortals. While in the 1980s some scholars still had questioned Ge’s authorship, it can now be considered attested.¹² Unfortunately, this text has not come down to us in its original form, as it was lost already during the Song dynasty. The currently available editions are all *rifacimenti* of Ming times and later. What still survives of the original work is an abridged version in the Daoist collection *Yun ji qi qian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Labels of the Bookcase from the Clouds) of before 1025 CE. In addition, quite a series of lengthy quotations survive in the *Tai ping guang ji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Records of the Great Peace [Reign Period], presented to the emperor in 978), besides a number of short quotations preserved in various other *lei shu*.¹³ However, even the “long versions” in *Yun ji qi qian* and *Tai ping guang ji* are not transmitted in their original length as the texts of early *Shen xian zhuan* quotations to be found in sources of the early fifth to the early sixth century occasionally preserve passages that are no longer extant in the “long” versions.¹⁴

4 The five Ways of the robbers

That Ge Hong has had a version of the *Zhuang zi* text at his disposal (or knew it by heart) is evident from the explicit quotation¹⁵ in his *Bao pu zi nei pian* 抱朴子內篇 as well as his several implicit *Zhuang zi* quotations in the *Shen xian zhuan*. The explicit quotation in *Bao pu zi nei pian* reads:

莊周云：盜有聖人之道五焉。妄意而知人之藏者，明也；先入而不疑者，勇也；後出而不懼者，義也；知可否之宜者，知也；分財均同者，仁也。不得此道，而成天下大盜者，未之有也。

Zhuang Zhou says: “Robbers have five of the Ways of sage people. That while thinking extravagantly they know people’s hoards: [this] is intelligence; that while being the first in entering [the homes of others] they do not hesitate: [this] is bravery; that while being the last in leaving [these homes] they are not afraid, [this] is righteousness; that they know the

11 *Bao pu zi nei pian* 19: 331; translated by Ware 1966: 309–310.

12 Bumbacher 2000b and Company 2002.

13 Bumbacher 2000b: 745–770, Company 2002: 375–386.

14 Bumbacher 2000b: 787.

15 For definitions of “explicit” and “implicit” quotations see Bumbacher 2016: 624–628.

proper [thing] of [what is] possible and [what is] not, [this] is wisdom; and that they divide the booty and make equal and identical [parts thereof], [this] is benevolence. Those who, while not obtaining these Ways, have succeeded [in becoming] great robbers under heaven have not yet existed.”¹⁶

The relevant sentences in the received version of the *Zhuang zi*¹⁷ read:

故跖之徒問跖曰：盜亦有道乎？跖曰：何適而無有道邪？夫妄意室中之藏，聖也；入先，勇也；出後，義也；知可否，知也；分均，仁也。五者，不備而能成大盜者，天下未之有也。

One of [Robber] Zhi’s followers once asked Zhi: “Do thieves too have Ways?” Zhi said: “How would they proceed without having a Way? Now, to think extravagantly about the hoards within the rooms: [this] is sageliness; to enter [the homes of others] and to be the first: [this] is bravery; to leave and to be the last: [this] is righteousness; to know [what is] possible and [what is] not: [this] is wisdom; to divide and make equal [the parts of the booty]: [this] is benevolence. As for [these] five, those who not being provided [by them] were able to succeed [in becoming] great robbers have not yet existed under heaven.”¹⁸

Fortunately, additional explicit and implicit quotations of this passage exist, two of which predate the *Bao pu zi* account and two postdate it. The earliest implicit versions appear in *Lü shi chun qiu* 呂氏春秋¹⁹ of ca. 239 BCE and in Liu An’s 劉安 (ob. 122 BCE) *Huai nan zi* 淮南子 (ca. 139 BCE),²⁰ the explicit quotations are to be found in Li Xian’s 李賢 (651–684) commentary to the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書²¹ and in Ma Zong’s 馬總 *Yi lin* 意林²² of AD 787. Collating all five Chinese texts and presenting them in chronological order²³ in a synopsis makes evident the similarities and differences:

¹⁶ *Bao pu zi nei pian* 12: 225; compare Ware 1966: 202.

¹⁷ *Zhuang zi* 10/24.10. Locations in the received *Zhuang zi* are indicated as (chapter/page.line) of the Harvard-Yenching edition *Zhuang zi yin de* 莊子引得.

¹⁸ Compare Watson 1968: 108–109.

¹⁹ *Lü shi chun qiu* 11: 110.

²⁰ *Huai nan zi* 12: 202.

²¹ *Hou Han shu* 72: 2345.

²² *Yi lin* 2: 8b.

²³ As the received *Zhuang zi* goes back to Guo Xiang’s (ob. 312) version, it is listed after the Han versions (*Lü shi chun qiu* and *Huai nan zi*) but before the *Bao pu zi*.

Synopsis of the six texts dealing with the robbers' five Ways

LSCQ		跖之徒問於	跖曰：盜	有	道	乎？	跖曰：奚啻其
HNZ		跖之徒問	跖曰：盜亦	有	道	乎？	跖曰：奚適其
ZZ	故	跖之徒問	跖曰：盜亦	有	道	乎？	跖曰：何適而
BPZ	莊周云：		盜	有	道	焉。	
HHSc.	莊子曰：	跖之徒問於	跖曰：盜亦	有	道	乎？	跖曰：何適
YL	[莊子:]	跖之徒問於	跖曰：盜亦	有	道	乎？	跖曰：

LSCQ	有	道	也？	夫	妄	意關內，	中	藏，	聖也；
HNZ	無	道	也！	夫	妄	意而	中	藏者，	聖也；
ZZ	無	道	邪？	夫	妄	意室	中	藏者，	聖也；
BPZ					妄	而	知人	藏者，	明也；
HHSc.	無	有	邪？	夫	妄	意室	中	藏者，	聖也；
YL				夫	妄	意室	中	藏	聖也；

LSCQ		入	先，		勇也；	出後，		義也；	知時，
HNZ		入	先者，		勇也；	出後者，		義也；	▶
ZZ		入	先者，		勇也；	出後者，		義也；	知可否，
BPZ	先	入而不疑	者，		勇也；	出而不懼	者，	義也；	知可否，
HHSc.		入	先者，		勇也；	出後者，		義也；	知可否，
YL		入	先者，		勇也；	出後者，		義也；	知可否，

LSCQ		智也；	分	均，	仁也。		不通	此
HNZ			分	均者，	仁也；	▶知可否者，智也。		
ZZ		知也；	分	均，	仁也。			
BPZ	之宜者，	知也；	分財	均同者，	仁也。			此
HHSc.		智也；	分	均，	仁也；			
YL		智也；	分	均，	仁也。			

LSCQ	五者		而能	成	大	盜者，天下	無	有。
HNZ	五者	不備，	而能	成	大	盜者，天下	無之。	
ZZ	五者	不備，	而能	成	大	盜者，天下	未之	有也。
BPZ	道	不得	而能	成	天下	盜者，	未之	有也。
HHSc.	五者	不備	而能	成	大	盜者，天下	未之	有也。
YL	五者	不備，	而能	成	大	盜者，天下	未之	有也。

This synopsis shows, firstly, that all versions agree *verbatim* to a large extent which is a clear indication that they all must belong to the same textual tradition (characters that are identical in all versions are marked green, characters that are identical in all but the *Bao pu zi* versions are marked yellow).²⁴

²⁴ I will not go into any philological details as they will be discussed in the critical edition of the *Zhuang zi* currently under preparation. Rather, I prefer to discuss here the principal aspects.

Secondly, these six versions fall into three categories. The first includes the *Lü shi chun qiu* and the *Huai nan zi* versions which on four locations are identical yet differ from the other versions. Both may derive from an early *Zhuang zi* version. However, the *Huai nan zi* version is not exactly identical with that of the *Lü shi chun qiu* but has some variant readings and, e. g., changes the phrase “知時，智也” (to know the [right] time is wisdom) into “知可否者，智也” (he who knows [what is] possible and [what is] not: is wise) and transposes the latter (indicated by  and marked magenta).

Thirdly, the second category comprises the received *Zhuang zi*, the commentary to the *Hou Han shu* and the *Yi lin* versions that share phrases (not seen in the first category) like “未之有也” instead of “無有” or “無之”. They may either derive from Liu Xiang’s “standardized” (*ding* 定) edition of the Western Han or from Guo Xiang’s abridged version.

Fourthly, Ge Hong’s version, although sharing variants with the second category *versus* the first, differs markedly from the other members of this group (red characters in the synopsis). His quotation is abridged by leaving out the context of the story (as is often the case with quotations),²⁵ namely the conversation of Robber Zhi with one of his disciples. Then he modifies the beginning, changing the question “盜有道乎” (do robbers have Ways?) into the positive statement “盜有聖人之道五焉” (robbers have five of the Ways of sage people). In addition, he expands the phrase “入先” (to enter [the homes of others] and to be the first) into “先入而不疑” (while being the first in entering [the homes of others] they do not hesitate) and “出後” (to leave and to be the last) into “後出而不懼” (while being the last in leaving [these homes] they are not afraid) – to name but the most obvious modifications.

While relying on one of the *Zhuang zi* editions available at his time – his explicit quotation is too short to allow to decide whether he used a text belonging to the Liu Xiang version or the then new Guo Xiang version – Ge Hong obviously took some liberties in making the meaning of the text (in his view) more explicit. We will now have to test whether the same can be said regarding the longer implicit *Zhuang zi* quotations within Ge Hong’s works. Ge Hong’s implicit *Zhuang zi* quotations are to be found in his *Shen xian zhuan*. We will first examine two *Lives* whose texts are to be seen in the received *Zhuang zi* before turning to candidates of lost *Zhuang zi* passages and pericopes.

²⁵ Quotation strategies within classical Chinese texts in general are discussed in Bumbacher 2000a: 41–96.

5 Guangchengzi's Life

The extant fragments of the *Shen xian zhuan* include remnants of a *Life of Guangchengzi* 廣成子. The very same Guangchengzi already occurs in the received *Zhuang zi*, in a pericope dealing with the Yellow Emperor. Furthermore, the *Huai nan zi* contains a few sentences uttered by Guangchengzi. As, at first sight, all three texts seem to be quite close to each other, it is tempting to collate them in a synopsis. However, it may be useful to start with a translation of the *Zhuang zi* account²⁶:

黃帝立為天子十九年，令行天下，聞廣成子在於空同之上，故往見之，曰：我聞吾子達於至道，敢問至道之精。吾欲取天地之精，以佐五穀，以養民人。吾又欲官陰陽，以遂羣生，為之奈何？廣成子曰：而所欲問者，物之質也；而所欲官者，物之殘也。自而治天下，雲氣不待族而雨，草木不待黃而落。日月之光益以荒矣，而佞人之心翦翦者，又奚足以語至道？黃帝退捐天下，築特室，席白茅，閒居三月，復往邀之。廣成子南首而臥，黃帝順下風膝行而進，再拜稽首而問曰：聞吾子達於至道，敢問治身奈何而可以長久？廣成子蹶然而起曰：善哉問乎！來，吾語女至道。至道之精，窈窕冥冥；至道之極，昏昏默默。無視無聽，抱神以靜，形將自正。必靜必清，無勞女形，無搖女精，乃可以長生。目無所見，耳無所聞，心無所知，女神將守形，形乃長生。慎女內，閉女外，多知為敗。我為女遂於大明之上矣，至彼至陽之原也；為女入於窈冥之門矣，至彼至陰之原也。天地有官，陰陽有藏。〈慎守女身，物將自壯〉²⁷。我守其一，以處其和。故我修身千二百歲矣，吾形未常衰。黃帝再拜稽首曰：廣成子之謂天矣！廣成子曰：來！余語女：彼其物無窮，而人皆以為有終；彼其物無測，而人皆以為有極。得吾道者，上為皇，而下為王；失吾道者，上見光而下為土。今夫百昌皆生於土而反於土。故余將去女，入無窮之門，以遊無極之野，吾與日月參光，吾與天地為常。當我，縵乎！遠我，昏乎！人其盡死，而我獨存乎！

The Yellow Emperor was established [as ruler] and acted as Son of Heaven for nineteen years. [His] commands circulated [throughout] all under heaven, [when] he heard that Master Guangcheng was staying on top of Mount Kongtong. He therefore went to see him and said: "I have heard that you, Master, have penetrated the perfect Way. I venture to ask [you about] the essence of the perfect Way. I wish to grasp the essence of heaven and earth, in order to aid the five grains and to nourish the common people. I also wish to put into service *yin* and *yang* in order to advance the growth of the multitudes. How may this be done?" Master Guangcheng said: "As to the question [about] what you wish, [this] is [providing] the substance of things; as to what you wish to put into service, [this] is the damaging of things. [Ever] since you govern all under heaven – while the energy of the clouds are not waiting for accumulation, it rains; while plants and trees are not waiting for

²⁶ *Zhuang zi* 11/26.28.

²⁷ These eight characters are missing in the Harvard-Yenching edition, they are here emended according to Guo Qingfan's edition (Guo 1993, vol. 2: 381); the second phrase "物將自壯" was already commented by Lu Deming.

turning yellow, they are shed; the light of sun and moon increases and thereby wastes [everything]. And as for the hair-splitting of [your] eloquent person's mind – what would it be worth to talk [to you] about the perfect Way?" The Yellow Emperor withdrew, abandoned all under heaven, built a solitary hut, spread a mat of white grass, and dwelled [there] in retirement for three months. [Then] he went again to seek him. Master Guangcheng was lying with [his] head to the south. The Yellow Emperor, according to a leeward [position] moving on [his] knees advanced and twice greeting and bowing [his] head to the ground asked, saying: "[I] have heard that you, Master, have penetrated the perfect Way. I venture to ask [you about] governing the body. How is it possible to [live] long?" Master Guangcheng rising up with a start said: "Excellent, this question of yours! Come! I [will] talk to you about the perfect Way: The essence of the perfect Way is very dark and very obscure, the extreme of the perfect Way is very mysterious and very silent: Do not look, do not listen, embrace [your] spirit in order to [let it be] calm, and [your] body will assume an upright [position] by itself. [You] must be calm, [you] must be pure, do not labour your body, do not agitate [your] essence, then you may live long. [When your] eyes have nothing which they look [at] and [your] ears have nothing which they listen to and [your] heart has nothing that it knows, then [your] spirit will guard [your] body and [your] body will live long. Be cautious of [what is] within you; block off [what is] outside you, much knowledge turns [you] into ruin. On your behalf I proceeded to the top of the Great Brilliance and arrived at the source of the perfect *yang*; on your behalf I entered the dark and mysterious Gate and arrived at the source of the perfect *yin*: Heaven and earth have [their own] officials, *yin* and *yang* [their own] storehouses. [Therefore, only] cautiously guard your body, [and all other] things will of themselves grow strong. I [myself] guarded this unity, in order to abide in this harmony. Therefore, I cultivated my body for twelve hundred years and my form has never suffered any decay." The Yellow Emperor greeted twice, bowed [his] head to the ground and said: "Master Guangcheng's words are [like] heaven [to me], indeed." Master Guangcheng said: "Come! I [will] talk to you. While this matter is inexhaustible, men all consider [it as being] finite. While this matter is unfathomable, men all consider [it as] having an utmost point. He who obtains my Way will become brilliant above and will become a king below; he who misses my Way may see the light above, yet will become dust below. Now, the hundred prosperous [beings on earth] are all born out of dust and return to dust. So I am going to leave you and enter the Gate of the inexhaustible, in order to wander in the fields of the limitless. With the sun and the moon I will triple the light and with heaven and earth I will be permanent. What is close to me I will mingle with, what is far from me I will unite with. While mankind in its entirety [will] die, I alone will be preserved."²⁸

²⁸ Also see Watson 1968: 118–120.

The *Shen xian zhuan* version reads²⁹:

廣成子者，古之仙人也。居崆峒之山，石室之中，黃帝聞而造焉。曰：敢問至道之要。廣成子曰：爾治天下，雲不待族而雨，禽不待候而飛，草木不待黃而落，奚足以語至道哉！黃帝退，而閒居三月，後往見之，膝行而前。再拜請問治身之道。廣成子答曰：至道之精，杳杳冥冥，無視無聽。抱神以靜，形將自正。必淨必清，無勞爾形，無搖爾精，乃可長生。慎內閉外，多知為敗。我守其一，以處其和。故千二百歲，而形未嘗衰。得我道者，上為皇，失吾道者，下為土。將去汝，入無窮之門，游無極之野，與日月參光，與天地為常。人其盡死，而我獨存矣。

Master Guangcheng was an immortal person in ancient times. He dwelled within a stone chamber of Mount Kongtong. The Yellow Emperor hearing [of him] went to [see] him and said: "I venture to ask [you about] the important [aspects] of the perfect Way." Master Guangcheng said: "[Under] your governing all under heaven, while the clouds are not waiting for accumulation, it rains; while birds are not waiting for the [proper] season, they fly, while plants and trees are not waiting for turning yellow, they are shed; the light of sun and moon increases and thereby wastes [everything]. And as for the hair-splitting of an eloquent person's mind – what would it be worth to talk [to it] about the perfect Way?" The Yellow Emperor withdrawing dwelled in retirement for three months. Later he went to see him. Moving on [his] knees he advanced, greeted twice and begged to ask about the Way of governing the body. Master Guangcheng replied, saying: "The essence of the perfect Way is very dark and very obscure: Do not look, do not listen, embrace [your] spirit in order to [let it be] calm, and [your] body will assume an upright [position] by itself. [You] must be clean, [you] must be pure, do not labor your body, do not agitate [your] essence and you may live long. Be cautious of [what is] within [you]; block off [what is] outside [you], much knowledge turns [you] into ruin. I [myself] guarded this unity, in order to abide in this harmony. Therefore, for twelve hundred years [my] form has not yet suffered any decay. He who obtains the Way will become brilliant above; he who misses my Way will become dust below. [I] am going to leave you, enter the Gate of the inexhaustible and wander in the fields of the limitless. With the sun and the moon I will triple the light and with heaven and earth I will be permanent. While mankind in its entirety [will] die, I alone will be preserved."³⁰

It may be interesting to see how both versions correspond to each other. Therefore, the *Shen xian zhuan* version is mapped onto the received *Zhuang zi* pericope (marked green):

²⁹ *Tai ping guang ji* 1: 5 and, abridged, *Yun ji qi qian* 109: 1a.

³⁰ Also see Company 2002: 159–160.

Mapping the *Shen xian zhuan* account (marked green) onto the received *Zhuang zi* (11/26.28)

黃帝立為天子十九年，令行天下，聞廣成子在於空同之上，故往見之，曰：我聞吾子達於至道，敢問至道之精。吾欲取天地之精，以佐五穀，以養民人。吾又欲官陰陽，以遂羣生，為之奈何？廣成子曰：而所欲問者，物之質也；而所欲官者，物之殘也。自而治天下，雲氣不待族而雨，草木不待黃而落，日月之光益以荒矣。而佞人之心翦翦者，又奚足以語至道？黃帝退捐天下，築特室，席白茅，間居三月，復往邀之。廣成子南首而臥，黃帝順下風膝行而進，再拜稽首而問曰：聞吾子達於至道，敢問治身奈何而可以長久？廣成子蹶然而起曰：善哉問乎！來，吾語女至道。至道之精，窈窈冥冥；至道之極，昏昏默默。無視無聽，抱神以靜，形將自正。必靜必清，無勞女形，無搖女精，乃可以長生。目無所見，耳無所聞，心無所知，女神將守形，形乃長生。慎女內，閉女外，多知為敗。我為女遂於大明之上矣，至彼至陽之原也；為女入於窈冥之門矣，至彼至陰之原也。天地有官，陰陽有藏。〈慎守女身，物將自壯〉。我守其一，以處其和。故我修身千二百歲矣，吾形未常衰。黃帝再拜稽首曰：廣成子之謂天矣！廣成子曰：來！余語女：彼其物無窮，而人皆以為有終；彼其物無測，而人皆以為有極。得吾道者，上為皇，而下為王；失吾道者，上見光而下為土。今夫百昌皆生於土而反於土。故余將去女，入無窮之門，以遊無極之野，吾與日月參光，吾與天地為常。當我，縉乎！遠我，昏乎！人其盡死，而我獨存乎！

As is immediately evident, the *Shen xian zhuan* version is severely abridged. There are two possible reasons for this: a) Ge Hong may have deliberately shortened the text to suit his purposes, or b) it may be due to the fact that the *Shen xian zhuan* is not extant in its original state, as we have seen, but survives only in quotations, and quotations are usually abridged.

In addition to *Shen xian zhuan*'s implicit *Zhuang zi* quotation there also exists a short one in the *Huai nan zi* to the effect³¹:

故廣成子曰：慎守而內，周閉而外，多知為敗。毋視毋聽，抱神以靜，形將自正。

Therefore Master Guangcheng said: "Be cautious of and guard [what is] within you; block off everywhere [what is] outside you, much knowledge turns [you] into ruin. Do not look, do not listen, embrace [your] spirit in order to [let it be] calm, and [your] body will assume an upright [position] by itself."³²

Putting both the pericope in the received *Zhuang zi* and the *Shen xian zhuan* version together with the short *Huai nan zi* piece into a synopsis the following result is obtained (*verbatim* identical characters marked green, transposed matching phrases marked blue):

³¹ *Huai nan zi* 14: 237.

³² See also Major *et al.* 2010: 542.

Synopsis of Shen xian zhuan, received Zhuang zi (11/26.28), received Huai nan zi 14: 237

ZZ 黃帝立為天子十九年，令行天下，聞廣成子 在於 空同之上，
 SXZ 廣成子者，古之仙人也。 居 崆峒之山，

ZZ 故往見之， 曰：我聞吾子達於至道， 敢問
 SXZ 石室之中， 黃帝聞而造焉。 曰： 敢問

ZZ 至道之精。吾欲取天地之精，以佐五穀，以養民人。吾又欲官陰陽，以遂羣生，為之
 SXZ 至道之要。

ZZ 奈何？廣成子曰：而所欲問者，物之質也；而所欲官者，物之殘也。自 而治天下，
 SXZ 廣成子曰： 爾治天下，

ZZ 雲氣 不待族而雨， 草木不待黃而落，日月之光益以荒矣。而
 SXZ 雲 不待族而雨， 禽不待候而飛， 草木不待黃而落，

ZZ 佞人之心翦翦者，又 奚足以語至道？ 黃帝退 捐天下，築特室，席白茅，
 SXZ 奚足以語至道哉！ 黃帝退而

ZZ 閒居三月，復往邀之。廣成子南首而臥，黃帝順下風 膝行而進，再拜稽首而問曰：
 SXZ 閒居三月，後往見之， 膝行而前。再拜

HNZ 故 廣成子 曰：
 ZZ 聞吾子達於至道， 敢問治身 奈何而可以長久？ 廣成子蹶然而起 曰：
 SXZ 請問治身之道。 廣成子 答 曰：

HNZ 慎守而內，周閉而外，多知為敗。
 these are the transposed phrases ◀

ZZ 善哉問乎！來，吾語女至道。 至道之精，窈窈冥冥；
 SXZ 至道之精，杳杳冥冥，

HNZ 毋視毋聽，抱神以靜，形將自正。
 ZZ 至道之極，昏昏默默。 無視無聽，抱神以靜，形將自正。必靜必清，無勞女形，無
 SXZ 無視無聽。抱神以靜，形將自正。必淨必清，無勞爾形，無

HNZ
 ZZ 搖女精，乃可以 長生。目无所見，耳无所聞，心无所知，女神將守形，形乃長生。
 SXZ 搖爾精，乃可 長生。

HNZ ◀ from here the Huai nan zi transposed
 ZZ 慎女 內，閉女 外，多知為敗。我為女遂於大明之上矣，至彼至陽之原也；為女入
 SXZ 慎 內，閉 外，多知為敗。

ZZ 於窈冥之門矣，至彼至陰之原也。天地有官，陰陽有藏。〈慎守女身，物將自壯〉³³。
 SXZ
 ZZ 我守其一，以處其和。故我修身 千二百歲矣，吾形未常衰。黃帝再拜稽首曰：廣成
 SXZ 我守其一，以處其和。故 千二百歲， 而形未嘗衰。

ZZ 子之謂天矣！廣成子曰：來！余語女：彼其物無窮，而人皆以為有終；彼其物無測，而
 SXZ

ZZ 人皆以為有極。 得吾道者，上為皇，而下為王； 失吾道者，上見光而 下為
 SXZ 得我道者， 上為皇， 失吾道者， 下為

ZZ 土。今夫百昌皆生於土而反於土。故余 將去女，入無窮之門，以 遊無極之野，吾
 SXZ 土。 將去汝，入無窮之門， 遊無極之野，

ZZ 與日月參光，吾 與天地為常。當我，縉乎！遠我，昏乎！ 人其盡死，而我獨存
 SXZ 與日月參光， 與天地為常。 人其盡死，而我獨存

ZZ 乎！
 SXZ 矣。

33 These eight characters are missing in the Harvard-Yenching edition, they are here emended according to Guo Qingfan's edition (Guo 1993: vol. 2: 381); the second phrase 物將自壯 was already commented by Lu Deming.

Apart from philological details that will be discussed elsewhere, six major results can be obtained from an analysis of this synopsis.

Firstly, although the *Shen xian zhuan* presents this narrative without acknowledging any source, it is obvious that it must be taken from a *Zhuang zi* version, as both the *Shen xian zhuan* and the received *Zhuang zi* are almost *verbatim* identical (in the synopsis marked green). The same holds true for the short *Huai nan zi* piece.

Secondly, and quite remarkably, the *Shen xian zhuan* version also contains a sentence that is no longer to be seen in the received *Zhuang zi* (underlined in the synopsis): The phrase “爾治天下” ([under] your governing all under heaven) is followed by the sentence “雲不待族而雨” (while the clouds are not waiting for accumulation, it rains) after which the *Shen xian zhuan* has the phrase “禽不待候而飛” (while birds are not waiting for the [proper] season, they fly) which is not seen in the received *Zhuang zi*.³⁴ Then both the *Shen xian zhuan* and the received *Zhuang zi* have “草木不待黃而落” (while plants and trees are not waiting for turning yellow, they are shed). Note that these three phrases in the *Shen xian zhuan* are strictly parallel, beginning with the upper realm (clouds), proceeding to the middle realm (birds) and ending with the lowest area, the earth (plants and trees). It is well possible – but cannot be verified so far – that Ge Hong here preserves the pre-Guo Xiang version of these phrases. However, it is equally possible that he composed this sentence himself, using this tripartite image to strengthen the point.

Thirdly, whereas the received *Zhuang zi* has: “敢問治身” (I venture to ask [you about] governing the body), the sentence in Ge Hong’s version reads “請問治身之道” (he begged to ask about the Way of governing of the body). While it is well possible that the *Zhuang zi* reading is original and Ge Hong made it more explicit, it has to be noted that in the received *Zhuang zi* the expression “存身之道”³⁵ (the Way of preserving the body) can be found (as well as the expression “不死之道”,³⁶ “the Way of not dying”). It is, therefore, equally possible that Ge Hong preserves the original form and the received *Zhuang zi* is abridged.

Fourthly, the *Shen xian zhuan* version also shows, at its beginning, redactional insertions (put into boxes in the synopsis) made by Ge Hong to allow for

³⁴ Note that this sentence occurs in the *Tai ping guang ji* quotation of the *Shen xian zhuan* but is lacking in the shorter *Yun ji qi qian* version.

³⁵ *Zhuang zi* 16/41.15.

³⁶ *Zhuang zi* 20/52.39.

the text to fit into the genre of a *Life* in general and into his collection of immortals' *vitae* in particular, namely, “古之仙人也” (he was an immortal person of ancient times) which lets Guangchengzi rank among the *xian ren* 仙人. The phrase “石室之中” ([he dwelled] within a stone chamber) appears quite often elsewhere in the extant fragments of the *Shen xian zhuan*³⁷ but neither in the received *Zhuang zi* nor in the lost parts of the *Zhuang zi* recovered so far. The sentence “黃帝聞而造焉” (the Yellow Emperor hearing [of him] went to [see] him) may also be Ge Hong's phrasing as the corresponding phrase in the received *Zhuang zi* “往見之” (he went to visit him) can be found several times elsewhere in the received *Zhuang zi* and seems to be its usual way to put it.

Finally, the *Huai nan zi* reverses the two halves of its implicit quotation and transposes the phrases “慎守而內，周閉而外，多知為敗” (be cautious of and guard [what is] within you; block off everywhere [what is] outside you, much knowledge turns [you] into ruin). They correspond to the phrases “慎女內，閉女外，多知為敗” (be cautious of [what is] within you; block off [what is] outside you, much knowledge turns [you] into ruin). This is a phenomenon quite often seen in the *Huai nan zi* – it takes phrases of its implicit source and translocates them.

6 Yangzi meets Laozi

Another pericope survives both as a version transmitted in the received *Zhuang zi* and as an implicit quotation to be found in the remnants of Ge Hong's *Shen xian zhuan*. The received *Zhuang zi* contains an account of a meeting between Yangzi or Master Yang and Laozi, the Old Master, to the effect (7/20.11):

陽子居見老聃曰：有人於此，嚮疾強梁，物徹疏明，學道不勑。如是者，可比明王乎？老聃曰：是於聖人也，胥易技係，勞形怵心者也。且也虎豹之文來田，猿狙之便、執爨之狗來藉。如是者，可比明王乎？陽子居蹴然曰：敢問明王之治。老聃曰：明王之治，功蓋天下，而似不自己，化貸萬物，而民弗恃，有莫舉名，使物自喜，立乎不測，而遊於无有者也。

Yang Zizhu went to see Lao Dan and said: “Here is a man swift as an echo, strong as a beam, with a wonderfully clear understanding of the principles of things, studying the Way without ever letting up – a man like this could compare with an enlightened king, couldn't he?” Lao Dan said: “In comparison to the sage, a man like this is a drudging slave, a craftsman bound to his calling, wearing out his body, grieving his mind.

³⁷ Campamy 2002: 37, 163, 342, 344.

Moreover, the beautiful markings of the tigers and the leopards let the hunters come, the nimbleness of the apes and monkeys and [the ability of] the dogs to catch rats let the leads come. A man like this – how could he compare to an enlightened king?”³⁸ Yang Zizhu respectfully said: “I venture to ask about the government of an enlightened king.” Lao Dan said: “The government of an enlightened king – while [his] achievements cover [all] under heaven, they seem not to [derive] from himself. While [his] transformations change the ten thousand things, the people do not depend [on him]. It happens that nobody is raised [in rank] or is praised. He lets [all] classes [of beings] rejoice themselves. And while he stands on the fathomless, he wanders where there is nothing at all.”

In the remnants of the *Shen xian zhuan*'s *Laozi Life* an implicit *Zhuang zi* quotation refers precisely to this story. The text reads³⁹:

陽子見於老子。老子告之，曰：虎豹之文，猿獠之捷，所以致射也。陽子曰：敢問明王之治。老子曰：明王之治，功蓋天下，而以不自己，化被萬物，而使民不恃。其有德而不稱其名，位乎不測，而遊乎無有者也。

When Master Yang saw the Old Master, the Old Master informed him, saying: “The beautiful markings of the tigers and the leopards as well as the spryness of apes and monkeys are wherefore they cause [that they] are shot at.” Master Yang said: “I venture to ask about the government of an enlightened king.” The Old Master said: “The government of an enlightened king – while [his] achievements cover [all] under heaven, they are considered not to [derive] from himself. While [his] transformations reach out over the ten thousand things, he lets the people not depend [on him]. He has integrity, but they don't praise his name. He positions [himself] on the fathomless, he wanders where there is nothing at all”.⁴⁰

Mapping the matching phrases (marked green) of the *Shen xian zhuan* passage onto the corresponding received *Zhuang zi* pericope reveals the extent to which the former is abridged:

Mapping matching phrases of *Shen xian zhuan* (marked green) onto received *Zhuang zi* 7/20.11

陽子居見老聃曰：有人於此，嚮疾強梁，物徹疏明，學道不勸。如是者，可比明王乎？老聃曰：是於聖人也，胥易技係，勞形怵心者也。且也虎豹之文來田，猿狙之便、執麋之狗來藉。如是者，可比明王乎？陽子居蹴然曰：敢問明王之治。老聃曰：明王之治，功蓋天下，而似不自己，化貸萬物，而民弗恃，有莫舉名，使物自喜，立乎不測，而遊於无有者也。

³⁸ The translation of this first part of the pericope is Watson's, see Watson 1968: 94; Romanization adapted to *pinyin*.

³⁹ *Tai ping guang ji* 1:3.

⁴⁰ Also see Company 2002: 202.

Presenting the relevant parts of both texts in a synopsis we obtain the following result (*verbatim* identical characters are marked green):

Synopsis of *Shen xian zhuan*, received *Zhuang zi* 7/20.11

ZZ 陽子居見 老聃曰：有人於此，嚮疾強梁，物徹疏明，學道不勌。如是者，可比明王
SXZ 陽子見於 老子。

ZZ 乎？ 老聃 曰：是於聖人也，胥易技係，勞形怵心者也。且也 虎豹之文來田，
SXZ 老子告之 曰： 虎豹之文，

ZZ 猿狙之便、 執麋之狗來藉。如是者，可比明王乎？ 陽子居蹴然
SXZ 猿猱之捷，所以致射也。 陽子

ZZ 曰：敢問明王之治。老聃 曰：明王之治，功蓋天下，而似不自己，化貸萬物，而
SXZ 曰：敢問明王之治。老子 曰：明王之治，功蓋天下，而以不自己，化被萬物，而使

ZZ 民弗恃， 有 莫舉 名，使物自喜， 立乎不測，而遊於无有者也。
SXZ 民不恃。其 有德而不稱其名 位乎不測，而遊乎無有者也。

As seen before, the *Shen xian zhuan* version for the most part *verbatim* agrees with the received version of the *Zhuang zi*. However, the phrase “所以致射也” (wherefore they cause [that they] are shot at) might be Ge Hong’s own formulation which he may have considered necessary to make good for his shortening the argument.

On the other hand, it is possible that his phrase “其有德而不稱其名” (“he has integrity, but they don’t praise his name”, put into a box in the synopsis) may derive from an earlier version than the “有莫舉名” (it happens that nobody respects [his] name) of the received *Zhuang zi*. Note, that neither the phrase “有莫” (it happens that nobody ...) nor the expression “舉名” (respect the name) appear anywhere else in the received *Zhuang zi*. However, it also has to be said that neither the *Shen xian zhuan*’s expression “有德” (he has integrity) nor “稱其名” (one praises his name) or “稱名” (one praises the name) does occur anywhere within the received *Zhuang zi*.

So far we have analysed the text passages of the received *Zhuang zi* of which either explicit or implicit quotations are to be found in the remnants of the *Shen xian zhuan*. Regarding the question whether Ge Hong has relied on a pre-Guo Xiang version, the result is not conclusive. The few candidate phrases that he could have copied from an earlier *Zhuang zi* edition and are not seen in the received *Zhuang zi* could equally originate from Ge Hong’s own brush. Things will become clearer, however, when we now turn to lost *Zhuang zi* passages that are preserved in Ge Hong’s works.

7 Huizi's retinue

Ge Hong's works do in fact preserve passages that both explicitly and implicitly refer to *Zhuang zi* whereas these quotations are no longer seen in the received version. In his Confucian work, entitled *Bao pu zi wai pian* 抱朴子外篇, Ge Hong refers to Zhuang Zhou to the effect:

昔莊周見惠子從車之多，而棄其餘魚。⁴¹

Of old, Zhuang Zhou, when seeing the great number of carriages of Huizi's followers, threw away his remaining fish.

That these sentences once belonged to the *Zhuang zi* although they are no longer extant within the received version is plausible for several reasons. In the received text there are quite a few pericopes that deal with both Zhuang Zhou and Huizi. Then, in pericope 17.6, Zhuang Zhou makes fun of Huizi's behaviour as prime minister of Liang.⁴² Since as prime minister Huizi may have had a retinue of a number of carriages, one could assume that these sentences once may have been part of another Huizi-Zhuang Zhou pericope in which, in addition, some fish also may have played a role. Finally, concerning the size of Huizi's retinue, there exists another pericope within the received *Zhuang zi* in which Zhuangzi explains to a certain Cao Shang of Song, who is proud of the many carriages he has been given by the king, that the more menial the job they have to do, the larger the retinue is which the king grants his subjects.⁴³

However, the only other source identified so far which presents these sentences is the *Huai nan zi* where the following phrases are to be found:

故惠子從車百乘，以過孟諸，莊子見之，棄其餘魚。⁴⁴

Therefore, when Huizi [was moving with] a retinue of one hundred chariots, in order to cross the Meng zhu [Marsh], and Zhuangzi saw him, he threw away his leftover fish.⁴⁵

Both the *Bao pu zi* and the *Huai nan zi* versions partially correspond *verbatim*, as can be seen when they are collated (identical characters are marked green):

⁴¹ *Bao pu zi wai pian* 16: 130.

⁴² *Zhuang zi* 17/45.84; see Watson 1968: 188.

⁴³ Watson 1968: 356.

⁴⁴ *Huai nan zi* 11: 184.

⁴⁵ Also see Major *et al.* 2010: 424.

HNZ 故
BPZwp 昔莊周見

惠子從車百乘，以過孟諸，莊子見之，
惠子從車之多，

而 棄其餘魚。
棄其餘魚。

In order to interpret this finding, we are basically left with two possibilities. While both make use of the same source, namely a pre-Guo Xiang version of the *Zhuang zi*, Ge Hong either abridged and edited the relevant phrases or he used the *Huai nan zi* and edited it as he considered suitable. At the current state of research, unfortunately, it cannot be decided which is the preferable one. In any case, Ge Hong's plausible attribution of these phrases to a *Zhuang zi* version hints at a potentially interesting *Zhuang zi* pericope which either was discarded by Guo Xiang or was lost early in the post-Guo Xiang transmission of the text.

8 Confucius meets Laozi

We now have to discuss two explicit *Zhuang zi* quotations preserved in *lei shu* 類書 and no longer to be seen in the received text. *Lei shu* “writings [arranged according to] categories”, often *faute-de-mieux* translated as “encyclopedias”, consist for the greatest part of quotations drawn from earlier writings. Once the set of categories *lei* 類 and/or sections *pin* 品 was established, the authors assembled within a given section as many quotations as seemed suitable to them. The quotations were shorter (for example, one sentence) or longer extractions from various texts each of which included an example of what the section was all about. Yet, quotations – especially from non-canonical works – are rarely made exactly word for word. Rather, they are abridged in order to present just the essential point, or they can occasionally even be paraphrased. *Lei shu* are, however, not necessarily independent sources as they may copy earlier ones, nevertheless, they are important as sources of additional information, particularly on lost works.

The *lei shu* of relevance here are the *Yi wen lei ju* 藝文類聚 (Categorized Collection of Literary Writings) ordered by Tang Gaozu in AD 622 and completed in AD 624, compiled by Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 and others, all in all more than ten scholars. It collected *belles lettres* materials under 46 sections and 727 sub-sections.⁴⁶ The *Tai ping yu lan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Inspection of the [Encyclopedia of the] Great Peace [Reign Period]) was commissioned by Song Taizong in 977 and probably completed in 982. Its editorial

⁴⁶ McMullen 1988: 211.

board is said to have included some fourteen members directed by Li Fang 李昉. It consists of 1,000 *juan* with more than 5,000 headings – from 天 *tian* (heaven) to 花 *hua* (flowers) – that are entered under 55 main categories, each of which is further subdivided.⁴⁷ The *Tai ping guang ji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Records of the Great Peace [Reign Period]), ordered by Song Taizong as well, was begun in 977 and presented to the emperor as early as in 978 by a commission of thirteen members which was also presided by Li Fang. It is a collection of stories and anecdotes divided in 500 *juan* arranged under 92 categories and 150 sub-categories. Both the *Tai ping yu lan* and the *Tai ping guang ji* are connected with each other as not only ten of the involved scholars were members of both projects but their sources were differently assigned – “formal” sources such as classics, apocrypha, historiographical and philosophical texts were to be used by the former, “informal” sources like unofficial histories (*ye shi* 野史), short stories (*chuan qi* 傳奇), novellas (*xiao shuo* 小說) etc. by the latter.

The first explicit quotation to be discussed was already found by Wang Yinglin: Both in the *Yi wen lei ju* and the *Tai ping yu lan* we find the following phrases:

Yi wen lei ju 80: 1374

《莊子》曰。仲尼讀書。老聃倚竈觚而聽之。曰。是何書也。曰。春秋也。

Tai ping yu lan 186: 3b

《莊子》曰：仲尼讀《春秋》，老聃踞竈觚而聽。[commentary:] 觚，竈額也。

The *Tai ping yu lan* version is almost identical with the first part of that of the *Yi wen lei ju*, but it lacks the second part and it contains a commentary not seen in the *Yi wen lei ju*. It is by no means clear, whether this is an early commentary (e. g., by Sima Biao) or is added by the compilers of the *Tai ping yu lan*. Without going into more detail for the moment, what interests us here is the fact that these phrases can indeed be found, although with variant readings, in an extant text – not recognized by the Chinese scholars already mentioned. These phrases can be located in Ge Hong's *Shen xian zhuan*, namely in its *Laozi vita*.

For the *Laozi vita* as a whole Ge Hong relied on different sources. He explicitly mentions Sima Qian's *Shi ji* as well as half a dozen Daoist texts. However, he also uses texts whose titles are not revealed but are introduced by “或云” (someone

⁴⁷ See Haeger 1968.

said). When he comes to the encounters between Laozi and Confucius, his *Life of Laozi* — as preserved in *Tai ping guang ji* (1: 3) — changes its form and turns into an uninterrupted narrative. It is precisely in this part that we can localize the lost *Zhuang zi* phrases, although abridged (they are marked blue):

孔子（常）〔嘗〕往問禮。先使子貢觀焉。子貢至，老子告之曰：子之師名丘。相徒三年，而後可教焉。孔子既見老子。老子告曰：良賈深藏若虛。君子盛德若愚。去子之驕氣與多欲淫志。是皆無益於子也。孔子讀書。老子見而問之，曰：（是）⁴⁹何書（也）？曰：易也。聖人亦讀之。老子曰：聖人讀之，可也。汝曷為（復）讀之。其要何說？孔子曰：要在仁義。老子曰：蚊虻嚼膚。通夕不得眠。今仁義慘然而汨人心。亂莫大焉。夫鵠不日浴而白。烏不日染而黑。天之自高矣，地之自厚矣，日月自明矣，星辰固自列矣，草木固有區矣。夫子修道而趨，則以至矣。又何用仁義。若擊鼓以求亡羊乎。夫子乃亂人之性也。老子問孔子曰：亦得道乎？孔子曰：求二十七年而不得也。老子曰：使道可獻人，則人莫不獻之其君。使道而可進人，則人莫不進之其親矣。使道可告人，則人莫不告之兄弟矣。使道可傳人，則人莫不傳之其子矣。然而不可者，無他也。中無主而道不可居也。孔子曰：丘治詩書禮樂易春秋，誦先王之道，明周召之迹。以干七十餘君而不見用。甚矣人之難說也。老子曰：夫六藝。先王之陳·也。豈其所陳哉。今子所修者，皆因陳迹也。迹者，履之出，而迹豈異哉。孔子歸。三日不談。子貢怪而問之。孔子曰：吾見人之用意如飛鳥者。吾飾意，以為弓弩射之。未嘗不及，而加之也。人之用意如麋鹿者。吾飾意，以為走狗，而逐之。未嘗不銜，而頓之也。人之用意如淵魚者。吾飾意，以為鉤緝，而投之。未嘗不釣，而制之也。至於龍，乘雲氣，遊太清，吾不能逐也。今見老子。其猶龍乎。使吾口張，而不能翕。舌出，而不能縮。神錯，而不知其所居也。

Campany's translation reads as follows (the words in question are marked blue):

Confucius once went to ask Laozi something about the rites. At first he sent [his disciple] Zigong ahead to him. When he arrived, Laozi said to him, "Your master is the one named Qiu. If he follows me for three years, then at that point he should be teachable."

When Confucius himself met Laozi, Laozi told him, "A good merchant hides his goods so that [his shop] appears empty. A true gentleman hides his integrity so that he appears dull. Quit your haughty bearing! You are spoiling your aim with too many desires. None of these is of any benefit to you!"

Confucius was reading a book. When Laozi saw him, he asked: "What book is that?" [Confucius] answered: "It is the [Book of] Changes, the [ancient] sages also studied it." "It's all right for the sages to have studied it," Laozi said, "but for what purpose are you studying it? What is the gist of it?" "The gist is in goodwill and duty," Confucius replied. Laozi responded, "When mosquitoes and gadflies sting the flesh, we lie awake all night long. If we let goodwill and duty torment our hearts and keep them restless, there is no disorder worse. The snow goose wants no daily bath to make it white, the rook no daily

⁴⁸ The emendations (...) are made according to the explicit *Shen xian zhuan* quotation in *Tai ping yu lan* 616.6a.

inking to make it black. It is inherent in Heaven to be high, in Earth to be thick, in the sun and moon to shed light, in the stars to form constellations, in trees and plants to have their distinctions. If you too go forward cultivating the Dao, you will already have attained the utmost. Why be so busy proclaiming goodwill and duty, like the man banging the drum as he goes looking for lost sheep? You are disrupting human nature, sir.”

When Laozi asked Confucius, “Have you after all attained the Dao?” “I’ve searched for it for twenty-seven years and have not found it,” answered Confucius. Laozi said, “Supposing the Dao could be offered up, there is no one who would not offer it to his lord. Supposing the Dao could be presented as a gift, there is no one who would not present it to his relatives. Supposing the Dao could be told to others, there is no one who would not tell it to his brothers. Supposing the Dao could be bequeathed, there is no one who would not bequeath it to his children. That we cannot do so is for this reason alone: unless you have an appropriator within to make it your own, the Dao cannot take up residence in you.”

When Confucius said, “I have studied the [classics of] *Songs*, *Documents*, *Rites*, *Music*, *Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*. I have chanted the way of the former kings and made plain the imprints of the Dukes of Zhou and Shao in order to introduce them to over seventy rulers, but still they have not been applied. How hard people are to persuade!” Laozi replied, “The Six Classics are the worn footprints of the former kings, not what they used to imprint. What you are cultivating yourself in now is all worn footprints, and footprints are where the shoes have passed, they are not the shoes!”

When Confucius returned [from seeing Laozi], he did not speak for three days. Zigong thought it strange and asked him why. Confucius said, “When I see that someone is thinking like a bird in flight, I refurbish my thinking into a bow and shoot at him, and never have I failed to hit and retrieve him. When I see that someone is thinking like a deer, I refurbish my thinking into a running dog and pursue him, and never have I failed to catch him. When I see that someone is thinking like a fish in the deep, I refurbish my thinking into a hook and line and cast for him, and never have I failed to hook him and reel him in. But when it comes to a dragon, riding clouds and vapour, roaming about in the Grand Purity empyrean, I am unable to pursue him. Today I saw Laozi, and how like a dragon he is! My mouth gaped so wide I could not get it shut; my tongue protruded so far I could not get it back in. My spirits were thrown into confusion and did not know where to lodge”.⁴⁹

A closer look at this Confucius-Laozi narrative reveals that it is composed of several passages that are *verbatim* taken from the *Zhuang zi*.⁵⁰ In order to analyse them, it may be useful to split this *Shen xian zhuan* text into its parts, here numbered from (1) to (8), and to discuss them one by one. Part (1) reads:

⁴⁹ Campany 2002: 200–202, modified.

⁵⁰ Already observed by Campany 2002.

(1) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

孔子（常）（嘗）往問禮。先使子貢觀焉。子貢至，老子告之曰：子之師名丘。相徒三年，而後可教焉。孔子既見老子。老子告曰：良賈深藏若虛。君子盛德若愚。去子之驕氣與多欲淫志。是皆無益於子也。

The analysis of this part is deferred for a moment. The following part (2) is no longer to be seen in the received *Zhuang zi* but must have once belonged to the pre-Guo Xiang version as can be seen in the two surviving explicit quotations discussed above. Its *Shen xian zhuan* version is transmitted twice, as part of the *Shen xian zhuan* as it occurs in the *Tai ping guang ji* and as an explicit *Shen xian zhuan* quotation in the *Tai ping yu lan*. We will have to collate both *Shen xian zhuan* versions of this passage first. Reason for this is that the compilers of the *Tai ping yu lan* still had the “original” or full-length *Shen xian zhuan* on their desk when the abridged *Tai ping guang ji* version was compiled. The *Tai ping yu lan*, therefore, serves to “control” the latter. We then will have to collate these *Shen xian zhuan* passages with the explicit *Zhuang zi* quotations (lost in the received version).

(2) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

孔子讀書。老子見而問之曰：何書？曰：易也。聖人亦讀之。老子曰：聖人讀之，可也。汝曷為讀之。其要何說？

Quotation of *Shen xian zhuan* in *Tai ping yu lan* 616.6a:

《神仙傳》曰：孔子讀書，老子見而問曰：是何書也？曰：禮也。聖人亦讀之。老子云：聖人可也，汝曷為復讀之？

It is interesting that the *Shen xian zhuan* sentences taken from the “long” version as contained in the *Tai ping guang ji* do not precisely match the explicit *Shen xian zhuan* quotation of the *Tai ping yu lan*. As can be seen in the following synopsis:

GJ 孔子讀書。老子見而問之	曰：何書？	曰：易也。聖人亦讀之。老子曰：
YL 孔子讀書，老子見而問	曰：是何書也？	曰：禮也。聖人亦讀之。老子云：
GJ 聖人讀之，	可也。汝曷為	讀之。其要何說？
YL 聖人	可也，汝曷為復	讀之？

The differences are put into boxes, they are minimal, indicating that – at least in this example – the *Shen xian zhuan* ap. *Tai ping guang ji* may be close to the “original” *Shen xian zhuan*. Most remarkable is the title variant of the book Confucius is busy reading. In the first example it is the *Yi jing* 易經 (*Book of*

Changes), in the second it is the *Li ji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) – both were traditionally considered Confucian classics. The sentence “that the sages read it is acceptable” (*Tai ping guang ji*) is shortened to “[for] the sages it is acceptable” (quotation in *Tai ping yu lan*). And the word “again” (*fu* 復) of the quotation is missing in the “long” version. The phrase “其要何說” (what is the gist of it?) is cut out in the quotation as it would have asked for Confucius’ answer the compiler of the quotation obviously did not want to provide within the given context of the *Tai ping yu lan*. Whereas the *Tai ping guang ji* has the short question “何書” (which book?), the quotation in the *Tai ping yu lan* has the longer phrase “是何書也” (which book is this?). The difference may seem utterly negligible, but it becomes important as soon as we also take into account the explicit *Zhuang zi* quotations in the *Yi wen lei ju* and *Tai ping yu lan* to which we now turn:

Explicit quotations of *Zhuang zi* (lost in the received version):

LJ⁵¹ 《莊子》曰：仲尼讀書，老聃倚竈觚而聽之。曰。是何書也。曰。春秋也。
YL⁵² 《莊子》曰：仲尼讀春秋，老聃踞竈觚而聽。[commentary:] 觚，竈額也。

In the *Yi wen lei ju* occurs the longer phrase “是何書也” (“which book is this, put into a box”). As this *lei shu* was compiled in AD 604, in a time when the pre-Guo Xiang version of the *Zhuang zi* was still available, we can presume that this was the original phrase to be found in the pre-Guo Xiang *Zhuang zi* of the early seventh century CE. This shows that while the *Shen xian zhuan* quotation in *Tai ping yu lan* keeps this reading, the “long” *Shen xian zhuan* text as contained in the *Tai ping guang ji*, which ought to be “more complete”, in fact turns out to be shortened at this location, confirming the earlier finding that even the “long” *Shen xian zhuan* remnants in *Tai ping guang ji* (and *Yun ji qi qian*, for that matter) do not represent the *Shen xian zhuan* “biographies” in their original form but are edited by the compilers of the the *Tai ping guang ji* and *Yun ji qi qian* to some extent.

Note that in these explicit *Zhuang zi* quotations the book read aloud by Confucius is the *Chun qiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn [Annals of the State of Lu]*), whereas both *Shen xian zhuan* versions not only differ from this but also differ from each other as the *Tai ping guang ji* version reads *yi* 易 for *Yi jing* 易經 while the *Tai ping yu lan* has *li* 禮 for *Li ji* 禮記. And then both explicit

51 *Yi wen lei ju* 80: 1374.

52 *Tai ping yu lan* 186: 3b.

Zhuang zi quotations have Lao Dan (Laozi) leaning towards a corner of the stove and hearing it (倚/踞竈觚而聽之) which is not seen in the *Shen xian zhuan* version.

In short, part (2) of the *Shen xian zhuan* text is indeed an implicit quotation of a lost part of *Zhuang zi*. Collation with the two extant explicit *Zhuang zi* quotations in *lei shu* revealed, however, that Ge Hong has edited his source text.

As parts (3) to (8) of the *Shen xian zhuan* text have corresponding parts in the received *Zhuang zi*, it might be worthwhile to collate them (*verbatim* matching phrases are marked green):

(3) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

孔子曰：要在仁義。老子曰：蚊虻嚼膚。通夕不得眠。今仁義慘然而汨人心。亂莫大焉。夫鵠不日浴而白。烏不日染而黑。

Zhuang zi (14/39.56):

孔子見老聃而語仁義。老聃曰：夫播糠眯目，則天地四方易位矣；蚊虻嚼膚，則通昔不寐矣。夫仁義濇然，乃憤吾心，亂莫大焉。吾子使天下无失其朴，吾子亦放風而動，總德而立矣，又奚傑然若負建鼓，而求亡子者邪？夫鵠不日浴而白，烏不日黔而黑。

Here, too, the *Shen xian zhuan* passage is an excerpt of the corresponding yet more comprehensive text of the received *Zhuang zi*. Despite some variant characters, the matching phrases are almost *verbatim* identical.

(4) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

天之自高矣，地之自厚矣，日月自明矣。

Zhuang zi (21/56.37):

[...]孔子曰：[...]若天之自高，地之自厚，日月之自明，夫何修焉！ [...]

Apart from the characters 矣 *yi* (not in *Zhuang zi*), 若 *ruo* and 之 *zhi* (not in *Shen xian zhuan*), there is a close match between *Shen xian zhuan* phrases and those of the received *Zhuang zi*.

(5) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

星辰固自列矣，草木固有區矣。夫子修道而趨，則以至矣。又何用仁義。若擊鼓以求亡羊乎。夫子乃亂人之性也。

Zhuang zi (13/35.51)

[...]星辰固有列矣，禽獸固有羣矣，樹木固有立矣。夫子亦放德而行，循道而趨，已至矣，又何偈偈乎揭仁義，若擊鼓而求亡子焉？意！夫子亂人之性也！

The *Shen xian zhuan* version is abridged, yet, apart from some variant characters (to be discussed elsewhere), both the *Shen xian zhuan* and the received *Zhuang zi* versions match closely (identical characters marked green).

(6) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

老子問孔子曰：亦得道乎？孔子曰：求二十七年而不得也。老子曰：使道可獻人，則人莫不獻之其君。使道而可進人，則人莫不進之其親矣。使道可告人，則人莫不告之兄弟矣。使道可傳人，則人莫不傳之其子矣。然而不可者，無他也。中無主而道不可居也。

Zhuang zi (14/38.44):

孔子行年五十有一而不聞道，乃南之沛，見老聃。老聃曰：子來乎？吾聞子北方之賢者也，子亦得道乎？孔子曰：未得也。老子曰：子惡乎求之哉？曰：吾求之於度數，五年而未得也。老子曰：子又惡乎求之哉？曰：吾求之於陰陽，十有二年而未得。老子曰：然。使道而可獻，則人莫不獻之於其君；使道而可進，則人莫不進之於其親；使道而可以告人，則人莫不告其兄弟；使道而可以與人，則人莫不與其子孫。然而不可者，无佗也，中无主而不止，外无正而不行。[...]

If character variants are, for the sake of the argument, neglected and the fact is acknowledged that the *Shen xian zhuan* abridges the text,⁵³ the matching phrases (marked green) are *verbatim* identical.

⁵³ Which, as has been said above, can be due either to Ge Hong's shortening of his sources or to the fact that the *Shen xian zhuan* has not been transmitted in its original form but survives in fragmentary form as quotations only.

(7) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

孔子曰。丘治詩書禮樂易春秋，誦先王之道，明周召之迹。以干七十餘君而不見用。甚矣人之難說也。老子曰：夫六藝。先王之陳迹也，豈其所陳哉。今子所修者，皆因陳迹也。迹者，履之出，而迹豈異哉。

Zhuang zi (14/39.74):

孔子謂老聃曰：丘治詩書禮樂易春秋六經，自以為久矣，孰知其故矣，以奸者七十二君，論先王之道，而明周召之迹，一君无所鈎用。甚矣夫！人之難說也，道之難明邪！老子曰：幸矣，子之不遇治世之君也！夫六經，先王之陳迹也，豈其所以迹哉！今子之所言，猶迹也。夫迹，履之所出，而迹豈履哉！[...]

Again, the *Shen xian zhuan* account is abridged (matching phrases are marked green) and its phrase “以干七十餘君” is transposed compared to the corresponding phrase “以奸者七十二君” of the received *Zhuang zi* (marked blue). On the other hand, where the *Zhuang zi* has “今子之所言，猶迹也” (now, what you are saying is like the [worn-out] paths), the *Shen xian zhuan* has the more elaborated reading “今子所修者，皆因陳迹也” (“now, as for what you are cultivating, is all worn footprints”).

(8) *Shen xian zhuan* (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*):

孔子歸。三日不談。子貢怪而問之。孔子曰：吾見人之用意如飛鳥者。吾飾意以為弓弩射之。未嘗不及而加之也。人之用意如麋鹿者。吾飾意以為走狗而逐之。未嘗不銜而頓之也。人之用意如淵魚者。吾飾意以為鈎緡而投之。未嘗不鈎而制之也。至於龍，乘雲氣，遊太清，吾不能逐也。今見老子。其猶龍乎。使吾口張而不能翕。舌出而不能縮。神錯而不知其所居也。

When Confucius returned, he did not speak for three days. Zigong thought it strange and asked him why. Confucius said, “When I see that someone is thinking like a bird in flight, I refurbish my thinking into a bow and shoot at him, and never have I failed to hit and retrieve him. When I see that someone is thinking like a deer, I refurbish my thinking into a running dog and pursue him, and never have I failed to catch him. When I see that someone is thinking like a fish in the deep, I refurbish my thinking into a hook and line and cast for him, and never have I failed to hook him and reel him in. But when it comes to a dragon, thought it strange and asked him why. Confucius said, “When I see that someone is thinking like a bird in flight, I refurbish my thinking into a bow and shoot at him, and never have I failed to hit and retrieve him. When I see that someone is thinking like a deer, I refurbish my thinking into a running dog and pursue him, and never have I failed to catch him. When I see that someone is

thinking like a fish in the deep, I refurbish my thinking into a hook and line and cast for him, and never have I failed to hook him and reel him in. But when it comes to a dragon, roaming about in the Grand Purity empyrean, I am unable to pursue him. Today I saw Laozi, and how like a dragon he is! My mouth gaped so wide I could not get it shut; my tongue protruded so far I could not get it back in. My spirits were thrown into confusion and did not know where to lodge”.

Zhuang zi (14/39.60):

[...]孔子見老聃歸，三日不談。弟子問曰：夫子見老聃，亦將何規哉？孔子曰：吾乃今於是乎見龍。龍合而成體，散而成章，乘雲氣而養乎陰陽。予口張而不能噤，予又何規老聃哉！

When Confucius returned from his visit with Lao Dan, he did not speak for three days. A disciples said, “Master, you’ve seen Lao Dan – what estimation would you make of him?” Confucius said, “At last I may say that I have seen a dragon – a dragon that coils to show his body at its best, that sprawls out to display his patterns at their best, riding clouds and vapor, feeding on the *yin* and *yang*. My mouth gaped so wide I could not close it. How could I possibly make any estimation of Lao Dan!”⁵⁴

This last part (8) deserves a more comprehensive discussion. While the reader will recognize that a few phrases both at the beginning and towards the end of the *Shen xian zhuan* text are *verbatim* identical with phrases in the first half of the received *Zhuang zi* passage (marked green), the *Shen xian zhuan* version, in its middle part, seems to be more detailed than the *Zhuang zi*. We may now ask: Is this the result of Ge Hong’s expanding as it were his source text? Is he just using his source as a starting point from which to make something of his own? Or does the *Shen xian zhuan* preserve original *Zhuang zi* sentences that are no longer extant in the received version?

That the latter possibility in fact is the case will become immediately obvious when an explicit *Zhuang zi* quotation to be found in a *lei shu* but partially missing in the received text is taken into account. In the *Yi wen lei ju* we find the following explicit quotation:

⁵⁴ Watson 1968: 163; Romanization adapted to *pinyin*.

Yi wen lei ju (96: 1662)

[莊子]又曰。孔子見老聃歸。三日不談。弟子問曰。夫子見老聃何規哉。子曰。人用意如飛鴻者。為弓弩射之。如遊鹿者。走狗而逐之。若游魚者。釣繖以投之。吾今見龍。合而成體。散而成章。余口張不能喻。舌出不能言。

This may be translated as:

[The *Zhuang zi*] also says: When Confucius had visited Lao Dan and returned, he did not speak for three days. A disciple asked: “Now that [you] Master have seen Lao Dan, what estimation would you make [of him]?” The Master said: “[If] a person is using thinking like a flying wild goose, [I] make a bow or a crossbow and shoot at him; [if a person is thinking] like a roaming deer, letting go a dog [I] pursue him; [if a person is thinking] like a swimming fish, [I use] a hook and line in order to cast for him. Today I saw a dragon — a dragon that coils to show his body at its best, that sprawls out to display his patterns at their best. My mouth gaped so wide I could not inhale; my tongue protruded so far I could not speak.”

Mapping now those characters of this explicit *Zhuang zi* quotation onto *Shen xian zhuan* passage (8) and marking the matching characters on the latter (green), we obtain the following pattern:

Shen xian zhuan (ap. *Tai ping guang ji*)

孔子歸。三日不談。子貢怪而問之。孔子曰：吾見人之用意如飛鳥者。吾飾意以為弓弩射之。未嘗不及而加之也。人之用意如麋鹿者。吾飾意以為走狗而逐之。未嘗不衡而頓之也。人之用意如淵魚者。吾飾意以為鈎繖而投之。未嘗不釣而制之也。至於龍，乘雲氣，遊太清，吾不能逐也。今見老子。其猶龍乎。使吾口張而不能翕。舌出而不能縮。神錯而不知其所居也。

The match cannot be an exact one as both the *Yi wen lei ju* quotation and the *Shen xian zhuan* text – which itself is only extant in fragmentary form – are abridged, though in different ways. However, to some extent, both can be considered complementary and can thus be used to undertake a tentative reconstruction of the pre-Guo Xiang version of this paragraph.

Taking into account all further relevant quotations in various sources (which due to space limitations cannot be presented here but will be discussed in the critical edition of the *Zhuang zi* currently under preparation by this author), the following reconstruction can be suggested (the emended phrases marked yellow):

Zhuang zi textus receptus 14/39.60 (partial)

[...] 孔子見老聃歸，三日不談。弟子問曰：夫子見老聃，亦將何規哉？孔子曰：

吾
乃今於是乎見
龍！龍，合而成體，散而成章，乘雲氣而養乎陰陽。予口張而不能噤，予又何規老聃哉？

Tentative reconstruction of the pericope (partial)

[...] 孔子見老聃歸，三日不談，〔而〕弟子〈賁怪而〉⁵⁵問曰：夫子見老聃，亦得將何規哉？孔子曰：〈吾與汝處於魯之時〉⁵⁶，〈見人之用意如飛鴻者，吾飾意，以爲弓弩射之。未嘗不及，而加之也。人之用意如遊鹿者，吾飾意，以爲走狗，而逐之。未嘗不銜，而頓之也。人之用意如淵魚者，吾飾意，以爲鈎繳，以投之。未嘗不釣，而制之也。至於龍，乘雲氣，遊太清，〉⁵⁷吾〈不能逐也。〉⁵⁸乃今於是乎見〈老子。其猶〉⁵⁹龍〈乎〉。龍，合而成體，散而成章，乘乎雲氣而養乎陰陽。（余）〔予〕口張而不能（噤）〔噤〕，〈舌出，而不能縮。神錯，而不知其所居也。〉⁶⁰予又何規老聃哉？

Translation of the reconstructed pericope:

[...] When Confucius returned from his visit with Lao Dan, he did not speak for three days. His disciple said, “Master, you’ve seen Lao Dan, what estimation would you make of him?” Confucius said, “When I and you stayed in Lu, [I] saw that when someone was thinking like a bird in flight, and I, having necessarily to shoot with an arrow, refurbished my thinking into a bow and shot at him, never have I failed to hit and retrieve him. When I saw that someone was thinking like a deer, I refurbished my thinking into a running dog and pursued him, and never have I failed to catch him. When I saw that someone was thinking like a fish in the deep, I refurbished my thinking into a hook and line and cast for him, and never I have failed to hook him and reel him in. But when it came to a dragon, riding clouds and vapour, roaming about in the Grand Purity empyrean, I was unable to pursue him. Today I saw Laozi, and how a dragon he is! A dragon that coils to show his body at its best, that sprawls out to display his patterns at their best, riding on the breath of the clouds, feeding on the *yin* and *yang*. My mouth fell open and I couldn’t close it; my tongue flew up and I couldn’t even stammer. My spirits were thrown into confusion and did not know where to lodge. How could I possibly make any estimation of Lao Dan!”

55 Emendation according to *Shen xian zhuan* in *Tai ping guang ji* 1: 3.

56 Emendation according to explicit *Zhuang zi* quotation in *Tai ping yu lan* 617.2773a.

57 Emendation according to *Shen xian zhuan* in *Tai ping guang ji* 1: 3.

58 Emendation according to *Shen xian zhuan* in *Tai ping guang ji* 1: 3.

59 Emendation according to *Shen xian zhuan* in *Tai ping guang ji* 1: 3.

60 Emendation according to *Shen xian zhuan* in *Tai ping guang ji* 1: 3.

Quite obviously Ge Hong relied on a pre-Guo Xiang version of the *Zhuang zi*, which still contained this passage that Guo Xiang discarded, and quoted it implicitly. The explicit quotation in the *Yi wen lei ju* confirms this. After collating all available quotations of this passage together with the remnant part in the received *Zhuang zi* it was possible to suggest this tentative reconstruction of the pre-Guo Xiang version.

We now have to come back to the initial passage (1) of the Confucius-Laozi episodes in the *Shen xian zhuan* which we had deferred so far. As it comes at the beginning of a series of seven passages that are, as we have seen, all taken from the *Zhuang zi* it may also be copied from the pre-Guo Xiang *Zhuang zi*. So far, however, no explicit *Zhuang zi* quotation is known that would substantiate this presumption.

On the other hand, Ge Hong indeed took at least part of this passage from an unquoted source the important element of which he also implicitly quoted in his *Bao pu zi nei pian* (7: 139). The same implicit source is also used in Sima Qian's *Shi ji* whose *Laozi Life* contains the following sentences:

Shi ji (63: 2140)

孔子適周，將問禮於老子。老子曰：子所言者，其人與骨皆已朽矣，獨其言在耳。且君子得其時則駕，不得其時則蓬累而行。吾聞之，良賈深藏若虛，君子盛德容貌若愚。去子之驕氣與多欲，態色與淫志，是皆無益於子之身。吾所以告子，若是而已。

William H. Nienhauser, Jr. *et al.*'s translation reads:

Confucius went to Zhou, intending to ask Laozi about the rites. Laozi said: "Those of whom you speak have all already rotted away, both the men and their bones. Only their words are here. Moreover, when a gentleman obtains his season, he will harness his horses. When he does not obtain it, he will move on like tumbleweed rolling in the wind. I have heard that 'an able merchant has the deepest storerooms, but they look empty; a gentleman has the fullest virtue, but he appears foolish.' Cast off your arrogant airs and many desires, sir, your contrived posturing and your overweening ambition. All of these are of no benefit to your person. What I have to tell you is this, and nothing more."

Synopsis of *Shi ji* 63: 2140, *Shen xian zhuan*, *Bao pu zi nei pian* 7: 139

- SJ 孔子 適周，將 問禮於老子。
 SXZ 孔子 (常) (嘗) 往 問禮。 先使子貢觀焉。子貢至，老子告之曰：子之
 BPZ
- SJ 老子 曰：子所言者，其人與骨皆
 SXZ 師名丘。相徒三年，而後可教焉。孔子既見老子。 老子告 曰：
 BPZ
- SJ 已朽矣，獨其言在耳。且君子得其時則駕，不得其時則蓬累而行。吾聞之， 良賈深
 SXZ 良賈深
 BPZ 良賈深
- SJ 藏若虛，君子盛德容貌 若愚。去子之驕氣與多欲， 態色與 淫志，是皆 無益於
 SXZ 藏若虛。君子盛德 若愚。去子之驕氣與多欲 若愚。去子之驕氣與多欲 淫志。是皆 無益於
 BPZ 藏若虛，君子盛德 若愚，去子之驕氣與多慾， 態色與 淫志，是 無益於
- SJ 子 之身。吾所以告子，若是而已。
 SXZ 子也。
 BPZ 子 之身。

The synopsis of the *Shi ji* account and the *Shen xian zhuan* as well as the *Bao pu zi* passage follows (identical characters are marked green):

The *Bao pu zi* version retains both phrases (marked blue in the synopsis) “態色與” (the contrived posturing and) as well as “之身” (the person of) which are missing in the *Shen xian zhuan*, thus enhancing the plausability that Ge Hong has indeed used the *Shi ji* as his source.

As the *Shi ji* elsewhere implicitly quotes the *Zhuang zi*,⁶¹ it remains a possibility that Sima Qian also copied this passage from a (Han times version of) *Zhuang zi*. If this is correct, the initial passage (1), too, was once part and parcel of the *Zhuang zi* as were the subsequent passages (2) to (8).

9 Master Ruo's Life

Among the more than hundred *Zhuang zi* quotations to be found in the *Tai ping yu lan* 太平御覽 a few cannot be located within the received text – they are to be taken as “survivals” of the pre-Guo Xiang version, unless proven otherwise. One example is the following⁶²:

[莊子]又曰：盧敖見若士，深目鳶肩。

⁶¹ Bumbacher 2016: 612.

⁶² *Taiping yulan* 369: 3b; Wang 1994, 3: 1405.

[*Zhuang zi*] also says: “Lu Ao met Master Ruo. [His] eyes were deep set and [his] shoulders [were hunched (?) like those of a] kite.”

However, these phrases can indeed be localized within known works. In fact, they are to be found, again, in Ge Hong's *Shen xian zhuan*. Here they are part of the *life* of Master Ruo 若士. Mapping these phrases on the *Shen xian zhuan vita* of Ruo shi (*Yun ji qi qian* 109: 1b–2b) gives us the following result (the matching characters being marked blue):

若士者，古之仙人也。莫知其姓名。燕人盧敖者，以秦時遊乎北海，經乎太陰，入乎玄闕，至於蒙穀之山。而見若士焉。其為人也。深目而玄準，齷肩而脩頸，豐上而殺下，欣欣然方迎風而舞。顧見盧敖，因遯逃乎碑下。盧仍而視之。方蹠龜殼而食蟹蛤。盧敖乃與之語曰：唯以敖焉，背羣離黨，窮觀六合之外，幼而好遊，長生而不渝，周行四極。唯此極之未窺，今覩夫子於此，殆可與敖為友乎。若士淡然而笑曰：嘻。子中州之民，不宜遠而至此。此猶光乎日月，而載乎列星，比乎不名之地，猶窅奧也。昔我南遊乎岡浪之野，北息乎沉嘿之鄉。西窮窈冥之室，東貫鴻洞之光。其下無地，其上無天，視焉無見，聽焉無聞，其外猶有沃沃之汜。其行一舉而千萬餘里，吾猶未之能究也。今子遊始至於此，乃語窮觀，豈不陋哉。然子處矣。吾與汗漫，期於九陔之上，不可以久駐。乃舉臂竦身，遂入雲中。盧敖仰而視之，不見乃止。恍惚若有所喪也。敖曰：吾比夫子也。猶黃鵠之與壤蟲也。終日行不離咫尺，而自以為之遠，不亦悲哉。

In Campany's translation it reads as follows (the relevant words are marked blue):

Master Ruo was an immortal of ancient [times]. Nobody knows his names. Lu Ao, a native of Yan, during Qin times traveled to Beihai, passed through Grand Yin, entered the Mystic Portal, and arriving at Mount Menggu he saw Master Ruo. As a person, [Master Ruo's] eyes were deep-set, his nose was dark, his shoulders were [hunched?] like those of a kite, and his neck was long, thick at the top and narrow at the bottom. With delight, [the Master] was just starting to greet the wind with a dance when he caught sight of Lu Ao. He fled to a place at the foot of the mountain. When Lu caught sight of him again, Ruo was curling up into a turtle shell and eating clams and crabs. Lu then said to him: “I am Lu Ao. I have turned my back on the common herd and separated myself from the ordinary run of men. I have personally seen things beyond the limits of space. From my youth I have been fond of traveling [in search of] long life and have never swerved. I have travelled out the four bournes, but only here at this remote place have I found my true master. Will you befriend me?” Master Ruo smiled slightly and replied: “My! A man like you from the central provinces by rights ought not have ended up here. [Your boasting] is like trying to outshine the sun and moon combined with the array of stars; how can the places you have been compare with the ones I have seen? I once roamed southward to the wilds of Wangliang; in the north, I rested in the territory of Chenbei; in the west, I penetrated the chamber of darkness; in the east, I passed through the light of Swan Cave. Below these places there is

no Earth, above them no Heaven. Looking, one sees nothing; listening, one hears nothing; and beyond them, there is only a stream of vastness. To go there one must traverse a thousand myriad *li* in one step. I have not yet even begun to figure it out. And yet on arriving here in your travels you at once speak of what you have ‘personally seen’! Isn’t it petty? But stay here, by all means. As for me, I have an appointment to meet Gan Man atop the nine heavens, so I can’t stay any longer!” With that, Ruo raised his arms, levitated, and entered into the clouds. Lu Ao gazed up after him but could not see him, so he quit trying. Dazed, like someone just bereaved, he said: “Compared to the Master, I am like a vile worm next to a yellow swan. I have travelled all my life and not moved of an inch, yet I have deemed it far. Isn’t it sad?”⁶³

Unless evidence for the contrary will be found, the ascription of the quotation to the *Zhuang zi* in the *Tai ping yu lan* has to be accepted. This means that in all likelihood Ge Hong’s *Ruo shi vita* must have been taken from the version of the *Zhuang zi* available to him. It is interesting to note that already Robert F. Campany, although intuitively, came to the conclusion: “The story has the flavor of a *Zhuang zi* tale and may be a passage lost from that text.”⁶⁴ However, Campany has rightly hinted at the fact that this *Life* already occurred in the *Huai nan zi* and in Wang Chong’s 王充 (27–c. 100) *Lun heng* 論衡 (Discourses Weighed in the Balance).⁶⁵ In order to assess the relationship between the three, it may be useful to collate all three versions in a synopsis (*verbatim* identical characters are marked green).

⁶³ Campany 2002: 330–331, modified.

⁶⁴ Campany 2002: 332 n. 156.

⁶⁵ Campany 2002: 331.

Synopsis Shen xian zhuan, Huai nan zi (in comm. San guo zhi), Lun heng

HNZ 盧敖 游乎北海，經乎太陰，
 LH 盧敖 游乎北海，經乎太陰，
 SXZ 若士者，古之仙人也。莫知其姓名。燕人 盧敖者，以秦時 遊乎北海，經乎太陰，

HNZ 入乎玄闕，至於蒙穀之上， 見一士焉， 深目而玄鬢，淚注而
 LH 入乎玄闕，至於蒙穀之上， 見一士焉， 深目而玄準，厲頸而
 SXZ 入乎玄闕，至於蒙穀之山。而 見若士焉。其為人也， 深目而玄準，

HNZ 焉肩， 豐上而殺下，軒軒然方迎風而舞， 顧見盧敖， 慢然下其臂， 遞逃乎
 LH 戴肩， 浮上而殺下，軒軒然方迎風而舞。 顧見盧敖， 樊然下其臂， 遞逃乎
 SXZ 焉肩而脩頸， 豐上而殺下，欣欣然方迎風而舞。 顧見盧敖， 因 遞逃乎

HNZ 碑。 盧 敖 就而 視之， 方倦 龜殼而食蛤梨。 盧敖 與之語曰：
 LH 碑下。 敖 乃 視之， 方卷然 龜背而食合梨。 盧敖仍 與之語曰：吾子
 SXZ 碑下。 盧 仍而 視之。 方蹠 龜殼而食蟹蛤。 盧敖乃 與之語曰：

HNZ 唯 敖為背 羣離黨，窮觀於 六合之外者，非敖而已乎！ 敖 幼而好
 LH 唯以 敖為倍俗，去 羣離黨，窮觀於 六合之外者，非敖而已？ 敖 幼而
 SXZ 唯以 敖焉背 羣離黨，窮觀 六合之外， 幼而好

HNZ 游，至長 不渝， 周行四極，唯北陰之未闕， 今卒 睹夫子於是，子
 LH 游，至長 不倫解， 周行四極，唯北陰之未闕。 今卒 睹夫子於是，
 SXZ 遊，長生而 不渝， 周行四極。唯此極之未窺， 今 觀夫子於此，

HNZ 殆可與敖為友乎！ 若士者 齷然而笑曰：嘻！子中州之民， 寧肯而遠 至此？
 LH 殆可與敖為友乎？ 若士者 悖然而笑曰：嘻！子中州之民也， 不宜 遠 至此。
 SXZ 殆可與敖為友乎。 若士 淡然而笑曰：嘻！子中州之民， 不宜 遠而 至此。

HNZ 此猶光乎 日月，而載 列星，陰陽之所行， 四時之所生，
 LH 此猶光乎 日月，而載 列星， 四時之所行，陰陽之所生也。此
 SXZ 此猶光乎 日月，而載乎 列星，

HNZ 其 比夫不名之地，猶突奧也。若我南游乎岡浪之野，北息乎沈墨之鄉，西窮
 LH 其 比夫不名之地，猶突帆也。若我南遊乎岡浪之野，北息乎沈蕘之鄉，西窮乎
 SXZ 比乎不名之地，猶突奧也。昔我南遊乎岡浪之野，北息乎沉囁之鄉。西窮

HNZ 官冥之黨， 東開鴻濛之先，此 其下無地而 上無天，聽焉無聞， 視焉
 LH 杳冥之黨，而 東貫鴻濛之先。此 其下無地 上無天，聽焉無聞，而 視焉
 SXZ 窈冥之室， 東貫鴻濛之光。 其下無地，其 上無天， 視焉

HNZ 無矚， 此 其外猶有 汰沃之汜，其 餘 一舉而
 LH 則營； 此 其外猶有狀，有狀之 餘， 一舉而能
 SXZ 無見，聽焉無聞， 其外猶有 沃沃之汜。其 行 一舉而

HNZ 千萬里，吾猶未 能之在。今子游始 於此，乃語窮觀，豈不亦 遠哉！然子處
 LH 千萬里，吾猶未 能之在。今子游始至 於此，乃語窮觀，豈不亦 遠哉？然子處
 SXZ 千萬餘里，吾猶未之 能究也。今子遊始至 於此，乃語窮觀，豈不 陋哉。然子處

HNZ 矣，吾與汗漫，期于九垓之外，吾 不可以久駐。 若士 舉臂而竦身，遂入雲
 LH 矣。吾與汗漫，期於九垓之上，吾 不可久。 若士者 舉臂而縱身，遂入雲
 SXZ 矣。吾與汗漫，期於九垓之上， 不可以久駐。乃 舉臂 竦身，遂入雲

HNZ 中。盧敖 仰而視之，弗見，乃止 駕， 桮治，悖 若有 喪也。
 LH 中。盧敖目 仰而視之，不見，乃止 喜，心 不怠，悵 若有 喪，
 SXZ 中。盧敖 仰而視之，不見，乃止。 恍惚 若有所 喪也。敖

HNZ 曰：吾比夫子， 猶黃鵠， 與壤蟲也， 終日行， 不離咫尺，而自以為
 LH 曰：吾比夫子也， 猶黃鵠之， 與壤蟲也， 終日行， 而 不離咫尺，而自以為
 SXZ 曰：吾比夫子也， 猶黃鵠之， 與壤蟲也， 終日行， 不離咫尺，而自以為之

HNZ 遠，豈不 悲哉！
 LH 遠，豈不 悲哉？
 SXZ 遠，不亦 悲哉。

Note that the first sentences (put into boxes) may be from Ge Hong's editorial hand, inserted to let the story fit into the genre of the *Shen xian zhuan*, as was already the case in Guangchengzi's *Life* (see above). Apart from this, it is immediately evident that, for the most part, all three versions are virtually identical (marked green) – once more, the discussion of variant characters will be provided elsewhere. If the *Tai ping yu lan*'s attribution of the quotation to the *Zhuang zi* is correct – and so far no evidence for the contrary is found – then this example again confirms that Ge Hong must have relied on a pre-Guo Xiang version of the *Zhuang zi* which, due to the implicit quotations of the *Huai nan zi* and the *Lun heng*, can be traced to the Former Han dynasty. Or, to put it the other way, we have here just another part of the *Zhuang zi* which for some reason has been discarded by Guo Xiang.

10 Conclusion

As the text examples presented in this article should have made evident, Ge Hong without any doubt has had a version of the *Zhuang zi* at his disposal that was not affected by Guo Xiang's editorial activity. Most likely this was a version standing in the Liu Xiang tradition. Accordingly, it still contained pericopes, part of pericopes, phrases, and characters that were either deliberately cut out by Guo Xiang or, if they were retained by Guo Xiang, were lost during the subsequent transmission of the text. The systematic investigation of Ge Hong's works thus revealed a Guangchengzi pericope and a Ruo *shi* pericope as well as lost parts of the pericopes dealing with Confucius' meetings with Laozi as remnants of a pre-Guo Xiang version of the *Zhuang zi*.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the presented evidence is that those parts whose received *Zhuang zi* versions agree *verbatim* with the *Shen xian zhuan* can be taken as unchanged by Guo Xiang and thus most probably representing the Han state of the text, too.

Ge Hong's own editorial interference with his source seems to have been mostly restricted to adding initial phrases to some pericopes he included in his *Shen xian zhuan* to make them compatible with the form of the *zhuan* or *Life* genre and to occasionally inserting additional phrases to make the point more explicit. On the other hand, we have also seen that the *Shen xian zhuan* as a source of quotations from other works has to be handled with care due to its own problematic transmission.

Finally, the suggested strategy of systematically examining texts composed during the Later Han and subsequent dynasties as possible sources of lost *Zhuang zi* parts has thus been validated in the case of Ge Hong's works.

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