

THREE TEXTUAL STUDIES OF THE *MÒZǏ*

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The following studies of the *Mòzǐ* were written for conferences of the Warring States Working Group in 1997 and 1998 and circulated among members of the group. Since they have not previously appeared in an easily accessible publication, it seems worthwhile to include them here. They are reprinted below with minor revisions from the original versions. The first study provides strong grounds for rejecting A. C. Graham's hypothesis that several of the shorter Mohist essays were not originally part of the thirty triad essays, but are "digests and fragments" inserted to replace missing essays.¹ It shows that one of the purported "fragments," Book 17, is unlikely to be a missing piece of Book 26, as Graham proposed. The second and third studies argue for the sequential revision theory of the triads presented in Appendix I. This is the view that different triad essays were composed during different periods in the development of the Mohist school. In these studies, I argue that, in the case of the "Inclusive Care," "Promoting the Worthy," and "Identifying Upward" triads, the first essay in each triad is probably chronologically earlier than the second, which in turn is earlier than the third.

1. IS *MÒZǏ* 17 A FRAGMENT OF *MÒZǏ* 26?²

A. C. Graham suggested that *Mòzǐ* Book 17, *Fēi Gōng Shàng* 非攻上 (Condemning Aggression I), originally was not an independent chapter in the "Condemning Aggression" series, but rather part of the ending of *Mòzǐ* Book 26, the first of the *Tiān Zhì* 天志 (Heaven's Intention)

chapters (*Divisions*, pp. 3–4). I argue that we have no reason to think Book 17 is a fragment of Book 26, but the position of Book 17 in the “Condemning Aggression” series does raise a question concerning the theory that the series represents the sequential development of the Mohist anti-war doctrine.

Graham’s Argument

Graham set out to explain why 17 is one of only three books in the extant triads that do not begin with the formula “Our master Mòzǐ states...” 子墨子言曰. He observed that the discussion in 26 runs roughly parallel to that in 28, the third “Heaven’s Intention” chapter, for about two thirds the length of the latter (to 28/46), after which 26 concludes. The remainder of 28 contains a passage (28/56–69) that is similar in content to 17 but has no counterpart in 26. Moreover, one of the examples in 17 and 28 involves distinguishing the colors black and white, and although 27, the second “Heaven’s Intention” chapter, also mentions distinguishing black from white, 26 does not. Graham thought these observations supported the hypothesis that 17 is a fragment from the original, now lost ending of 26. Presumably, he took this hypothesis to explain three points. First, 17 does not begin with “Our master Mòzǐ states” because it is not a complete *piān* 篇, or independent bamboo scroll. Second, 17 is similar to 28/56–69 because it originally was a part of 26, which at one time had an ending parallel to that of 28. Third, the extant 26 contains no passage analogous to 28/56–69 and no mention of the black/white distinction because these portions of the original essay are now in 17.

Critique

Graham’s hypothesis that 17 is a fragment from 26—which I will refer to as the “fragment

hypothesis”—may indeed explain the absence of the “Our master Mòzǐ” formula from the head of 17. But it does so at the cost of introducing several other problems. Moreover, the fragment hypothesis does not provide the best available explanation of the second and third points above.

(1a) Compared with the other twenty-two extant triad chapters, the most striking feature of 17 is that the text fails to mention Mòzǐ at all. The fragment hypothesis does not explain this feature well, because if the fragment hypothesis were correct, we would expect that 17 would include a Mòzǐ citation. The “our master Mòzǐ states” formula is used six times throughout 26, and it appears once in the middle of the passage in 28 that is supposedly the counterpart of the missing ending of 26.

(1b) Books 17 and 26 consistently use different phrases for the persons whose behavior they discuss: 17 uses “gentlemen of the world” 天下之君子 three times, while 26 uses “officers and gentlemen of the world” 天下之士君子 five times (once omitting the *zhī* 之). the fragment hypothesis cannot explain this difference between the two chapters.

(1c) If the fragment hypothesis were correct, we would expect to find incomplete sentences or other evidence of broken bamboo strips in 17 or at the ending of 26, but we do not.

(2) The fragment hypothesis explains the similarity between 28/56–69 and 17 by transposing 17 to the end of 26, which has many other similarities to 28. However, Graham failed to notice that another part of the ending of 28 (28/47–49), which also has no parallel in 26, shares several phrases with Book 18 (18/34–35) and is extremely similar to several lines in Book 19 (19/11–13).³ Thus we need to explain not only the parallel between 28 and 17, but also that between 28, 18, and 19.

Unless we are prepared to suggest that 19 too was once part of the posited lost ending of 26, I think

the simplest explanation for both sets of parallels is that the writers of 28 borrowed material from the “Condemning Aggression” series, including 17. (I take this to be the direction of quotation, because it is more likely that writers adding an anti-war message to a text on Heaven’s intention would borrow from two anti-war tracts than that the writers of two separate anti-war texts would both borrow from a single text on Heaven’s intention.) Thus the similarity between 28 and 17 can be explained without transposing 17 to the end of 26.

(3) According to the fragment hypothesis, the absence of a passage in 26 analogous to 28/56–69 calls for explanation. The account the hypothesis offers is that 26 and 28 originally ran closely parallel for the entire length of the latter chapter, and part of the missing ending of 26 can be found in 17. I propose a simpler explanation. The ending of 28 is different from that of 26 because the writers or editors of 28 chose to supplement the content of 26, their main source text, with an extended anti-war passage incorporating material from 17 and 19. They followed the basic structure of 26, but added the supplementary passage beginning at 28/46, with no serious attempt to integrate the main theme of the chapter into it. The lines immediately preceding the passage state that Mòzǐ established “Heaven’s intention” to serve as a standard, “by which I know the officers and gentlemen of the world are far from morality.” The conclusion of the chapter returns to the theme of Heaven’s intention and again mentions standards. But the intervening passage does not illustrate or even mention the use of Heaven’s intention as a standard, and it discusses the behavior of rulers, not officers and gentlemen.

Finally, the contexts in which the black/white distinction appears in 27 and 28 are so dissimilar that we have no reason to think a reference to the distinction was originally a general feature of all

three *Tiān Zhì* chapters. In 27, the colors are mentioned briefly in the final lines of the text as a simile for a distinction that is easy to draw. In 28, they are used in an extended example that highlights the inconsistency of those who condemn minor crimes but approve of military aggression.

Verdict

Graham's fragment hypothesis faces at least three serious explanatory obstacles and provides an implausible account of the relationship between books 17, 26, and 28. I conclude that 17 is not a fragment of 26. Both this conclusion and my alternative hypothesis concerning the ending of 28 are *prima facie* compatible with either a three-schools theory of the triads or a sequential development theory.

A New Problem

If my hypothesis about the relationship between the "Condemning Aggression" chapters and 28 is correct, then at the time the ending of 28 was written, 17 was firmly associated with the "Condemning Aggression" theme. This raises a puzzle concerning the relationship between the three "Condemning Aggression" chapters. Books 17 and 19 both contain passages of philosophical interest, and both emphasize the immorality of military aggression. In contrast, in 18 the philosophical and ethical issues central to 17 and 19 vanish: the chapter presents only a pragmatic, philosophically uninteresting argument that the costs of war are greater than the benefits, without a single mention of the immorality of warfare. If the chapters were written in the sequence 17–18–19, why do they shift away from a concern with morality and then back to it again? Moreover, having come up with arguments as good as those in 17, why would the Mohists abandon them in a later text on the same theme?

One possible explanation is that the chapters were not written in the sequence 17–18–19.

However, a sequential theory explains a number of other observations about the three chapters,⁴ and an alternative sequence, such as 18–17–19, would raise even more explanatory problems than the present sequence.

Another possibility is that the three chapters represent the views of three different Mohist schools. Rather than explaining the topical shift, however, this account presents a new problem: If all three schools promoted moral doctrines such as inclusive care and conforming to Heaven's intention, why would one school think there was nothing to be said against warfare other than that it is unprofitable?

The most promising explanatory route, I think, is to begin by considering the implicit audience for each of the three chapters. As Taeko Brooks has suggested,⁵ the stance of Book 17 is that of a “critical outsider,” denouncing the gentlemen of the world for failing to draw the distinction between morality and immorality properly. The audience for the piece seems to be society in general. In contrast, 18 is directed specifically at those in a position to affect policy, presumably rulers or high-level officials. 19 is in some respects a synthesis of 17 and 18 and seems to address a wider audience than either, ranging from the general populace to rulers. So some of the concerns of 17 could have been omitted from 18 because they were not directly relevant to the narrower focus of that text, but then incorporated into 19, which combines themes from both 17 and 18.

This scenario is plausible, but only if we recognize that in this case at least, a sequential theory does not entail that a newer text supersede an older one. 18 is not a later, replacement version of the “same” essay as 17: it was written for a different purpose and a different audience. My hypothesis is

that the Mohists did not shift from the concerns of 17 to those of 18. Rather, they developed new, additional concerns and arguments and then wrote 18 to present them. This new text could well have been read side by side with the existing 17.

2. DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE *MÒZǏ JIĀN ÀI TRIAD*⁶

A number of theories have been proposed to explain the relationship between the essays that make up the Mohist triads. These include:

- The three-factions theory: The essays in each triad represent the divergent doctrines of the three Mohist factions mentioned in the *Hánfēizǐ* and *Zhuāngzǐ*. (This theory is due to Yú Yuè 俞樾; see his preface to Sūn, *Mòzǐ Jiān Gǔ*.)
- The digest theory: Most of the essays can be attributed to three different factions, but three of the shorter ones (14, 17, and 20) are digests or fragments and are not the canonical texts of any of the factions. (This is A. C. Graham's theory. See Graham, *Divisions*, and also *Disputers*, pp. 35–36.)
- The one-school theory: Each triad presents three contemporaneous versions of the same doctrine as recorded by different disciples of Mò Dì. (This view is attributed to Chén Zhù 陳柱 in Fāng, *Mòxué*, p. 41.)
- The sequential theory: The essays are from different periods in the history of the Mohist school, the shortest essay generally being the earliest in each triad. (This type of view has been proposed by Alfred Forke, Watanabe Takashi, and Taeko Brooks.)

- The reverse sequential theory: The essays are from different periods, but the shortest essay is a later, more concise formulation of the ideas in the other two essays (This is the proposal of Fāng Shòuchǔ 方授楚.)

In this study, I examine differences in doctrine and exposition between the three *Jiān Ài* (Inclusive Care) essays, books 14 through 16 of the *Mòzǐ*. I suggest that the differences between these essays are best explained by the sequential theory, on which 14 is the earliest of the essays and 16 the latest. Thus I endorse Taeko Brooks's conclusions as to the chronology of the three essays,⁷ and I aim to complement her work by arguing to the same end from a different set of observations.

Book 14 Versus 15 and 16

Two prominent doctrinal differences between Book 14 and the other *Jiān Ài* chapters are signaled in the first line of the essay. The model held up for emulation is the sage, and the essay is concerned primarily with achieving social order. In contrast, in 15 and 16, the exemplar is the more down-to-earth figure of the humane person (*rén rén* 仁人), and the leading concern is with promoting benefit to the world and eliminating harm from the world. These differences represent a striking shift in the focus of the essays: The term *rén* 仁 (humaneness, goodheartedness) does not occur at all in 14, and the term *lì* 利 (benefit) is used only in the negative sense of selfish benefit, and not as a criterion or element of moral goodness.

Also absent from 14 are the key terms *hài* 害 (harm)—in Mohist texts typically contrasted with *lì* 利—and *fǎ* 法 (model). These terms are used repeatedly in 15–16 and many other Mohist essays.

Another difference between the chapters is the sequence in which social problems are discussed. Book 14 first treats problems at the level of the family or individual and then works its way up to

the issue of interstate warfare. Books 15 and 16 begin with interstate warfare and then work down to disorder involving families or individuals.

Book 14 presents no theory of how inclusive care (*jiān ài*) can be achieved in practice, a topic treated in both 15 and 16, and it shows no signs of debate with doctrinal opponents. By comparison, 15 considers two potential objections to the doctrine of inclusive care, and 16 is deeply engaged in controversy: the essay answers five objections, four of which are introduced by the claim that the words of the Mohists' critics "still haven't ceased."

Finally, the conclusion of 14 again refers only to the conduct of the ideal sage, without mentioning either "officers and gentlemen," as in 15, or "kings, dukes, and great men," as in 16.

Book 15 Versus 16

Two interesting differences between these essays have already been mentioned: 16 treats more objections than 15 and addresses not merely gentlemen, but rulers. Let me now highlight three further points.

The technical term *bié* 別 (excluding, partial) is used sixteen times in 16 to contrast exclusive concern for oneself or one's kin with the Mohist ideal of all-inclusive concern, and the chapter answers several objections related to partiality and filial piety. In contrast, the term *bié* does not appear in 15, and the chapter shows no awareness of objections to inclusive care premised on special concern for one's kin.

The term *fǎ* 法 (model, standard) is used three times in each essay, but in a slightly different way. In 15, *fǎ* is used twice to refer to the doctrine of *jiān ài* ("the *fǎ* of inclusively caring about each other and mutually benefiting each other") and once at the end of the essay in the claim that

this doctrine is “the *fǎ* of the sage-kings.” In 16, *fǎ* is used only in the parallel claims that “what Mòzǐ calls inclusiveness” is based on the model (*fǎ*) set by the sage-kings Wén, Tāng, and Wǔ.⁸

Both 15 and 16 appeal to the theory of “identifying upward” to explain how inclusive care can be realized in practice, but only 16 mentions the theory by name, informing us that the people can be changed because they will seek to “identify with their superiors.” 16 also presents a fuller account of the theory, mentioning the amount of time needed to realize the Mohist ideal (“within a generation”) and the use of rewards and punishments to encourage conformity. To emphasize the naturalness and ease with which superiors can lead the people to practice inclusive care and mutual benefit, the essay uses the similes of fire turning upward and water turning downward, which also appear in the *Mencius*.⁹

Discussion

The differences between 14 and the other two essays pose serious problems for the digest theory, the one-school theory, and the reverse sequential theory. If 14 were a digest, distillation, or contemporary variant of the doctrines expounded in 15 and 16, as these theories hold, we would expect the three essays to address the same central issues and use key terms in a roughly consistent way. In fact, however, the essays differ both in their main concern (achieving order versus practicing humaneness and promoting benefit) and in their use of terms such as *lì*, *hài*, *rén*, and *fǎ*. None of these three theories can explain these differences well. Thus at least with respect to the *Jiān Ài* triad, I suggest we reject these theories without further consideration.

That leaves us with the three-factions theory and the sequential theory. A rigorous evaluation of these theories will be one that judges them on the basis of their explanatory power. We seek a

theory that is not merely consistent with, but explains observations such as the differences I have cited.¹⁰ As I see it, the most promising strategy for explaining these differences along the lines of the three-factions theory is to present a historical scenario in which different issues would have been relevant to the three different Mohist groups. For example, perhaps the faction that produced 14 was located in a region in which the problem of social disorder was especially pertinent, so the essay focuses on this problem. The groups that wrote 14 and 15 could have been active in areas where they lacked opponents who argued for special concern for oneself or one's kin, so these essays do not address the issue of "exclusion" (*bié*). The writers of 16 might have been the only faction to win the attention of all levels of society, including rulers, so only 16 discusses the use of rewards and punishments and mentions "kings, dukes, and great men" in its conclusion.

The problem with this "different groups, different issues" approach is that it is hard to explain convincingly how the circumstances and concerns of three roughly contemporary factions could have diverged so widely, given the compact land area of Warring States China, the general cultural homogeneity of the central states, and the extensive social, intellectual, and commercial contact between states. Moreover, since each of the essays expresses an interest in governance, I think we can assume that all three hypothetical Mohist groups would have sought political influence in their home state, and in doing so, they would probably have encountered philosophical rivals, against whom they would have had to defend their doctrines. Thus I think the three-factions theory has difficulty explaining, for example, why 14 considers no objections to Mohist doctrine at all and provides no sketch of how inclusive care can be put into practice, and why only 16 has a term for the converse of Mohist universalism, "exclusion."

Like the three-factions theory, a sequential theory will attempt to explain disparities between the three essays by showing how the writers could have had different concerns. On the sequential theory, however, it is much easier to formulate a plausible scenario in which this would be the case, because we can distribute the essays over a long historical period, during which the Mohists' circumstances could have changed considerably. Thus the sequential theory can account for differences between the essays by appealing to the gradual internal development of Mohist doctrine, increasing contact and debate with the *Rú* and other opponents, and changes in the Mohists' social status or political prominence.

For example, we might explain the differences in the treatment of the “identifying upward” theory by suggesting that 14 predates the theory, 15 follows it and sees that it complements the doctrine of *jiān ài*, and the later 16 recognizes both that the theory is crucially important to the success of *jiān ài* and that rulers need a more detailed account of it than 15 provides. We can explain the disparity in the attention the essays devote to objections by the hypothesis that 14 predates extensive contact between the Mohists and intellectual opponents, 15 was written after it had become necessary to defend *jiān ài* against critics, and 16 is the product of an extended period of intellectual controversy. We can account for the different issues mentioned in the conclusions of the essays by supposing that in the early 14, the writers are addressing an audience of outsiders, to whom they can only articulate a sagely ideal; by the time of 15, they are in a position to offer positive proposals to “officers and gentlemen”; and by 16 they have achieved enough status to address all levels of society, including those in power. I suggest that hypotheses such as these provide more plausible explanations of the differences cited than those available from the three-

factions theory.¹¹

Implications

On the sequential theory, many of the differences between the essays can be explained as responses to increased contact and debate with intellectual opponents. The concept of *bié* (“exclusion” or “partiality”) in 16, for example, was probably introduced in the context of debate with opponents who rejected inclusive care. An intriguing, albeit speculative explanation for the shift in the incipit concern of the essays from social order in 14 to benevolence and benefit in 15 and 16 is that contact with the *Rú* stimulated the Mohists to assign a central place to *rén*, an important Ruist virtue, which the Mohists proceeded to elucidate in their own terms.

The fire and water similes in 16 might also be interpreted as signs of *Rú-Mò* controversy. Since one of the main Ruist criticisms of Mohism seems to have been that inclusive care is unnatural or counterintuitive,¹² it is tempting to view the use of these similes as a response to the Mencians or like-minded opponents.

Finally, the shift in the use of *lì* from negative, selfish benefit in 14 to positive, all-inclusive benefit in 15 and 16 raises the possibility that *lì* may initially have had a negative connotation for the Mohists. (Another presumably early essay, Book 17, also uses *lì* only in a negative sense.) The emphasis on *lì* as a criterion of benevolence and morality may have emerged only gradually, as a result of the Mohists’ interest in developing objective, constant standards of conduct.

3. THEMATIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE *MÒZĪ* POLITICAL ESSAYS¹³

Analyses of the Mohist triads tend to rely mainly on observations about linguistic or rhetorical

features. In this study, I aim to supplement such research by offering observations about the thematic content of the *Shàngxián* 尚賢 and *Shàngtóng* 尚同 triads (books 8–10 and 11–13 of the *Mòzǐ*). I argue that my observations are best explained by the hypothesis that the essays in both triads were composed in the order in which we find them in the traditional edition of the *Mòzǐ*—that is, 8–9–10 and 11–12–13. I also suggest that the writers of the later texts in each triad probably had access to the earlier ones.

The textual units on which my observations are based are shown in Table 1. I have grouped the observations under four headings: basic concerns, detail and sophistication, new sections, and prominence of new issues.

Basic Concerns

One essay in each triad focuses on basic concerns noticeably different from those of the other two. In the first triad, Book 8 focuses on how to obtain worthy and capable personnel and emphasizes *yì* 義 (morality) as a standard of merit. The shortage of good officials seems acute, since the essay twice mentions that even farmers and artisans can be promoted if they are capable. The topic of attracting talent, the emphasis on *yì*, and the references to farmers and artisans vanish in books 9 and 10, which are concerned instead with the issue of selecting only qualified people (10 in particular focuses on the dangers of nepotism). A plausible explanation for these differences is that 8 dates from an earlier period, in which the population was smaller and worthy or talented officials were scarce. Also, in the earlier stages of the Mohist movement, the writers may have been speaking as political outsiders with strong ties to the farmer and artisan classes, and they may have stressed moral considerations more than political realities.

In the second triad, Book 13 stands out from the others. The core doctrine in both 11 and 12 involves promulgating a unified morality by establishing a hierarchical social structure in which subordinates conform to their superiors' standards of *shì-fēi* 是非. The content of the standards is left vague (perhaps to be filled in by the “Heaven’s Intention” essays). In 13 the doctrine is that subordinates must report on persons or events that “care for and benefit” the community at each level of society, from the clan to the empire. The emphasis shifts from educating people to obtaining feedback from them, and the basis for this feedback is not unspecified moral standards imposed from above, but “care and benefit,” which apparently people are expected to recognize on their own. The political hierarchy described in 13 also differs from that in 11 and 12, with the lowest level being the clan head rather than the village head.¹⁴ The differences between 13 and the other essays seem to suggest that 13 was not available to the writers of 11 and 12, who probably would have mentioned “care and benefit” as moral standards if 13 had been a source for them. A partial, albeit at this stage tentative explanation is that 13 is later than 11 and 12.

Detail and Sophistication

The doctrines presented in 8 and 11 are simpler and cruder than those in the other essays. If we compare passages that run parallel or have an analogous place in the structure of the essays (e.g., 8.3 and 9.2; 8.5, 9.8, and 10.4; 11.5 and 12.5), 8 and 11 tend to include fewer details about political administration, historical events, or the concrete consequences of their policies. Also, Book 9 restates several ideas from 8 in a more sophisticated form.¹⁵ For example, 9.1 converts a claim used in the conclusion of 8—“elevating the worthy is the root of governing”—into a slogan that serves as the foundation of its presentation (this slogan also appears in 10.1). The text supports this claim by

citing the general principle that having the noble and wise govern the foolish and base yields order.¹⁶ Parallel passages in 8.4 and 9.4 argue that for the *shàngxián* policy to work, the ruler must grant officials sufficient rank, emoluments, and power; but only 9 assigns these elements of the policy a formal label (the “three roots” 三本). Similarly, the first two sections of 12 stress the notion of a unifying morality more than the corresponding parts of 11 do and provide more details about the political system.

New Sections

The second and third essays in each triad incorporate many additional sections, not shared with the first essay, that develop themes from the first one (9.3, 12.6, part of 12.7) or introduce new issues (9.5–6; 10.2–3, 10.8; 12.7–9; 13.1, 13.3, 13.7–8). Some of these “new” sections are related to each other in interesting ways. For example, 12 runs closely parallel to 11 until section 12.5, which expands the claim in 11.5 that failure to conform upward to Heaven (*Tiān* 天) will be punished by natural disasters. The relatively brief 12.5 is then followed by a longer, new section, 12.6, which describes how the ancient sage kings led the people to sacrifice and serve Heaven and the ghosts (*Tiān-guǐ* 天鬼), who rewarded them in turn (I will comment on the shift from *Tiān* to *Tiān-guǐ* below). Nothing in 11 parallels 12.6, but the latter section has thematic and linguistic links to 9.3 and 9.9, two “new” sections of 9 that lack parallels in 8. So here we see connections between sections of *hū*-series essays (the second essay in each of these triads) all of which lack parallels in the first essay in the respective triad.¹⁷

Also, in the second and third essays of both triads, linguistic features Durrant (“Grammar,” p. 261) identified as distinctive of the *Mòzǐ* essays and word combinations Graham (*Divisions*, p. 3)

tagged as characteristic of the *hū* 乎 series tend to cluster in the “new” sections, suggesting that they may be based on a source different from that of the sections with close parallels to the first essay in each triad. For example, of the ten instances of *ruògǒu* 若苟 in 9, 10, 12, and 13, all but two occur in passages that have no parallels in 8 or 11.¹⁸ Of the seven instances of *wéiwú* 唯/惟毋 in these essays, none occur in passages with obvious parallels in 8 or 11.¹⁹ Similarly, of the five instances of *guānfǔ* 官府 and eleven instances of *Tiān-guǐ*, none are in sections with close counterparts in 8 or 11.²⁰

A plausible explanation for the change in terminology from *Tiān* in 12.5 to *Tiān-guǐ* in 12.6 is that the content of the two sections derives from different sources. The writers of 12 may have used 11 as a basis for the first five sections of their text and then composed the remainder afresh. Other plausible hypotheses might be that 11 and the parallel stretch of 12 were based on a shared source (possibly an oral one), or that 12 was compiled from 11 and one or more other sources. But since the shift in terminology occurs precisely at the end of the parallel between 12.5 and 11.5, I think it unlikely that 12 was composed without access to 11 or a source that was extremely similar to 11.²¹

Prominence of New Issues

Last, I want to call attention to a pattern that occurs in both triads: Issues absent from the first essay are introduced in “new” sections of the second essay and then become increasingly prominent in the third essay. The most salient example is the issue of ensuring that society’s system of rewards and punishments functions properly in encouraging good and discouraging bad behavior. In both triads, this topic is absent from the first essay, emerges in the second essay (9.2, 9.5, 9.9; 12.8), and is especially prominent in the third essay (10.2, 10.8; 13.1, 13.3). Another example, from the first

triad, is the argument from professionalism: just as rulers hire specialists to handle their tailoring or butchering, they should hire qualified officials to administer their government (9.6, 10.3). This claim is absent from 8, introduced in 9, and then expanded and placed in a more conspicuous position in 10, where it is used as a springboard for an attack on nepotism. Similarly, in the second triad, two key concerns of 13—genuinely grasping the situation (*qíng* 情) of subordinates (13.1) and understanding the benefits of the *shàngtóng* system for the ruler (13.7)—seem to be developments of themes introduced in 12.9 and not found in 11. A probable explanation for this developmental pattern is that the third essays are later than the second ones and may be drawing on them as sources.

Implications for Chronology

The shifts in basic concern in both triads make it extremely unlikely that essays 8 and 11 are later, more compact statements of the themes of 9–10 and 12–13, as suggested by Fāng (*Mòxué*, pp. 49–50). The increased detail and sophistication and the new issues treated in the second and third essays make it clear that these texts do not merely present different versions of the same material as the first essay, but extend, modify, and supplement this material. If the first essays were written later, they ought to show some awareness of the additional topics treated in the other two. I think the best explanation for their failure to do so is that they are earlier than the others. This explanation agrees with the conclusions of Forke (*Me Ti*, p. 23), Watanabe (*Kodai*, p. 506), and Taeko Brooks (“Evolution,” p. 2).

In both triads, the third essay seems to develop themes that are present also in the second essay, but not in the first essay. One explanation for this pattern, consistent with the proposals of Forke and Watanabe, is that the second essay is a later synthesis of material from the other two. However,

among other problems, this hypothesis founders in explaining why the content of both second essays is consistently more elaborate than parallel sections in one purported source, the first essay, but less elaborate than parallel sections in the other, the third essay. The thematic developments in the third essays seem better explained by taking the order of composition in both triads to be first-second-third, or 8–9–10 and 11–12–13, as Brooks has proposed.²²

Graham (*Divisions*, p. 1) conjectured that each triad presents three versions of a common oral teaching, which were written down independently of each other. Against this, I think the many close parallels between passages in essays within the same triad (e.g., 11.5 and 12.5) suggest that the writers of some later essays probably consulted earlier ones. Also, the extensive amount of new material in the second and third essays, the concentration of this material in certain sections, and the clustering of certain stylistic and linguistic features in those sections seem better explained by the model of a brief core of oral material later augmented by new, written material than by the view that the essays as wholes represent separate versions of a shared oral teaching. If the essays rest on an oral tradition, I suggest the direct remnants of that tradition are confined to the highly repetitive, formulaic parts of the earliest essays, such as 14 and 11.

Table 1. Thematic Relationships in *Mòzǐ* 8–13

Section	HY 8*	Description	Compare
8.1	1/1–5/2	To achieve aims, rulers need to attract the worthy	9.1, 10.1, 35.1
8.2	5/3–8/17	Attract them by offering wealth, rank, etc.	10.1
8.3	8/18–16/22	Make morality a prerequisite for wealth, rank, etc.	9.2
8.4	16/23–21/4	Promote the capable; give high rank, salary, power	9.4; 12.8, 13.2
8.5	21/5–25/11	Historical examples	9.8, 10.4
8.6	25/12–end	Conclusion: <i>Shàngxián</i> is the <i>dào</i> of the sage kings, root of governing	9.11, 10.10
Section	HY 9	Description	Compare
9.1	1/1–3/19	<i>Shàngxián</i> is the root of governing	8.1, 27
9.2	3/20–8/7	Impartial promotion of the worthy	8.3
9.3	8/8–14/30	Details concerning administration of the state	12.6
9.4	14/31–22/7	Promote the capable; give high rank, salary, power	8.4
9.5	22/8–32/2	Not applying <i>shàngxián</i> properly leads to failure of the reward/punishment system	10.2, 10.8, 12.8, 13.3
9.6	32/3–42/28	“Butcher-tailor” argument: putting unqualified amateurs in charge leads to disorder	10.3, 10.7, 47.8
9.7	42/29–46/31	All this isn’t only Mòzǐ’s words! Cites texts	
9.8	46/32–51/23	Historical examples	8.5, 10.4
9.9	51/24–67/3	<i>Shàngxián</i> is taking one’s model from heaven; historical examples: 3 sage kings, 3 tyrants	12.6, 26.3, 27.2
9.10	67/4–70/23	Textual citations	10.9
9.11	70/24–end	Conclusion: A ruler can become a true king and rule the world only by virtue and morality, not intimidation; why not examine that <i>shàngxián</i> is the root of governing?	<i>Mencius</i> ; 8.6, 10.10
Section	HY 10	Description	Compare
10.1	1/1–7/11	Rulers fail to achieve aims because they don’t apply <i>shàngxián</i> policy	8.1, 8.2, 9.1
10.2	7/12–10/23	<i>Shàngxián</i> encourages the good and discourages the bad	9.2, 9.5, 10.8, 12.8, 13.3
10.3	10/24–20/25	“Butcher-tailor” argument: putting unqualified amateurs in charge leads to disorder; attack on nepotism begins	9.6, 47.8, 10.7
10.4	20/26–28/3	Historical examples	8.5, 9.8
10.5	28/4–32/19	Textual citations	
10.6	32/20–35/21	Conduct of the worthy person	11.1, 12.1
10.7	35/22–40/9	Rulers today fail to apply <i>shàngxián</i> (negative contrast with 10.4–6)	9.6
10.8	40/10–44/14	Failure to apply <i>shàngxián</i> leads to breakdown of reward/punishment system	9.5, 10.2, 12.8, 13.1, 11.1
10.9	44/15–46/25	Historical examples	9.10
10.10	46/26–end	Conclusion: To be benevolent, moral, and beneficial, apply <i>shàngxián</i> , root of governing	13.9, 28

* The entry under “HY” gives the *line and character* number in the relevant chapter of the Harvard-Yenching concordance (e.g., “1/1–5/2” means “from line 1, first graph to line 5, second graph”)

Section	HY 11*	Description	Compare
11.1	1/1–5/5	Different <i>yì</i> led to disorder (10 <i>yì</i>)	12.1, 13.2, 10.8
11.2	5/6–8/33	Disorder due to lack of leaders, so leaders were selected	12.2, 13.2
11.3	9/1–13/11	<i>Tiānzǐ</i> proclaimed: report and conform to superiors	12.3
11.4	13/12–22/29	Leaders at all levels led people to report and conform, unified their <i>yì</i>	12.4, 13.4
11.5	22/30–24/16	Conforming to <i>tiānzǐ</i> without conforming to heaven will be punished by natural disasters	12.5, 13.4d
11.6	24/17–end	Five punishments were for reining in non-conformers	12.7

Section	HY 12	Description	Compare
12.1	1/1–5/21	Different <i>yì</i> led to disorder (100 <i>yì</i>)	11.1, 13.2
12.2	5/22–11/33	Disorder due to lack of leaders, so leaders were selected	11.2, 13.2
12.3	12/1–18/10	<i>Tiānzǐ</i> proclaimed: report and conform to superiors	11.3, 13.4c
12.4	18/11–31/16	Leaders at all levels led people to conform, unified their morality	11.4, 13.4
12.5	31/17–33/30	Conforming to <i>tiānzǐ</i> without conforming to heaven will be punished by natural disasters	11.5
12.6	33/31–41/3	Conforming to heaven <i>and ghosts</i>	9.3, 9.9, 27.1c
12.7	41/4–44/12	Today there are leaders, so why is the world still in disorder? (Discusses five punishments)	11.6
12.8	44/13–61/13	Contrast of sage-kings with rulers today, who install cronies, leading to breakdown of the reward/punishment system	9.5, 10.2, 10.8, 13.1, 13.3
12.9	61/14–68/23	<i>Shàngtóng</i> policy connects the <i>qíng</i> of superior and subordinate, benefiting all (especially the ruler)	13.1, 13.7, 9.5
12.10	68/24–74/24	Ancient sages, textual citations	
12.11	74/25–end	Conclusion: For wealth, population growth, order, examine <i>shàngtóng</i>	13.9

Section	HY 13	Description	Compare
13.1	1/1–7/6	What brings order? Getting the <i>qíng</i> of those below	12.9, 12.8, 9.5
13.2	7/7–17/18	To do this, apply <i>shàngtóng</i> ; story about disorder and selection of leaders (1000 different moralities)	11.1–2, 12.1–2
13.3	17/19–22/8	Rulers today unsuccessful because morality isn't unified, which causes breakdown of reward/punishment system	12.8, 9.5, 10.2, 10.8
13.4	22/9–42/22	To unify morality, have each level report on things that benefit or harm that level	11.3, 12.3
13.5	42/23–45/17	<i>Shàngtóng</i> leads to success at all levels; governing the world is like governing one clan	
13.6	45/18–48/1	Not only Mòzǐ has this! Textual citation	
13.7	48/2–56/6	Benefits to ruler of the <i>shàngtóng</i> policy	12.9
13.8	56/7–58/2	To make the people conform, you must care for them earnestly, use rewards, punishments	
13.9	58/3–end	Conclusion: To be benevolent, moral, and beneficial, apply <i>shàngtóng</i> , root of governing	12.11, 10.10, 28

* The entry under “HY” gives the line and character number in the relevant chapter of the Harvard-Yenching concordance (e.g., “1/1–5/2” means “from line 1, first graph to line 5, second graph”).

Notes

¹ See Graham, *Disputers*, pp. 35–36. For a more detailed presentation of Graham’s theory, see his *Divisions*.

² This short essay was presented in absentia at the ninth conference of the Warring States Working Group, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, October 1997, and later published as *Warring States Working Group Query 95*.

³ These parallels are also noted by Maeder, “Some Observations,” who reaches a similar conclusion from them.

⁴ See Taeko Brooks, “MZ 17–19.”

⁵ Brooks, *ibid.*

⁶ This paper was presented in absentia at the ninth conference of the Warring States Working Group, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, October 1997.

⁷ See Brooks, “MZ 14–16: Universal Love.”

⁸ 15 cites only three sage kings—Yǔ 禹, Wén 文, and Wǔ 武—but 16 adds Tāng 湯 to the list.

⁹ For instance, at *Mencius* 1A6, 2A6, 4A9, and 6A2.

¹⁰ Conceivably, the explanations offered by the three-factions theory and the sequential theory might complement each other, such that the combination of the two yields a theory with greater explanatory power than either alone. This might be the case if, for example, the three essays of a particular triad contained historical references that suggested they were written many years apart, but also had features that suggested they were written in different geographical regions. I do not think we need such a joint theory to account for my observations about the *Jiān Ài* triad, but I leave open the possibility that further features of the essays—their linguistic peculiarities, for instance—

might be best explained by a joint theory.

¹¹ On doctrinal differences in the *Jiān Ài* triad, see too now Defoort, “The Growing Scope,” which shows how the scope of concern for others grows throughout the triad, from treating others well and refraining from harming them in 14, to concern for the weak and oppressed in 15, to concern for those without families to care for them in 16. This development too seems best explained by the hypothesis that the essays were composed in the order 14–15–16. [Note added 2008.]

¹² I have in mind Mencius 3A5, where Mencius expresses incredulity that a person could be as concerned for the welfare of a neighbor’s child as for a relative’s.

¹³ This paper was presented at the tenth conference of the Warring States Working Group, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, April 1998.

¹⁴ Another interesting observation is that the number of “different moralities” mentioned in the myth about the origins of the state increases from ten in essay 11 to one hundred in 12 to one thousand in 13. The best explanation for this change is probably that the essays were composed in the order 11–12–13.

¹⁵ This move toward more sophisticated, systematic doctrines seems to be a general feature of the essays in the *hū* 乎 series identified by Durrant, “Consideration,” and Graham, *Divisions*.

¹⁶ This principle also appears in the opening sections of 27, the *hū*-series “Heaven’s Intention” essay.

¹⁷ There are also parallels between 9.9, 12.6, and passages in 27, though some of the relevant parts of 27 do have parallels in 26. In addition, Maeder has pointed out parallels between 9.3 and passages in 32 and 37, two other *hū*-series essays (“Observations,” p. 50).

¹⁸ *Ruògǒu* occurs in 9.5 (twice), 10.1, 12.8 (thrice), 13.1 (twice), 13.2, and 13.3 (these account for

half of all its occurrences in the entire *Mòzǐ*). Of these passages, 10.1 is loosely parallel to 8.2 and 13.2 to 11.1. However, the particular lines in which *ruògǒu* occurs have no parallels in 8.2 and 11.1.

¹⁹ *Wéiwú* occurs in 9.4 (9/19–22) (twice), 10.2 (twice), 12.8 (twice), and 13.7.

²⁰ *Guānfǔ* appears only in essay 9, in sections 9.2, 9.3 (3x), and 9.5. *Tiān-guǐ* appears in 9.3 (2x), 9.9 (2x), 10.10, and 12.6 (6x).

²¹ An adequate textual theory for the *Shàngtóng* triad must also explain the relationship between 11.6 and 12.7, both of which mention the five punishments and the similes of the skein and the net. I think the hypothesis that 12 is reworking material from 11 probably offers the simplest explanation of the relationship, but the argument is beyond the scope of this study.

²² Further support for this conclusion can be found in the relationships between these triads and essays 26–28, but that topic is beyond the scope of this study.

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