The Zuozhuan Account
of the Death of King Zhao of Chu and Its Sources

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The Zuozhuan Account of the Death of King Zhao of Chu and Its Sources

Jens Østergaard Petersen

Introduction

During recent decades, considerable advances have been made in the study of the form of Zuozhuan左傳 narrative;1 studies of the ideological contents of Zuozhuan have appeared as well.2 In these studies hypotheses on the sources of Zuozhuan are advanced, new methodological perspectives being applied to the centuries-long debate about the authenticity and date of this text. Though highly suggestive, these hypotheses have generally been of an indirect nature, interpretations of the literary form and ideological contents of Zuozhuan serving as point of departure for inferences about which material might have been used to compose this text. I will not here undertake an appraisal of these contributions, but instead examine the relationship between a single Zuozhuan entry and its parallels in the early literature, in the hope that an approach to the question of the origins of Zuozhuan can be developed which builds on the principles of textual criticism.

The methodological issues I wish to raise can be addressed by considering the opposite stands on the Zuozhuan taken by two modern Chinese scholars, Liu Zhenghao 劉正浩 and Xu Renfu 徐仁甫.

Liu Zhenghao is interested in how paraphrases of Zuozhuan passages in later literature can be interpreted as glosses on Zuozhuan expressions. Liu has collected most existing parallels to Zuozhuan accounts in Han and pre-Han texts, holding that these in each and every case used Zuozhuan as source, and that the way they paraphrase the Zuozhuan text reflects their understanding of this classic, an understanding that is valuable since it predates the commentaries.3 It is difficult to gauge to what extent this way of looking at the relationship between Zuo-

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3 Liu Zhenghao 劉正浩, “Taishigong Zuoshi Chunqiu yi shu” 太史公左氏春秋義述, Taiwan Shengli Shifan Daxue guowen yanjiu jikan 臺灣省立師範大學國文研究集刊 6 (1962), 259-425; Zhou Qin zhuzi shu...
and its parallels is shared by present-day Sinologists, but (excepting the Guoyu 國語, which is special and which Liu does not treat), it is probably the prevalent view that parallels to Zuozhuan accounts in texts which manifestly are later than Zuozhuan derive from Zuozhuan. However, if one holds that the Zuozhuan author based himself to a considerable extent on pre-existing material, being patently unable to produce ab novo his voluminous work, one can hardly agree with Liu without committing oneself to the view that all the texts used in this way by the Zuozhuan author simply vanished after the Zuozhuan had been completed, leaving no other trace in the transmitted literature. This does not appear plausible, for while it is often the case that a popular anthology may squeeze out of existence the texts it derives from, there is no evidence that Zuozhuan was widely circulated before the Eastern Han. I think we would be wrong in ruling out the possibility that part of the material utilised by the Zuozhuan author has survived, however circuitously, by being rendered in texts other than Zuozhuan, text that are perhaps transmitted to this day. A number of the parallels collected by Liu may thus render, more or less directly, the material used to compose the Zuozhuan, not the Zuozhuan itself.

Xu Renfu, working with basically the same material as Liu Zhenghao, holds that Zuozhuan is a late Western Han forgery and that it draws to a large extent on texts transmitted to this day (including the Shiji 史記). Xu’s arguments mostly consist in the claim that the Zuozhuan is stylistically superior to its parallels and that it would be strange if the often inept parallels should derive from Zuozhuan. This is not very convincing, since this “argument” relies solely on the very weak postulate that no one would ever adapt a Zuozhuan passage and produce a version which lacked the dense textual qualities that Zuozhuan is generally admired for. Be that as it may — I do think that Xu Renfu may now and then have a point, especially when he calls attention to structural differences between the Zuozhuan and the parallel accounts, some of which are indeed difficult to see occurring in the direction from Zuozhuan to the parallels, and that some of his claims therefore merit closer scrutiny. Xu Renfu builds on the (almost) universally discredited idea that Zuozhuan is a forgery perpetrated by Liu Xin 劉歆, which means that practically no present-day Sinologists would agree with him. With our knowledge of the date of compilation of the texts involved (shaky as it may be in part), the influence from parallel accounts on Zuozhuan can, at the most, be indirect (excepting, of course,
quotations from Shi 詩, Shu 書 and so on). That is, it might be worthwhile examining whether some of the texts Xu Renfu regards as sources of Zuozhuan do not derive from some of the many texts that are held to have served Zuozhuan as sources.

For all their differences, Liu Zhenghao and Xu Renfu share one basic assumption, namely that only two groups of texts can have interacted, Zuozhuan and the extant texts that contain parallels to Zuozhuan accounts: either Zuozhuan was copied by its parallels (Liu’s position) or Zuozhuan was copied from its parallels (Xu’s position).

Behind this lies the assumption that, basically speaking, the same texts were available to a Han or pre-Han person that are available to us today. This, of course, contradicts all we know about the transmission of early Chinese texts, knowledge which has been radicalised by archaeological finds in recent decades. We have learnt to expect that modern (that is, post-Western Han) editions of texts differ significantly from the editions that circulated in Western Han and pre-Han times. Basically, when confronted with a transmitted text hailing from early times, we would do best to regard it as testimony to its early state, not as a faithful reflection of it. We also now know that it makes little sense to discuss textual interaction in Han and pre-Han times on the assumption that we have even moderately adequate knowledge about which texts were available to persons living then. Every text implicates a wealth of other texts, with which it interacted in various ways, and every text transmitted to us has its prehistory.

With all the uncertainty this implies, we have to consider the possibility that texts existed which are unknown to us and to constantly bear in mind that all texts with which we are acquainted were different, in ways we can only attempt to reconstruct, in pre-modern times. The dilemma posed by the positions of Liu Zhenghao and Xu Renfu can perhaps be solved if we admit the possibility of influence on Zuozhuan by such “unknown sources,” but the challenge is to do so in a way, which always builds on the evidence of extant texts and proceeds by transparent arguments.

A model for this is furnished by the practices and insights developed in textual criticism. In short, if we wish to argue that a certain source was used by the Zuozhuan author, we have to reconstruct it first, for we cannot inspect it directly. In order to reconstruct an edition of a text which is closer to the original than the editions at hand, one compares these and attempts to explain them as testimony to an edition upon which they all are based, directly or indirectly. The same approach can be applied to different versions of the same account, such as, e.g., stories paralleled in the early literature.

The point is that in order to explain the early forms of a certain story, we have to explain the whole set of extant versions of this story, to account for all their similarities and all the peculiarities. If one compares, as Liu Zhenghao and Xu Renfu are wont to, one Zuozhuan

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5 The aim of the present study is not to determine the absolute dates of the texts concerned, but to establish influences on Zuozhuan of archetypes of parallels to Zuozhuan; all of these parallels are contained in texts which I hold to have been compiled after Zuozhuan was compiled.
account with one parallel, there is very little one can say with any degree of certainty about the filiation of the two accounts, except, in the manner of Xu Renfn, that one feels that one is more "developed" than the other. If no external evidence is at hand, it is very difficult to establish the relationship between two texts (or two versions of the same story). When more than two texts are concerned, however, one can argue that a peculiarity shared by two versions against a third testifies to a common ancestry for the two against the third (or that contamination is at issue).

If we regard the case of the relationship between Zuozhuan and Shiji as basically closed, the early text that contains the largest overlap with Zuozhuan is Guoyu. This is not the place to rehearse the centuries-long discussion about the relationship between these two texts; I will only note that one of the major reasons why the discussion of this topic is often quite inconclusive is that the larger part of the parallels between Zuozhuan and Guoyu are particular to these two texts, making the "triangulation" often necessary for studies of textual filiation impossible.

When a reconstruction of this kind is performed, certain features of the editions/versions at hand are explained by hypothesising that editions/versions that we may not possess, had certain features. Such features can be quite abstract in nature; it is thus not a question, in the case at hand, of reconstructing the material used by the Zuozhuan author verbissima verbis, surely an impossible task, but to attempt to deduce whether or not the source in question had certain characteristics — had a certain narrative progression, mentioned certain persons, used a word within a certain range of words, and so on.

I wish here to discuss a Zuozhuan account with a fairly large number of parallels in the extant sources, to examine these in order to reconstruct some features of the version from which I deem that they all ultimately derive and to explore how the Zuozhuan account may be considered an adaptation of this. Several clusters of parallels exist that make possible this kind of argument; I have here chosen the two didactic stories which occur in the account of the death of King Zhao of Chu 楚昭王 (515-489), recounted in Zuozhuan under the sixth year of Duke Ai of Lu 鲁哀公, mainly on account of the relatively few challenges they pose to the conventional understanding of the role of the Zuozhuan author as an historian. In subsequent

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6 That the Shiji derives a considerable amount of material from the Zuozhuan has been shown by Bernhard Karlgren, "On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan," Göteborgs Högskolas årsskrift 32 (1926); Kamata Tadashi 鎌田正, Saden no seirisstu to sono tenkai 左傳の成立と其の展開 (Tokyo: Taishukan, 1963), pp. 110-175; and Yoshimoto Michimasa 吉本道雅, "Sashi tangen josetsu" 左氏探源序説, Tokhakku 東方學 81 (1991), pp. 1-12.

instalments, I will treat the story about Jin’s conquest of Guo and Yu (Zuozhuan Xi 2), the story about Qi Xi and his recommendations (Zuozhuan Xiang 3), and the story about the floods in Song (Zuozhuan Zhuang 11).

My argument emphatically does not concern all of the sources that the Zuozhuan appears to have had, only a small — and, I admit, from a certain point of view, insignificant — part, namely the didactic stories that Zuozhuan abounds in. Zuozhuan, e.g., derives a wealth of information from chronicles, broadly speaking, and any general study of the sources of Zuozhuan that failed to examine these would be seriously defective. However, since we have no texts that belong in this category with which we can compare Zuozhuan, arguments concerning its dependence upon these must resort to indirect evidence and often reach but vague conclusions. In this situation, it is perhaps instructive to study in detail Zuozhuan’s didactic stories, since we here often have the material requisite upon which to build arguments of a textual nature. If we gain some insight into the way the Zuozhuan author worked with these sources, perhaps our understanding of the weightier parts of Zuozhuan will also be furthered.

Arguments about textual variants and lineation are notoriously difficult to follow. The two stories I discuss will be rendered integrally in their Shuoyuan 說苑, Zuozhuan and Shi ji versions when these are taken up for discussion, but in order to make it possible to gain a synoptic view of the issues involved, all texts discussed are presented in an interlinear format in the appendix.

In this paper I advance two kinds of argument. In one kind I attempt to establish that the Shuoyuan version of the stories about King Zhao of Chu comes close to the source used by the Zuozhuan author in his rendition of these stories. In another kind of argument, I examine the probable origins of the parts of the Zuozhuan rendition that are not paralleled in the extant literature and attempt to explain how the Zuozhuan narrative came to include these elements and why it has the form it has; here I attempt to fathom which concerns motivated the Zuozhuan author when he formed his account. The arguments which seek to establish that the Zuozhuan is based on a version of the story close to that found in Shuoyuan can stand alone and do not depend on those of the second kind, but they gain in interest, I think, if it can be explained how and why the Zuozhuan account came into existence — even though arguments of the latter kind

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11 This format makes possible a consecutive reading of the Shuoyuan (SY/B, SY/A), Zuozhuan (ZZ/B), Han Shi waizhuan 韓詩外傳 (HSWZ) and Kongzi jiayu 孔子家語 (KZJY) versions of the stories; since the Shi ji version is differently structured, one has to follow the SJ/A to SJ/D sequence to read the Shi ji version consecutively (the same applies to Lienzi zhuan 列女傳 [NLZ], which follows Shi ji).
are necessarily more uncertain than arguments of the first kind. The first kind of argument is predominantly found in the first part of the paper, whereas the second kind dominates towards the end.

The Shuoyuan, Zuozhuan and Shiji versions of the stories about King Zhao of Chu

In Shuoyuan two consecutive stories recount how King Zhao of Chu reacted when he was confronted with adverse auguries. One is about a disease which was said to be inflicted upon the king by the Yellow River and one is about some strange clouds which were alleged to portend the king's imminent illness. On both occasions masters in the arts of augury were consulted, but the king rejected their interpretations and recommendations, arguing that they were implausible and useless. The king was advised to unload his guilt by making offerings to gods outside his own territory and by sacrificing his ministers, but he refused to do so.

Both stories are paralleled in Zuozhuan and Shiji. I shall argue that the Shuoyuan version of the stories is independent of the Zuozhuan and Shiji versions and that the Shuoyuan version probably approximates the source utilised to compose the Zuozhuan version. The Shiji version I hold to be a conflation of the Zuozhuan version and a version close to that found in Shuoyuan.

The Shuoyuan version of the story about the strange clouds and the story about the Yellow River

The first Shuoyuan story (SY/A) begins by stating that King Zhao was ill and that when cracks were read to divine the reason for this, the illness was found to be caused by the Yellow River. The court grandees requested that a sacrifice be made to the river, but the king protested, upholding the principle that feudal lords should only sacrifice to nature deities resident within their own domains and that both good and ill fortune could befall him only from the rivers of his native Chu. Consequently, he did not bring offerings. Upon hearing of this Confucius praised him for "knowing the Way of Heaven" and declared that it was befitting that the king did not lose his state.

楚昭王有疾。卜之，曰。「河為祟。」大夫請用三牲焉。王曰。「止。古者先王。割地制土。祭不過望。江、漢、睢、漳。楚之望也。禍福之至。不是過也。不穀難不德。河非所獲罪也。」遂不祭焉。仲尼聞之。曰。「昭王可謂知天道矣。其不失國。宜哉。」

King Zhao of Chu fell ill. A divination was performed about this, and it said: "The spirit of the Yellow River is causing disaster." The court officers asked permission to offer a sacrifice with beef, mutton and pork to the River. The king said, "Stop! In ancient times when the former
kings carved up the land and conferred fiefs, [it was decreed that] sacrifices were not to go beyond the Wang. The Jiang, Han, Sui and Zhang Rivers are the Wang of Chu. Calamity or prosperity do not come from beyond these. Though I am deficient in virtue, it is not the Yellow River that I have offended.” Accordingly, he did not sacrifice to it. When Zhongni heard of this, he said, “King Zhao may be said to have known the Way of Heaven! That he did not lose his state was indeed fitting!”

The second Shuoyuan story (SY/B) tells how in the time of King Zhao some bird-like clouds surrounded the sun for three days. Worried by this the king sent someone by coach to ask the Grand Scribe Zhouli 太史州黎 what the clouds portended. The Grand Scribe replied that illness would be visited upon the king, but that he could avoid this by sacrificing his ministers and generals. Upon hearing of this, the king’s ministers and generals prepared to offer themselves in sacrifice, but the king stopped them, declaring that his own relation to the state of Chu was like that of the relation of the abdomen to the body as a whole and that the relation of his ministers and generals to the state of Chu was like that of the relation of the limbs to the body as a whole — if one were to move a disease from the abdomen to the limbs, the body as a whole would still be ill, and it would therefore be of no avail for his ministers and generals to sacrifice themselves.

楚昭王之時。有雲如飛鳥。夾日而飛。三日。昭王患之。使人乘駟。東而問諸太史州黎。州黎曰。「將虜於王身。以令尹。司馬。說焉。則可。」令尹。司馬聞之。宿齋沐浴。將自以身禱之焉。王曰。「止。楚國之有不穀也。由身之有匈霑也。匈霑有疾。轉之股肱。庸為去是人也。」

In the time of King Zhao of Chu there were some clouds which resembled flying birds; they flew on both sides of the sun for three days. King Zhao was worried about this. He sent someone to ride eastwards in a postal relay coach to ask the Grand Scribe Zhouli about it. Zhouli said, “Illness will be visited upon the king himself. If he absolves himself from calamity by sacrificing the chief minister and the grand marshal, he will be fine.” The chief minister and the grand marshal heard of this and fasted and cleansed themselves, preparing to sacrifice themselves to it. The king said, "Halt! That Chu has me is like the body having an abdomen. If there is illness in the abdomen, how can the illness be said to have left the body if it has been transferred to the limbs?"
Both stories feature two related themes. One theme is the king’s rejection of mantic advice, a rejection which in the first story is identified with his adherence to a higher principle. The other theme (more important, I believe) is the king’s refusal to assign the blame for whatever is wrong to something/someone else, in this case the “foreign” Yellow River and his ministers and generals.

In *Shuoyuan* the two stories appear to be independent in all respects. Though they presumably occur together because of their identical theme and identical main protagonist, they are not intermeshed in any way, and if one were to judge from *Shuoyuan* alone, one might well imagine that they had been brought together for the first time by the *Shuoyuan* compiler. Since, however, *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* also render the stories in conjunction, they evidently belonged together before *Shuoyuan* was compiled.

The *Zuozhuan* account of the events leading up to the king’s death

In *Zuozhuan*, the two stories are told after an account of how King Zhao died in 489 while fighting Wu in aid of Chen (*ZZ*/B1-7), and after an account of how the king’s brothers placed one of the king’s sons on the throne (*ZZ*/B8-11).

The first account tells of the Chu preparations for the campaign against Wu and it also centres around the taking of auguries (*ZZ*/B2-7). Cracks were first read to tell whether the king should engage his army in battle, the answer being that this would be inauspicious; cracks were then read to tell whether the king should retreat, the answer again being that this would be inauspicious. The king then exclaimed that he would rather die than lead his army into defeat again (he did so in 506, in the battle at Boju 柏舉), just as he would rather die than flee the enemy or turn down an ally.

This story is evidenced only in *Zuozhuan*.

秋。七月。楚子在城父。將救陳。卜戰。不吉。卜退。不吉。王曰。「然則死也。再敗楚師。不如死。棄盟逃饑。亦不如死。死一也。其死饑乎。」

In autumn, in the seventh month, the Viscount of Chu was in Chengfu, preparing to aid Chen. He consulted the tortoise-shell about entering battle, and it was inauspicious. He consulted it about retreating, and it was inauspicious. The king said, “Well, then I am bound to die! It is...
better to die than to cause the defeat of the army of Chu once again. It is also better to die than to cast aside our covenant and flee from the enemy. The dying is the same, so let me die at the hands of the enemy!

After the story about the auguries taken by the king in order to determine whether he should engage in battle, Zuozhuan relates the second extra account (ZZJB8-11), which tells how the king bequeathed the throne to Gongzi Shen (also known as Zixi 子西), who refused the honour, then to Gongzi Jie (公子結), who likewise declined, and then to Gongzi Qi (公子啟), who accepted only after having refused five times. The three were, as we learn elsewhere in Zuozhuan, elder brothers of King Zhao.13

Just prior to joining the Wu forces in battle the king fell ill. He then led the Chu army in an attack on the Wu forces at Daming 大冥, but died at Chengfu 城父. Following its notice about the king’s death, Zuozhuan tells how Gongzi Qi withdrew the Chu army from battle in order to install Zhang 章, son of King Zhao by a consort from Yue, in his own place. Having accomplished this, Gongzi Qi then returned to the battlefield, presumably to continue the campaign against Wu (Zuozhuan curiously does not inform us about the outcome of the battle).

This story is also evidenced in Shiji and Lienü zhuan, but, as I shall attempt to show, the Lienü zhuan version of this story derives from Shiji and the Shiji version from Zuozhuan. The Zuozhuan version reads:

He charged Gongzi Shen (Zixi) with being king, but he refused. Next he charged Gongzi Jie (Ziqi), but he also refused. Then he charged Gongzi Qi (Zilü), who refused five times, after which he accepted. When they were about to fight, the king fell ill. On the gengyin day King Zhao attacked Daming. He died in Chengfu. Zilü retreated, saying, “Our king has abdicated to us subjects, discarding his own son. Dare we forget [the words of] our ruler? To follow his charge is to obey, but to appoint a ruler’s son is likewise to obey. Neither of the two obediences may be neglected.” He took counsel with Zixi and Ziqi, concealed

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the army and shut up all roads, encountering Zhang, [the king’s son] by a woman of Yue, and appointed him king, only then returning [to the army].

The king has died and his successor has been found — after these key historical events have been recounted, Zuozhuan presents the stories concerning the strange clouds (ZZ/B12-19) and the Yellow River (ZZ/B20-24), stories which conclude with Confucius’ paean to the king (ZZ/B25-30).

In Zuozhuan, the first story is placed in the same year as the king’s death by being introduced by ‘是岁’, whereas the second story is placed in the indefinite past (presumably before the year of the king’s death) by being introduced by ‘初’ ‘是岁’ refers in concrete terms to the king’s stay at Chengfu which is noted in Zuozhuan, commenting on Chunqiu 春秋, to have begun in spring (CQ/A). By appending these flash-backs to the basic historical narrative, culminating in Confucius’ appreciation of the king, the Zuozhuan author in effect presents an obituary of the king.  

In this year, there were clouds like a multitude of crimson birds flying on both sides of the sun; this lasted for three days. The viscount of Chu sent someone to enquire of the Grand Scribe of Zhou about it. The Grand Scribe of Zhou said, “This applies to the person of the king! If he offers a deprecatory sacrifice to it, [the evil] may be moved to the chief minister and the grand marshal.” The king said, “Of what use would it be to remove a disease threatening the heart and lay it upon the limbs? If I have not committed grave errors, would Heaven cause me to die before my time? If I am guilty, I must receive my penalty; whereto should I move [my illness]?” Accordingly, he would not sacrifice.

See also Eric Henry, “‘Junzi Yue’ Versus ‘Zhongni Yue’ in Zuozhuan,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 59 (1999), pp. 141-142, for a discussion of this passage.
Before this, King Zhao had been ill, and the tortoise-shell was consulted; it said: “God of the Yellow River is causing disaster.” The king did not sacrifice to it; and when his great officers begged him to sacrifice to it at the border altar, he said, “According to the sacrifices commanded by the three dynasties, sacrifices were not to go beyond the Wang. The Jiang, Han, Ju, and Zhang Rivers are the Wang of Chu. Calamity or prosperity does not come from beyond these. Although I am deficient in virtue, it is not the Yellow River that I have offended.” Accordingly, he would not sacrifice. Kong Zi said, “King Zhao of Chu knew the Great Way. That he did not lose his state was indeed fitting! The Xia shu says, ‘That Tao Tang! He followed the constant rules of Heaven and so came to possess this land of Ji. Now his conduct has been abandoned [by his descendants], and his framework of order has been thrown into confusion, and thus it has been destroyed.’ It also says, ‘If you give away something, you will have that same thing.’ When a person observes the constant rules of his own volition, he may be pronounced capable!”

The narrative integration of the stories in Shiji and Zuozhuan

In Shiji (SJ/A-D) the stories about the strange clouds and the Yellow River are embedded in the account of the king’s campaign in aid of Chen and his abdication; they are not appended to that account as in Zuozhuan. In Shiji, the auguries concerning the strange clouds (SJ/B1-8) and the Yellow River (SJ/B9-13) are both taken whilst the king was camping at Chengfu (SJ/A1-3), not prior to that event (as at least the auguries on the Yellow River are in Zuozhuan).
In spring, in the 27th year, Wu attacked Chen. King Zhao of Chu went to Chen’s aid, camping at Chengfu. In the 10th month, King Zhao fell ill in the camp. There were crimson clouds resembling birds flying on both sides of the sun. King Zhao asked the Grand Scribe of Zhou about this, and the Grand Scribe said: “This will harm the king of Chu, but the harm can be moved to the generals and ministers.” When the generals and ministers heard of this, they requested permission to sacrifice themselves to the spirit. King Zhao said, “My generals and ministers are my limbs; if I were to move this calamity [to them], how would it have left this body?” He would not comply. He consulted the tortoise-shell and [it said that] the Yellow River was causing disaster. The grandees asked to sacrifice to the Yellow River. King Zhao said, “Ever since my predecessors received their fief, our Wang have not gone beyond the Jiang and Han Rivers. Moreover, the Yellow River is not what I have incurred blame from.” He stopped them, refusing to grant permission. Confucius was in Chen and heard what [the king] had said; Qe stated, “King Zhao of Chu has comprehended the Great Way! That he does not lose his state is indeed fitting!” King Zhao’s illness worsened and he called together the royal scions and grandees, saying, “I am unworthy! Twice have I dishonoured the Chu army — that I have been able to die of old age today is my luck!” He abdicated to his younger brother Gongzi Shen; he would not accept. Then he abdicated to his next younger brother Gongzi Jie; he would not accept either. Then he abdicated to his next younger brother Gongzi Lü, who, after having refused five times, agreed to become king. When he was about to enter battle, the king died in the camp on a gengyin day. Zilü said, “The king was very ill, discarding his own son and abdicating to us subjects. I agreed in order to soothe the king’s mind. Now the king is dead — should I dare to forget the king’s intention?” Then he planned together with Zixi and Ziqi; they concealed the army and shut the roads, encountering Zhang, son of a woman of Yue, establishing him as king (he was King Hui); after that he dismissed the army and returned in order to bury King Zhao.

According to Shiji, after the king was taken ill at Chengfu some strange clouds were sighted, so first the Grand Scribe was asked for an interpretation and then cracks were read (presumably by the court crack-readers). On both occasions the king rejected the advice offered him, and he was praised for this by Confucius — who at that very moment happened to be
staying in Chen (SJ/B14). The king’s illness worsened (SJ/B15) and he abdicated (SJ/C1-2),
dying just as the battle with Wu was about to commence (SJ/C3), whereupon Gongzi Qi and
his brothers installed Zhang as king. After disbanding the troops at Chengfu, Gongzi Qi then
returned to the capital and buried King Zhao (SJ/C4-7).

According to Shiji, King Zhao’s abdication was motivated by a belief that he would soon
die of illness, whereas in Zuozhuan the context indicates that the king was motivated by a belief
that he would soon die in battle. Similarly, according to Shiji, Gongzi Qi stated that he had
accepted the king’s abdication in order to please the ailing king, and it is hinted that the king’s
wish to appoint a brother crown prince was due to the delirious effects of his illness (SJ/C4). In
Shiji both the king’s abdication and the auguries concerning the strange clouds and the Yellow
River thus revolve around the king’s illness, and one may speculate that the Shiji author did not
use the Zuozhuan story about the auguries taken by the king before he engaged in battle with
Wu because he found it impossible to adapt to this theme.

Shiji holds all events to be linked to the king’s illness, which creates a high degree of
narrative consistency, whereas the train of events as narrated in Zuozhuan is somewhat difficult
to follow. According to Zuozhuan, the king foresaw his own death in battle, but was then taken
ill, after which, seemingly without having recovered from his illness, he proceeded to lead his
army in the attack on Daming, only to die at Chengfu — the cause of death is not specified, but
it is surely reasonable to suppose that the king died of his illness. In Zuozhuan, we are thus led
to believe that the king was ill while in the field and that his premonition about his own death in
battle was mistaken, whereas in Shiji, the king fell ill while in the field, whereupon his illness
aggravated, causing his death before he engaged in battle. The Zuozhuan account is, at best,
difficult to understand, whereas the Shiji account is simple and straightforward, being concerned
with the king’s illness from beginning to end.

In the speech he delivers prior to his abdication (SJ/B15), the king says that he considers
himself fortunate to be able to die of old age (以天壽終), but, according to the information
available to us, he can at the most have been thirty-three years of age when he died.\footnote{He can only have been eight years old when he was installed as king and he reigned for a total of
twenty-seven years; Yang Bojun, commentary in Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhuan Zhao 26.8, p. 1474.}
We must assume that this information was accessible to the Shiji author as well. How dying of old age
and dying of illness can be harmonised is indeed unclear. In forming this speech, the Shiji
author may have been misled by the fact that in Zuozhuan the king protests that Heaven would
not cause his premature death if he was innocent (不穀不有大過, 天其天諸; ZZ/B18) — “the
king was innocent, therefore he must have died of old age,” the Shiji author appears to have
reasoned.

Takigawa Kametaro 澀川亀太郎 held this speech to be the work of the Shiji author him-
self.\footnote{Shiki kaichu kosho 史記會注考證 (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunka Gakuin, 1932-34) 40, p. 46.} This presumes that the Shiji author did not know (or make use of) traditions that are
unknown to us, which is plausible to the extent that the speech can be explained as fulfilling a function created by the narrative form given to the *Shiji* account and as the result of an (understandable) misconstrual of elements of the sources that we know were at the disposal of the *Shiji* author. I believe that both these considerations apply in the case at hand and that Takigawa was right in attributing the creation of the speech to the *Shiji* author. One can, of course, claim that this misconstrual was made in an unknown source that the *Shiji* author simply rendered faithfully (if thoughtlessly), but such a claim is only relevant in an argument to the effect that, e.g., the *Shiji* author never “nodded” — it is not of consequence in a discussion of the probable sources of the *Zuozhuan* account.

The speech may have been inspired by *Zuozhuan* on one further point. According to *Zuozhuan* the king foresaw that he would cause the Chu army to suffer defeat a second time (再敗楚師) if he engaged in battle, whereas according to *Shiji* the king regretted the circumstance that the Chu army had suffered defeat twice under his command (再辱楚國之師). Though *Shiji* does not render the story about the auguries taken before engaging in battle with Wu, the notion that two defeats were involved could be due to influence from the *Zuozhuan* story about these auguries — the Chu defeat at Boju and the defeat foreseen in *Zuozhuan* at Chengfu are intended (King Zhao did not lead Chu to defeat on any other occasion, according to the sources at our disposal). If this is the case, the *Shiji* author again confuses his sources.

If the *Shiji* author did not utilise sources other than *Zuozhuan* to describe the king’s abdication, we must assume that if *Shiji* does not accord with *Zuozhuan* this is because the *Shiji* author attempts to rationalise the material at his disposal. This makes sense in other connections as well. *Zuozhuan* is thus silent about the outcome of the battle, but in *Shiji* we are told that the battle was called off by the retreating Gongzi Qi (SJ/C7). *Shiji* also states that Gongzi Qi returned to the capital (歸) to bury the king after having travelled (where to, if not the capital?) to install Zhang as king, whereas *Zuozhuan* informs us that he set out on his way back to the battle-field (還) after installing Zhang (ZZ/B11), which is quite a different matter. *Zuozhuan* leaves us in the dark about certain facts that it would be obvious to enquire about, whereas *Shiji* tries to make sense, but we should be wary of attributing the intelligibility of the *Shiji* account to more than the *Shiji* author’s rationalisation of the information he was presented with in *Zuozhuan*.

According to *Zuozhuan* the king was taken ill at least twice, whereas in *Shiji* he was taken ill only once. In *Shiji* the king is said to have died of the same eruption of the same illness that occasioned the questioning of the Grand Scribe and the taking of auguries. According to *Zuozhuan*, however, while the illness may conceivably have been the same, the king was clearly taken ill on two different occasions, ‘初’ clearly referring to a time well before the time referred to by ‘是歲’.

While the sources agree that the king was ill in the story about the Yellow River, they disagree about the king’s state of health in the story about the strange clouds. *Shiji* is unequivo-
cal, as prior to its rendering of the story it states that the king was ill while in his camp (昭王病於軍中) (SJ/A3). In *Shuoyuan*, however, the clouds are clearly taken to warn that illness will be inflicted on the king (將虐於王身) (SY/B3), and we must be allowed to presume that he was in good health when the story took place. In *Zuozhuan* there is, as in *Shuoyuan*, nothing to indicate that the king was ill at the time in question. The king says that if one attempted to rid an illness affecting the abdomen by transferring it to the limbs this would be unproductive: the passage is metaphorical and does not state that the king was physically ill at the time (SY/B6-7; ZZ/B17-18) - though conceivably the king may have become ill as a result of not following the mantic advice. This suggests that the circumstance that the king is ill in the *Shiji* version of the story about the strange clouds is also due to the *Shiji* author’s integration of the story about the Yellow River into the story of the king’s illness and death while in the field.

Seen in relation to the *Shuoyuan* version, in which the two stories are completely independent, *Zuozhuan* may also be said to integrate the story about the strange clouds into the story about the king’s illness and death in the field, for the circumstance that *Zuozhuan* dates the story about the strange clouds to the year of the king’s death, introducing it by ‘是歳’ , is certainly an attempt to link it with the illness which led to the king’s death: the king was cursed by the strange clouds and became ill because he refused to shift his illness to others. If so, *Zuozhuan* integrates the story causally, but not narratively, whereas *Shiji* integrates the story narratively as well as causally. In *Zuozhuan* only the story about the Yellow River is not integrated in a definite way, being solely introduced by ‘初’. One should note, however, that if the *Zuozhuan* author has integrated the story about the strange clouds because it supplies the reason for the king’s eventual death, the *Zuozhuan* author in effect attributes causality to the same phenomenon to which King Zhao is praised for not attributing causality, leading to a discrepancy between the moral of the story (as voiced by Confucius) and its narrative logic.

The highly integrated nature of the *Shiji* account is also revealed by its choice of words. According to *Shiji*, the king’s ministers requested permission to sacrifice themselves to appease the strange clouds and wished to offer prayers to the Yellow River, ‘請自以身禱於神’ (SJ/B5) and ‘請禱河’ (SJ/B10, but, to judge from the extant versions of the stories, the *Shiji* sources for the two stories can hardly both have contained the characters ‘請’ and ‘禱’. 17 It would appear that in this case the *Shiji* author harmonised terminology when adapting the stories, making the two episodes echo one another.

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17 In *Shuoyuan* story about the strange clouds, ‘禱’ is probably used for ‘禱’, ‘to sacrifice (especially livestock)’, and thus does not mean ‘to supplicate’. Compare the use of ‘以身禱於桑林’ and ‘以身為犧牲’ in the story about how Tang 汤 stopped a drought, *Lushi chunqiu jiaoshi* 9, p. 479 (see also *Huainanzi jiaoshi* 9, p. 906; 19, p. 1940). Since obviously something is being offered and more than a prayer is involved, this is the only interpretation which makes sense of the king’s protest and simile it employs. Whether ‘禱’ is used in the same sense in the *Shuoyuan* story about the Yellow River is unclear. In *Shiji* ‘禱’ is presumably used in the same sense in both instances, but it is unclear what to make of ‘以身禱’ if ‘禱’ is interpreted as ‘to supplicate’.
The context of Confucius’ appreciation of King Zhao

The *Shiji* author often uses the life of Confucius as a guideline to fix the chronology of events of Confucius’ time. In *Shuoyuan* and *Zuo zhuan* Confucius’ appreciation of King Zhao concludes the story about the strange clouds. In *Shiji* the two stories are integrated into the story of the king’s death, but the episode of the strange clouds is directly followed by the episode involving the Yellow River, after which Confucius makes his appreciation, and in *Shiji* Confucius therefore comments on the character of the king, as revealed on both occasions, immediately following the king’s death.

The *Shiji* integration of the itinerary of Confucius into the story of the death of King Zhao is presumably caused by a misconstrual of the time Confucius made his statement according to *Zuo zhuan*. In *Shuoyuan* the king is said to have been ill, but it is in no way implied that this was the illness which led to his death, and in *Zuo zhuan*, by means of the expression ‘初’, the king’s illness is placed in the past, some time prior to the king’s death. Neither *Shuoyuan* nor *Zuo zhuan* therefore implies that Confucius made his appraisal of the king immediately following the king’s death, nor do they as much as hint that Confucius was staying in Chen at the time he made his appraisal. The integration of the life of Confucius into the life of King Zhao of Chu appears to be the work of the *Shiji* author alone. The Chu king was in Chen when Confucius made his appreciation — and therefore Confucius must have been there as well, the *Shiji* author must have reasoned.

In *Zuo zhuan*, the ‘宜哉’ of the appreciation should probably be taken to refer to the past (“it was appropriate that he did not lose his state”), not to indicate a prognostication. On the presumption that it must have appeared plausible to the original author of the story to have Confucius make this appraisal, one could attempt to find a point in the career of the king which it would fit.

King Zhao was certainly in imminent danger of “losing his state” (失國) when after the battle of Boju (506), seventeen years before his death (489), he was driven by the Wu army to flee his capital Ying 鄔. Although he succeeded in returning the following year (505), he was actually very close to “losing his state” — indeed, one might argue that he did lose it for a brief period of time, witness, e.g., the appraisal attributed to the duke of Chen in *Zuo zhuan* that “the state of Chu has been defeated and its king has fled” (國勝君亡). It could be the case that Confucius’ appreciation of the king should be viewed against *this* historical background and be construed as “though King Zhao almost lost his state in the battle of Boju, it was surely fitting that he did not lose it after all, but was able to return afterwards to his capital.” The appreciation could be understood by the *Zuo zhuan* author to have been made at any time following 505 and the time of Confucius’ own death. The important point is that the appreciation was made on the

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18 See, e.g., the treatment of the same event; *Shiji* 36, p. 1583.
19 *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhuan Ai* 1.4, p. 1607.
background of the king’s defeat at Boju, not on the background of the king’s death at Chengfu.

Though the Shuoyuan version of the story is undated, the story about King Zhao’s flight from his capital was probably fairly widely known, since it was part of the popular tale of the revenge which Wu Zixu 伍子胥 wrought on King Ping of Chu 楚平王. Admittedly, this does not apply with equal force to the story about King Zhao’s return to Ying, but conceivably Confucius’ appreciation of King Zhao would be understood on the background of this story as well, even in the absence of any explicit reference to it.

Whereas Confucius in Zuozhuan makes his appreciation at some indefinite point in time, presumably after 505, in Shiji he must be held to have pronounced on the king in 489 (or immediately following this). However, regardless of how we construe Confucius’ appreciation, the Shiji account is involved in considerable narrative inconsistency. If Confucius is taken to refer to contemporary events, he will be saying that, considering the king’s unwillingness to unload his blame on others shown now (in 489), it is seemly that he will not lose his country — after which the king loses his life! If Confucius refers to events of the past, he will be saying that, considering the king’s unwillingness to load his blame on others shown now (in 489), it is proper that he did not lose his country (in 506-505) — in order for this statement to appear even remotely plausible, we would at least have to have some indication that the king was equally morally enlightened before (which of course he was not, in the common understanding). In either way the Shiji account is defective and the defectiveness appears to arise from a misconstrual of the time and reference of Confucius’ appreciation.

According to the Shiji “Hereditary House of Confucius,” Confucius on his wanderings visits Chen on two occasions and stays once more in an unspecified place on the border of Chen and Cai (陳 蔡之間). Whilst Confucius stays on the border of Chen and Cai, King Zhao of Chu communicates his intention to appoint and enfeoff him — Shuoyuan parallels this story, apparently independently of Shiji. Confucius prepares to go, but finds his way blocked by the grandees of Chen and Cai who do not wish to see Chu prosper under his guidance. Finally, the Chu army helps him proceed to Chu. Gongzi Shen, however, dissuades King Zhao from presenting Confucius with office and fief, insinuating that Confucius will establish an empire of his own. In the autumn of the same year, King Zhao dies.

In Shiji, a series of dialogues between the main disciples and Confucius are said to have taken place in between these events. As has been noted by among others Watanabe Takashi 渡邊卓, the Shiji chronology of Confucius’ wanderings has some extremely curious features.
Though the *Shiji* author had ample material on Confucius, I believe a good case can be made for the hypothesis that *Zuozhuan* presented him with most (if not all) the chronological pegs on which to hang the events of Confucius’ life, and that the chronology of the “Hereditary House of Confucius” is the result of his attempt to fit the undated sources at his disposal into the chronological framework he discerned in *Zuozhuan*. This is not to say that the *Shiji* author interpreted *Zuozhuan* correctly: several features of the rather twisted nature of the chronology of Confucius’ years in exile can be accounted for by the *Shiji* author’s misinterpretation of the date and time of Confucius appreciation of King Zhao of Chu.

Whereas, chronologically speaking, Confucius’ appreciation appears most apposite on the background of King Zhao’s 505 return to Ying, ideologically speaking, one might say that it gains in intelligibility if viewed on the background of the story about how King Zhao wanted to appoint Confucius to high office. This story is probably one of the (presumably quite late) stories that were meant to show how close Confucius came to implementing his Way. The “special relationship” that was supposed to obtain between Confucius and the king also shows itself in a story, evidenced in both *Shuoyuan* and *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語, in which Confucius prophesied that King Zhao would become hegemon (ba 藩), surely an unlikely development for this sorry ruler.

The derivation of the *Shiji* version of the stories

The relation between *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan* is actually more complicated than I have implied above. Though it certainly builds on *Zuozhuan*, the *Shiji* rendering of the stories about the strange clouds and the Yellow River cannot be explained solely as the *Shiji* author’s adaptation of the *Zuozhuan* account.

In the story about the strange clouds, *Shiji’s* ‘將相聞是言，乃請自以身禦於神’ can hardly be derived from *Zuozhuan’s* ‘大夫請祭諸郊’, whereas it is closely mirrored in *Shuoyuan’s* ‘令尹司馬聞之，宿齋沐浴，將自以身禦之焉’, of which it might well be a condensation. *Shiji’s* ‘是害於楚王’ can also more reasonably be interpreted as a paraphrase of *Shuoyuan’s* ‘將虐於王身’ than of *Zuozhuan’s* ‘其當王身乎’ (more about ‘當’ below). There is thus reason to hold that the *Shiji* rendering of the story about the strange clouds builds on a source in addition to *Zuozhuan*, a source which, in some respects at least, is close to *Shuoyuan*.

There is one important point on which *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan* agree against *Shuoyuan*: both hold the person asked for an interpretation of the strange clouds to have been 周太史/周大史, whereas according to *Shuoyuan* the person was 太史州黎. The *Shiji* reading is almost certainly due to influence from *Zuozhuan*. Another indication of such influence is the occurrence in *Shiji*
of the phrase ‘然可移於將相’, paralleled only by Zuozhuan’s ‘可移於令尹、司馬’ (we shall examine below what is the probable origin of the Zuozhuan phrase). However, influence from Zuozhuan on Shiji is what we expect. There are other points on which such influence is not in evidence.

In the story about the Yellow River, Shiji’s ‘先王受封’ is closer to Shuoyuan’s ‘先王削地制土’ than to Zuozhuan’s ‘三代命祀’; Shiji presumably paraphrases a sentence similar to that in Shuoyuan. Shiji’s use of ‘過’ likewise relates it to Shuoyuan, rather than to Zuozhuan and its ‘越’. There is thus reason to suppose that Shiji builds on sources in addition to Zuozhuan in the case of the story about the Yellow River as well.

The Shiji version thus in several instances agrees with Shuoyuan where Shuoyuan is at variance with Zuozhuan.

The Lienu zhuan rendition contains a number of puzzles which may cast doubt on the transmitted version of the Shiji (see below), but the Shiji rendition of the two stories is probably a conflation of the Zuozhuan version of the stories and a version of the stories close to that in Shuoyuan.

In the subsequent narrative in Shiji about how the king renounced the throne before his death there are conspicuous verbal agreements between Zuozhuan and Shiji, and there is no reason to suppose that Zuozhuan did not serve as the sole source for this part of the Shiji account. The king cedes the throne to three persons, only the third accepting. In Zuozhuan, these three appear, as mentioned above, to have been the king’s elder brothers. Moreover, perhaps the Shiji author misconstrued the relationship between the king and his brothers, influenced by stories, such as those involving Ji Zha 季札 and Duke Jing of Song 宋景公, in which the king abdicates to his younger brother who then abdicates to his younger brother (and so on), or perhaps the Shiji author was confused by the circumstance that the Chu royal house did not uphold the principle that one could not marry persons that were not of one’s own generation.

The Lienu zhuan and Kongzi jiayu versions of the stories

In order to illustrate the female virtue of self-sacrifice, the Lienu zhuan author has inserted into the story about the strange clouds the figure of Yue Ji 越姬 (the mother of Zhang, referred to as ‘越女’ in Shiji), who committed suicide to accompany her lord in death. Here, the story about the strange clouds has been appropriated to tell a story about the principled devotion of Yue Ji

25 Shiji elsewhere holds Gongzi Shen to be the younger brother of King Ping of Chu, the father of King Zhao; Shiji 40, p. 1714.

26 The situation is confusing: the mother of King Zhao was a concubine of King Ping, but she had been brought to Chu to marry King Ping’s (erstwhile) crown prince, Wangzi Jian 王子健, who was born to King Ping by a concubine from Cai 蔡 and who was thus the brother of the (future) King Zhao. See Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Zhao 19.2, p. 1401; Shiji 5, p. 197; 40, p. 1712.

27 This passage is omitted in the interlinear presentation.
to her unprincipled lord, who finally mends his ways.

The Lienü zhuan version (LNZ/A-D) is very close to the Shiji version from which it unquestionably derives. Lienü zhuan thus states that Gongzi Shen and his brothers are King Zhao's younger brothers (LNZ/D1); this must be due to the circumstance that Shiji (erroneously) calls them the king's '弟'.

However, though it follows the Shiji, the Lienü zhuan contains a number of minor discrepancies where contact with Shuoyuan could conceivably be in evidence. The phrase '是害王身' (LNZ/B3) thus parallels Shuoyuan's '將虐於王身', rather than Shiji's '是害於楚王', in its use of the expression '王身'; '將諸以身禱於神' (LNZ/B5) contains a '將' which Shuoyuan has ('將自以身禱之焉') but Shiji does not ('乃請自以身禱於神').'庸為' (LNZ/B7) is also the Shuoyuan reading, but Shiji only has '庸'. Even though Liu Xiang compiled both Shuoyuan and Lienü zhuan, I am reluctant to posit conflation or the use of an intermediate source on the basis of such minute discrepancies. Lienü zhuan does not appear to be a text where great care has been taken to collate different versions of stories in order to present improved versions of these; stories were taken, generally from the Shiji, and made relevant to the theme of female virtuousness. I rather think we have to consider the possibility that the modern editions of Shiji have been edited and that Lienü zhuan is based on an early version of Shiji. A systematic study of the relationship between Shiji and Lienü zhuan is needed to clarify this.

As it offers no certain independent testimony to the stories discussed, the Lienü zhuan version will be left out of consideration in the following discussion.

The Kongzi jiayu version (KZJY) to all appearances derives from the Zuozhuan version. The Kongzi jiayu variant '沮' for Zuozhuan's '雎' is supported by Zuozhuan quotations in Shuijing zhu 水經注 and Chuxue ji 初學記. While this could mean that it was original with Zuozhuan, Zuozhuan elsewhere refers to the same river using the character '雎',30 and '沮' might equally well be a vulgarisation. The variants in the first Shu quotation suggest that the Zuozhuan version has been corrected by the Kongzi jiayu author by use of a different tradition of the Shu. The Guwen Shangshu 古文尚書 has '厥道' with Kongzi jiayu where Zuozhuan has '其行', indicating influence from this forgery (possibly perpetrated by the Kongzi jiayu compiler himself).31

Offering no independent testimony, there is no reason to consider Kongzi jiayu in the following discussion.

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28 Gu Lienü zhuan zhuzi suoyin 古列女傳逐字索引, ed. by D. C. Lau (Taibei: Taiwan Shangwu, 1993) 5.4, p. 43.
29 Li Fusun 李富孫, Chunqiu Zuozhuan yiwenshi 春秋左傳異文釋 (Huang Qing jingjie xubian 皇清經解續編, ed. by Wang Xianqian 王先謙, 1888) 10, p. 19a.
30 Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Ding 4.3, p. 1545; King Zhao of Chu crosses the雎.
The *Han Shi waizhuan* version of the story about the Yellow River

There is a close relationship between the *Shuoyuan* version of the story about the curse of the Yellow River and a *Han Shi waizhuan* (HSWZ) story about King Zhuang of Chu (613-591).²

The major difference between the *Han Shi waizhuan* and *Shuoyuan* versions, aside from their different main protagonist, is that in *Han Shi waizhuan*, the king is said to have recovered from his illness, this being (somewhat incongruously, it appears to me) the effect of his scepticism in the matter of the auguries, and therefore ‘三日而疾有瘳’ is unique (and central) to the *Han Shi waizhuan* version. There are also minor differences, such as the order in which the two pairs of rivers are mentioned and *Han Shi waizhuan*’s ‘寡人’ for *Shuoyuan*’s ‘不榖’, but the story is obviously the same.

However, the *Han Shi waizhuan* version does not have significant verbal similarities with *Shiji* or *Zuo zhuan* that are not shared by *Shuoyuan*. It appears to be a story about the curse of the Yellow River similar to that found in *Shuoyuan*, adapted to fit King Zhuang of Chu, which has had its moral “strengthened” by adding that the king recovered from his illness. In *Han Shi waizhuan* the story is used to explain how King Zhuang became hegemon. King Zhuang figures in the lists of Chunqiu hegemons; this could explain why the *Han Shi waizhuan* author chose to feature King Zhuang instead of King Zhao.

The panegyric attributed to Confucius differs considerably (HSWZ/6, 8), though some points of contact with the *Shuoyuan* version are in evidence. There is, one might argue, a structural similarity between *Han Shi waizhuan* and *Zuo zhuan* that is not shared by *Shuoyuan*: in both *Zuo zhuan* and *Han Shi waizhuan* Confucius quotes classics to illustrate the virtues of the king. This is hardly significant, however, since the classics Confucius quotes are different, and I do not think that it presents grounds for assuming influence between *Han Shi waizhuan* and *Zuo zhuan* — one expects Confucius to do such things and rather wonders at his reticence in *Shuoyuan*.

There are a number of features of the *Han Shi waizhuan* version that could be important to assessing the relationship between the *Shuoyuan* and *Zuo zhuan* versions. In *Han Shi waizhuan*, the grandees recommend that the king 用性; this agrees with the *Shuoyuan* reading ‘用三牲焉’ but is at variance with the *Zuo zhuan* reading ‘祭諸郊’. The king begins his rebuttal of the recommendation by uttering ‘止’ in both *Han Shi waizhuan* and *Shuoyuan*, but not elsewhere. Also, according to *Han Shi waizhuan*, the king refers to the circumstance that 古者聖王之制, 祭不過望, which is definitely closer to *Shuoyuan*’s ‘古者先王, 剎地制土, 祭不越望’ than *Zuo zhuan*’s ‘三代命祀, 祭不越望’, both in its use of ‘古者聖王’ and in its use of ‘過’ ‘制’ is used in different senses in the two passages — perhaps

corruption (followed by rationalisation) is at play in Han Shi waizhuan, but whichever is the case the character ‘制’ ties together Han Shi waizhuan with Shuoyuan; the Shuoyuan reading is here corroborated by Shiji whose ‘受封’ is probably a paraphrase of a passage similar to Shuoyuan’s ‘割地制土’, not of Zuozhuan’s ‘三代命祀’.

All in all, where Han Shi waizhuan differs from Zuozhuan, it is corroborated by Shuoyuan.

Preliminary conclusions, Part 1

Above we have seen that among the sources rendering one or both of the stories about King Zhao, only that found in Shiji shows signs of being influenced by Zuozhuan. That Shiji draws on Zuozhuan should not surprise us, but what does perhaps cause some wonder is the circumstance that Zuozhuan has only supplied the Shiji author with the framework for the stories, but not the stories themselves (except for the designation of the person consulted in the story about the strange clouds and the phrase with ‘移’). We see this pattern repeatedly: Zuozhuan furnishes Shiji with the chronological clues and the general structure of the stories, but for the actual wording of the stories, Shiji avails itself of other sources. I believe that it does not strain credulity to assume that the Shiji author is able to perform such feats of textual integration, for we see the same level of textual sophistication evidenced elsewhere in the work, e.g., in the chronological tables. Also, the “scissors-and-paste” method that this implies also fits with what else we know about the way the Shiji author worked.33 That Shiji should be the only source to depend on Zuozhuan is not so strange, for though the circulation of Zuozhuan was quite limited until Eastern Han times, the Shiji author had special access to imperial libraries.

Among the various versions of the two stories, except that in Shiji, in all cases where there is agreement between a source other than Zuozhuan that contains a parallel to the Zuozhuan story and Zuozhuan itself, there is also agreement among the non-Zuozhuan sources themselves. It is thus unnecessary to posit the influence of Zuozhuan on sources other than Shiji. There are many cases where a non-Zuozhuan source disagrees with Zuozhuan, but this in itself of course does not show that the source in question does not derive from Zuozhuan — changing some things, adding some things, deleting some things: all this is to be expected when stories like these are transmitted and improved (though we should in each case seek to explain why the changes have occurred).

However, how are we to account for the fact that several versions agree in disagreeing with Zuozhuan, when these versions do not, as far as we can ascertain, depend upon one another? It is highly improbable that the same changes should have arisen independently in

several versions of the stories. This appeals to the most basic principle of textual criticism, and even though the differences are at times inconsequential and marginal, this principle carries considerable weight. The testimony to the stories has to be explained in its totality — even though derivation may go either way if the different versions are viewed in pairs, there are often ways in which the line of derivation can be shown not to be possible, if all the versions are taken into consideration.

It is of course conceivable that the sources that agree in disagreeing with Zuozhuan are not independent, but there are no positive indications that this is the case, and an appeal to this possibility is thus wanton — if it were allowed, any claim about "possible" sources would have to be admitted.

Again, it is, in a certain (but somewhat uninteresting) sense of this word, possible that Zuozhuan version of the stories is original and all the other versions derivative. However, if we postulate this, we are committed to defending a number of rather improbable hypotheses. We will first have to posit that at a relatively early stage someone disentangled the stories from the chronological framework in which they are lodged in Zuozhuan, altered their morals, removed their Shu quotations, discarded the story about the pre-combat omens, and so on. Admittedly, it is within the realm of the possible for this to have happened, but we additionally have to posit that this unknown source served as source for all the remaining parallels, Zuozhuan having no direct influence on them (except on Shiji), and that, after having effected this influence, the modified version disappeared from the face of the earth, leaving no trace behind. Aside from its use by the Shiji author, Zuozhuan was to exert a direct influence only once, on this (hypothetical) source of all non-Zuozhuan versions of the stories.

I think that it will be agreed that such assumptions are highly implausible. The reverse — that Zuozhuan is directly influenced by Han Shiwaizhuan and/or Shuoyuan — is likewise implausible, given our knowledge about the time of compilation of these texts.

The more plausible solution appears to be to postulate the existence of a version of the stories that (ultimately) served as source for the versions found in Zuozhuan, Han Shiwaizhuan, Shiji and Shuoyuan. All these versions testify, directly or indirectly, to this original version, but the Shuoyuan version is the most interesting among these, because (as I will attempt to show below) it shows signs of being more likely to be the original. The Zuozhuan version is interesting as well, but mainly on account of the modifications that were made to the original story, modifications that were to influence Shiji.

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34 The Shi Chun 簡春, a text excavated in A.D. 281 which was probably written in the 4th century B.C., is said to contain extracts of Zuozhuan divination accounts (Jinshu [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974] 51/1433), but unfortunately not even a quotation remains of this work, making it impossible to evaluate the validity of this claim. I know of no other Han or pre-Han works which could have contained similar extracts.
The origin of the *Shuoyuan* version of the story about the strange clouds

It is through a comparison of the *Shuoyuan* and *Zuo zhuan* versions of the stories that I believe we can get closer to the sources employed to compose the *Zuo zhuan* version.

Of crucial importance for assessing the relationship between the *Shuoyuan* and the *Zuo zhuan* versions of the story about the strange clouds is the circumstance that whereas in *Zuo zhuan* and *Shiji* the king asks an unnamed 周大史 for advice (ZZ/B13), in *Shuoyuan* he consults a 太史 with the name ‘州黎’ (SY/B2). This is significant first of all because of its specificity, but also because an important figure, with what may safely be regarded as a variant of this name, Bo Zhouli 伯州犁, is mentioned repeatedly in *Zuo zhuan* and *Guoyu*.35

The father of Bo Zhouli was a man of Jin. After he was killed, Bo Zhouli fled to Chu where he became 大宰 and was killed in the coup of 541. The *Shuoyuan* version dates the events of the story to “the time of King Zhao” (楚昭王之時), so it is of course impossible that Bo Zhouli should have been asked by King Zhao of Chu in 489 about the strange clouds — King Zhao of Chu acceded to the throne in 516 and any contact between the two is out of the question. How this problem could be solved I will attempt to address below.

While the *Shuoyuan* version reading thus does not make sense chronologically, the *Zuo zhuan* and *Shiji* readings ‘周大史’ and ‘周太史’ have likewise proven difficult to explain, for though the expressions ‘周史’ and ‘周內史’ are quite common,36 the *Zuo zhuan* version of the story about the strange clouds supplies the only example in the pre-Han literature of the expression ‘周大史’/‘周太史’.

In his *Zuo zhuan* commentary, Fu Qian 服虔 (fl. 184-189) wrote that all the feudal houses had 太史37 and that they were in charge of the documents that the Zhou house had bestowed on the various feudal lords, for which reason they were called ‘周大史’. Why the 太史 of King Zhao of Chu, alone of all known 太史, should be called by this designation, is a question Fu Qian does not attempt to address, and one must question whether he had concrete support for his interpretation, or whether he was not forcing sense out of *Zuo zhuan*. Of some interest is the fact that he continues to report an alternative interpretation, namely that the person asked for

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35 Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu Cheng 15.5, p. 876; Cheng 16.5, p. 884; Xiang 26.6, p. 1115; Xiang 27.4, p. 1131; Zhao 1.1, pp. 1199, 1203; Zhao 1.13, p. 1223; Ding 4.3, p. 1542; Guoyu 11, p. 407; see also Shiji 31, p. 1465 and 66, p. 2174. Wei Zhao, in his commentary on *Guoyu* 20, p. 634, also writes ‘黎’ instead of ‘黎’. — The *Shuoyuan* mention of 周史州黎 is also noted by Zhang Binglin; Zhang Taiyan quanji 章太炎全集, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Renmin, 1982), pp. 770-771. Zhang, however, postulates that the person in question was called ‘州大史’ and that this expression gave rise to ‘周大史’. Since ‘州黎’ is clearly a 名, however, half of it cannot be used in the manner suggested by Zhang; the standard way of referring to 史 is to mention their 名 after the character ‘史’, not their 姓 or 氏 before the character ‘史’.

36 See the convenient table, Kamata Tadashi, *Saden no seiritsu to sono tenkai*, p. 64, and Yang Bojun, commentary in Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu Huan 2.2, p. 90.

37 Fu Qian’s commentary is rendered by Kong Yingda 孔穎達, Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi Ai 6, p. 1007. Du Yu supplies no interpretation.
advice by the Chu king was the 大史 of Zhou — the 周史 or 周内史, officials of the Zhou court, are often asked for mantic advice in Zuozhuan. That Fu Qian found it pertinent to report this alternative interpretation presumably shows that he had no convincing proof for his primary interpretation — that it was based on conjecture. One should also note that, according to Zuozhuan, King Ling of Chu (540-528) had even recently complained that Chu had not received bestowals from Zhou, whereas Qi, Wei, Jin and Lu had. This makes Hui Dong (1697-1758) conjecture that when Wangzi Chao fled to Chu with the records of Zhou (周之典籍), he carried along with him someone who took care of these, and that this person was consulted about the strange clouds, but, as Yang Bojun remarks, such a refugee scribe would hardly be called a ‘周大史’ (nor, for that matter, a ‘周史’). The testimony of Zuozhuan in this matter is thus also difficult to make sense of.

We should note that ‘州’ and ‘周’ are homophonous, the pronunciation of both words being reconstructed according to Li Fanggui 李方圭 as *tjaw. The character ‘史’ is reconstructed as *sjaj and ‘獅’ as *laj. As ‘史’ is phonetic in ‘吏’ (*lajh), the element ‘l’, very close to ‘r’, can be accounted for. The pronunciation of ‘史’ and ‘獅’ was thus quite similar and one could be mistaken for the other. One may also note that ‘宰’, *tjagx, and ‘史’, *sjagx, have identical medials and finals.

While each of these resemblances may be dismissed as inconsequential, their aggregate suggests that the expressions ‘周史’ and ‘州獅’, and, possibly, that ‘大宰’ and ‘大史’ as well, have been confused.

Two explanations appear to be possible. One is that ‘州獅’ is a bona fide name which, perhaps influenced by the ‘大史’ occurring in front of it, was misinterpreted as ‘周史’. An intermediate form, probably never actualised in any text, ‘大史周史’, would then have to be posited, a form which has been rationalised in Zuozhuan as ‘周大史’ and which led to the Shiji reading ‘周太史’. The other explanation posits the corruption of ‘周大史’ into ‘大宰州獅’.

If ‘州獅’ is original, there are two possibilities. One is that a person, different from the earlier Bo Zhouli, with the name ‘州獅’ held the office of 大史/太史 during the reign of King

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39 This has not deterred scholars from doing their utmost to support Fu Qian. The arguments by Hui Dong and Zhang Binglin are conveniently summed up Kamata Tadashi, Saden no seiritsu to sono tenkai, pp. 62-63.
40 Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Zhao 12.11, p. 1339.
41 Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Zhao 26.9, p. 1475.
42 It is said that Lu received many ritual officers and implements, including some Zhou documents (典籍), as a special favour in the early days of the dynasty (Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Ding 4.1, p. 1537), and it is also the case that Lu had an official called ‘周人’ (Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Ai 3.2, p. 1620), who, according to Du Yu, was in charge of these documents — the meaning of ‘周人’ is, however, also in dispute.
44 In the reconstruction of Zheng Zhang Shangfang 鄭張尚芳, both are thus realised as ‘r’; Shanggu yinxi 上古音系 (Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2003).
Zhao of Chu. This is the most simple solution, but of course entirely conjectural. The other possibility is that the story about the strange clouds originally was not about King Zhao of Chu and that the person in question was the Bo Zhouli that we know from Zuozhuan and Guoyu. An intriguing possibility is then that Bo Zhouli was referred to in the archetype of the story by use of his office and his name, as '大宰州黎'. According to this line of thinking, originally the 大宰 was questioned, but because the question was one normally put to a 大史, '大宰' was changed into '大史', giving rise to the form '大史州黎', which led to the '太史州黎' evidenced in Shuoyuan. In '大史州黎' the element '大史' led to a corruption of '州黎' to '周史', with the subsequent rationalisation of '大史周史/太史周史' to '周大史/周太史', resulting in the Zuozhuan and Shiji readings. In Zuozhuan only the locution '大宰伯州黎' occurs, but the common way of referring to occupants of the office of 大宰 is by prefixing '大宰' to their name or 字, as in the case of the grandson of Bo Zhouli, who is known as '大宰懿' and '大宰子餘'.

Admittedly, this line of reasoning is rather strained, but are there more plausible ways of explaining the occurrence of '大史州黎' in Shuoyuan? It will not do to attribute the variant form to the lack of historical accuracy on the part of Shuoyuan — this begs the question, since we need an answer to why the "inaccuracy" (if, indeed, it is one) occurred in the first place — even mistakes in rag-bag compilations like Shuoyuan have to be explained. Corruptions may make a text incomprehensible (from which nothing follows) or more comprehensible (in which case the principle of lectio difficilior regards the less comprehensible variant as original, all other things being equal) but rarely comprehensible in two ways, unless reinterpretation is at issue. If reinterpretation is involved, what can have made Shuoyuan reinterpret the, on the surface, quite unobjectionable, '周大史/周太史' as the rather exceptionable '大史州黎'? I find it hard to make a convincing argument for this, but — as outlined above — there is a line of reasoning, torturous as it may be, which leads in the other direction.

Bo Zhouli was considered a wise man, and the figure of didactic stories most susceptible to alteration is the ruler; indeed, we have seen an example of this in the Han Shi waizhuan adaptation of the story about the Yellow River which features King Zhuang and not King Zhao of Chu.

The hypothesis that '周史' is a corruption of '州黎' accounts for the, otherwise inexplicable, specificity of the Shuoyuan reading. Whether '大史/太史' has anything to do with '大宰/太宰' is more uncertain, but an intriguing possibility. If we accept that '太史州黎' is a corruption of '大宰州黎', then the king was not King Zhao — most probably, in the original version of the story the king was an unidentified "king of Chu," and only became King Zhao when the story was associated with the story about the curse of the Yellow River.

45 See Chunqi Zuozhuan zhu Cheng 16.5, p. 884; Zhao 1.1 p. 1199; Zhao 1.13, p. 1223.
To attempt an argument for the opposite course of alteration will inevitably stumble on the specificity of ‘州犁’. If the editor of a text regarded ‘周太史’ as strange, surely the easiest way to assimilate it would be to emend it to ‘周史’ — not to introduce a specific person who was pronounced similarly to ‘周史’.\(^{47}\)

The claim in *Shuoyuan* that the king sent someone *eastwards* by coach to question 太史州黎 is also very specific, but unfortunately it does not help identify the person questioned by the king, since we do not know where the king was thought to be when the strange clouds were sighted — we must bear in mind that the *Shuoyuan* story does not in any way indicate that the story took place on a military campaign in aid of Chen. The *Shuoyuan* claim is impossible to explain from the context of the *Zuozhuan* or *Shiji* versions of the story. Yang Bojun has suggested that since the king was at Chengfu, he would be closer to Zhou than to his own capital, which would point in the direction that the person consulted was a Zhou courtier. However, since Luoyang is northwest of Chengfu and north of Ying, the Chu capital, this really does not solve the problem. The unexplained specificity of the *Shuoyuan* claim that 太史州黎 was staying someplace east of the Chu king suggests that the story about the strange clouds was formulated on the background of some other story wherein this feature was readily interpretable. No known historical context has the Chu king to the west of Ying (let alone Zhou) — if we want to make sense of the ‘東’, we may perhaps conjecture that 太史州黎 was on a mission in the east when consulted by the king. It would be more convenient if we could dismiss the ‘東’ as a corruption, but there is no positive reason for doing so — again, the specificity of the *Shuoyuan* version, irritating as it is, argues in favour of its originality. We cannot dismiss this character, just because it is marginal to the story, because in arguments concerning textual filiation odd and innocuous features of this kind count as evidence on an equal footing as more weighty elements.

There is one further feature of the *Shuoyuan* version that appears to contain an element as irreversible as ‘州犁’. According to the story about the strange clouds in *Zuozhuan*, the 周大史 recommended performing the Yong 祭 sacrifice (ZZ/B15). This sacrifice, mentioned several times in *Zuozhuan*, is offered to nature deities in order to eliminate or prevent natural catastrophes,\(^{48}\) so there is nothing unnatural about it being performed in connection with the strange clouds. In *Shuoyuan*, there seems at first sight to be no parallel to the mention of this sacrifice, 太史州黎 advising the king with the words ‘以令尹, 司馬說焉, 則可’ (SY/B4). According to *Zhouli*, however, the Taizhu 大祝 is in charge of six irregular sacrifices, all directed towards nature deities with the purpose of averting catastrophes. Among these are the Yong

\(^{47}\) The ‘周史’ of the *Lienü zhuàn* may be just such a rationalisation of *Shiji*’s ‘周太史’ — Liu Xiang knew that there had never been an official entitled ‘周太史’ and altered it in this work of his. The expression ‘周太史’ is common in *Shiji*, but only in connection with Zhou; cf., e.g., *Shiji* 4, p. 147; 4, p. 159; 5, p. 201; 28, pp. 1364; 36, p. 1577.

\(^{48}\) See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* Zhao 1.12, p. 1220; Zhao 19.10, p. 1405.
sacrifice, but also the Shuo 説 sacrifice. Likewise the Shushi 庶氏 is responsible for expelling venom (毒蠍) by means of the Shuo sacrifice. The Shuo sacrifice seems to be mentioned only on two other occasions outside of the Zhouli in the early transmitted literature, but the circumstance that ‘説’ is used as the name of a sacrifice in Shuoyuan should be beyond doubt. The name of the sacrifice was changed into the name of the similar, but more familiar, Yong sacrifice, in Zuozhuan. To posit the opposite, that ‘説’ is an adaptation of ‘榮’, would strain credulity, given the extreme rarity of references to this sacrifice.

The changes postulated in connection with ‘太史州黎’ and ‘説’ need of course not be the work of the Zuozhuan author — they could have taken place in the material adapted by him. To assume that he exchanged ‘榮’ for ‘説’ perhaps does not strain credulity, but it is very much a matter of opinion whether the change from ‘太史州黎’ to ‘周大史’ should be attributed to the Zuozhuan author or to the author of a source used by him.

The origin of the Shuoyuan version of the story about the Yellow River

The story about the Yellow River does not present features as interesting as the story about the strange clouds.

Zuozhuan and Shuoyuan differ in the terms used to describe the offerings proposed by the 大夫, Shuoyuan having ‘用三牲焉’ (SY/A1) where Zuozhuan has ‘祭諸郊’ (ZZ/B21). Whereas the Jiao 郊 sacrifice, primarily performed by feudal lords to ensure a bountiful harvest, is mentioned elsewhere in Zuozhuan, the use of 三牲 is not. It is here relevant to note (as has been done above) that Han Shi waizhuan agrees with Shuoyuan, reading ‘用牲’. In adapting the story, the Zuozhuan author may have changed ‘三牲’ to ‘郊’ because of the subsequent mention of the Wang 望 sacrifice; the two sacrifices were linked, the Wang sacrifice being a minor sacrifice performed after the Jiao sacrifice.52

49 Zhouli zhushu 周禮注疏 (Shisanjing zhushu, vol. 3) 25, p. 383; cf. 26, p. 816. The remaining sacrifices (禱) are 類, 造, 䄄, 祭 and 攻. According to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200), the Shuo sacrifice only involved offering 養 and mainly consisted in a verbal berating (貣) of the deities. In Shuoyuan, the sacrifice of the king’s ministers seems to be involved. An explanation of this discrepancy could be that the tradition of Zheng Xuan (and Zhouli itself) tends to redefine ritual involving (human) sacrifice in an “elegant” way. The pronunciation of the name of the sacrifice is uncertain (“Tu'o?”), as is its translation (“Dislodge?”).

50 Zhouli zhushu 37, p. 557. Other rituals in this connection are 祈 and 攻.

51 Huainan zi jiaoshi 淮南子校釋, annot. by Zhang Shuangdi 張雙棣 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 1997) 20, p. 665 (as ‘兌’ in ‘禱祠而求福，雩兌而請雨’). In Yanzi chunqiu jishi 晏子春秋集釋, annot. by Wu Zeyu 吳則虞 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1962) 1, p. 43, Duke Jing of Qi is said to have wanted to kill two of his ritual experts 以説于上帝. The Zuozhuan parallel to this story, Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Zhao 20.6, pp. 1415-1418, does not contain such a locution. Li Ling 李零 (private communication, May 2000) has informed me that this sacrifice is also mentioned in excavated Qin and Chu texts, the character forms used in these being ‘效’ and ‘兌’.

52 The two sacrifices are mentioned together Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Xi 31.3, pp. 486-487; Xuan 3.1, pp. 668.
Zuozhuan and Shuoyuan also differ in the rationale given by the king for not sacrificing. In both the king says that the Yellow River is not one of the places Chu directs its Wang sacrifice to and he names four rivers that are. The point is that the Yellow River lies outside of Chu territory, and, as the king states, 為不於/為越望. In Shuoyuan this is said to follow from the facts of feudal investiture (古者先王, 割地制土), whereas Zuozhuan explains this rule by referring to the injunctions given in ancient times to perform certain sacrifices (三代命祀). The rationale given in Shuoyuan is connected with the concept of territory, crucial to that of the Wang sacrifice, whereas the explanation given in Zuozhuan deals in a more vague manner with sacrifices instituted in antiquity. Here again Han Shi waizhuan supports Shuoyuan. Han Shi waizhuan’s ‘古者聖王之制’ is definitely affiliated in some way with Shuoyuan’s ‘古者先王, 割地制土’.

The ‘過/越’ variation could be due to stylistic variation, the Zuozhuan author seeking to avoid the repetition of characters, but, again, this is too a weak foundation to build an argument regarding derivation upon. Zuozhuan’s ‘遂弗祭’ against Shuoyuan’s ‘遂不祭焉’ may also be due to stylistic concerns, as the Zuozhuan three-character ‘遂弗祭’, with its association of finality, is paralleled not only by the initial ‘王弗祭’ (which is not evidenced elsewhere and may well have been supplied by the Zuozhuan author), but also by the conclusion of the story about the strange clouds, which reads ‘遂弗祭’. The Shuoyuan reading is in both cases supported by Han Shi waizhuan, and this allows us to use these variants as indications that Zuozhuan is not original. Zuozhuan has ‘孔子曰’ instead of Shuoyuan’s ‘仲尼曰’, but this can hardly be attributed any significance.

The Xia Shu 夏書 quotations following Confucius’ appreciation have probably been added by the Zuozhuan author — the addition of Shi and Shu quotations is typical of the Zuozhuan author, as examination of numerous instances of parallels to Zuozhuan stories shows.

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53 One should note that if the king was believed to be at Chengfu in the story, his proximity to the Yellow River would go some way towards explaining why the augury should mention this river at all. However, whether this should be accorded any weight is difficult to decide.

54 The expression ‘命祀’ appears Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Xi 31.5, p. 487, in a passage which states a similar principle concerning the proper recipients of sacrifices, ‘鬼神非其族類, 不歆其祀’ ‘命祀’ also appears Guoyu 4, p. 158. The expression ‘三代’ occurs Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Zhao 7.7, p. 1290, in a discussion likewise involving sacrifice and a ruler’s illness.

Preliminary conclusions, Part 2

I believe it can be said that with regard to neither story do there exist any convincing arguments for the position that the *Shuoyuan* version should have been derived from the *Zuozhuan* version or, indeed, that it has been influenced by it. On the other hand, it does not appear implausible to suppose that *Zuozhuan* derives from an account along the lines of *Shuoyuan*. The *Zuozhuan* version definitely influenced the *Shiji* version, but it appears to have left no other trace in the early transmitted literature. This is in agreement with our knowledge of the limited circulation of this gargantuan text before Eastern Han times.

If it can be shown that there exists a version of a text that does not derive from its parallel in *Zuozhuan*, we then know that this version testifies, however indirectly, to a state of the text in question that is anterior to the text as incorporated in *Zuozhuan*. If we have three versions of the same text, A, B and C, and B depends on A, whereas C does not depend on A or B, then C is on the same level as A, in terms of lineation. A is the source of *Zuozhuan* and B is *Shuoyuan*. Since *Shuoyuan* does not depend on *Zuozhuan*, within the body of witnesses as a whole, *Shuoyuan* is on a par with *Zuozhuan*'s source. This does not imply that *Shuoyuan* is identical with the source of *Zuozhuan*, indeed, it might be quite different, but it shows that it testifies independently to this source. Based on arguments concerning textual filiation, we can go no further. However, if, by means of other arguments, it can be shown to make sense to assume that a text close to *Shuoyuan* served as source for *Zuozhuan*, in that we can explain the transformations that the *Shuoyuan* story underwent by what we know about the *Zuozhuan* author's ideas and ways of working, we may be able to advance, if somewhat perilously, to a more definite view of the relationship between the two texts.

*Shuoyuan* (and possibly *Han Shi waizhuan*) thus testify indirectly to the state of the text used in composing the *Zuozhuan* version. It is important to remember that this in itself does not inform us about which features this text had, only that it had features that lead in two directions, one in the direction of *Zuozhuan* and one in the direction of *Shuoyuan*. Though we do not know with certainty what the state of the original text was, we have reason to believe that the *Shuoyuan* version is a rather faithful witness to the source of the *Zuozhuan* version, because it is difficult to explain how the "specific" features of the *Shuoyuan* version discussed above could arise, were it derived from the *Zuozhuan* version, whereas at least some degree of plausibility adheres to the suggestion that the direction of adaptation proceeded in the other direction. The *Zuozhuan* version can be presumed to be non-original if other versions agree independently against it — an argument of this kind has considerable power, though it is basically negative in nature. Though more interesting, the argument that one of these versions is more likely to have influenced the *Zuozhuan* version is weaker, since it rests on our knowledge about what the *Zuozhuan* author might have done with his sources in order to construct his own account, a "knowledge" which is obviously very indirect and uncertain.

Before entering on speculations regarding these, I would like to explore another story
which appears to have influenced the *Zuozhuan* version of the stories about King Zhao of Chu.

**The story about Duke Jing of Song and its influence upon the *Zuozhuan* version of the story about the strange clouds**

When assessing the nature of *Zuozhuan*’s sources for the story about the strange clouds, one should note that a parallel of a sort exists in the story about an ominous celestial phenomenon observed during the reign of Duke Jing of Song 宋景公 (516-469). This story is rendered in almost identical words in *Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, *Xinxu* 新序, and *Lunheng* 論衡; moreover, a condensed version is found in *Shiji* and a variant version in *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋.56

The Yinghuo 氹惑 star is in the Xin 心 constellation and Duke Jing asks Ziwei 子韋 for interpretation and advice. Ziwei predicts that calamity will strike Duke Jing, but that he can avert trouble by shifting it onto his ministers. The Duke answers that he needs his ministers to rule his state, and that it will lead to no good to cause them to become ill in his stead. Ziwei then suggests that the ruler shift the trouble onto his people, to which Duke Jing replies that if his people die, who is he to rule over? Finally, Ziwei points to the possibility of unloading the trouble onto the harvest, which Duke Jing finds wrong, for who will regard him as a legitimate ruler if he lets his people die of starvation? Ziwei congratulates Duke Jing, stating that since Heaven is sure to have heard his three good sayings, Heaven will bestow three-fold blessings upon him, which he computes to mean an extension of the duke’s life-span by twenty-one years. Moreover, he predicts that the Yinghuo star will recede three mansions (astrological houses) the very same night, which it then did.

This story, with its tripartite structure and involved astrology, is more elaborate than that about King Zhao of Chu and the strange clouds, but there are striking points of contact between this story (in all its various versions) and the *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* versions of the story about King Zhao of Chu and the strange clouds, in addition to their shared moral.

First, in the *Zuozhuan* version of the story about the strange clouds the Grand Scribe says: ‘其當王身乎’ (ZZ/B14), whereas in the *Xinxu* version of the story about Duke Jing of Song Ziwei says: ‘禍當君身’. Other versions of the story about Duke Jing of Song contain variants of this, but all employ the character ‘當’.57 Though there is nothing peculiar about the use of this character in *Zuozhuan*, *Zuozhuan* is the only text which employs it in the story about

56 *Lushi chunqiu jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋校釋, annot. Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 (Shanghai: Xuelin, 1984) 6, pp. 347-348 (quoted in the appendix); see also *Huainanji jiaoshi* 12, p. 398; *Xinxu zhuzi suoyin* 新序逐字索引, ed. by D. C. Lau and Chen Fangzheng 陳方正 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu, 1992) 4.27, pp. 23-24; *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋, annot. by Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990) 4, pp. 202-3; *Shiji* 38, p. 1631; *Yanzi chunqiu jishi* 7, pp. 435-436. The *Lushi chunqiu* version (*Lushi Chunjiqu jiaoshi* 6, pp. 347-348) is rendered below.

57 *Lushi chunqiu*: ‘禍當於君’; *Huainanzi* and *Lunheng*: ‘禍且當君’. ‘當’ is also used in a similar context in *Chunjiqu Zuozhuan shu* Xiang 25.2, p. 1096.
King Zhao of Chu, and this is significant.

Second, the Lushi chunqiu, Huainanzi, Xinzu and Lunheng versions of the story about Duke Jing of Song have '雖然，可移於宰相'，where the Zuozhuan and Shiji stories about King Zhao of Chu have '可移於令尹、司馬' (ZZ/B15) and '然，可移於將相' (SJ/B4) (Shiji here obviously draws on Zuozhuan). The Shuoyuan story about King Zhao of Chu contains no parallel to this phrase, a phrase which plays a central role in the Zuozhuan and Shiji versions of the story.

How are we to explain the appearance of these two passages in the Zuozhuan version of the story about King Zhao of Chu and the strange clouds?

I hypothesise that first the Zuozhuan drew on a story about King Zhao of Chu, more or less as we have it in the present edition of Shuoyuan. Then, influenced by the story about Duke Jing of Song, he added two concepts to it: that of '當' and that of '移'. If this hypothesis is not accepted, the question will have to be answered why Zuozhuan and Shiji alone render a version of the story about the strange clouds that employs these expressions? Is it at all plausible to hold that Zuozhuan served as source for the version of the story about King Zhao of Chu and the strange clouds which is found in Shuoyuan, when no other version of the story (except the dependent Shiji) contains any indication that its source contained these two central concepts? Is it not more plausible to suppose that the Zuozhuan author wove the story about Duke Jing of Song into his version of the story of King Zhao of Chu?

There are a number of circumstances that make this hypothesis more probable.

One notes, first of all, that the message of the story is that virtue alone can eliminate calamity — measures that seek to shift trouble unto others are self-defeating. Since the moral of the two stories is practically identical, it makes sense to suppose that they were brought together, whether by the Zuozhuan author or someone else who compiled the material used by the Zuozhuan author.

There is also a striking chronological congruence. Duke Jing of Song is promised twenty-one years more to live; according to Zuozhuan, he died in 469. This means that the prediction took place (using the Chinese way of reckoning) in 489. That this is when King Zhao of Chu died may not be coincidental, and may be said to lend some support to the

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58 Lienü zhuan, being derivative of Shiji, is left out of account here. 59 Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Ai 26.2, p. 1729-30; Shiji 38, p. 1631. Liu Zhenghao, Zhou Qin zhuzi shu Zuozhuan kao, p. 216-217, notes that the story about the duke Jing of Song parallels that about King Zhao of Chu and that the years coincide, but apparently he sees the story about King Zhao of Chu as an adaptation of the story of Duke Jing of Song. This is an unnecessarily radical proposal; rather, confusion is at issue. There exists another story in which Duke Jing's death is predicted. In Guwen suoyu 古文索語, quoted Yiwen leiju 藝文類聚 (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1982), 87, p. 1502, Xing Shi Zichen 邢史子臣 predicts his own death five years hence, then the destruction of the state of Wu another five years hence, then the death of Duke Jing yet five years hence. In the catalogue of the Han imperial library, a book entitled Song sixing Ziwei 宋司星子韋 is listed (Hanshu 漢書 [Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962] 30, p. 1733). Presumably this lost book contained accounts similar to these.
hypothesis that the two stories in some way became associated.

There appear to be two ways in which the story about Duke Jing of Song could have influenced the Zuozhuan rendition of the story about King Zhao of Chu. One is that the Zuozhuan author found the two stories in two independent sources and brought the two stories together when arranging his material according to thematic and/or chronological criteria. Even though he decided not to use the story about Duke Jing of Song, his acquaintance with it left traces in his rendition of the story about King Zhao of Chu. The other is that only one source was used by the Zuozhuan author and that this source contained both stories.

I believe it is possible to argue for the second position, that the Shuoyuan stories which surround the two stories studied here are excerpts, directly or indirectly, of a book which contained stories with morals similar to those about King Zhao and, furthermore, that the stories surrounding the Shuoyuan stories about King Zhao are excerpts from this work. The multitude of didactic stories of Han and pre-Han times are generally thought to have moved from text to text as singular stories, but exceptions to this rule could exist. However, since the argument for the existence of this thematically organised book is tenuous at best and does not support the hypothesis that specifically the story about Duke Jing of Song influenced the story about King Zhao of Chu, I will not attempt to develop it here.

The moral dimension imparted to the Zuozhuan version of the stories

We must ask the question whether, with our knowledge of the Zuozhuan author, it makes sense to hold that the Zuozhuan account has been built out of something closely resembling the Shuoyuan versions of the stories. Creating a “scenario” like this does not prove anything, for the speculative element is strong, but if it is difficult to imagine how the process occurred, something is bound to be wrong, either with the concrete theory of derivation entertained or with our knowledge of the habits of the Zuozhuan author.

We might begin by considering what the Zuozhuan author achieved by the manipulations I argue that he performed. What was his purpose, in addition to producing a coherent narrative?

In part, his motivation appears to have been to make the narrative an illustration of a certain moralistic view of history. In Shuoyuan the king is portrayed as a sceptic with regard to the irregular claims made by his advisors concerning the efficacy of performing various sacrifices, but in Zuozhuan — by means of the Shu passages he quotes and his final summing-up — Confucius rather praises the king for his moral character and especially for his moral initiative (由己率常) (ZZ/B30). The same difference is found in the way the king rejects the advice given in the story about the strange birds. In Shuoyuan, the king argues solely that sacrificing his ministers would be futile, since the ministers are an integral part of the state; in Zuozhuan, the king additionally discusses the issue in moral terms: if he has committed an offence, he ought to accept punishment for it himself (有罪受罰), and he asks the rhetorical
question whether Heaven would cause his premature death (天其夭誅) if he was innocent (ZZJ/B18). The level of discourse is therefore different, basically involving the rationality of mantic advice in Shuoyuan and the morality of mantic advice in Zuozhuan. The morality espoused by the king in Zuozhuan is, however, of a special kind: instead of taking all the blame upon himself, regardless of questions of guilt, which appears to be what he should do according to Shuoyuan, in Zuozhuan the king expresses his belief that Heaven will not treat him unfairly, implying that he is not required by the Way to suffer for others.

Since these elements are the point of what is distinct in the Zuozhuan author’s additions to the Shuoyuan narratives, it makes sense to seek in them his main intention in reworking the materials at his disposal.

The moral dimension given the king’s rejection of mantic advice in Zuozhuan is probably what has caused it to disintegrate causally. In the same year that he dies the king states that if he is innocent, he will not meet with premature death — whereupon he dies prematurely. The king courageously expresses his determination to die in battle — whereupon he dies of illness. There appear to be two ways of explaining these inconsistencies. One might interpret them as testifying to the documentary nature of Zuozhuan — this is actually what the king said, but things turned out differently, and who could blame the Zuozhuan author for his faithful depiction of the inconsistencies of life? The other way is to see them as testifying to the Zuozhuan author’s imperfect integration and adaptation of his (very consistent, if somewhat simplistic) sources — he wished (for reasons which will have to be explained) to depict the king’s heroic devotion to battle and to moralise the king’s rejection of mantic advice, but the adjustments and additions he made to his sources gave rise to problems of narrative coherence which he did not notice (or attribute importance to). As the following discussion will show, I favour the second answer.

The question of unresolved dilemmas

There is a certain lack of consistency in the attitude taken by King Zhao in the scene prior to his death and in the attitude taken by Gongzi Qi in the scene following the death of King Zhao. In both cases the narrative is structured around dilemmas. Both fighting and retreating were inauspicious, but King Zhao chose to die in battle, exclaiming “Let me die at the hands of my foe!” (其死於乎) (ZZJ/B4). In this we may presume that the king was led by considerations of honour, but we are told that, inconsequently, he died of illness. His stated objective was to avoid leading Chu to yet another defeat and to avoid disgracefully fleeing the enemy, and though by choosing to die in battle he of course avoided the latter alternative, it is not clear how he imagined that his country could avoid defeat if he, the king, was slain on the field. This also appears inconsistent. After the king’s death, Gongzi Qi faced another dilemma: should he obey the king’s wish that he himself become king or should he establish one of the king’s sons as king? Both alternatives were compliant with the Way (順) and both were unconditionally imperative.
Gongzi Qi and his two brothers eventually decided to establish a son of the king on the throne, thus in effect choosing to be filial (孝) rather than brotherly (弟), but it is unclear according to which criterion they solved their dilemma (子立父) — was the son wiser or more capable, or did he become king because he was the eldest?

One might thus say that both dilemmas are inadequately integrated into the over-all narrative — unless one wishes to attribute to the Zuozhuan author the view that human motivation is inconsequential.

Seen as a whole, the episodes leading up to and following the king’s death form a narrative of near-deductive integration. The king, young as he was, would presumably not appoint a successor while in the field if he did not feel certain that he was about to die, and how could he have been certain about this if he had not taken omens about it? Of course, he could have taken omens about the time of his death at any time in his life, but since he was known to have died on a military campaign, there is some logic in the suggestion that he divined about the outcome of the battle he was to engage in — the divination must then have told him that he would die in battle, no matter what he did.

I am suggesting that the narrative of the death of King Zhao was fleshed out by the Zuozhuan author, who extrapolated from the few facts known to him, and that the deductions he made occasioned the inconsistencies observed.

Let us imagine the following information to have been available to the Zuozhuan author: King Zhao died of illness at Chengfu on such-and-such a day, while on a campaign in aid of Chen, having just attacked Wu at Daming; subsequently, Gongzi Qi, Gongzi Jie and Gongzi Shen hurried to the capital to install Zhang, the king’s son, in his stead. Let us further imagine that the Zuozhuan author considered these facts to be fairly uninteresting and that he wished to portray the king’s death in a more “philosophical” vein. Given three royal scions with a dead king far from the capital, things could certainly have turned bad — why did they selflessly install the son, when usurping the throne would have been so easy?

The Zuozhuan author would think back to the time when King Zhao inherited the throne and would remember that at the death of King Ping 楚平王 (r. 528-516), Gongzi Shen, the brother of King Ping by a concubine, was thought more fit to follow King Ping than Ren 王, the king known to posterity as King Zhao, who was the son of King Ping by a concubine.60 Gongzi Shen argued vehemently against his own inheritance of the throne, holding that this was not “compliant” (順), and Ren was duly established as king.61 The Zuozhuan author would notice that the opposition between a son with a formal claim to the throne and a brother (or uncle) regarded as more wise and capable could be highlighted again with some plausibility, once more involving the term ‘順’, and that Gongzi Shen could in effect be made to forego the

60 *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* Zhao 26.6, p. 1474-1475, quoted in the appendix.
61 Note the close resemblance of his speech with that Zhao Dun 趙盾 held in a similar situation in Jin; *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* Wen 6.5, p. 550.
throne on two occasions. However, this time three persons were involved, so all three had to be cast in the rôle that Gongzi Shen had played 27 years earlier.

Since the king must then have sought to appoint all three royal scions, he must have had a reason for this, and the obvious reason was that he knew he was about to die. Presumably a sudden turn in the king’s illness would have been sufficient to make a convincing case for his sudden demise, but since the king was on campaign, it would be more dramatic to integrate his knowledge of his imminent death into the situation he was in. Since omens were routinely taken in connection with such activities, it would have seemed obvious that the king was told of his death by an omen taken on the success or failure of the campaign.

Reasoning from the material at his disposal and feeling a desire to make the story interesting, the Zuozhuan author might have constructed his account in this way, but if he did he did not notice (or attach importance to) the circumstance that the logic-driven nature of his manipulations led to certain narrative inconsistencies.

It certainly might be the case that other explanations could be found for the curious features of the account. Be that as it may, I see at present no other way of making sense of all the circumstances of this account and therefore believe that the contents as well as the form of the pre-battle story and the abdication story are elaborations on the part of the Zuozhuan author.

The relationship between the Zuozhuan account of King Zhao’s death and the Chunqiu

Another element contributing to the inconsistencies of the Zuozhuan account perhaps comes from the confrontation of the factual account of the Chunqiu with the didactic stories concerning the strange clouds and the Yellow River.

Under the first year of the reign of Duke Ai (494), Zuozhuan states that “In autumn, in the 8th month, Wu invaded Chen; this was because [Wu] nursed its old grudges [against Chen]” (秋，八月，吳侵陳，修舊怨也). No Chunqiu entry corresponds to this, though Zuozhuan clearly comments on some pre-existing text, possibly an edition of Chunqiu earlier than the transmitted edition.

In a spring notice from the sixth year of Duke Ai (489), Chunqiu states that “Wu attacked Chen” (吳伐陳), which Zuozhuan comments upon in the following way: “Wu attacked Chen; this was because [Wu] again nursed its old grudges [against Chen]. The Chu Zi said: “My former lord had a pact with Chen; I must come to its rescue.” (吳伐陳，復修舊怨也。楚子曰：「吾先君與陳有盟，不可以不救。」乃救陳，師于城父。). The ‘復’ obviously relates to the passage from the first year of Duke Ai.

From Chunqiu the Zuozhuan author would therefore have known that in the spring of 489, King Zhao was on a campaign against Wu in aid of Chen. The information that his camp was based in Chengfu (師于城父) was presumably based on another source. The Chu king’s
statement of his obligation to aid Chen may conceivably be based on a pre-existing source, but its function in the spring notice as a whole is hardly more than commentarial, explaining why Chu felt obliged to aid Chen, and it adds no further knowledge of the event in question. I think we would be wrong in assuming that the Zuozhuan author necessarily had sources to back up this passage.

In an autumn notice from the same year, Chunqiu states that “In autumn, in the seventh month, on a gengyin day, Chu Zi Zhen died.” (秋，七月庚寅，楚子轸卒). This entry forms the basis for the Zuozhuan account of the death of the king.

In this account, the Zuozhuan first states that the king was at Chengfu in the seventh month and that he was preparing to aid Chen (秋，七月，楚子在城父，將救陳); later on, it then notes that he died in Chengfu on a gengyin day of this month whilst attacking Daming (庚寅，昭王攻大冥，卒于城父). Does this mean that the Zuozhuan author had two sources containing dates, one concerning when the king arrived at Chengfu and one concerning when he died? I doubt that this was the case: rather, the Chunqiu date has been split up, the events dated to the month setting the scene for the main event dated to the day, the king’s death. There is a fair number of similar month/day splits of Chunqiu dates in Zuozhuan, typically setting off battle preparations from the battle itself and the events leading up to the death of a ruler from the death itself.62

The Zuozhuan author knew from Chunqiu when the king died, and he deduced from the source he had drawn upon for the spring entry that the king had been encamped at Chengfu, obviously assuming that the king had stayed in the same place since spring. The information that the king died whilst attacking Daming must derive from a pre-existing source, possibly the same that informed the Zuozhuan author that the king was camped at Chengfu.

The approach I have used above has been to peel away everything from the Zuozhuan account that does not present “historical facts” that the Zuozhuan author may be presumed to know about from chronicles at his disposal. The question is: did the Zuozhuan author know, from such sources, that the king had died of illness?

Let us assume that he did not. The Zuozhuan author then had the following information to play with: the king stayed at Chengfu in spring to attack Chen, and he died in connection with an attack on Daming on a certain day in autumn.

This opens the possibility that the Zuozhuan author worked with this material on two occasions. First, he wrote that, in autumn, while at Chengfu, the king took auguries and found that no way of action open to him would bring success, whereupon he decided to die on the

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62 See, e.g., Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Yin 11.3, pp. 73; Xi 15.4, p. 355-356; Wen 1.7, p. 515; Wen 2.1, p. 519; Xuan 2.3, pp. 659-662. This is not to say that such a split invariably is performed in Zuozhuan — it would also have been possible to have leave the opening account undated (see, e.g., Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Yin 3.5, pp. 28-30; Wen 12.6, pp. 589-592); it is unclear to me why the Zuozhuan author used now one, now the other way of disposing such dates.
field. In anticipation of his own death, the king passed on the throne to Gongzi Qi and then attacked Daming, dying in the process. After the king's death, Gongzi Qi installed Zhang as king instead.

What we have in this way is the *Zuozhuan* account as we know it with all elements mentioning illness removed — the king had been cast in a heroic rôle instead. The account does not contain any of the inconsistencies that have been discussed above. In formulating this account, the *Zuozhuan* author presumably could have been inspired by his own description of the death of King Ping, but we do not have to assume that he used any further sources.

After he had elaborated this account, the *Zuozhuan* author decided to use the two stories paralleled in *Shuoyuan*. They both introduced the theme of illness, and the *Zuozhuan* author decided that King Zhao had died of illness, not in battle, and he incorporated the two stories in a manner which would explain this. He related the first story causally to the death of the king, noting that it took place in the same year, and then related the second story in a looser way, implying the king's health was bad. The incorporation of the two stories gave rise to most of the inconsistencies mentioned above, for now the king was supposed to die of illness, not in battle.

This is speculative, but it does supply one way of accounting for the inconsistencies of the *Zuozhuan* account, a problem which any interpretation will have to face. If the *Zuozhuan* author started out with the knowledge that the king died of illness, I see no way of imagining a "scenario" which could account for the creation of the present text. I therefore hypothesise that this "information" was derived from the two stories examined in the beginning of this article.

**Conclusions**

In this paper I have argued for the possibility that in his account of the death of King Zhao of Chu, the *Zuozhuan* author used a version of the stories about the strange clouds and the Yellow River that was close to the version we know from *Shuoyuan* and that he was influenced in his rendering of these stories by a version of the story about Duke Jing of Song that has been discussed above. The *Shiji* version of the stories is the only version which shows influence from *Zuozhuan*, but in addition it builds on a version of the story close to that found in *Shuoyuan*. *Han Shi waizhuan* contains a story closely affiliated with that in *Shuoyuan* as well, but not about King Zhao. *Han Shi waizhuan*, *Shiji* and *Shuoyuan* are not dependent upon each other; the combined evidence of the three, coupled with the independent evidence regarding the story about Duke Jing of Song, constitute whatever support there is for my main thesis.

In addition to this, I have attempted to imagine what could be the provenance of the parts of the *Zuozhuan* account of the death of King Zhao that are not mirrored in sources other than the dependent *Shiji* and to construct an authoring scenario that would account for the inconsistencies in that account, as well as its distinctive message. I have attempted to show how
the inconsistencies may have arisen as the result of a two-stage composition of the account, the latter stage being motivated by the wish to express a certain moral, occasioned by the temptation that arose to have the king die of illness once the two omen-related stories were incorporated into the account of the king’s death. I readily concede that other scenarios may be possible, but believe that the suggested scenario is at least possible. In studies of a similar didactic stories, which I hope to publish in the near future, I show a situation similar to that outlined in this case.

The analysis of the Shiji rendering of the Zuo account has shown some of the techniques used by the Shiji author to marshal the material at his disposal, and the different slant put on the Shiji rendition makes ideas informing the Zuo version stand out clearer.

Those acquainted with Shuoyuan will perhaps protest that this late Western Han text simply cannot contain material as “ancient” as I claim — the parts of it that relate to pre-Han times contain so many anachronisms and often use language characteristic of Han times, and this makes all of the text appear suspect. Dissatisfaction with the probity of the text goes back to Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661-721), but we must bear in mind that, as Liu Xiang explains in the edition report he presented to Emperor Cheng, it is basically an ordering of material Liu Xiang had found in the imperial libraries, supplemented with material in his own possession and material obtained from the populace. Aside from the chapter prefaces composed by Liu Xiang himself, the work consists entirely of “original material from ancient books” (古書原文), as phrased by Yu Jiaxi 余家錫. It would be wrong to rule out in advance that it contains material of value in the study of pre-Han China. Detailed studies of Shuoyuan that could illuminate this question are still lacking, but recently D. C. Lau has examined the use of taboo characters in the text and found it to contain ancient material of an origin different from parallels in other works. Gustav Haloun has studied the in many ways similar, but even more dubious, Kongzi jiayu, and has shown it to contain material more original than the parallels in, e.g., Lüshi

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63 Shitong xin jiaozhu 史通新校注, annot. by Zhao Lüfu 趙呂甫 (Chongqing: Chongqing Chubanshe, 1990), pp. 979-980.
I believe it possible to show by examining other parallels to Zuozhuan accounts that the material used by Liu Xiang for his anecdote compilations in other cases as well lies close to the sources of Zuozhuan. This is not to say that Shuoyuan does not, in places, derive from Zuozhuan — such cases do occur, but so do cases in which Shuoyuan presents material that is more original than Zuozhuan. 

69 The relationship between the Chunqiu commentaries and Shuoyuan is discussed in Noma Fumichika, "Ryū Kō Shunju-setsu kō" Tetsugaku 哲學 31 (1979), pp. 57-83.
### Appendix: Sources

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<td>CQ/A</td>
<td>Chunqiu Ai 6.3, p. 1632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ/B</td>
<td>Chunqiu Ai 6.6, p. 1632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSWZ</td>
<td>Han Shi waizhuan jishi 3, pp. 90-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZJY</td>
<td>Kongzi jiayu zhuzi suoyin 41.17, p. 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNZ/A-D</td>
<td>Gu Lienü zhuan zhuzi suoyin 5, 7b-8a (material particular to Lienü zhuan has been omitted at ‘…’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ/A-D</td>
<td>Shiji 40, p. 1717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SY/A</td>
<td>Shuoyuan 1, p. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SY/B</td>
<td>Shuoyuan 1, pp. 23-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZZ/A</td>
<td>Zuozhuan Ai 6.2, pp. 1633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZZ/B</td>
<td>Zuozhuan Ai 6.4, pp. 1634-1636</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chunqiu Ai 6.3, p. 1632

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZZ/A1</th>
<th>吳伐 陳。復修舊怨也。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SJI/A</td>
<td>二十七年春。吳伐 陳。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNZ/A1</td>
<td>居二十五年。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chunqiu Ai 6.6, p. 1632

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZZ/A2</th>
<th>楚子曰：「吾先君與陳有盟。不可以不救。」乃救 陳。師于城父。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SJI/A2</td>
<td>楚昭王救之。軍城父。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNZ/A2</td>
<td>王救 陳。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Shiji 40, p. 1717

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZZ/B1</th>
<th>秋。七月。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SJI/A3</td>
<td>十月。昭王病於軍中。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNZ/A3</td>
<td>王病在軍中。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Zuozhuan Ai 6.2, pp. 1633-1634

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZZ/B2</th>
<th>卜戦。不吉。卜退。不吉。</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SJI/A3</td>
<td>卜戦。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNZ/A3</td>
<td>卜退。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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王曰：「然則死也。再敗楚師。不如死。」

棄盟逃讕。亦不如死。死一也。其死讕乎。」

命公子申為王。不可。則命公子結。亦不可。

讓其弟公子申為王。不可。又讓次弟公子結。亦不可。

立于三弟。三弟不聽。

則命公子敗。五辭而後許。

乃又讓次弟公子闔。五讓。乃後許為王。

秋。七月。庚寅。楚子滅卒。

將戰。王有疾。

庚寅。昭王攻大冥。卒于城父。

將戰。

庚寅。昭王卒於軍中。

王薨于軍中。盟。

子閔退。曰。「君王舍其子而讓。」

子閔曰。「王病甚。舍其子而讓群臣。臣所以許王。以廣王意也。

群臣敢忘君乎。

今君王卒。臣豈敢忘君王之意乎。」

從君之命。順也。立君之子。亦順也。二順不可失也。」
43
| SY/B5 | 令尹、司馬聞之。宿齋沐浴。將自以身禦之於神。 |
| ZZ/B16 |  |
| SJ/B5 | 將相聞是言。乃請自以身禦於神。 |
| LNZ/B5 |  |
| SY/B6-1 | 王曰。「止。楚國之有不穀也。由身之有匈鬱也。 |
| ZZ/B17-1 | 王曰。 |
| SJ/B6-1 | 昭王曰。 |
| LNZ/B6-1 | 王曰。 |
| SY/B6-2 | 「除腹心之疾。而實諸股肱。何益。 |
| ZZ/B17-2 | 「將相。孤之股肱也。 |
| SJ/B6-2 | 「將相之於孤。猶股肱也。 |
| LNZ/B6-2 |  |
| SY/B7-1 | 匈鬱有疾。轉之股肱。 |
| ZZ/B18-1 | 不穀不有大過。天其天諸。有罪受罰。 |
| SJ/B7-1 |  |
| LNZ/B7-1 |  |
| SY/B7-2 | 庸為去是人也。」 |
| ZZ/B18-2 | 又焉移之。」 |
| SJ/B7-2 | 今移禍。庸為去是身乎。」 |
| LNZ/B7-2 | 今移禍焉。庸為去是身乎。」 |
| ZZ/B19 | 遂弗祭。 |
| SJ/B8 | 非聽。 |
| LNZ/B8 | 不聽。⋯ |
| SY/B9 | 楚昭王有疾，卜之。曰。「河為祟。」 |
| HSWZ/1 | 楚莊王廢疾，卜之。曰。「河為祟。」 |
| ZZ/B20 | 初，昭王有疾，卜。曰。「河為祟。」 |
| KZJY/1 | 楚昭王有疾。卜。曰。「河為祟。」 |
| SJ/B9 | 卜而河為祟。 |
| SY/A1 | 大夫請用三牲焉。 |
| HSWZ/2 | 大夫曰。「請用牲。」 |
| ZZ/B21 | 王弗祭，大夫請祭諸郊。 |
| KZJY/2 | 王弗祭。大夫請祭諸郊。 |
| SJ/B10 | 大夫請彊河。 |
| SY/A2 | 王曰。「止。古者先王，制地制土。祭不過望。」 |
| HSWZ/3 | 莊王曰。「止。古者聖王之制。祭不過望。」 |
| ZZ/B22 | 王曰。「三代命祀。」祭不過望。 |
| KZJY/3 | 王曰。「三代命祀。」祭不過望。 |
| SJ/B11 | 昭王曰。「自吾先王，受封。望不過。」 |
| SY/A3 | 江、漢、雎、滎。楚之望也。禍福之至，不是過也。 |
| HSWZ/4 | 漯、滍、江、漢。楚之望也。 |
| ZZ/B23 | 江、漢、雎、淠。楚之望也。禍福之至，不是過也。 |
| KZJY/4 | 江、漢、沮、滎。楚之望也。禍福之至，不是過也。 |
| SJ/B12 | 江、漢。 |
| SY/A4 | 不殺雖不德。河非所獲罪也。」遂不祭焉。 |
| HSWZ/5 | 喪人殺不德。河非所獲罪也。」遂不祭。三日而疾有瘳。 |
| ZZ/B24 | 不殺雖不德。河非所獲罪也。」遂弗祭。 |
| KZJY/5 | 不殺雖不德。河非所獲罪也。」遂不祭。 |
| SJ/B13 | 而河非所獲罪也。」止。不許。 |

45
| SY/A5-1 | 仲尼聞之，曰：「昭王可謂知天道矣。」 |
| HSWZ6-1 | 孔子聞之，曰：「楚莊王之霸。」 |
| ZZ/B25-1 | 孔子曰：「楚昭王知大道矣。」 |
| KZJY/6-2 | 孔子曰：「楚昭王通大道矣。」 |
| SJ/B14-1 | 孔子在陳，聞是言，曰：「楚昭王通大道矣。」 |
| SY/A5-2 | 。其不失國，宜哉。」 |
| HSWZ6-2 | 其有方矣。制節守職，反身不貳。其不失國也。宜哉。 |
| ZZ/B25-2 | 其不失國也。宜哉。 |
| KZJY/6-2 | 其不失國也。宜哉。 |
| SJ/B14-2 | 其不失國。宜哉。」 |

| HSWZ7-1 |
| ZZ/B26-1 |
| KZJY/7-1 |

| SJ/B15-1 | 昭王病甚。乃詔諸公子大夫。曰：「孤不佞。再辱楚國之師。」 |
| LNZ/C-1 | 王病甚。 |

| HSWZ7-2 |
| ZZ/B26-2 |
| KZJY/7-2 |

| SJ/B15-2 | 今乃得以天壽終。孤之幸也。」 |
| LNZ/C-2 |

| HSWZ8-1 |
| ZZ/B27-1 | 夏書曰：「惟彼陶唐，師彼天常。有此翼方。」 |
| KZJY/8-1 | 夏書曰：「維彼陶唐，師彼天常。在彼翼方。」

In Zuozhuan, '天道' occurs as '大道'; Kong Yingda and Lu Deming 陸德明 note the variant reading '天道', but hold it to be mistaken. As argued by Li Fusun, 10, 19b, the reading '天道' is not implausible in light of the expression '天常' which occurs in the following quotation from the Xia Shu. '天道' also occurs Zuozhuan Xiang 9, p. 863. '大道' is, however, also evidenced by the Shiji parallel. '天道' is used exclusively in connection with disasters elsewhere in Zuozhuan; cf. Xiang 9.1, p. 963, Xiang 18.4, p. 1041, Zhao 18.3, p. 1395, Zhao 26.10, p. 1479 (which also concerns 知天道).

The story about Duke Jing of Song (Lüshi Chunqiu jiaoshi 6, pp. 347-348)

The Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu Zhao 26.8, p. 1474-1475

九月。楚平王卒。令尹子常欲立子西。曰：「大子王鍾。其母非適也。王子建寭聘之。子西長而好善。立長則順。建舊則治。王順、國治。可不務乎。」子西怒。曰：「是亂國而惡君也。國不外授。不可難也。王有適嗣。不可亂也。敗親。遂亂。亂終。不祥。我受其名。贈吾以天下。吾誰不從也。楚國何為。必殺令尹。」令尹懼。乃立昭王。
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