
The Relationship between the *Zhou xun* 周訓 and *Lüshi chungiu* 呂氏春秋 in the Context of the Late Warring States Period*

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In this article, I compare two lengthy parallel anecdotes found in the newly discovered manuscript *Zhou xun* 周訓 and the philosophical compendium from the late Zhangguo period, *Lüshi chungiu* 呂氏春秋. Based on this comparison, I argue that the authors of the *Lüshi chungiu* borrowed from the *Zhou xun*. The techniques employed in incorporating the borrowed materials into the respective chapters proved to be virtually identical. Given that the materials under consideration appear in different parts of the *Lüshi chungiu*—the relation, the time and the order of composition of which have been the subject of long debates—the present study promises to help us gain a better understanding of the process and principles of its creation. Moreover, I discuss the appearance of the main protagonist of the *Zhou xun*, Lord Zhaowen of Zhou 周昭文君 (4th c. BC), in the *Lüshi chungiu*. In some chapters, he is portrayed as a ruler who acquired considerable fame among his contemporaries. Especially in the state of Qin, his renown was said to have culminated in his recognition as “teacher” (*shi* 師) by King Hui(wen) of Qin 秦惠(文)王 (356–311 BC, r. 338–311 BC). In view of these attempts to establish the (historically unlikely) close ties between Lord Zhaowen (and his teachings) and the state of Qin, in the concluding part of this paper, I conjecture in regard to the place of origin of the *Zhou xun*.

Keywords: *Zhou xun*, *Lüshi chungiu*, Zhou Dynasty, the State of Qin, anecdotes

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Introduction

This article examines the relationship between the newly discovered manuscript *Zhou xun* 周訓 (訓) or *Instructions of the Zhou* and the comprehensive philosophical compendium *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Annals of Lü Buwei) from the last decades before the unification of China under the Qin 秦 in 221 BC. The direct parallels between the two works involve two lengthy anecdotes which show such a high degree of similarity that it necessitates a clarification of the direction of borrowing between them. Although the relevant parts of the *Zhou xun* were already tentatively determined as predating the *Lüshi chunqiu*, this assumption was based on the two texts' common "Daoist" traits, their general structure, and Lü Buwei's 呂不韋 (d. 235 BC) personal connection to the supposed place of origin of the *Zhou xun*.¹

However, some of these features, such as their calendrical structure, are common to a number of early Chinese texts, while others, such as the "Daoist" traits of the *Zhou xun*² and its place of origin, are by no means obvious. Therefore, a careful analysis of the two textual parallels is in order. The fact that the main protagonist of the *Zhou xun*, Lord Zhaowen of Zhou 周昭文公 (4th c. BC), plays a prominent role in the *Lüshi chunqiu* has to be considered as well. In addition to clarifying the textual links between the *Zhou xun* and *Lüshi chunqiu*, this investigation attempts to view them in the context of the relationship between the two states they are associated with, namely the Zhou 周 and Qin 秦.

I. The *Zhou xun* 周訓

The *Zhou xun* is part of the Peking University collection (*Beijing daxue cang Xi-Han zhushu* 北京大學藏西漢竹書), a group of bamboo-strip manuscripts dated to the Western Han and donated to Peking University in 2009.³ Being illegally retrieved by a private party, the circumstances of their

- 1 Han Wei 韓巍, "Xi-Han zhushu *Zhou xun* ruogan wenti de tantao" 西漢竹書《周訓》若干問題的探討, in *Beijing daxue cang Xi-Han zhushu. San* 北京大學藏西漢竹書·叁, ed. Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學出土文獻研究所 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015), 278.
- 2 Andrej Feč, "The *Zhou xun* 周訓 and 'Elevating the Worthy' (*shang xian* 尚賢)," *Early China* 41 (2018): 176–77.
- 3 Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yanjiusuo, "Beijing daxue cang Xi-Han zhushu gaishuo" 北京大學藏西漢竹書概說, *Wenwu* 文物 (2011.6): 49–56, 98.