

Hans Stumpfeldt and the Texts Behind the Texts

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This volume marks a double anniversary. It is the 50th volume of *Oriens Extremus*, which has been published at the University of Hamburg since 1954. And its publication coincides with the 70th birthday of Hans Stumpfeldt, Emeritus Professor of Sinology at this university and long-time editor of *Oriens Extremus*. It is most fitting that this volume be dedicated to him, who has set the tone and temper of this journal and its home institute for a whole generation.

Or has he? Some readers, especially outside Germany, may be surprised at this homage, indeed, some may not even know Hans Stumpfeldt's name. That is entirely understandable. Yet, Hans Stumpfeldt never sought the limelight. He never was a jet-set scholar flying from one conference to another, and he never played the publish-or-perish game.¹ He worked quietly and meticulously, writing thoughtful "notes from a nocturnal desk" rather than flashy articles, preferring questions to ready-made answers, hinting at possibilities instead of asserting facts. In this way, acting behind the scenes as it were, Hans Stumpfeldt has inspired hundreds of students, quite a few of which have become established scholars themselves.

There is a certain inner logic to the fact that Hans Stumpfeldt has – among countless other things – devoted himself intensively to the study of "texts behind the texts," a field that he himself has defined as follows:

One of the most conspicuous characteristics of the literature from classical and late classical times is the fact that very often two or more compilations of texts share the same passages, the so-called parallels. Such parallels may be fairly large, as in anecdotes, or they may be sayings that appear in different places in more or less the same wording. [...] Only in rare cases is it possible to demonstrate with a measure of certainty that a given transmitted text must have adapted this material from another transmitted text. In most cases the examination of such parallels suggests that there probably were intermediate stages of transmission or that both transmitted versions may derive from a shared older version. [...] It follows that there must have existed a host of texts hidden behind the transmitted texts. It would seem necessary to detect and, as far as possible, describe such "texts behind the texts." This will perhaps change our concepts and impressions of the range, genres and forms of classical literature.²

Indeed, Hans Stumpfeldt's recent studies have shown just how fruitful this approach is. Closely analyzing parallels of *Lunyu* passages, he found behind the words of Confucius a didactic poem that was put into his mouth bit by bit, pointed out surprising intertextual relations between the

1 However, all those who believe that he published little are in for a big surprise; cf. the bibliography in Friedrich *et al.* 2006, XV–XXV, as well as, for recent book publications, the catalogue of the Ostasien Verlag at www.ostasien-verlag.de/oav-gesamt.html.

2 Stumpfeldt 2002, 184–185.

Lunyu and the “Hongfan” chapter of the *Shujing* and suggested convincingly that several anecdotes surrounding Confucius possibly derive from long lost travel accounts.³

In other papers, Stumpfeldt suggests that behind the dictionary-type entries of the *Erya* there may have been a “song of songs,”⁴ that many anecdotes that are independently transmitted in *Yanzi chunqiu* and other texts originally belonged to larger narrative contexts, perhaps travelogues,⁵ and that texts like the *Han Shi waizhuan* or the *Xinxu* adopted material from a putative anecdotal commentary to the *Lunyu*.⁶ Analyzing outwardly meaningless “catalogues” of historical events, Stumpfeldt detects a genre of didactic literature that was perhaps meant to be memorized.⁷ Similarly enigmatic sayings are at the center of Stumpfeldt’s latest study, published in this volume. He suggests that such sayings as well as many anecdotes in *Han Feizi*, *Huainan zi* and *Lüshi chunqiu* derive from now lost thematic collections of anecdotes, perhaps connected to Zou Yan and the Yin-Yang school.

In all these studies, tentative though they may be, Hans Stumpfeldt opens exciting new perspectives on classical Chinese literature, especially works like *Zuozhuan*, *Lunyu*, *Mengzi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi*, *Han Feizi*, *Lüshi chunqiu*, *Huainan zi*, *Shuoyuan*, *Hanshi waizhuan* and others that transmit the anecdotal lore of ancient China. While parallels and other intertextual relations between these texts have long since been recognized, Stumpfeldt incisively argues that these anecdotes are but the tip of the iceberg: there must have been many other texts behind the transmitted texts. We can only conjecture their form and existence, but such conjectures may open up an entire field of research.

While Stumpfeldt has so far confined this line of research to classical texts, his approach may be applied to other fields as well. The papers assembled in this volume show just how fruitful it may be to not simply take Chinese texts as integral works, but to focus specifically on the manifold “texts behind the texts” that inform and structure them.

In a penetrating philosophical analysis, Ernst-Joachim Vierheller points his finger at a striking parallel between *Zhuangzi* and *Gongsun longzi*, concluding that *Zhuangzi* actually builds on material from the *Gongsun longzi* and cannot be understood without knowledge of the latter. Dennis Schilling, reexamining the relationship between hexagrams and the associated sayings (*ci*), traces the origins of the sayings not to notes on the milfoil oracle but to mythical poetry, perhaps connected to a larger cycle of myths, and to animal imagery, perhaps totemistic, as well as to elements of political discourse: such are the texts behind the sayings of the *Yijing*. Bill Nienhauser, focusing on the stories of the debauched minister Qing Feng of Qi and Duke Xian of Wey, examines the usage of songs in the *Zuozhuan*. He observes that often only selected lines of songs are quoted, hinting at the meaning of the entire song – and that while it was expected that educated men would understand the rest, this was not always the case: not recognizing the “texts behind texts” had an adverse effect on com-

3 Cf. Stumpfeldt 2010.

4 Stumpfeldt 2007.

5 Stumpfeldt 2002, fn. 2.

6 Stumpfeldt 2006.

7 Stumpfeldt 2008.

munication. Kai Vogelsang calls attention to a number of analeptic anecdotes in the *Zuo-zhuan* that tell stories of love, intrigue and succession struggles; they seem to be independent textual units, perhaps derived from court gossip and transmitted among the populace in connection with songs. Anthony Barbieri-Low examines model forms of bureaucratic documents in early imperial China. Analyzing documents from Shuihu di, Zhangjia shan, Juyan and Dunhuang, he alerts us to the fact that much of such official communication – even wills – are not individual but standardized by model “texts behind texts” which are followed more (in Qin and Han legal documents) or less (in Tang wills) closely. Hans van Ess, upon meticulous comparison of parallels in the *Shiji* biography of Confucius and the *Kongzi jiayu* (as well as other texts), tentatively suggests that the latter actually turns several unflattering passages of the former into hagiographic accounts, thus creating a counter-narrative to the *Shiji*. Imre Hamar discusses collections of miraculous stories about the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, demonstrating how popular traditions became part of the exegetical tradition of Huayan Buddhism, thus spreading the faith to the lower rungs of society and creating a distinct Huayan tradition. Dorothee Schaab-Hanke relates the description of Hangzhou in the *Ducheng jisheng* to Meng Yuanlao’s account of Kaifeng in his *Dongjing meng Hua lu*, demonstrating that the latter was in many ways the text behind the former. Kaifeng was the “capital behind the capital” and a constant point of reference – which does not, however, keep the author of the *Ducheng jisheng* from subtly elevating the new capital over the old one and thereby warning his contemporaries of impending decay. The most ingenious take on the topic of “texts behind texts” is offered by Frank Kraushaar, who argues that since good translations do not reflect the original but, quite to the contrary, completely emancipate themselves from it, the latter is nothing more than a “text behind the text.” Having said that, Kraushaar offers a delightful translation of Fan Chengda’s poetic cycle „Sishi tianyuan zaxing liushi shou.“ Finally, Sarah Kirchberger describes the background and making of the famous “truth criterion” article of May 1978, demonstrating that it was consciously modeled on Mao’s even more famous article “On practice.” Kirchberger’s paper goes to show that CCP documents, just like the classical texts that Hans Stumpfheldt deals with, may be adequately understood only by close reading and, most of all, a careful look “behind the texts.”

In some way related to the aspect “texts behind texts”, even though not initially written for this issue is the analysis of the meaning of the term *fa* by Miranda Brown and Charles Sanft. They argue that the term *fa* as it occurs in archaeologically recovered documents such as “Ernian lüling” and “Zouyanshu” refers to categories and should be rendered accordingly rather than as a “principle” or “law” as it has been proposed earlier. These categories were built from a list of prototypical situations and intended to guide an official to the statutes applicable on a given case .

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