

Preface

This work has been a long time in the making — almost 25 years. There have been periods of concentrated activity interspersed with temporary diversions to other (but often related) projects. Along the way, various people have made significant contributions. As far as memory allows, they will be mentioned in this preface. The work actually began with a dissertation for a Master's degree in philosophy at the University of New England, submitted in 1995. The title was “The Dialecticians of the Pre-Qin Period” and it included translations and analyses of the *Gongsun Longzi*, the paradoxes of Hui Shi and the dialectical chapters of the *Mozhi* (Canons and Explanations A and B 經上, 經下, 經說上, 經說下 and the Greater and Lesser Choosings 大取, 小取). On the last, resolutely opaque writings, I think Y. P. Mei's description in the preface to his *Ethical and Political Works of Motse* is appropriate. He writes: “Regarding the former group (i.e. the dialectical chapters), besides the unsettled question as to their respective authorship, the few pages probably make the hardest reading in the whole body of ancient Chinese literature.” My supervisor then was Peter Forrest and I remain grateful to him for accepting such an esoteric topic in a department devoted to Western philosophy. I am also grateful to Karen Lai, a significant contributor to the literature on early Chinese philosophy, who acted as an external examiner. Her comments and encouragement were much appreciated. Looking back now, I am embarrassed by how rudimentary the translations were — but at least they were a start, and my fascination with these difficult chapters has remained.

I then became very interested in the detailed work of Tan Jiefu on the Later Mohist chapters. On the basis of this, I subsequently produced an upgraded version of the translation of the “Daqu” and “Xiaoqu” which Chung-ying Cheng, after some discussion, was kind enough to publish in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. Something of a watershed in these studies then came in 2003 when I was invited to give a workshop on my translations

of the Mingjia and Later Mohist texts at the Needham Research Institute in Cambridge. This was organised by Geoffrey Lloyd, Christopher Cullen and Sue Bennett and attended also by Timothy Barrett, Anne Cheng, Michael Loewe, John Moffett, Jean-Paul Reding, Roel Sterckx, Kim Taylor and Paul Thompson. I am very grateful to all those named, each of whom contributed to the development of my studies. One immediate product of the workshop was a new translation of the *Gongsun Longzi* published in 2004 in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, a fitting repository in that I was greatly influenced by the excellent earlier article (1997) in that journal by its long-time editor, the aforementioned Chung-ying Cheng. The Cambridge workshop was, however, also responsible for the first of two major diversions. While there, I realised that if I were to achieve a better understanding of what the Later Mohists were attempting to do, I would need to increase my understanding of the doctrines of Mo Zi himself and whatever the “Early” Mohists had contributed to the eponymous work. This resulted in my producing a complete translation of the *Mozi* (2010), which needless to say took some time.

The second diversion followed hard on the heels of the first when the then director of The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, Steven Luk, asked me to prepare a bilingual version of the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* (2012) for the Press. I decided to include with these the commentaries of Zheng Xuan and Zhu Xi in full. Of course, this too was time-consuming, but brought one major benefit. It signalled the beginning of my ongoing collaboration with Wang Ping, who was then teaching in the Chinese Department at the University of New South Wales. I first met Ping when, on the advice of a friend, I asked her to join me in a reading of some of my translations of early Chinese poetry at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, which was at the time hosting an exhibition, “China’s Entombed Warriors.” I cannot overstate how grateful I have been for her collaboration, then and now. Not only has the collaboration itself been very harmonious and fruitful, but we have also become firm friends.

The next fortunate occurrence was the invitation to both of us to present papers at the 2014 workshop on the *Gongsun Longzi* and related texts, organised at the University of Zurich by Wolfgang Behr, Lisa Indracollo and Rafael Suter. This was attended by a number of notable scholars on the subject: Feng Yiu-ming, Thierry Lucas, Bo Miu, Ernst-Joachim Vierheller, Liu Tisheng, Jiang Xiangdong, Zhou Changzhong, Dennis Schilling and Lukáš Zádřapp. Over a lifetime of attending academic meetings on various matters, I can truly say none was more enjoyable and stimulating than this one. Indeed, it was this meeting and the preparation for it that set in motion

a period of concentrated work on the texts, which finally got us over the line as far as the present volume is concerned.

A number of people whom I have met only through their writings but have been particularly influential must also be mentioned. In Western languages, there is the early work of Alfred Forke and more recently that of the late A. C. Graham and Chad Hansen, while in relation to “Daqu” and “Xiaoqu” there are the important articles by D. C. Lau and Dan Robins. In Chinese, Tan Jiefu particularly and also Hu Shi and Wu Yujiang have been of great importance. Last, and perhaps most of all, we are indebted to Wu Feibai, to whom the present volume is dedicated in honour of his outstanding work on the subject, *Zhongguo Gu Mingjia Yan* 中國古名家言 — a nonpareil, and in fact something of a blueprint, as it were, for our own book. Although the latter inevitably falls short of his unreachable standard, we hope it may be of some use to scholars interested in the Mingjia and the subjects they focussed on, who might benefit from having the relevant writings in a bilingual format collected in a single volume.

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