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The Crafts of the Hidden Hands: Scribal Culture and the Making of Texts in Early China

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Princeton, NJ : Princeton University

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THE CRAFTS OF THE HIDDEN HANDS:
SCRIBAL CULTURE AND THE MAKING OF TEXTS IN EARLY CHINA

Yunxiao Xiao

A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY

OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

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OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines epistemological practices and information technologies before the era of paper. Scrutinizing a series of recently unearthed bamboo, wooden, and silk manuscripts from ca. 400 BCE to 300 CE as both cultural documents and material objects, this project explores how classical texts and pragmatic information were created, stored, circulated, and organized in early China across various ancient informational media. Negotiating the border between the "lowly" scribes and the "learned" scholars, this project concerns the common people and the actual practices behind the edifice of Sinitic classical knowledge. I propose that knowledge-making in ancient China was inextricably connected to the intellectual agency and executive autonomy of various, myriad, nameless scribes.

I integrate methods from various historical disciplines—book history, the history of scholarship, the history of information, along with codicology, paleography, philology, and media studies—and I apply them to a series of newly unearthed archaeological sources. Based on a comprehensive survey of the existing materials, I show how ancient manuscripts are both witnesses to and products of the very processes that brought them into being; they are not merely "the earliest versions" of transmitted classics or of long-lost texts, but also physical, contingent literary objects that were created by and for their own epistemological contexts. Through four chapters (materiality, paratext, orthography, textuality), I reveal 1) the technological affordance and historical importance of various bamboo and wood manuscripts as ancient media, 2) the actual practices and scribal/scholarly methods behind the making of the written objects, 3) continuity and transformation between pre-imperial and early imperial written cultures, and 4) the traces of myriad scribes, the actual people behind the grand enterprise of the classical knowledge and imperial governance. Ultimately, I underscore the interplay between knowledge and media as pertinent to our understanding of every facet of history: from emperor to peasant, from poetry to law—everything we know about the past is contingent upon not only what was written and survived in historical sources but also how such knowledge was produced, practiced, and perpetuated.

The Crafts of the Hidden Hands:
Scribal Culture and the Making of Texts in Early China

Table of Content

Abstract **3**

Acknowledgement **6**

Introduction: **In Search of the Lost Crafts** **8**

1. People and Practices
2. Practices and Objects
3. Materials and Materiality
4. Research Questions
5. Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 **Materiality: Building the Books** **40**

1. Bound Bamboo, Unbound Medium
2. Material Versatility
3. Date
4. Findings
    4.1 Enlarging the Manuscripts
    4.2 Shortening the Slips
    4.3 (Un)changed Interfaces

Chapter 2 **Paratexts: Mediating the Readers** **87**

1: Who's Literary Pragmatics?
2: Overview of the Codicological and Paratextual Elements
3: Distinction among Hands
4: Overlaps in Dispositions
    4.1: Titles
    4.2: Serial Numbers
    4.3: Punctuation Marks
    4.4: Verso Lines and Verso Preparation
5: Between Fact and Goal

Chapter 3 **Orthography: (Re)making the Graphs** **127**

1: Before the Unification of Writing
2: Rethinking Graphic Variants
2.1: Regional Graphic Differences
2.2: Different Objects for Different Functions
2.3: Graphic Variations in the Same Document
3: Making the Differences Differently: The Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua
4: Distinctions between Hands

Chapter 4 **Textuality: Renewing the Knowledge** **184**
1. The Text and the Object
2. Complilation of Imperial Ordinances
3. Classifying of Hands
4. Handwriting and Periodization
4.1Emperor Wen's personal name
4.2 Diachronical Editorial Process
5. Editing over the *Longue duree*

Conclusion: Books made by and for people **225**

APPENDIX **229**
BIBLIOGRAPHY **238**

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Finally, this is for my family—mom, dad, and Yifan—who have always loved me, no matter what.

Introduction

In Search of the Lost Crafts

"Small, humble fragile, old-fashioned things are endowed with dignity and sanctity
when his antiquarian spirit, preserving and venerating...
His city's history becomes for him his own biography."
— *Friedrich Nietzsche*, "History in the Service and Disservice of Life."[1]

1. People and Practices
2. Practices and Objects
3. Materials and Materiality
4. Research Questions
5. Chapter Outline

1. *People and Practices*

The enterprise of today's bookmaking involves an extensive array of techniques and technologies: compositional, editorial, typographical, institutional, logistical, commercial, and more. With the distinct division of labor and deeply ingrained collaborative practices, the contemporary book industry relies on a well-defined structure composed of diverse specialized roles. Yet, when envisioning book production in antiquity, the joint work of many has been attributed to a single, enigmatic group: the scribes. Perhaps for their versatility or our anachronism, "scribe" in ancient China is an elusive yet expansive term: it might merely suggest the actual writer of one certain document[2] or, equally possible, a highly specialized, trained, and

[1] Nietzsche, "History in the Service and Disservice of Life," in *Unmodern Observations / Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen,* ed. William Arrowsmith (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 99–10.

[2] For instance, Hsing I-Tien 邢義田 had proposed that the term "writer" (*shuxie zhe* 書寫者) is more appropriate than "scribe" (*shu shou* 書手) when discussing the handwriting as well as the signature on administrative documents. This is because the latter term implicates an instrumental function akin to that of a passive copyist. See "'Shou, ban,' 'yue wu yue jing' yu 'Qianling gong': Liye Qin jian chudu zhi yi" 「手、半」、「曰牾曰荊」與「遷陵公」：里耶秦簡初讀之一, in *Jin chen ji* 今塵集 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2019), 366–371.

oftentimes hereditary literate professional.[3] In practice, if writing mantic or religious documents, "scribes" referred to as diviners (*bu* 卜) or invocators (*zhu* 祝);[4] in the case of tomb inventories, the

[3] Especially for the literary texts, substantial evidence had shown that many of them are more likely produced by professional scribes. For example, in his study on the two Mawangdui "Laozi" manuscripts, Matthias Richter has noted: "The types of errors and their relative frequency indicate that the scribe was a well-trained professional with a high level of craftsmanship in calligraphy but not with a particularly high level of competence with regard to the manuscript's contents." "Textual Identity and the Role of Literacy in the Transmission of Early Chinese Literature," in *Writing and Literacy in Early China*, ed. Li Feng and David Prager Branner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 206–236, esp. 235. See also Li Mengtao 李孟濤 [Matthias L. Richter], "Shi tan shuxiezhe de shizi nengli ji qi dui liuchuan wenben de yingxiang" 試探書寫者的識字能力及其對流傳文本的影響, *Jianbo* 簡帛 4 (2009): 395–402.

Mostly from the perspectives of the pre-imperial manuscripts, Feng Shengjun has expressed a similar view. see Feng Shengjun 馮勝君, "Cong chutu wenxian kan chaoshou zai xianqin wenxian chuanbu guocheng zhong suo chansheng de yingxiang" 從出土文獻看抄手在先秦文獻傳佈過程中所產生的影響. *Jianbo* 3 (2008): 419–429; "Scribal Influence on the Transmission of Pre–Qin Texts, as Seen in Excavated Manuscripts," *Chinese Studies in History* 50.3 (2017): 185–198. Likewise, for the Guodian corpus, Li Xueqin has also suggested that for the high standard of calligraphy, the scribes were highly skilled professionals. See Sarah Allan and Crispin Williams (eds.), *The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of the International Conference* (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2002), 134.

As a selective list of this topic, see Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五, "Guodian zhujian de xingshi tezheng yu fenlei yiyi" 郭店竹簡的形式特徵與分類意義, Wuhan daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu yuan 武漢大學中國文化研究院 ed., *Guodian chujian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000), 53–63; Li Songru 李松儒, *Zhanguo jian bo ziji yanjiu: Yi Shangbo jian wei zhongxin* 戰國簡帛字跡研究—以上博簡爲中心. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015; "Excavated Manuscript and the Study of Warring States Handwriting," *Chinese Studies in History* 50.3 (2017): 199–212; *Qinghua jian ziji yanjiu* 清華簡字迹研究 (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2023); Xiong Jiahui 熊佳暉, "Guodian jian *Wu xing* pian de chengshu fangshi yu shushou wenhua shuiping tanxi" 郭店簡《五行》篇的成書方式與書手文化水平探析, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 1 (2020), 91–101; 賈連翔 "Qinghua jian '*Yin zhi* shushou' ziji de kuoda jiqi xiangguan wenti taolun" 清华簡〈尹至〉書手字迹的扩大及相關問題探討, *Chutu wenxian zonghe yanjiu jikan* 出土文獻綜合研究集刊 13 (2021): 79–100; Li Meichen 李美辰, "Qinghuajian shushou chaoxie yongzi xiguan tanyan" 清華簡書手抄寫用字習慣探研, *Hanyushi xuebao* 漢語史學報 23 (2020): 150–57.

[4] For a discussion of the role of diviners (*bu* 卜) or (*zhen ren* 貞人) in early Chinese history, see Donald Harper, "Physicians and Diviners: The Relation of Divination to the Medicine of the Huangdi Neijing (Inner Canon of the Yellow Thearch)," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident,* no. 21 (1999): 91–110; Marc Kalinowski, "Diviners and Astrologers under the Eastern Zhou: Transmitted Texts and Recent Archaeological Discoveries," (Tr. Margaret McIntosh), in *Early Chinese Religion*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 341–96; Li Shoukui 李守奎, "Baoshan bushi wenshu shuji de fenlei yu shuxie de jiben zhuangkuang" 包山卜筮文書書跡的分類與書寫的基本狀況, *Zhongguo wenxi yanjiu* 中國文字研究 1 (2007): 63 - 67; Zhu Xiaoxue 朱曉雪, *Baoshan chujian zongshu* 包山楚簡綜述 (Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2013), 812–14; Li Ling 李令, "Chu jian suojian chuguo zhenren yanjiu" 楚簡所見楚國貞人研究, Ph.D. diss., Qinghai University, 2018. See also Zhu Xiaoxue 朱曉雪 and Guo Jue 郭珏, *Hubei chutu chuguo bushi jidao jian jiaozhu ji ying yi* 湖北出土楚國卜筮祭禱簡校注及英譯 (Taipei: Huamulan chubanshe, 2024).

term applies to funerary staff. In the case of literary/philosophical texts, "scribe" denotes a book-making artisan (*shu shou* 書手 or *chao shou* 抄手), usually a lower-rank person who copied texts for profits.[5] When it comes to legal and administrative documents, "scribes" are referred to as *shi* 史, suggesting an extensive range of bureaucratic officials—a *shi* could be one of the myriad, nameless low-ranked imperial judiciary clerks, or could also be a high-official, such as the Grand Scribe or Grand Historian, the "*tai shi ling* 太史令", Sima Qian 司馬遷[6]—let alone the fact that meaning and implication of *shi* were never static, ever since its first appearance on oracle bones.[7]

As the scribes' identity is contingent and ambiguous, their work is likewise portrayed in various, often contradictory ways. Two often-seen scribal activities denote seemingly incompatible roles: the scribe as a mere copyist, as a mere instrument in manuscript production,[8]

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[5] Feng shengjun, "Scribal Influence on the Transmission of Pre–Qin Texts, as Seen in Excavated Manuscripts," 189.

[6] As a comprehensive survey, see Robin D.S Yates, "Introduction: The Empire of the Scribes," in *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited*, ed. Pines, Yuri, Gideon Shelach-Lavi, Lothar von Falkenhausen, and Robin D. S. Yates (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 141-53. Tsang Wing Ma has specified various types of imperial bureaucratic scribe: Scribes Scribe (*shi* 史), Scribe Director (*ling shi* 令史), Judiciary Scribe (*yu shi* 獄史), Scribe of the Commandant (*wei shi* 尉史), Minor Scribe (*xiao shi* 小史); Assistants: Assistant (*zuo* 佐)Assistant Director (*ling zuo* 令佐), Judiciary Assistant (*yu zuo* 獄佐), Assistant of the Commandant (wei zuo 尉佐), Minor Assistant (*xiao zuo* 小佐), etc. See "Scribes in Early Imperial China," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2017, 321. An articulation of the emergence of the assistant scribe, see Ma, "Between the State and Their Superiors: The Anxiety of Low-Ranked Scribes in the Qin and Han Bureaucracies," *Asia Major* (third series) 33.2 (2020): 25–59. As for bureaucratic scribe's literary training, see Robin D.S. Yates, "Soldiers, Scribes, and Women: Literacy among the Lower Orders in Early China," in *Writing & Literacy in Early China*, ed. Li and Branner (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2011), 339–69.

[7] As for early Chinese scribes focus solely on the pre-Qin period, see Xi Hanjing 席涵靜, Zhoudai shiguan yanjiu 周代史官研究 (Taipei: Fuji wenhua tushu, 1983) and Xu Zhaochang 許兆昌, Xian Qin shiguan de zhidu yu wenhua 先秦史官文化 (Haerbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2006). For a survey of the complicated history of term *shi*, see Stephen Durrant, "From 'Scribe' to 'History': The Keyword *shi* 史," in *Keywords in Chinese Culture: Thought and Literature,* eds. Li, Wai-yee and Yuri Pines (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2019), 85–119.

[8] For instance, Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 considers the scribe of the Guodian collection as "incompetent, made many mistakes," see *The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of The international Conference*, Dartmouth College, May 1998, edited by Sarah Allan and Crispin Williams (The Society for the Study of Early China and Institute of

or as a writer with agency, an active intruder in the text and co-inventor of meaning. Conceivably, the former scenario suggests a mutual exclusivity between thinking minds and laboring hands, whereas the latter assumes a scribe's complete executive autonomy. In evaluating an ancient scribe's writings, the criteria seem more concerned with accuracy and precision, and surely not originality or intellectual quality. Scribes rarely received praise, and when they did it was only when they managed to produce written copies with *absolute* fidelity; yet if any textual variant occurred, the claimed deterioration was inevitably attributed to the scribe's incompetency and negligence.[9] In other words, scribal work in pre-modern China was depicted as either text-replicating or classics-sabotaging. While copying text hardly makes a scribe a hero, textual mistakes easily cast them as culprits. Ultimately, no matter how fastidious they were, the scribes' endeavors were always overshadowed by the invincible importance of the classical texts they produced, causing us to almost forget to ask who the actual makers of the ancient classics were. That is, prosthetic or agential, artificial or authorial—scribes as the actual makers of the ancient knowledge, how should we understand their invisible, yet pervasive roles?

East Asian Studies, Berkeley: University of California, 2000), 236–238. Zhou Fengwu, "Guodian zhujian de xingshi"; Feng Shengjun, "Cong chutu wenxian"; Qiu Xigui, "Tantan Shangbo jian he Guodian jian zhong de cuo bie zi" 談談上博簡和郭店簡中的錯別字, in *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji: Jiandu boshu juan* 裘錫圭學術文集 · 簡牘帛書卷 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2012), 372–77; Li Mengtao 李孟濤 [Matthias L. Richter], "Shi tan shuxiezhe de shizi nengli ji qi dui liuchuan wenben de yingxiang" 試探書寫者的識字能力及其對流傳文本的影響, *Jianbo* 簡帛 4 (2009): 395–402. See also Xiong Jiahui 熊佳暉, "Guodian jian *Wu xing* pian de chengshu fangshi yu shushou wenhua shuiping tanxi" 郭店簡《五行》篇的成書方式與書手文化水平探析, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 1 (2020): 91–101.

[9] For instance, arguably, the earliest mention of scribes might be Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283—343) *Baopu zi* 抱朴子: "Even if those who are in charge of copying have learned the texts, they still make many errors in writing. That is why people say: "After transcribing a text three times, a *yu* 魚 (fish) becomes *lu* 魯 (coarse) and *xu* 虛 (empty), a *hu* 虎 (tiger)." 書字人知之，猶尚寫之多誤。故諺曰：書三寫，魚成魯，虛成虎. Ge Hong, Wang Ming 王明 annotated, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 307–308.

This project investigates epistemological practices and information technology before the era of paper; it concerns the common people and their actual methods and activities behind the edifice of Sinitic classical knowledge. Negotiating the border between the "lowly" scribes and the "learned" scholars, the focal point of this project is to portray the actual book-making scenario achieved by a variety of anonymous scribes and known scholars, and to challenge the artificial dichotomy that modern narratives have built between ancient book-makers and text-authors, narratives that perpetuate historical structural inequalities and assumptions about effective agency. Examining their actual products—recently excavated and discovered bamboo and wood manuscript from ancient China—I address that ancient scribes were not mere copyists, and that the neither the creation and not the transformation of ancient texts via the media of bamboo and wood could not have been accomplished by simply transcribing existing documents as the current mainstream scholarship would assume. Rather, the countless common scribes and readers exerted a pervasive and perpetual impact on the making of ancient knowledge, and a wide range of writing technologies were invented and innovated by those numerous hidden figures. Synthesizing the codicological data and the textual characteristics and integrating a variety of excavated and transmitted sources, I propose that the ancient epistemic enterprise was inseparable from the intellectual agency and executive autonomy of the myriad common scribes; numerous learning paradigms and information technologies of later generations—on paper, by printing, through digital devices—were, in fact, developed out of the world of knowledge made from bamboo, wood, and silk.

As we seldom see direct depictions of book production in the transmitted literary sources of early China, especially for the pre-imperial period, my approach to uncovering the puzzle of ancient scribes involves investigating their working methods and actual practices. As the question of "who they were" may still not be answerable based on the existing materials, I examine the

ancient scribal culture through the lens of "what they did and how they did it," by delving into a series of actual ancient manuscripts as the direct products of and interfaces with the ancient people. That is, uncovering the actual crafts embedded in their making of books is the very pathway toward their historical moment of living, thinking, and writing. Just as "scribe" is a perplexing term, writing is a multifaceted activity—driven by needs, defined by context, executed by people, fostered by community, conveyed by physical support, and inherently inseparable from orality, memorability, materiality, temporality, spatiality, functionality, and individuality. A written object always necessitates careful scrutiny to unpack its entire meaning, as it awaits its readers, across time and space, to discover not only the explicitly told message, but also the implicitly expressed story of the interplay among media, people, and knowledge.

To this end, I integrate methods from various disciplines—book history, the history of scholarship, the history of information and of technology, legal and institutional history, along with codicology, paleography, philology, textual criticism, and media studies—and I apply them to a series of newly unearthed archaeological sources dated to the Warring States (475–221 BCE), Qin (221–207 BCE), and Han (206 BCE–220 CE) dynasties. Scrutinizing a series of unearthed bamboo, wood, and silk manuscripts from ca. 400 BCE to 300 CE as both cultural documents and material objects, we discover the actual methods in making and conveying various types of knowledge and information, from the elegant and sophisticated classical literature to the voluminous and tedious legal tomes, as well as the exhaustive, gigantic quantity of administrative information. I ask how ancient people created, stored, circulated, and organized in the historical context of early China across various ancient informational media. What was a "book" before the era of paper? In what way did ancient people read, write, and engage with their books and knowledge? How was information represented and utilized through the media of bamboo scrolls and wooden tablets? How was the imperial administrative system

and classical textual tradition established and renewed through the scribal culture of writing on bamboo, wood, and silk?

2. *Practices and Objects: The Surviving Texts, the Lost Books*

Classical texts have always lain at the very heart of Chinese culture and society. From the Six Arts (*Liu yi* 六藝) to the Thirteen Classics (*Shisan jing* 十三經),[10] from the Han imperial bibliographic project to the Qing Evidential School, knowledge of the ancient classics, as it is processual and ubiquitous, has been deeply entrenched in every permutation of Chinese political infrastructure and intellectual evolution. As the classical texts have always been an indispensable element in Chinese culture and society, the Sinographic classics[11] reached to the vast adjacent territories, including today's Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, where the literary Sinitic written language, as the *lingua franca* of premodern East Asia, was widely adopted as the major vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge.[12]

Despite the long and rich history of studying the classical texts, readers have to confront the reality that a substantial portion of ancient books, no matter whether from pre-imperial or

[10] For example, see Max Jakob Fölster, "Libraries and Archives in the Former Han: Arguing for a Distinction," in *Manuscripts and Archives: Comparative Views on Record-Keeping*, ed. Sabine Kienitz, Michael Friedrich, Christian Brockmann, and Alessandro Bausi (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 201–230. See also also Michael Hunter, "The 'Yiwen Zhi' 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) Bibliography in Its Own Context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 138. 4 (2018): 763–80; Cheng Sudong 程蘇東, *Cong liuyi dao shisan jing: yi jingmu yanbian wei zhongxin* 從六藝到十三經：以經目演變爲中心 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018).

[11] See for instance, David B. Lurie, "A World Dense with Writing," in *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 115–166.

[12] Concerning the evolvement of adaptation of Chinese-character script when it transformed to today's Vietnam, Korea and Japan, see Zev Handel, *Sinography: The Borrowing and Adaptation of the Chinese Script* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019).

early imperial times, have been lost to history, both textually and materially.[13] The textual loss, on the one hand, is the fading of human memory into oblivion, and on the other hand, it is the physical demise of the material books, which were the embodiment of classical learning. Lamentations over this loss echo through various genres of writing: in prefaces or postfaces of bibliographic surveys, literary works, and legal compendia.[14] The dire state of the historical texts hints at a diminishing future for current knowledge, while the lingering fears over the loss of classical knowledge loom over every reader who cherishes history and memory. With time, it becomes impossible to gauge the historicity of the statements regarding the number of the missing books, but at least we can conceive of the recurrent scene of textual loss mirroring a profound concern about the fragility of the ancient texts: the ancient readers were fully aware, cautious, and constantly distressed about textual losses; and in retrospect, such concerns largely became reality.

Eventually, the ancient libraries were scattered, plundered, or destroyed. For those ancient texts that serendipitously survived, how can we understand their textual continuity? A teleological narrative might suggest that the classical texts survived because the embedded philosophical ideologies adapted under different historical circumstances; yet text itself is never a self-controlling entity, but always a result of human epistemological activities—its lifespan, especially in the premodern context, defined not so much by its physical durability but more by

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[13] For a survey in this "book adversities" in Chinese history, see Chen Zhong 陈忠海. "Woguo gudai shu'e de yuanyin ji qi tedian" 我國古代書厄的原因研究及其特點, *He'nan tushuguan xuekan* 河南圖書館學刊 33.3 (2013): 2–6; Zhang Shunhui 張舜徽, "Gudai wenxian de sanwang" 古代文獻的散亡 in *Zhongguo wenxian xue* 中國文獻學 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou shuhua she, 1982), 19–30.

[14] For instance, Zheng Qiao's 鄭樵 (1104—1162) "General Preface" (*zongxu* 總序) and "Treatise of Textual Collation" (*jiaochou lüe* 校讎略), both in his encyclopedia *Tongzhi* 通志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995). See also Hu Yingling's 胡應麟 (1551—1602) "Jingji hui tong" 經籍會通 in *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* 少室山房筆叢 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2009); Xie Zhzozhi's 謝肇淛 (1567—1624) "Wuju bisan pian" in *Wenhai pisha* 文海披沙 (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe, 2016).

the vicissitudes of reader interests. Despite the difficulty in gauging what parts exactly the various involved factors played, we can certainly attribute more to the constant intellectual inquiries of the generations of historical readers than to the ancient books' inherent material durability.[15] In other words, the persistency and evolution of the Chinese classical tradition owes more to the continuous textual practices that kept and revitalized the textual knowledge rather than successful physical preservation of the material book in a tangible form. Crafted from delicate silk sheets or brittle, unwieldy bamboo or wood slips, the inherent fragility of these materials dictated the lifespan of the ancient written artifacts. Yet just as Peter Miller noted, "without us, things might exist, but they could not have meaning":[16] despite the limited durability of ancient books as physical objects, the relentless pursuit of textual studies, continuous and various textual practices, and the dedication of generations of inquisitive minds have kept these ancient texts alive.

The history of Chinese texts is as much ever-diminishing as it is ever-growing: on one hand, constrained by the limited durability of any writing medium as well as the evanescence of human memory, the entirety of the textual knowledge is destined to decay; on the other hand, what was lost or silenced, or what was believed to have been so, has also prompted textual scholars to create more. Between the disappearance of old texts and the emergence of new ones,

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[15] For instance, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130—1200) once discussed the interaction between the material media and textual knowledge. He says: "The reason people today read sloppily is that there are a great many printed texts…It would seem that the ancients had no written texts, so only if they had memorized a work from beginning to end would they get it. Those studying a text would memorize it completely and afterwards receive instruction on it from a teacher…For people today, even copying down a text has become bothersome. Therefore their reading is sloppy." 今緣文字印本多，人不著心讀。漢時諸儒以經相授者，只是暗誦，所以記得牢，故其所引書句，多有錯字。如孟子所引詩書亦多錯，以其無本，但記得耳。今人所以讀書苟簡者，緣書皆有印本多了。如古人皆用竹簡，除非大段有力底人方做得。...今人連寫也自厭煩了，所以讀書苟簡. See "Methods of Reading" ("Dushufa shang" 讀書法上) in *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, vol. 10, (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1997), 153.

[16] Peter N. Miller, *History and Its Objects: Antiquarianism and Material Culture Since 1500* (Ithaca, New York State, Cornell University, Press, 2017), 206.

Chinese books transformed not only textually, but also materially: as the textual knowledge kept revolutionizing the language, composition, and ideology, the material format and physical exteriority of books also continuously metamorphosed in presentation and signification. From bamboo and silk to paper to screen, from handwritten copies to printed and digital copies, from cumbersome scrolls to navigable codices, the entirety of their materiality which also includes the visuality of the content, has all drastically changed. Imagine a philosophical master text from the Warring States (475–221 BCE) period that survived intact through countless iterations of scrupulous copying or rigid memorizing for more than two thousand years—even if the entirety of its textuality were to fortuitously remain unchanged, presenting the originally handwritten bamboo text on a printed paper or even an electronic medium would still deprive it of the invaluable historical information that was embedded in its Warring States appearance. That is, despite *absolutely* faithful transmission[17] that could theoretically preserve a text's semantics, its

[17] Although I hesitate to exclude the possibility that rigid transmissions with a requirement for absolute accuracy of the text might have existed, the transmission of classical texts, at least before the Song dynasty, largely included the concept of collaborative authorship, meaning that scribes and scholars altogether embraced great editorial autonomy in transcribing an existing text. A highly selective list on the fluidity in textual transmission through the lens of recently discovered early Chinese manuscripts includes Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫, *Gushu tongli* 古書通例 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985); Martin Kern, "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China," *Journal of East Asian Archeology*, 4 (2002): 143–181; Li Ling 李零, *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu* 簡帛古書與學術源流 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004), 193–211; William G. Boltz, "The Composite Nature of Early Chinese Texts," in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2005), 50–78; Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Lai Guolong 來國龍, "Lun zhanguo qinhan xieben wenhua de liudong yu guding 論戰國秦漢寫本文化中文本的流動與固定, *Jianbo* 簡帛 2 (2007): 515–527; Feng Shengjun 馮勝君, "Chutu cailiao suojian xian Qian gushu de zaiti yiji goucheng he chuanbu fangshi" 出土材料所見先秦古書的載體以及構成和傳布方式, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 4 (2011), 195–214; and Matthias Richter, *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); "Manuscript Formats and Textual Structure in Early China," in *Confucius and the Analects Revisited: New Perspectives on Composition, Dating, and Authorship*, eds., Michael Hunter and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 187–217.

For a broader perspective on classical texts that includes medieval materials, see Susan Chernieck, "Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54.1 (1994): 5–125; and Christopher Nugent, *Manifest in Words, Written on Paper: Producing and Circulating Poetry in Tang Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010), 221–35.

historical material form and format as well as the entirety of the knowledge-making circumstances that are encapsulated its physical presentation[18] would all inevitably be gone. In a nutshell, textuality might achieve a form of timelessness or even immortality by being continually transformed into new vessels of knowledge; yet the materiality of books is inherently transient, even ephemeral, and inextricably bound to limitations in time and space.

3. *Materials and Materiality*

Then, why should a book's materiality matter? In recent decades, a series of studies have shown how the material presentation of a book is an inseparable dimension of its socio-cultural environment in which they were produced; books are created by and for people and shaped by their temporal, spatial, and functional contexts; thus they should be contextualized as cultural records and material objects, as well as powerful and versatile media for communicative and informational pursuits. Books are never simply passive receptacles of knowledge but witnesses to and instantiations and physical outcomes of dynamic and diverse intellectual activities. Each dimension of materiality is not merely an appendage to its semantics nor only a means to facilitate reconstruction of fragmentary and/or scattered pieces in an archeological context, but it is also an ever-present aspect of its entire semiotic effect, manifesting the book's socially and historically distinctive signification.[19] Furthermore, a book's materiality is never static: it

[18] D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–30; Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 13–24.

[19] Roger Chartier. *Forms and Meanings*, 22.

embodies not merely the historical context of the moment when it was created, but it also encapsulates the processual knowledge activities over the *longue-durée.*[20]

Ultimately, books evolved not only physically, but also culturally, socially, and epistemologically. The changing form of the knowledge vehicle suggests not only a technological advancement, but rather that the entire epistemological environment, the expectations, and experiences have evolved in tandem. In this immensely dynamic, interlocking, and perpetual process of transforming both knowledge and the knowledge experience, numerous modern preconceived notions should be put aside if we attempt to make sense of a text composed on bamboo and silk. We must ask: what was the ancient reader's experience while holding a bamboo book? Were they memorizing, contemplating, or casually perusing it? Were they searching, studying with others or alone, transcribing by sight or by speech, reading sequentially or selectively, engaging scholastically or performatively? While some of these scenarios may less likely have occurred, the full spectrum of potential epistemic modes together formed a complex, evolving web of learning; it is these diverse activities that shaped every dimension of an ancient Chinese book's materiality.

Manuscript culture on bamboo was not simply an archaic means of text production as a precursor of printing/digital media but that the long-running material condition and epistemological context of knowledge-making in East Asia before the first millennium; it is of monumental significance in understanding every facet of history and texts in the early and medieval periods.[21] Yet, for the longest period of historical time, scholars could not truly

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[20] Jacob Soll, "The Grafton Method, or the Science of Tradition," in *For the Sake of Learning: Essays in Honor of Anthony Grafton*, Ann Blair and Anja-Silvia Goeing eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1018–31.

[21] For Han compositional styles, see Michael Nylan, "Manuscript Culture in Late Western Han and Authors' Authority," *Journal of Chinese Literature* 1, no. 3 (2014–15): 155–85; *Yang Xiong and the Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in Han China* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2011), and "On Libraries and Manuscript Culture in Western Han Chang'an and Alexandria," in *Ancient Greece and China*

reconstruct, but only imagine the ancient book culture of bamboo and silk manuscripts due to the absence of actual written documents that had survived from before the prevalence of paper.[22] At the same time, the transmitted corpora provided insufficient information about the ancient books' formats and the actual textual practices, thereby precluding a truly comprehensive understanding of the sociology of ancient texts and reading.

However, the scarcity of materials from ancient China has seen a dramatic shift in the last century. Beginning a century ago, with the discovery of an increasing number of manuscripts on bamboo, wood, and silk from pre-imperial and early imperial China, our understanding of the material history of writing prior to the paper era has been drastically revolutionized.[23] In 1923, Wang Guowei 王國維, an eminent scholar of Chinese classical studies, put forward a famous proposition: "Since ancient times, new studies have primarily emerged from new [archeological]

Compared, ed. G. E. R. Lloyd and Jenny Zhao (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 373–408. On Han activist editing, see Michael Nylan, Yang Xiong and the *Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in Han China* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2011), and "Manuscript Culture in Late Western Han and Authors' Authority," *Journal of Chinese Literature* 1, no. 3 (2014–15): 155–85; Ruyue He and Michael Nylan, "On a Han-Era Postface (Xu 序) to the Documents," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 75, no. 2 (2015): 377–426. On Song activist editing, see Susan Cherniack, "Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54, no. 1 (1994): 5–125.

[22] Before the archaeological discoveries of unearthed documents in the 20th century, the Jizhong 汲冢 bamboo documents used to be the only pre-modern excavated texts for nearly two centuries. For an introduction to the Jizhong documents, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Chinese Annals in the Western Observatory: An Outline of Western Studies of Chinese Unearthed Documents* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 272–79.

[23] A few essential studies on this topic include Chen Mengjia 陳夢家, "You shiwu suojian handai jiance zhidu" 由實物所見漢代簡册制度, in *Hanjian zhuishu* 漢簡綴述 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 291–315; Wang Guowei 王國維, Hu Pingsheng 胡平生 and Ma Yuehua 馬月華 annotated, *Jiandu Jianshu kao jiaozhu*, 簡牘檢署考校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004); Lin Ching-Yuan 林清源, *Jiandu boshu biaoti geshi yanjiu* 簡牘帛書標題格式研究 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 2004); Feng Shengjun, "Cong chutu wenxian tan xianqin lianghan gushu de tili" 從出土文獻談先秦兩漢古書的體例, *Wenshi* 文史 4 (2004): 25–35; Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔, *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu* 戰國竹書形制及相關問題研究 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2015); and Cheng Pengwan 程鵬萬, *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu* 簡牘帛書格式研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2017).

discoveries." (古來新學問起，大都由於新發見)[24] Wang lived in a transitional historical moment when the long-standing Chinese empire was compelled to transform into a different form of polity, and the social change precipitated profound disruptions in the cultural, intellectual, and academic realms. He witnessed the explosive uncovering of a series of unprecedented archaeological finds that stirred immense intellectual excitement for their extraordinary historical value. Based on these finds, he identified the four major discoveries of his time: 1) oracle bones from Shang dynasty (ca. 1600–1045 BCE), 2) Han (206 BCE–220 CE) wooden strips found at the northwestern frontier, 3) medieval paper manuscripts found in Dunhuang,[25] and 4) archives from the Qing's (1644–1911) Grand Secretariat Storehouse imperial palace. After examining each of these remarkable materials and articulating the significance of the discoveries of these historical materials, Wang stated: "Thus, our present age may rightfully be deemed an age of discovery—it is truly unparalleled by any previous era." (故今日之時代，可謂發見之時代，自來未有能比者也). In that same year of 1923, Li Ji 李濟 (or Li Chi), the father of modern archeology in China, received his PhD in anthropology from Harvard University. Soon after returning to his homeland, he spearheaded a series of groundbreaking archaeological excavations with his Academia Sinica colleagues.[26] Discovering

[24] See Wang Guowei, "Zuijin er sanshi nian zhong zhongguo xin fa jian zhi xuewen" 最近二三十年中中國新發見之學問, in *Xue heng* 學衡 45 (1925): 1–13; later in *Wang Guowei quanji (di shisi juan)* 王國維全集 (第十四卷). Hangzhou: Zhengjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009, 239–244. Especially in page 241, Wang mentioned the specific numbers of these "discovered" wooden documents in the northwestern frontier: 1) several tens of Jin wooden slips at Khotan; 2) the Liusha zhuijian 流沙墜簡.See also Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Fu Sinian, Hu Shi yu Juyan han jian de yun mei ji fan tai" 傅斯年、胡適與居延漢簡的運美及返台 *Bulletin of Institute of History and Philology* 66.4(1995): 921–952.

[26] Kuang-chi Chang. "Li Chi: 1896–1979." *Asian Perspectives* 23, no. 2 (1980): 317–21.
On the historiographical orientation of Chinese archaeology Falkenhausen, Lothar von On the Historiographical Orientation of Chinese. Archaeology," *Antiquity* 67.257 (1993): 839–49; Peter N. Miller, *History and Its Objects: Antiquarianism and Material Culture Since 1500*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017.

and integrating an increasing number of archaeological finds with the traditional historical sources, the scholarly shift marked a new era in the study of ancient Chinese language, texts, and civilization. Over the past century, these revolutionary discoveries have profoundly transformed our knowledge of the history and archeology of ancient China.

A century has passed since Wang Guowei heralded the new era sparked by archeological discoveries. Each genre in the "the four major discoveries" (*si da faxian* 四大發現) yielded a significant number of new finds: dozens of archaeological sites with oracle bones have been unearthed in Henan and Shanxi;[27] beyond Dunhuang,[28] numerous early medieval and medieval paper documents were found among the various finds in Turfan, Astana, Khara-Khoto, and even the Jiangnan area;[29] in terms of the late imperial archives, more than one hundred thousand volumes of local governmental documents from the Qing dynasty were discovered in Ba County (巴縣) in Sichuan province.[30] Among the four types of discoveries, the number of

[27] See Li Yung-ti, *Archaeological Research of Anyang and the Surrounding Regions*. Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2016.

[28] Dunhuang caves were recognized as one of the actual library-like collections from manuscript culture. See Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: published by the Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 5, reads "The only extensive Chinese manuscript library that survives is that of Dunhuang, many centuries later. It is such a peculiar case—a provincial Buddhist library on 仕 le margins of Chinese civilization—that it cannot serve as a perfect model, but it is the only model we have." See also Tian xiaofei, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 7, "As mentioned previously, because of the fragility of their medium, early manuscripts produced in China have largely disappeared. The famous manuscripts of the Tang and the Five Dynasties (907–960) from the Dunhuang grottos of northwestern China, protected by the dry weather of the desert and by their geographical isolation, are a rare case of survival."

[29] Nikolai G. Pchelin and Simone-Christiane Raschmann. "Turfan Manuscripts in the State Hermitage—A Discovery," in *Written Monuments of the Orient* 2 (4) 2016: 3–43. See also Wang Xiaoxin 王曉欣, Zheng Xudong 鄭旭東, and Wei Yile 魏亦樂, *Yuansai Huzhoulu Huji Wenshu: Yuan Gongwen zhiyinben "zengxiu huzhu Libu yunlüe" shibei gongwen ziliao* 元代湖州路戶籍文書：元公文紙印本《增修互注禮部韻略》紙背公文資料 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2021).

[30] Feng Erkang 馮爾康, *Qingshi shiliao xue* 清史史料學 (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1993), 3–15.

unearthed bamboo and wooden strips has increased the most significantly. During his lifespan, Wang Guowei only came across one corpus of discovery, the Han documents from Juyan (居延) and a few scattered Han slips from Dunhuang. Quantitatively, the Juyan corpus was initially recorded as "over ten thousand pieces" (一萬余枚), a figure that was updated to 13,405 pieces thirty years later.[31] Now, a century later, even with incomplete statistics and knowing that numerous corpora remain unpublished, recent calculations suggest that, as of 2019, archaeologists have identified over 300,000 pieces,[32] at least thirty times of what Wang Guowei had ever seen. Thanks to the excavation and conservatory technologies, a substantial portion of the manuscripts are intact. Despite this, the estimate of complete slips must remain subjective, because of the fragmentary nature of many of them. The calculation of the number of Dunhuang manuscripts is similarly uncertain.[33]

Not only has the quantity multiplied more than thirtyfold since Wang Guowei's time, but the time range has also expanded and now covers documents from the mid-to-late Warring States period (ca. 400 BCE) to the Jin dynasty (ca. 400 CE).[34] The variety of textual genres have also broadened from administrative records to now include 1) literary, philosophical, historical,

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[31] Hsing I-tien, "Fu Sinian, Hu Shi yu Juyan han jian de yun mei ji fan tai," 934.

[32] These include both complete and incomplete slips. Chen Minzhen 陳民鎮 and Li Junming 李均明, "Jiandu xue yanjiu 70 nian" 簡牘學研究 70 年, in *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu* 中國文化研究 (2019.3): 1–25, especially page 2.

[33] Rong Xinjiang, Eighteen Lectures on Dunhuang (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 140: "Many of them are only the size of a man's palm, whereas the last hundred some items in reality only have a single character or even half a character. Some scholars are eager to determine the definite number of Dunhuang manuscripts, or to ascertain which holding institution has more items. I do not believe that this can be done because, as the example of the Stein manuscripts tells us, one scroll may be larger than a hundred small fragments joined together, and thus it is impossible to compare collections on the basis of their catalogue numbers alone."

[34] See Brian Lander, Ling Wenchao and Wen Xin. *State and Local Society in Third Century South China: Administrative Documents Excavated at Zoumalou, Hunan*. Leiden: Brill, 2024.

and cosmological works, as well as technical treatises collectively known as "books" (*shu ji* 書籍), such as ancient versions of the ancient classics like *Laozi*, *Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Change*, *Book of Ritual*, *Analects*, various masters texts, and numerous previously unknown texts; 2) a vast array of previously unseen or unknown legal compilations, including various Qin-Han statutes, ordinances, edicts (*lü ling* 律令),[35] the locally made actual imperial laws, and a substantial number of local administrative documents (*wen shu* 文書), the actual paperwork circulating in the early imperial bureaucracy; 3) divinatory and religious records (*bushi jidao* 卜筮祭禱); and 4) a range of tomb inventories (*qiance* 遣册) and other funerary writings.[36] Given this immense quantity and diversity, the time is ripe for a typology and a chronology of the ancient Chinese manuscripts.

Now, scholars working on early China are experiencing a dual shift in the "material turn," both in terms of methodology and resources. On the one hand, global humanities research in recent decades has been paying increasing attention to the material aspects of literary documents;[37] on the other hand, scholars working on the Warring States, Qin, Han, and Jin dynasties in particular are witnessing the extensive archaeological excavations and discoveries of (looted) ancient written artefacts—the vast quantity of ancient bamboo, wood, and silk documents have granted us unprecedented opportunities to study not only the textual but also the material aspects of ancient writings. In other words, without the archaeological discoveries,

[35] In a border sense, Lüling should also be considered as "book," instead of "document" or "archive."

[36] This project does not encompass another significant genre of excavated documents, tomb inventories (*qian ce* 遣册).

[37] Peter N. Miller. *History and Its Objects: Antiquarianism and Material Culture Since 1500*. Ithaca, New York State, Cornell University, Press, 2017.

the material dimension of ancient China's written world would remain elusive; without the intellectual shift of scholarly attention towards the texts' materiality, the true significance of these precious documents could not truly be comprehended. Integrating the perspective of the "material turn" with these valuable newly unearthed materials, we now have unparalleled opportunities to explore a variety of previously unaddressed questions, delving into numerous uncharted territories in both ancient texts and ancient books, as well as the myriad common people and life experience behind them. That is, our age is truly unparalleled not only because of the invaluable discoveries that have come to light, but also for the global community of humanities research that has made it possible to explore these rich new sources.

The known archeological contexts are mainly ancient tombs, wells, and relics of ancient architecture;[38] most of the bamboo and wooden manuscripts were excavated either in southern China, primarily in modern-day Hubei 湖北 and Hunan 湖南 provinces, where the climate is exceptionally humid, or in the northwestern provinces, such as Gansu 甘肅 and Inner Mongolia that have a desert-like environment: both the extremely humid and extremely dry climates seem to provide ideal conditions for preserving manuscripts. Unfortunately, a small portion of the manuscripts are unprovenanced, causing significant loss of archeological context and resulting in additional challenges for material restoration and textual deciphering.[39]

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[38] Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Social Ranking in Chu Tombs: The Mortuary Background of the Warring States Manuscript Finds," *Monumenta Serica* 51 (2003): 439–526; Armin Selbitschka, "'I Write Therefore I Am': Scribes, Literacy, and Identity in Early China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 78.2 (2018): 413–76.

[39] A selective list regarding this topic, see Paul R. Goldin, "Heng xian and the Problem of Studying Looted Artifacts," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative* Philosophy 12.2 (2013): 153–160; Christopher J. Foster, "Introduction to the Peking University Han Bamboo Strips: On the Authentication and Study of Purchased Manuscripts," *Early China* 40 (2017): 232–239; Martin Kern, "'Xi shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') and its Consequences: Issues in Early Chinese Poetry and Textual Studies," *Early China* 42 (2019): 7–11. More recently, see Paul R. Goldin, "The Problem of Looted Artifacts in Chinese Studies: A Rejoinder to Critics," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative* Philosophy 22.1 (2023): 145–151; Hans Van Ess, "A Textual Approach to the Problem of the Authenticity of the Historical Text Xinian from the Tsing–hua Collection of Manuscripts," *Chinese Literature:*

With its own ancient appearance, these manuscripts are not merely direct messages from the ancient past, they are original messages conveyed by their original media, invaluable precisely because they allow us to discern not only what was recorded and survived in historical sources but also how such knowledge came into being. Longstanding discussions of classical texts, institutional history, and ancient languages can now be revisited in light of the new finds; we are also empowered to ask numerous previously unexplored questions about topics such as book history in ancient China, documentation activities, writing technologies, knowledge practices, information management, and the actual readers and writers—if we call for attentiveness and sensitivity toward the immensely profound dimensions of materiality.

However tantalizing, the study of the past through ancient objects and the discovery of inscribed artifacts were not entirely novel in Chinese history: both the Song (960-1279) antiquarianism of bronzes and the discovery of the Jizhong 汲冢 bamboo manuscripts during the Jin (265-420) dynasty can be seen as earlier instances of emphasizing on the material aspects of historical artifacts.[40] For the recent discoveries of bamboo and wood documents, there also has

Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR) 45 (2023): 185–214; Christopher J. Foster, Glenda Chao, and Mercedes Valmisa, *Methods and Ethics of Researching Unprovenanced Artifacts from East Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

[40] For an overview of Song antiquarianism, see Ye Guoliang 葉國良, *Songdai jinshixue yanjiu* 宋代金石學研究 (Taipei: Taiwan shufang, 2011); see also Bruce Rusk, "Artifacts of Authentication: People Making Texts Making Things in Late Imperial China," in *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800*, ed. Fran.ois Louis and Peter Miller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 180–204. Wu Hung, *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2010); "On Rubbings: Their Materiality and Historicity," in *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan*, ed. Judith T. Zeitlinand Lydia H. Liu (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 29–72.

For an overview of the Bamboo annal, representatively, see Shao Dongfang 邵東方, *Zhushu jinian yanjiu lungao* 竹書紀年研究論稿 (Taipei: Airiti Press, 2019); Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The Editing and Editions of the Bamboo Annals," in *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 185–256; David S. Nivison, "Epilogue to the Riddle of the Bamboo Annals." *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 53 (2011): 1–32.

been a notable increase in scholarly interest worldwide regarding the material aspects. In China, there has been a growing emphasis on the manuscripts' forms and material conventions (*xingzhi* 形制) and materiality (*wuzhixing* 物質性).[41] In Japan, scholars working on ancient Chinese manuscripts have adopted the methodologies of *komonjo gaku* 古文書學 (study of ancient documents), that originate from those used in the study of indigenous Japanese documents and encompasses considerations of the material and ecological aspects of historical documents.[42] A string of related concepts of materiality have become buzzwords, while at the same time, these related yet subtly different terms carry their own different implications for use in their own contexts. Despite the fact that they resemble each other, these terms do not share exactly the same emphasis. *Xingzhi*, as a compound word, consists of two aspects: *xing* 形, referring to form and shape, and *zhi* 制, pertaining to the system and mechanisms of its production. Hence, in China, the significance of the materiality of ancient manuscripts is predominantly due to its potential for better reconstructing fragmentary texts.[43] On the other hand, the study of *komonjo gaku* in Japan, which focuses on the physical aspects of ancient texts and stems from Japanese textual traditions regarding the treatment of historical texts, is more concerned about the life cycle of the document. These approaches, in a way, resonate methodologically with the global "material turn" in historiography. Regardless of the particular emphasis, these subjects and

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[41] Cheng Pengwan 程鵬萬. *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu* 簡牘帛書格式研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2017). Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔. *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu—yi Tsinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian wei zhongxin* 戰國竹書形制及相關問題研究——以清華大學藏戰國竹簡爲中心. Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2015.

[42] Momiyama Akira 籾山明. *Bunken to ibutsu no kyōkai II: Chūgoku shutsudo kan doku shiryō no seitai-teki kenkyū* 文献と遺物の境界 II: 中国出土簡牘史料の生態的研究 (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2014), 323–339.

[43] For the extensive works on this topic, see chapter two, footnote 22.

methods, especially in the study of ancient Chinese manuscripts, have emerged relatively recently.

As for Anglophone scholarship in the field of ancient Chinese manuscripts, a series of important studies have ventured to discover their material aspects. This has definitely facilitated the reconstruction of fragmentary manuscripts,[44] provided new knowledge of the history of

[44] Most representatively, Thies Staack, "The 'Wei li zhi guan ji qianshou' Manuscript from the Yuelu Academy Collection: A New Reconstruction Based on Verso Lines and Verso Imprints of Writing." In *Documents and Writing Materials in East Asia* [東アジアの写本と書写材料], ed. Tomoyuki Nagata (Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, 2014), 1–27; "Reconstruction of Early Chinese Bamboo and Wood Manuscripts: A Review (1900–2010)," *Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures Occasional Papers* 5 (2016), 1–52; "The Neglected 'Backyard' of Early Chinese Manuscripts: How an Analysis of the Verso of Bamboo Slips can enable the Reconstruction of a Manuscript Roll," heiDOK - University of Heidelberg open access platform, 2017, http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/23213; Yunxiao Xiao, "Restoring Bamboo Scroll: Observations on the Materiality of Waring States Bamboo Manuscripts," *Chinese Studies in History* 50 (2017): 235–254. Daniel Patrick Morgan (墨子涵) and Karine Chemla (林力娜). "Writing in Turns: An Analysis of Scribal Hands in the Bamboo Manuscript Suan shu shu 筭數書 (Writings on Mathematical Procedures) from Zhangjiashan Tomb No. 247 (張家山 247 號墓漢簡《筭數書》寫手再探)," *Bamboo and Silk* 1 (2018): 152–190. Yang Qian (楊茜), "Rearranging the Slip Sequence in the Wang Ji Manuscript in the Peking University Han Bamboo-Slip Collection," *Bamboo and Silk* 6 (2023): 78–102.

ancient Chinese language[45] and book culture,[46] conceptualized the ancient textual culture,[47] revealed the actual reading and writing practices,[48] and offered new insights into the life cycle of the documents[49] and the sociology of knowledge.[50]

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[45] Imre Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing* (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2006); "Graphic Variation in Early Chinese Writing," in *China Across the Centuries: Papers from a Lecture Series in Budapest*, ed. Gabor Kosa (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2017), 33–60. Matthias Richter, "Tentative Criteria for Discerning Individual Hands in the Guodian Manuscripts," in *Rethinking Confucianism: Selected Papers from the Third International Conference on Excavated Chinese Manuscripts*, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass., 2004; "Towards a Profile of Graphic Variation: On the Distribution of Graphic Variants within the Mawangdui Laozi Manuscripts," in *Methodological Issues in the Study of Early Chinese Manuscripts: Papers from the Second Hamburg Tomb Text Workshop*, ed. idem, *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005), 169–207; "The Fickle Brush: Chinese Orthography in the Age of Manuscripts," *Early China* 31 (2007): 171–92.

[46] Li Songru (2017) Excavated manuscripts and the study of Warring States handwriting, *Chinese Studies in History* 50:3 (2017), 199–212; Feng Shengjun (2017) Scribal influence on the transmission of pre-Qin texts, as seen in excavated manuscripts, *Chinese Studies in History*, 50:3, 185–198. Thies Staack, "Identifying Codicological Sub—units in Bamboo Manuscripts: Verso Line's Revisited," *Manuscript Cultures* 8 (2015), 157–86; "Single- and Multi-Piece Manuscripts in Early Imperial China: On the Background and Significance of a Terminological Distinction," *Early China* 41 (2018), 245–95; "Ancient Chinese Scrolls as Evolving Entities: Implications for Reconstruction and Description," *Bamboo and Silk* 6 (2023), 296–328; "Bindings of Ancient Chinese Bamboo and Wood Scrolls," in *Tied and Bound: A Comparative View on Manuscript Binding,* ed. Alessandro Bausi and Michael Friedrich (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023), 39–72. Matthias Richter, "Manuscript Formats and Textual Structure in Early China," in *In Confucius and the* Analects *Revisited*, ed. Michael Hunter and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 187–217.

[47] Matthias Richter, "Textual Identity and the Role of Literacy in the Transmission of Early Chinese Literature." In in *Writing and Literacy in Early China*, ed. Li Feng and David Prager Branner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 206–36; *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts. Studies in the History of Chinese Texts* 3. Leiden: Brill, 2013; Matthias Richter, "Towards a Broad Concept of Punctuation," Bamboo and Silk 6.2 (2023), 159–185.

[48] Martin Kern, "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1–4 (2002): 143–181. Marc Kalinowski, "La production des manuscrits dans la chine ancienne: Uneapproche codicologique de la bibliothèque funéraire de Mawangdui." *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005): 131–68. Matthias Richter. "Faithful Transmission or Creative Change: Tracing Modes of Manuscript Production from the Material Evidence." *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques* 63.4 (2009): 889–908. Lai Guolong. "Textual fluidity and fixity in early Chinese manuscript culture." *Chinese Studies in History* 50:3 (2017): 172–184. Olivier Venture. "The Usage of Yu 于 and Yu 於 in Warring States Period and Han Dynasty and the Transmission and Writing Habit of Classical Texts." *Bamboo and Silk* 3 (2020): 206–231. Rens Krijgsman, "An Inquiry into the Formation of Readership in Early China: Using and Producing the **Yong yue* 用曰 and *Yinshu* 引書 Manuscripts," *T'oung Pao* 104.1–2 (2018): 2–65; "Punctuation and Text Division in Two Early Narratives: The Tsinghua University *Jin Wen Gong ru yu Jin 晉文公入於晉 and Zi Fan Zi Yu 子犯子餘 Manuscripts," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 143.1 (2023), 109–124. Thies Staack, "'Drafting,' 'Copying,' and 'Adding Notes': On the Semantic Field of 'Writing' as Reflected by Qin and Early Han Legal and Administrative Documents," *Bamboo and Silk* 2.2 (2019): 290–318. Max Jakob Fölster and Thies Staack, "Collation in Early Imperial China: From Administrative Procedure to Philological Tool," in *Exploring Written Artefacts: Objects,*

To fully appreciate the richness of the new materials and the promising perspectives offered by the perspective of materiality, several caveats require mentioning. First, there is no exclusivity between materiality and textuality, or materiality and orality, as these elements are profoundly intertwined and mutually reinforce each other in an actual textual activity. No written object can be detached from its historical context and social milieu: they are products of and witnesses to their directly and indirectly associated epistemic activities. In reality, any textual event—whether interpersonal or solitary—inevitably incorporates these inextricable elements. Ultimately, numerous textual practices are interwoven in a dynamic web of learning. For instance, reading serves to internalize a material text into a memorized one; reading a material text aloud transforms it into an oral text while simultaneously reinforcing the memorized one; engaging in reading and writing with others produces additional versions of oral, memorized, and material texts, further complicating the shared repertoire. Therefore, the newly established text may exhibit features of its previous incarnations—this processual, complex procedure of

Methods, and Concepts, edited by Jörg B. Quenzer, (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 889–912. Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Unearthed Documents and the Question of the Oral Versus Written Nature of the Classic of Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 75.2 (2016): 331–375. Martin Kern, " 'Xi shuai' 蟋蟀 ("Cricket") and its Consequences: Issues in Early Chinese Poetry and Textual Studies," Early China 42 (2019), 39–74. Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The Tsinghua Manuscript *Zheng Wen Gong wen Tai Bo and the Question of the Production of Manuscripts in Early China [清華簡《鄭文公問太伯》與中國古代文獻抄寫的問題]." *Bamboo and Silk* 3. 1 (2019): 54–73. Jiang Wen 蔣文, "A Re-examination of the Controversy over the Oral and Written Nature of the Classic of Poetry's Early Transmission, Based on the Anhui University Manuscript [由安大簡重審《詩經》早期流傳的口傳與書寫之爭]." *Bamboo and Silk 4. 1* (2021): 128–148. Christopher J. Foster, "Navigating Early Chinese Daybook Manuscripts." *Manuscript and Text Cultures* 2.1 (2023). Jia LianxiangJia. "A Study of the Format and Formation of the *Si gao 四告 (Four Proclamations) of the Tsinghua Bamboo Slips [清華簡《四告》的形制及其成書問題探研]," *Bamboo and Silk* 6. 1 (2023): 1–21. Luke Waring. "Introducing the **Wu ze you xing tu* Manuscript from Mawangdui," *Early China* 43 (2020): 123–60. Lai, Guolong. "The Diagram of the Mourning System from Mawangdui." *Early China* 28 (2003): 43–99.

[49] Thies Staack, "Ancient Chinese Scrolls as Evolving Entities: Implications for Reconstruction and Description," *Bamboo and Silk* 6.2 (2023): 296–328.

[50] Luke Waring, "What the Single Bamboo Slip Found in Mawangdui Tomb M2 Tells Us about Text and Ritual in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 106.1–2 (2020): 56–86.

knowledge-making shapes the nature of any written text, making it constantly fluctuate in a hybrid status of various medial dimensions. For this reason, this study, with its emphasis on the materiality of discovered manuscripts, is neither focused narrowly on the appearance of ancient writing, nor is it arguing for the importance of "non-textuality," as a written object's absolute "non-textuality" does not exist; rather, it seeks to illustrate how the materialized written object interfaces and communicates, both inwardly and outwardly, between people and knowledge, across past and present.

Second, as archeological finds often came to us completely serendipitously, it is crucial to note that any excavated manuscript represents merely a random snapshot of the vast, complex, and evolving manuscript culture. We must therefore refrain from generalizing the characteristics of a single document as representative of the entirety. In fact, as I will articulate in chapters 1 to 3, what characterizes pre-imperial and early imperial manuscript culture is precisely the tremendous individual agency and autonomy—as the material conditions and epistemological paradigms of ancient writings differ drastically from our age, the signification and conceptualization of writing were also distinct in ancient times. Thus, to truly understand the meaning and mechanisms of reading and writing in their own context, we should appreciate, rather than dismiss the idiosyncrasy of any peculiar written object as "non-standardized"—and the non-standardized nature is not a defect of a written object but a manifestation of the ancient writer's autonomy and agency.

Third, to follow up the previous point, what materiality can offer is a tremendously rich codicological data rather than explicit, unambiguous information—such densely packed dataset inevitably requires thorough possessing and synthesizing to fully reveal its meanings. Therefore, systematic collecting and critical analysis are imperative, rather than rushing to a straightforward yet impressionistic conclusion by merely looking at few features of one example. Each dimension

of a manuscript's materiality—from size, weight, layout, punctuation, palimpsests, impagination,[51] to script size, graphic form, handwriting, orthography, calligraphy, and even regional paleographic features—should be an integral part of a holistic inquiry into the producer' roles and document's historical circumstance. Recognizing the potentially significant role of scribes in manuscript production, the synthesis of handwriting emerges as a core point for uncovering these various aspects.

Finally, materiality must be recognized as the result of both historical moment and historical duration, originating from and retaining significance within a specific time frame. The making of texts and books involves dynamic and processual procedures, meaning that they are products of the accumulation and filtration of previous, various, direct and indirect textual activities. Materiality serves as a conduit to the original writers and readers, and it also mediates between various readers in different historical moments. While the ancient written object now brings us closer to its original historical moment, it also reconstructs its readership by inviting us, its modern readers, to contribute new meanings to the ancient edifice of knowledge. In this stretched period of meaning-making, we are enlightened by the collectivistic nature of ancient texts as well as how the actual people actively participated in the grand enterprises of bibliographic projects and administrative systems. Once again, ancient texts themselves are not self-directing entities, they may physically deteriorate over time but cannot last or develop on their own; rather, it is always readers' activities, making and transforming the texts, shaped the very nature of all classical, legal, and technician knowledge and fostered countless crafts within text-making and bookmaking.

[51] The use and meaning of "imagination," see Ku-ming Kevin Chang, Anthony Grafton, and Glenn W. Most, *Impagination: Layout and Materiality of Writing and Publication: Interdisciplinary Approaches From East and West* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 1–21.

Research Question and Chapter Outline

New discoveries from ancient China have presented us not only with new knowledge but also new questions. Among the numerous inquiries that can be raised, I propose three sets that are the most fundamental: 1) Holistically, what are the extant manuscripts and where can they be found? 2) Specifically, how were these sources produced and utilized? and 3) How representative are these documents? Inviting reflections at both the macro and micro levels, each question entails a series of interlocking inquiries. Before any critical analysis on the various dimensions of the ancient texts can be launched, let us articulate why these questions should be investigated carefully and collectively.

Comprehensiveness and thoroughness bring depth—the first set of questions (first chapter) concerns the holistic picture of the great abundance of the existing discovered manuscripts: after a century of discovery, what are the available materials? [52] How can we understand this massive quantity of data? Unlike single treasure troves that encompass an extensive quantity of ancient writings over the centuries—like the paper documents found at Dunhuang,[53] Cairo Geniza,[54] or Shosoin[55]—ancient Chinese manuscripts have been discovered at hundreds of archeological sites that are widely spread across an expansive territory, with the

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[52] Chen Minzhen 陳民鎮 and Li Junming 李均明, "Jiandu xue yanjiu 70 nian" 簡牘學研究 70 年, in *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu* 中國文化研究 2019.3, 1–25.

[53] Rong Xinjiang, *Eighteen Lectures on Dunhuang*, Imre Galambos, trans. (Boston: Brill, 2013); Hao Chunwen and Stephen F. Teiser, *Dunhuang Manuscripts: An Introduction of Texts from the Silk Road* (Diamond Bar, California: Portico Publishing Company, 2020).

[54] Marina Rustow, *The Lost Archive: Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020).

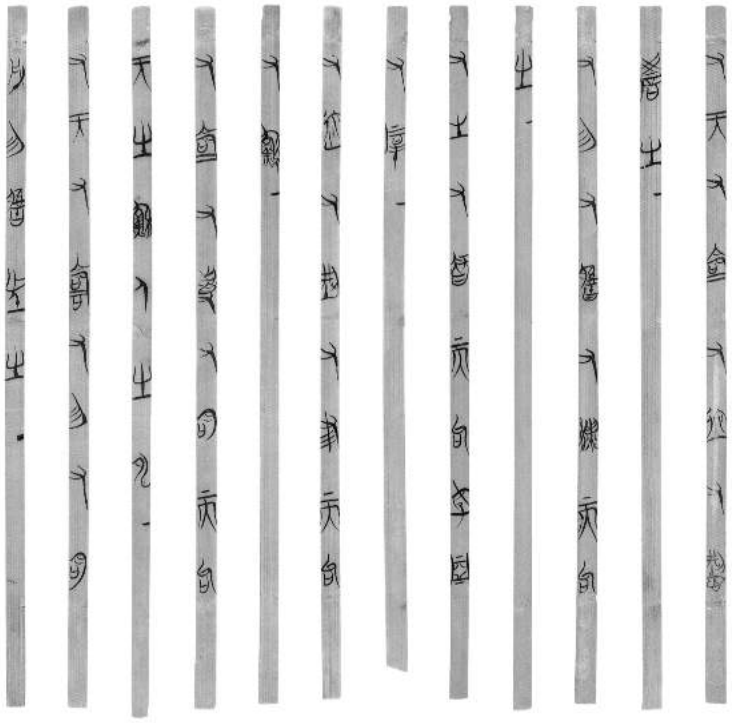
[55] Shosoin Monjo Kenkyu 正倉院文書研究会, *Shosoin Monjo Kenkyu* 正倉院文書研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1993).

number of documents varying significantly from one site to another. In a way, closer to the current state of the discovery of papyri.[56] Such particularity provides the study of ancient Chinese writing culture with a tremendously rich yet sometimes a sometimes seemingly uncontrollable amount of information, as well as the promise and peril of the various resemblances and incommensurability between each discovery. To accurately capture a panoramic view of the ancient literacy landscape and hence the network of knowledge making, or to appropriately situate any certain document within its embedded framework, a comprehensive survey and synthesis of the extensive existing quantity of data is an urgent desideratum.

The second set of questions, microscopically, concerns the intricacies between a specific manuscript's materiality and its associated practices (chapters 2 to 4): What was the experience of actually holding them in the hands? What was the writing posture? How were the texts presented and visually organized, and what kind of reading could be conducted? As a text's materiality is inseparable from the associated reading and writing events, these inquiries into the physical dimension are unavoidable in any further exploration of the textual culture. For example, if we assume that manuscript production invariably requires a physical master copy, then producing manuscripts made of long slips—measuring, let's say, 50cm to 75cm each—would reasonably necessitate a similarly sized master copy to be physically present in front of the scribe; if so, whether holding the new slip in hand or keeping it on a table, in tandem with positioning the master copy on a table or hanging on the wall, or any other method of juxtaposing the master copies with the new copy before one's eyes, would necessarily require 1) a very spacious table, and 2) excellent eyesight. Alternatively, if we believe that ancient manuscripts were made from a

[56] Eric G. Turner, *Greek Papyri: An Introduction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 26–41; The *Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); William A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

purely oral/aural classroom setting, with every student scribbling down notes as the teacher spoke without any chalkboard-like visual model of the texts, then the absence of a physical master copy would unavoidably lead to an impromptu creation of the unprecedented layout that is not necessarily bad-looking, but conceivably and understandably not always perfect, as the physical distribution of words was not decided until the moment when the scribe heard the texts—unless other evidence on the same document suggests the scribe's extraordinary writing and organizing skill. Furthermore, if we believe the literary manuscripts in the Warring States were already produced as highly industrialized commodities that the literati could purchase on the open market, then the manuscripts as commercial products should be necessarily profitable and transportable—then, what is the explanation for the many Warring States manuscripts that show an extravagant use of space? In the Guodian **Yu cong* manuscripts, for example, each slip has only eight or fewer characters (fig. 2). For economic purposes, each slip could easily have been inscribed with two times the amount of text, so why would the scribe deliberately choose to "waste" so much space?



Finally, the third set of questions is how to situate the microscopic observation that we found in the second set of questions within the macroscopic considerations from the first set. That is, how can we evaluate the representativeness of the extant documents in the vast and changing networks of objects, knowledge, and people? Do the excavated books found in a funerary setting actually reflect their use and meaning in real life? To what extent does a document or even a collection suffice to exemplify the local or even broader geographic scope? And finally, how can we evaluate the excavated corpus within the matrix of the entire ancient Chinese textual culture and get to know the myriad unseen and unknown texts in their various forms—material, oral, and memorized?

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 (materiality) comprehensively surveys and analyzes the material properties of the large number of discovered texts and portrays the varied occasions for which literary

manuscripts were written, their functions, and their uses. It aims to illustrate both the general picture of the material condition of writing and the tremendous diversity and fluidity in materiality between various texts and contexts. Finally, by analytically synthesizing data on the manuscripts' length and scale, I identify a chronological change in size over the nearly six hundred years of written on bamboo and wood for manuscripts.

Chapter 2 (paratext) unravels the meaning and implications of multiple paratextual devices in the manuscripts. Through the lens of the Tsinghua collection for its large quantity and physical completeness, I examine the interconnectedness among the manuscripts' codicological and paratextual arrangements and handwriting, and I challenge the assumption that the paratextual design of books in the Warring States was largely random. My analysis reveals a strong correlation between the various paratextual properties and the classification of scribal hands. This indicates that many important physical arrangements such as titles, slip numbers, punctuation marks, and physical size were closely associated with the individual scribes who wrote the texts. Altogether, these codicological and paratextual arrangements of the discovered bamboo manuscripts resonate with the intensifying concerns about textual loss as expressed in transmitted sources: the inherent fragility of the written medium and the growing amount and importance of textual knowledge drove the pre-imperial scribes and scholars, as a team, to create crafts and techniques to preserve, protect, and stabilize the classical texts' completeness.

Chapter 3 (orthography) discusses the idea that for a Warring States written text, the orthographic fluidity was not an intrinsic feature of the pre-imperial writing system itself, but rather a physical result of the diverse written culture that fostered variability. That is, it was not the pre-imperial graphs were written without any regulation, but the actual pre-imperial writers have exerted more autonomy to decide which form, graph, or even word they were composing, and each individual could do their work in ways that differed drastically from others. I

demonstrate that there is no linear evolution over time from orthographic variability to uniformity. Taking the two corpora that I see as epitomizing the topic, the Guodian and the Tsinghua collections, I propose two points: 1) an awareness of consistent orthography, no matter how incipient and circumscribed, already existed in the Warring States, and 2) corresponding practices and effective methods for achieving orthographic uniformity had already emerged. Contrary to the traditional belief that the official unification of script occurred during the Qin First Emperor's reign (246–210 BCE). the remarkable orthographic consistency of the Tsinghua manuscripts demonstrates that scribal endeavors and methods to regulate orthographic inconsistency already existed in the southern Chu region of the Warring States.

Chapter 4 (textuality) tackles the actual editing practices—how early imperial scribes updated laws while recycling, scraping, and rewriting the earlier slips—by examining the materiality and textuality of the recently published Zhangjiashan No. 336 "Gongling" (Ordinances on Official Promotion) manuscript. In contrast with what we previously knew as a synchronic, collective mode of manuscript production ("multiple scribes writing in turns"), this manuscript reflects a diachronic editorial process that took place over decades. This phenomenon reveals that it is not only that the content of the "Gongling" text, as a collection of ordinances, has multiple, complicated strata of law-making practices, but also that the "Gongling" manuscript, as a material object, underwent several times of being revised, expanded, corrected, and (re-)organized. Connecting multiple pieces of evidence suggesting its date of writing within each hand, I propose that about 70 percent of the text was written before the start of the rule of Emperor Wen (179–157 BCE). More importantly, it also shows that during the era of bamboo and wood, the actual editorial process of a core legal text might have been a continuation, possibly even recycling, of the earlier bamboo/wood slips. That is, law-making in early China might not have been practiced like the rather modern paradigm of collecting existing

materials, drafting them from the beginning, copying them, and then disposing of the drafts or earlier materials, but some may have been to directly scrape and rewrite on the slips and boards, and/or add or insert the slips. In short, the prolonged making of the "Gongling" manuscript resonates with the evolution of the law and the historical change from Emperor Gaozu (206–195 BCE) to Emperor Wen (179–157 BCE) in that it allows us a vivid glimpse of the transformation of a law collection, not only as public knowledge but also as a physical, actual epistemological object.

Chapter 1

Materiality: Building the Books

The written word is the great technical medium
in its ability to convert time to space and space to time,
and sound to sight and sight to sound, and to do so in external material.
All other symbolic media sail in its wake.

John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds*

1. Introduction: Bound Bamboo, Unbound Medium
2. Material Versatility
3. Data
4. Findings
   - 4.1 Enlarging the Manuscripts
   - 4.2 Shortening the Slips
   - 4.3 (Un)changed Interfaces

1. Introduction: Bound Bamboo, Unbound Medium

Imaginative yet informative, the few depictions of the material documents in the transmitted literary sources provide an enigmatic story of the history of media in ancient China. Perhaps the earliest evidence of using bamboo or wood for writing is the very graphic form of two essential characters that stand for "book": *ce* 册 (volume, scroll, book), and *dian* 典 (code, cannon, classics, document). As early as the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600 – 1045 BCE) in oracle bone inscriptions, *ce* [57] is the visual representation of an open scroll made of bamboo or wood slips

[57] Yu Xingwu 于省吾, *Jiagu wenzi gulin* 甲骨文字詁林 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 4.2961.

that were tied together with binding thread. *Dian* 典 ,[58] on the other hand, with two hands in the lower part of the character, suggests a document of great importance. The various records that pertain to *ce* and *dian* on the oracle bones resonate with the numerous depictions of making and using documents in the early classics; among them, the most famous quote would be the following line from the *Shangshu* 尚書 (*the Book of Documents*), it reads "It was the earlier men of Yin (Shang) who possessed the codes and records, documenting how Yin superseded the mandate of Xia" (惟殷先人，有典有册，殷革夏命),[59] underscoring the close relationship between the writing (hence literacy) and the Shang's legitimate succession from the former (legendary) Xia dynasty. In time, the meaning of these two terms evolved, in the same way as their physical format, cultural connotations, as well as the entire constellation of its associated practices. As a part of its processual nature, the written texts' materiality via the vehicle of connected bamboo or wood slips informed and was encapsulated in the terminology of Chinese books in their initial stage. Perhaps the most famous quote of ancient Chinese book culture, "written on bamboo and silk" (*shu yu zhu bo* 書於竹帛) [60] derives from a conversation in the Mozi 墨子 (*Book of Master Mo*):

> How do we know that the six founding sagacious kings actually put them (*impartially loving others and cooperatively benefiting others*) into practice?
> Mozi said: I am not the six sagacious kings' contemporary, nor have I personally heard their voices or seen their faces. Yet I know what they did from words that were written on bamboo and silk, engraved on bronze and stone, and inscribed on plates and basins that have been passed down through the successive generations of their descendants."

[58] *Jiagu wenzi gulin* 4.2970.

[59] Kong Anguo 孔安國 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Shangshu zhenyi* 尚書正義, vol. 1 in the *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1993), 1368; Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Liu Qiyu 劉起釪, Shangshu jiaoshi yilun 尚書校釋譯論, vol.3 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), 1517.

[60] This phrase also became the title of the most important work of early Chinse books in English language: see Tsuen-hsuin Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962).

何知先聖六王之親行之(兼相愛, 交相利)也?
子墨子曰:“吾非與之並世同時,親聞其聲,見其色也。以其所書於竹帛,鏤於金石,琢於槃盂,傳遺後世子孫者知之。”[61]

In this, Mozi noted that despite the chronological divide that precluded direct learning, the surviving historical documents still enabled him to acquire the wisdom and demeanor of sagacious kings from antiquity, even if the documents might not have been created for a reader like him in posterity. The many kinds of physical documents—words written on bamboo and silk, inscribed on bronze and stone, and engraved on plates and basins—offered Mozi alternative possibilities when the ideal in-person experience of learning became impossible. Materialized texts are thus not merely historical records and ritualized objects of their own time—as ancient informational media, these crafted "things-with-words" and "words-on-things" not only documented and fossilized one historical moment but created a timeless threshold between people in different time and space. In its creation, it was not only a message enacted in a different format, but also an implementation of a multiplicity of paradigms of learning and communication.

More importantly, what an historical textual artifact, beyond its technological capability as medium, could provide to a Warring States (475-221 BCE) thinker like Mozi, whose job was inseparable from skillful persuasion,[62] was not only the unambiguous, verbal information

[61] See *Mozi* 16.6: Our Master Mozi said: "As for 'picking up Mount Tai and leaping over the Yangzi or Yellow River with it,' from antiquity to the present, from the time people were first created, no one has ever accomplished such a thing. But as for impartially loving others and cooperatively benefiting others, the six founding sage-kings put them into practice." 墨子曰:「夫挈泰山以超江河,自古之及今,生民而來,未嘗有也。今若夫兼相愛,交相利,此自先聖六王者親行之。」Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Mozi jiangu* 墨子閒詁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 120–121. My translation is based on John Knoblock, and Jeffrey K. Riegel, *Mozi: A Study and Translation of the Ethical and Political Writings* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2013), 162–163.

[62] See, David Schaberg, "Playing at Critique: Indirect Remonstrance and the Formation of Shi 士 Identity." In *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 194–225; "The Ruling Mind: Peuasion and the Origins of Chinese Psychology." In *The Rhetoric of Hiddenness in Traditional Chinese Culture*, ed. Paula Varsano. Albany: SUNY Press, 2016, 33–52.

encrypted in the ancient language, but also the powerful and flexible rhetoric affordances which were embodied in the implicated various information repositories. No matter whether it was on bamboo or bronze, a materialized text empowered its readers not merely by informing them about what *actually* happened in the past, but also through its potential knowledge-acquiring infrastructure, a source of persuasion to elaborate what they *could* reason in the present conversation. Furthermore, in another chapter, Mozi reiterated the same line, immediately following his anticipation of the power of media for posterity: "to transmit them to later generations—you may ask, "Then what would be done by that?" In order to let it be known that..." (傳遺後世子孫。曰將何以爲？將以識...)[63] By doing this, the value of a materialized text was not merely its capability to transmit the lessons from antiquity to the current time, but also its ability to preserve and perpetuate the teaching for the future generations. Ultimately, ancient media were created to extend the lifespan of language, to create a channel to a distant audience, to emancipate the utterance from its original time and space and carried the message into the realm of timelessness, thus enabling the text despite the context.

Technically and theoretically, the physical form of a text might preserve the ephemeral oral message or unreliable human memory longer due to its comparatively greater physical durability. Yet, intriguingly, although the durability of bronze and stone seemingly surpasses that of the delicate and even flimsy bamboo and silk, the two *Mozi* passages, with the intention of preserving the ancient knowledge, still gave precedence to the softer and lighter materials than

[63] *Mozi* 27.8A, Ibid,136–137: They (the sagacious kings) are humane, they are righteous, and by loving others and benefiting others, they obey the intentions of Heaven and receive the reward of Heaven. But it does not end with this. The people wrote documents about them, which they recorded on bamboo and silk, engraved in metal and stone, and inscribed on bowls and basins that have been transmitted to later generations. You may ask, "Why did they do this?" In order to let it be known that those who, by loving others and benefiting others, obey the will of Heaven will receive the reward of Heaven. 此仁也，義也，愛人利人，順天之意，得天之賞者也。不止此而已，書於竹帛，鏤之金石，琢之槃盂，傳遺後世子孫。曰將何以為？將以識夫愛人利人，順天之意，得天之賞者也。

the harder and longer-lasting ones. Conceivably, produced with an interdependence between its content and context, the monumentality of the bronze inscription often eclipsed its historicity.[64] As unwieldy and heavy ritual artefacts with inherent ceremonial functionality, bronzes and stones circulated within a comparatively exclusive social circle and limited geographic scope, and thus might not always have been available to offer a lower-ranking literatus like Mozi the desired knowledge. In other words, his choices of media have never solely prescribed physical durability and technological affordance, but by the contextual need and perhaps a conventional or idiosyncratic habit.

Mozi's priority was on bamboo and silk as learning sources—materials known as the predominant informational media before the age of paper in the vast regions of ancient East Asia. These common, convenient, and comparatively affordable materials were widely used not only in ancient and early medieval China but also Japan and Korea,[65] owing to their ubiquitous accessibility, versatile adaptability, and also the increasing needs and thirst of written documents. A variety of occasions when the bamboo slips were used can also be found among various early classics: in the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Odes), they were used as diplomatic letters between adjacent

[64] Martin Kern, "Bronze inscriptions, the Shangshu, and the Shijing: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang Through Han (1250 BC to 220 AD),* ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 143–200; *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-Huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation*. New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2000; Lothar von Falkenhausen, Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou Studies: A Review Article," *Early China* 18 (1993): 139–226. "The E Jun Qi Metal Tallies: Inscribed Texts and Ritual Contexts," in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 79–123.

[65] William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archeology of Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 203–232; Kim Chang-seok, "Ancient Korean Mokkan (Wooden Slips): With a Special Focus on Their Features and Uses," *Acta Koreana* 17.1 (2014): 193–222. Marjorie Burge, "Wooden Inscriptions and the Culture of Writing in Sabi Paekche," *Asian Perspectives* 58.1 (2019): 47–73. David B. Lurie. *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011); "A World Dense with Writing," in Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing (Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 115–166. Peter F. Kornicki, "Manuscripts up to 1600," in The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 87–98.

states;[66] in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo Tradition),[67] they were used for officially documenting historical events; and in the *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites), they were used to record royal ceremonies.[68] Used to record information and events ranging from the epistolary and governmental to the ceremonial, bamboo slips were depicted not merely the prevalent material precondition of maintaining and disseminating letters and literature, but they also functioned as an immensely versatile informational medium for every occasion that necessitated written language, mediating between time, space and people.

To this end, this chapter, focusing on general statistics and material properties—in its narrowest sense, namely, size, length, shape, format—of manuscripts of the middle-late Warring States and Qin-Han periods. It will set the stage for the subsequent chapters on paratextual, orthographic, and textual levels of the ancient written culture, by offering a comprehensive survey and a critical analysis of the material properties of the extant major pre-imperial and early

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[66] The "Chu jü" 出車" chapter of the *Shijing* 詩經: "How could we not long to return? We were in awe of the bamboo slip documents" 豈不懷歸? 畏此簡書; see Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shi sanjia yi jishu* 詩三家義集疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 587–588.

[67] "(Xiang 25): The secretary of the south, having heard that the grand secretaries had all died, clutched the bamboo slips and set out" 南史氏聞大史盡死，執簡以往; see Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 1099 (Xiang 25).

[68] The phrase *Shu yu zhu bo* 書於竹帛, or "writing on bamboo and silk," from the the "Wang zhi" 王制 chapter of the *Liji* 禮記: "The Grand Secretary had the superintendence of rituals. Taking up bamboo slips, he recorded" 大史典禮，執簡記; see Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 562–563. A selective list of reading of this topic includes Tsuen-hsuin Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1962] 2004), 96–98; Robert Bagley, "Anyang Writing and the Origin of the Chinese Writing System," in *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, ed. Stephen D. Houston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 190–249; Li Feng, "Literacy and the Social Contexts of Writing in the Western Zhou," in *Writing and Literacy in Early China*, ed. Li Feng and David Prager Branner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 271–301; Sarah Allan, "On Shu 書 (Documents) and the Origin of the *Shang shu* 尚書 (Ancient Documents) in Light of Recently Discovered Bamboo Slip Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75.3 (2012): 552–555; and Constance A. Cook, *Ancestors, Kings, and the Dao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 158.

imperial bamboo, wood, and silk manuscripts. It should be noted that, as I highlighted in the introduction, materiality permeates every facet of a written object: it consists of the dimensions of the physical presentation of the text—but for pragmatic purposes, in this chapter, I am using the term "materiality" in its narrowest sense, as I will primarily be discussing the size, form, and shape of the ancient manuscripts and leave the discussion of the textual dimensions to the following chapters. I offer a complete list of the known and published archeological and unprovenanced materials, and I provide not only a comprehensive survey of the existing bamboo, wood, and silk materials of ancient China but also to demonstrate the tremendous diversity and fluidity in materiality across various texts and contexts.

Moreover, by analytically synthesizing the data of the materiality, I identify chronological changes over the nearly six hundred years of writing primarily found on bamboo and wood. There was a steady growth in both the general quantity and the length of each manuscript from the Warring States to the late Han: the quantity of surviving documents has steadily grown, the length of each scroll and the number of slips has increased, and those slips and boards have presented increasingly diverse sizes and shapes, whereas on average, early imperial individual slips were produced in shorter height. Finally, by articulating the material resemblance of the manuscripts written by the same hand and the discrepancy in the same texts made by different hands, I draw special attention to possible writing autonomy in determining the material features of the ancient books, attributing a meaningful change of perspective from the texts and manuscripts to the very people who produced them.

2. Material Versatility

The textual artifacts' various functionality in transmitted source resonates with and has been articulated by the material flexibility of excavated manuscripts from ancient China, as they

have varied drastically in size, length, and shape. Chronologically, the earliest extant archeological finds of bamboo manuscripts, the Geling xincai 葛陵新蔡 and Zeng hou yi 曾侯乙 funerary texts are dated no earlier than the mid-fifth century BCE.[69] To form a rectangular writing surface or a reading interface in a workable size, a series of slips were bound together by two to four hemp or silk horizontal binding cords (fig.1). Unfortunately, however, even if the bamboo or wooden slips survive either in an extremely humid or dry climate (the ideal conditions for preservation), their original binding threads, in most cases, have decayed long ago.[70] As such, modern archaeologists must either collect and sequence the slips if they were scattered either above ground or in tombs, or—in the case of waterlogged tombs—separate and rearrange the slips if they are jumbled together in muddy clumps; and they definitely also had to puzzle together the broken slips. Correspondingly, the scholars' tasks of reconstruction are both textual and material: the first is to reconstruct the broken slips and hence the original sequence of slips to understand the texts, and the second is to recover the manuscript roll and retrieve the original form and format of the early books.

The most common case is that one slip of bamboo or wood *jian* 簡 (fig. 1) contains only one line of writing, so *jian* also indicates one long and slim slip with a single-line layout, as the

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[69] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 and Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所 eds., *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (er): Xincai geling chujian, Changtaiguan chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(二): 新蔡葛陵楚簡, 長臺關楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2013); Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin and Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所 eds., *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji vol. (san): Zenghou Yi mu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(三): 曾侯乙墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2013).

[70] However unfortunately, even if the bamboo or wooden slips survive either in an extremely humid or a dry climate as the ideal condition for preserving, their original binding threads, in most cases, have in most cases decayed long ago. The only extant case of a complete manuscript with the original binding thread is the famous "List of objects from Juyan during the Yongyuan reign (ca. 89–105 AD)" *Yongyuan qiwu bo* 永元器物簿, a Han Wooden manuscript found at Juyan 居延, Gansu, which consists of 77 slips, each 23.8 centimeters long and measuring 91 centimeters in combined width. Other than this, only a few incomplete northwestern manuscripts still had their original threads when discovered.

most frequent and basic codicological unit. The size of the slips varies from 12 to 75 centimeters in length and 0.5 to 1 centimeter in width. Although it is less frequent, we also see slips designed for two lines, the *liang hang* 兩行 ("double line," fig. 9) slip, which is accordingly wider than the normal *jian*. To form a rectangular writing surface of a workable size, a series of bamboo or wood slips were bound together by two to four hemp or silk cords. In this continuous writing space, texts on the slips usually present a continuous layout—one line sequentially written after another, from top to bottom, from right to left. This method writing on knotted slips was not only prevalent in the contemporary materials such as wooden boards or sheets of silk, but it also laid the foundation for the visuality of Chinese books on paper in later eras.

Du 牘 (fig. 2) or *fang* 方 (figs. 3 and 4)[71], the wooden board, on the other hand, was devised for a more expansive writing surface and a more flexible layout and was especially convenient for multiple-line or multiple-register mise-en-page for tasks such as accounting, listing short items, or arranging tabular organization or diagrams. Moreover, while early scribes composed texts mostly only on the recto side of the *jian*,[72] the two sides of the *du* were prepared for writing. Since it did not have to be tied to the others, the *du* itself could be a stand-alone codicological unit; yet, when necessary, it could also be easily stored by binding it with other *du* in the same way as the *jian*. All these pragmatic merits made the *du* an especially economic and

[71] For using writing boards or tablets, important records involve 1) the "Pin li" 聘禮 chapter of the *Yili*: "If a list contains more than one hundred names, it should be written on slips tied together (ce); but if the list is shorter, then use the square board (du)" 百名以上書於策，不及百名書於方; see Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 and Jia Gongyan 賈公彥, *Yili zhushu* 儀禮注疏 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 723–724. 2) The preface of the *Zuozhuan*: "The great affairs are written on capacious slips (ce) that were tied up; normal-sized slips (jian) or wooden boards (du) is sufficient for the minor affairs" 大事書於策，小事簡牘而已; see Takezoe Kōkō 竹添光鴻, *Zuo shi huijian* 左氏會箋 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2008), 1–2.

[72] For the rare case where writing appears on both sides of the manuscript, see the vol.4 in Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yu gudai wenming yanjiusuo 北京大學出土文獻與古代文明研究所, *Beijing daxue cang qin jiandu* 北京大學藏秦簡牘 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2023), 503.

convenient writing support that was widely adopted for administrative and utilitarian documents. In some circumstances, the wooden boards were not confined to a flat, rectangular format: *qian pai* 簽牌 (fig. 5), half-round half-rectangular label tablets were used as a signifier of a bundle of documents, and *feng jian* 封檢 (figs. 6 and 7), sealed covers with a cavity for sealing clay, functioned as an envelope to protect the inner documents and to ensure their confidentiality. Furthermore, wooden writing supports were not always two-dimensional: *gu* 觚 (fig. 8) multiple-faced wooden columns, and even *ling shai* 令骰 (fig. 11), dices, created three to seven writing surfaces and were used for students' writing exercises or public announcements.

The flexibility of writing on bamboo and wood applies not only to the documents' shape, format, and layout, but also to the ways of organizing and storing them. If necessary, *du* and *gu* could also be bound together in the same way as *jian;* hence, *jian*, *du*, and *gu* could also be bound with each other to form a scroll.[73] Just as the textual culture of the time was very fluid, the arrangements of the codicological units also present remarkable versatility. The rarely found *bo* 帛 (fig. 10), silk sheets, with their softer, finer texture and lighter weight, are a more exquisite writing material. Judging from the Mawangdui manuscripts, silk sheets could be either folded or rolled up for storing.[74] Likewise, although most scrolls made with bamboo or wooden slips were rolled, recent

[73] See, for example, the *Zhoumalou* 走馬樓 Western Han manuscripts include a legal case "A Bailiff Named Xiang Ren Collecting the *Cong* Tax" 襄人斂賓案, see Chen Songchang 陳松長, "Changsha Zoumalou Xi Han gujing chutu jiandu gaishu" 長沙走馬樓西漢古井出土簡牘概述. *Kaogu* 2021.3: 97–108. See also the text "Ci zhu zhidao" 祠祝之道 in the Peking University Qin Manuscripts cache. Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學出土文獻研究所, *Beijing daxue cang Qin jiandu* 北京大學藏秦簡牘 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2023), 290–293.

[74] Chen Jian 陳劍, "Mawangdui boshu de 'yinwen,' kongbai ye he chenye ji zhedie qingkuang zongshu" 馬王堆帛書的"印文"、空白頁和襯頁及折疊情況綜述, (http://www.fdgwz.org.cn), 2018-1-1, http://www.fdgwz.org.cn/Web/Show/4202.

studies also show that multiple mid-size manuscripts were folded for storage.[75] Besides the aforementioned terms, transmitted texts contain a rich vocabulary to describe writing materials, although many of them have not yet become entirely clear to us.[76] In short, echoing the countless purposes of writing in reality, the shape and format of the writing surface are likewise diverse; "written on bamboo and wood" was not merely to choose certain type of material, but to customize and optimize the versatile materials into the form that best fits the contextual need. In this regard, bamboo and wood were not only the material pre-condition of ancient information and knowledge—they are a fertile ground for myriad potential uses.

[75] Yunxiao Xiao, "Restoring Bamboo Scroll: Observations on the Materiality of Waring States Bamboo Manuscripts," *Chinese Studies in History* 50 (2017): 235–254. Jia Lianxiang. "A Study of the Format and Formation of the *Si gao 四告 (Four Proclamations) of the Tsinghua Bamboo Slips [清華簡《四告》的形制及其成書問題探研]," *Bamboo and Silk* 6. 1 (2023): 1–21.

[76] Pu Maozuo 濮茅左 has summarized a long list of these terms, including *jian* 簡， *han jian* 汗簡, *zhi jian* 炙簡, *shaqing jian* 殺青簡, *su jian* 素簡, *du jian* 牘簡, *zhe jian* 折簡, *yu jian* 玉簡, *jian ce* 簡策, *chi jian* 尺簡, *rui die* 瑞牒, *chi die* 尺牒, *xuan die* 玄牒, *yu die* 玉牒, *zhu die* 竹牒, *mu die* 木牒, *sangpi die* 桑皮牒, *tiao die* 條牒, *fu die* 符牒, *bian die* 編牒, *bu die* 簿牒, *du die* 牘牒, *jian die* 簡牒, *die shu* 書牒, *chi du* 尺牘, *zhu du* 竹牘, *ban du* 版牘, *gan du* 竿牘, *su du* 素牘, *fu du* 符牘, *han du* 書牘, *hu du* 觚牘, *zha du* 劄牘, and various *ban* 版, *zha* 劄, *hu* 笏, *ji* 籍, *xi* 檄, *bi* 畢, *jian* 檢, etc.; see Pu, *Xin chutu zhanguo chu zhushu yanjiu* 新出土戰國楚竹書研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2017), 3.



Fig. 1 Jüyan 居延 Han manuscript, 57.1A
jian 簡 wood slips
[administrative record]



Fig. 2 Jianshui jinguan 肩水金關
Han manuscript, 73EJT10:120, 73EJT1:1
du 牘 wood board [administrative record]

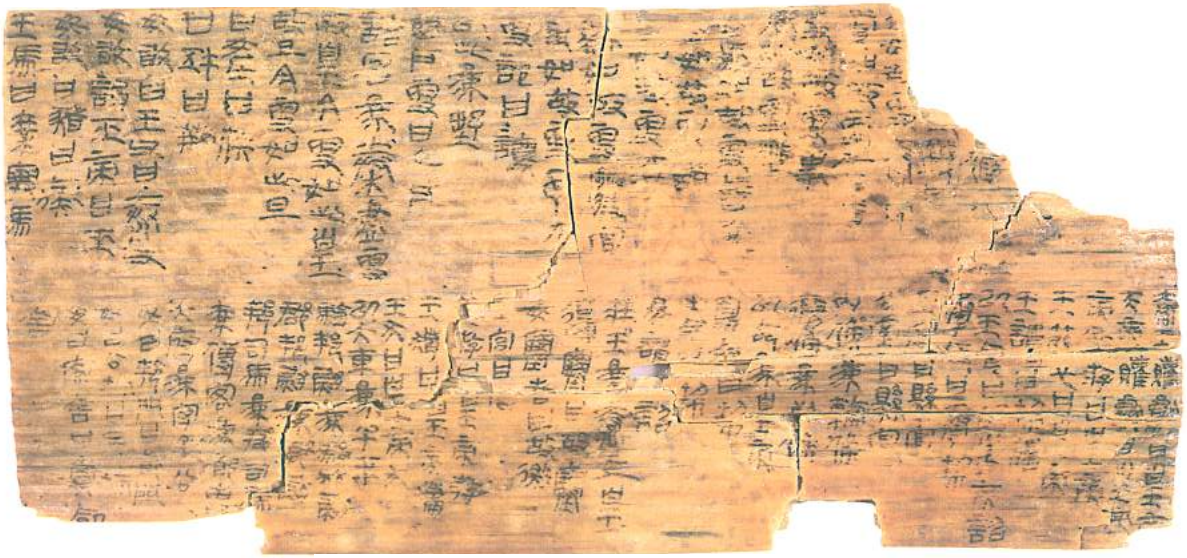


Fig. 3 Liye 里耶 Qin manuscript 8-461,
fang 方 wood board (wide)
[nomenclature decree]

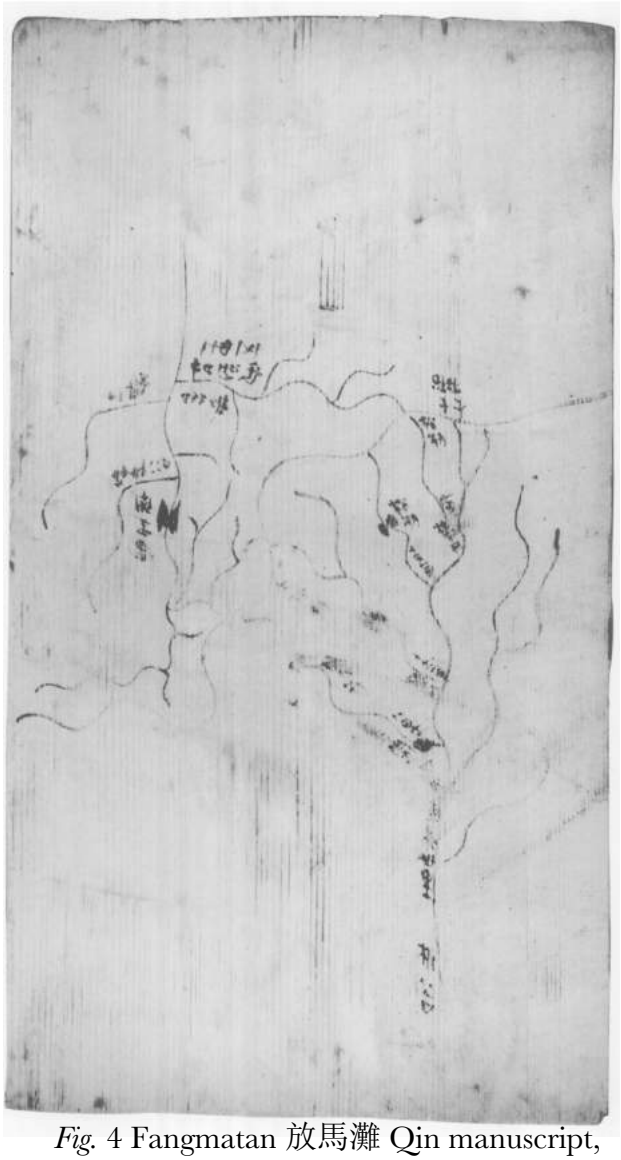


Fig. 4 Fangmatan 放馬灘 Qin manuscript,
fang 方 wood board,
[topographic map]



Fig. 5 Jianshui jinguan 肩水金關
Han manuscript
qianpai 簽牌 [sealing tag]



Fig. 6 Wuyi guangchang 五一廣場
Han manuscript,
fengjian 封檢
[envelope of official document]



Fig. 7 Majuanwan 馬圈灣
Han manuscript,
fengjian 封檢 Envelope

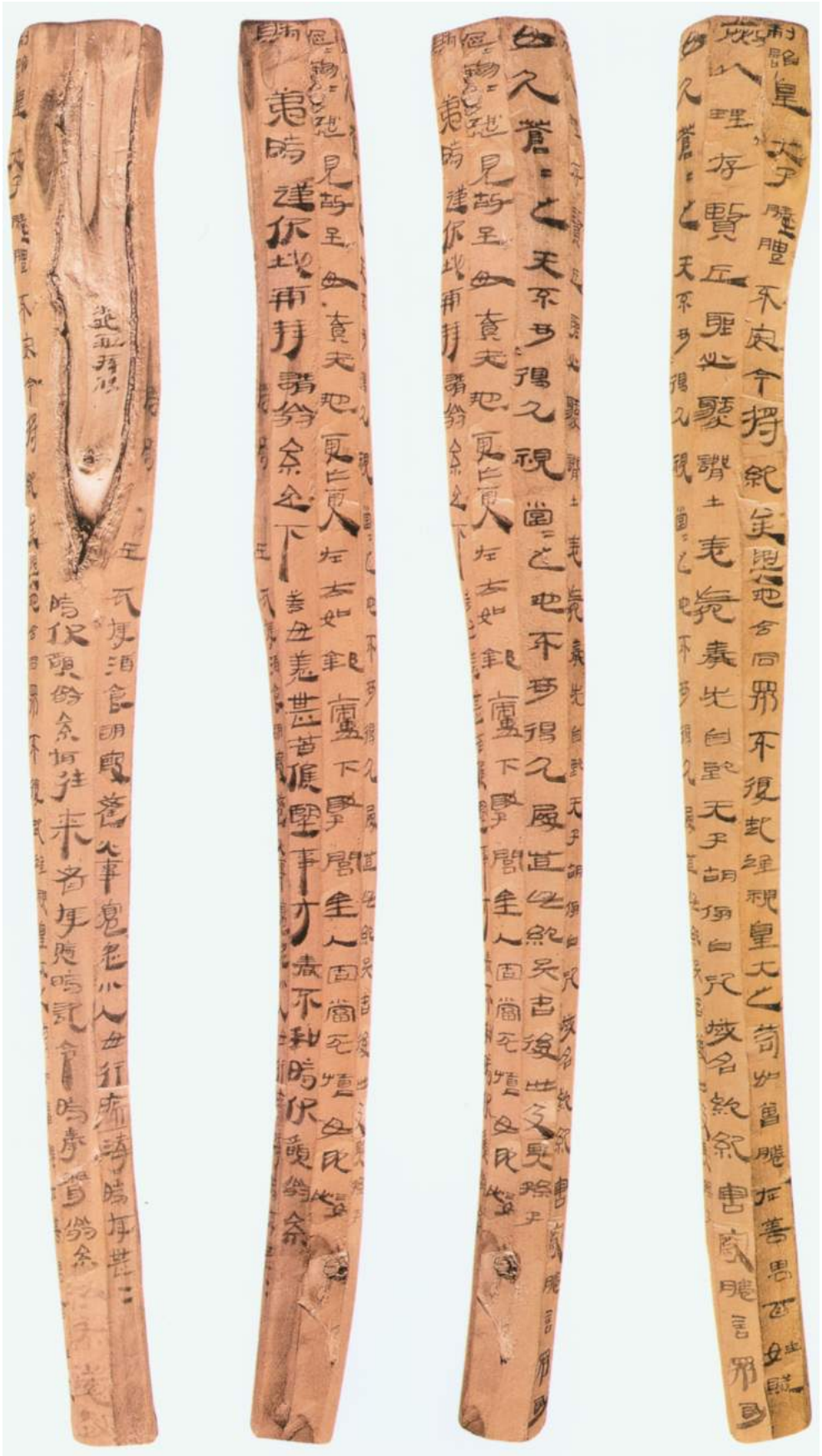


Fig. 8 Yumen huahai 玉門花海 Han manuscript
gu 觚
multi-faceted wood column



Fig. 9 Jianshui jinguan 肩水金關 Han manuscript
lianghang 兩行 slips designed for two lines
[administrative record]

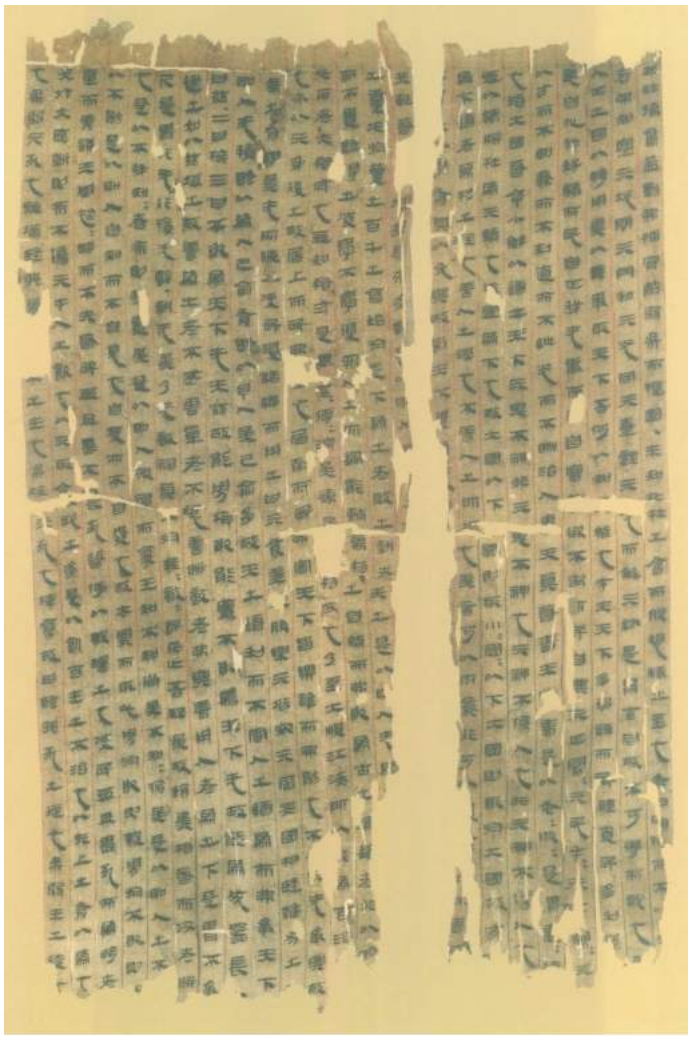


Fig. 10 Mawangdui 馬王堆 Han manuscript
bo 帛, silk sheet [literature]



Fig. 11 Peking University Qin manuscript
Six-sided Dice
[used for drinking games]

3. Data

After showcasing the variety of individual codicological units, the following section will focus on the actual scenario of a manuscript as a self-contained codicological unit in which the individual slips were connected and formed a text or texts of an altogether greater dimension: a book. As we are now fortunate to have an extensive, albeit not yet fully explored, dataset of these ancient manuscripts—over 300,000 complete or fragmentary slips—I propose that a comprehensive survey of the existing data is an urgent necessity.

Certainly, such a quantitative approach comes with both great promise and peril: as there are numerous ongoing explorations and uncertainties of various fundamental aspects in the codicological and textual dimensions such as the sequencing of slips, reconstruction of fragmentary pieces, and recognition of illegible characters, the current study will avoid inquiries involving these aspects. Instead, I will only look at the most straightforward aspects—the number of slips that constitute one manuscript and the height and width of each individual slip, despite the fact that measuring them and handling this data is already extremely complicated.[77] On the one hand, the archeological condition of the scattered slips in tombs or in the ground has already posed great difficulties in identifying a scroll's original composition; on the other hand, the unprovenanced nature of looted manuscripts compounds the challenge to delineate the original codicological unity. Thankfully, because many of the excavated archaeological finds have contained carefully recorded reports of the original distribution of the slips in the tombs, and a series of foregrounding reconstructive works based on both textual and material evidence have been carried out in recent years, the scale of a significant number of the manuscripts can be

[77] Relatable situation, see, for example, "The value of Dunhuang and Turfan manuscripts for the study of Tang administrative institutions is by no means limited to those described above, but because of the fragmentary and scattered nature of the material it is impossible to enumerate each and every topic." In Rong Xinjiang, *Eighteen Classes on Dunhuang*, 285

determined, despite the fact that in many cases there is still the problem of the inner sequence of slips.

Likewise, the data-collecting process should be exercised with utmost caution. The difficulties of gathering the data reside in, first, the manuscripts' fragmentary nature: we often find ourselves constantly debating whether two fragmentary pieces were originally part of the same slip or if they are unrelated fragments from different slips; thus measuring the slip-count in one manuscript can be a serious problem. Furthermore, the slips' fragmentary nature also results in the difficulty of measuring a given slip's size—the number I marked in the following chart is the measurement of the size of an intact slip: as long as there is at least one complete slip or confident reconstruction of individual slip, we can ascertain the measurements. Third, a change in environmental conditions—from a waterlogged funerary site to a modern laboratory—can lead to alterations in size (typically shrinkage) during the dehydration process. As an "involving entity," in the words of Thies Staack,[78] the physicality of the manuscripts may have also changed drastically both before and after their entombment.

With these caveats, the following sections aim to outline the holistic picture and diachronic change in the manuscripts' size and volume, rather than to ascertain the exact number of slips in a manuscript or the precise length of an individual slip at different historical times. The sources of my data are both the archeological reports and secondary scholarship. If an official publication has not been released yet, I refer to the brief archeological report (*jian bao* 簡報); if studies provide convincing evidence that multiple shorter texts should be combined to form a multi-text manuscript roll, I refer to those works as well. The following tables offer an overview

[78] Thies Staack, "Ancient Chinese Scrolls as Evolving Entities: Implications for Reconstruction and Description," *Bamboo and Silk* 6.2 (2023): 296–328.

of the size and included slips of the discovered manuscripts written as literary treatises or legal statutes and ordinances that are usually considered "book manuscripts" (*shu ji jian* 書籍簡) from tombs dated from the Warring States period to the Han dynasty. It should be noted that the various institutional documents (*wen shu* 文書) from wells or relics of ancient architecture will not be taken into consideration because this project concerns textual artifacts defined broadly as "books," rather than those regarded as administrative records. The following chart serves both as an overview of the significant discoveries and a source of information on their respective quantities and sizes.

Warring States (Chu) Manuscripts	Title or Content	Quantity (slip)	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Chsngtaiguan 長臺關[79]	Literary texts	110 (?)[80]	30 (?)	0.7–0.8
Jiudian 九店[81]	Daybook	205	46.6–48.2	0.6–0.8
	**Jizi nüxun* 季子女訓	127	22.2 (?)	0.6–0.7
Xiyangpo 夕陽坡[82]	Administrative documents	2	68	1.1
Baoshan 包山[83]	Divinatory texts	54	67.1–69.5	0.7–0.85
	Administrative documents	232 (?)	55–69.5	

[79] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 and Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所 [led by Chen Wei 陳偉 and Peng Hao 彭浩], eds. *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (er): Geling chumu zhujia, Changtaiguan zhumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(二): 葛陵楚墓竹書 長臺關楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2013).

[80] The literary texts from Changtaiguan are too fragmented to accurately measure their quantity and size; currently, we have 110 fragmented pieces, with the longest surviving piece being approximately 30 cm (see page 136). I will not include such fragmentary manuscripts (and other similar situations) in the count. I will mark the similar situation with a "(?)"

[81] Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所 and Beijing daxue zhongwen xi 北京大學中文系, eds., *Jiudian chu jian* 九店楚簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000).

[82] Hunan sheng chu shi yanjiu hui 湖南省楚史研究會 ed., *Chu shi yu chu wenhua yanjiu* 楚史與楚文化研究 (Changsha: Qiushi zazhishe, 1987), 215–218.

[83] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉 and Peng Hao 彭浩], *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (liu) Baoshan chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集 (六): 包山楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2024).

Shibancun 石板村[84]	Literary texts	4557 (?)	45 (?)	0.4–0.6
Zhuanwachang 磚瓦廠[85]	Legal texts	6	62.4	
Guodian 郭店[86]	**Laozi A* 老子甲	39	32.3	
	**Laozi B* 老子乙	18	30.6	
	Laozi C* 老子丙+Taiyi shengshui* 太一生水[87]	28 (14+14)	26.5	
	*Zi yi 緇衣	47	32.5	
	Lumugong wen Zisi* 魯穆公問子思+Qiong da yi shi* 窮達以時[88]	23 (8+15)	26.4	
	**Wu xing* 五行	50	32.5	
	**Tangyu zhidao* 唐虞之道	29	28.1–28.3	
	**Zhong xin zhidao* 忠信之道	9	28.1–28.3	
	Cheng zhi wen zhi* 成之聞之+Zun de yi* 尊德義+**Liu de* 六德[89]	128(40+39+49)	32.5	
	**Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出	67	32.5	
	**Yu cong A* 語叢一	112	17.2–17.4	

[84] Hunan sheng wenwu yanjiu suo 湖南省文物研究所 and Cili xian wenwu baohu guanli yanjiu suo,慈利縣文物保護管理研究所, "Hunan cili shibancun 36 zhanguo mu fajue jianbao" 湖南慈利石板村36號戰國墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu*文物 1990.10, 37–46.

[85] Teng Rensheng 滕壬生 and Huang Xiquan 黃錫全, "Jiangling zhuanwachang M370 chumu zhujian" 江陵磚瓦廠 M370 楚墓竹簡, *Jianbo yanjiu* 簡帛研究 (2021), 218–221.

[86] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 and Jingmen shi bowuguan 荊門市博物館 [led by Chen Wei 陳偉 and Peng Hao 彭浩], eds. *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (yi): Guodian chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集 (一) : 郭店楚墓竹書 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2011).

[87] Reconstruction see Jingmenshi bowuguan 荊門市博物館, *Guodian chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹書 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1999), 125.

[88] Reconstruction see Li Xueqin 李學勤 "Tian ren zhi fen" 天人之分 in *Zhongguo chuantong zhexue xinlun: Zhu Bokun jiaoshou qishi wusui shouchen jinian wenji* 中國傳統哲學新論 朱伯崑教授 75 壽辰紀念文集 . Beijing: Jiuzhou tushu, 1999，239–244.

[89] Liu Zuxin 劉祖信 and Bao Yunfeng 鮑雲豐. "Guodian Chujian bemian jishu wenzi kao" 郭店楚簡簡背面記數文字考 in *Xinchu Chujian guoji xueshu yantaohui huiyi lunwenji* 新出楚簡國際學術研討會會議論文集, Wuhan: 2006, 158–161. Chen Jian 陳劍. "Guodian jian 'Zun deyi' he 'Chengzhi wenzhi' de jianbei shuzi yu qi jianxu guanxi de kaocha 郭店簡〈尊德義〉和〈成之聞之〉的簡背數字與其簡序關係的考察 in *Jianbo* 2 (2007), 209–225. Hirose Kunio 廣瀨薰雄. "Guodian Chujian 'Zun deyi' he 'Chengzhi wenzhi' de jianbei shuzi bulun" 郭店楚簡〈尊德義〉和〈成之聞之〉的簡背數字補論 published 02–19–2008 http://www.bsm.org.cn/?chujian/5001.html ; Huang Jie 黃傑. "Xinjian youguan Guodian 'Zun deyi' deng pian bianlian de zhongyao xinxi" 新見有關郭店簡《尊德義》等篇編聯的重要信息 published 06–06–2013, http://www.bsm.org.cn/?chujian/6038.html

	**Yu cong B* 語叢二	54	15.1–15.2	
	**Yu cong C* 語叢三	72	17.6–17.7	
	**Yu cong D* 語叢四	27	15.1–15.2	
Shanghai Museum Collection[90] Vol.1	**Kongzi shi lun* 孔子詩論+ *Zi gao* 子羔 (vol.2)+**Lubang da han* 魯邦大旱 (vol.2)[91]	49 (29+14+6)	55.5	
	**Zi yi* 緇衣	24	54.3	
	**Xing qing lun* 性情論	45	57	
Vol. 2	**Min zhi fumu* 民之父母	14	45.8	
	**Cong zheng* 從政	24	42.6	
	**Xi zhe Jun lao* 昔者君老	4	44.2	
	Rong cheng shi 容成氏	53	44.5	
Vol. 3	**Zhouyi* 周易	58	44	
	**Zhong gong* 中弓	28	47	
	**Heng xian* 亘先	13	39.4	
	**Peng zu* 彭祖	8	53	
Vol. 4	**Caifeng qu mu* 采風曲目	6	56.1	
	**Yi shi* 逸詩	6	45	
	Zhaowang huishi 昭王毀室 +*Zhaowang yu Gongzhisui* 昭王與龔之脽	10	43.7–44.2	
	**Jian dawang bohan* 柬大王泊旱	23	24	
	**Neili* 內豊	10	44.2	
	**Xiangbang zhi dao* 相邦之道	4	51.6	
	Cao Mo zhi chen 曹沫之陳	65	47.1	
Vol. 5	**Jingjian na zhi* 競建內之	10	42.8–43.3	
	**Baoshuya yu xipeng zhijian* 鮑叔牙與隰朋之諫	9	40.4–43.2	
	**Jigengzi wen yu kongzi* 季庚子問於孔子	23	39	
	**Gu cheng jia fu* 姑成家父	10	44.2	
	**Junzi wei li* 君子爲禮	16	54.1–54.5	
	**San de* 三德	22	45	
	**Guishen zhiming*鬼神之明 +*Rongshi youchengshi*融師有成氏	8	53	

[90] Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 et al, eds. *Shanghai bowuguan cang zhanguo zhushu vol.1–vol.9* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (一–九) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001–12).

[91] Li Ling 李零. *Shangbo Chujian sanpian jiaoduji* 上博楚簡三篇校讀記 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou, 2002), 13–14.

Vol. 6	**Jinggongnue* 競公瘧	13	55	0.6
	**Kongzi jian Jihuanzi* 孔子見季桓子	27	54.6	0.6
	**Zhuangwang jicheng* 莊王既成 +*Shengong chen* Lingwang 申公臣靈王	9	33.1–33.8	0.6
	**Pingwang wen Zhengshou* 平王問鄭壽	7	33–33.2	0.6
	**Pingwang yu Wangzimu* 平王與王子木	5	33	0.6
	**Shenzi yue gongjian* 慎子曰恭儉	6	32	
	**Yong yue* 用曰	20	45.9	
	**Tianzi jianzhou A* 天子建州甲	13	46	
	**Tianzi jianzhou B* 天子建州乙	11	43.5	
Vol. 7	**Wuwang jianzuo* 武王踐阼	15	41.6–43.7	
	**Zhengzi jiasang A* 鄭子家喪甲	7	33.1–33.2	0.6
	**Zhengzi jiasang B* 鄭子家喪乙	7	47.5	0.6
	**Junrenzhe hebi anzai A* 君人者何必安哉甲	9	33.2–33.9	0.6
	* *Junrenzhe hebi anzai B* 君人者何必安在乙	9	33.5–33.7	
	**Fan wu liuxing A* 凡物流形甲	30	33.6	
	**Fan wu liuxing B* 凡物流形乙	22	40	
	**Wu ming* 吳命	9	52	
Vol. 8	**Zi dao e* 子道餓	6	44	0.6
	**Yanyuan wenyu Kongzi* 顏淵問於孔子	14	45	
	**Chengwang ji bang* 成王既邦	16	45.6–45.9	
	**Ming* 命	11	33.1–33.4	
	**Wang jü* 王居	7	33.1–33.2	
	**Zhishu naiyan* 志書乃言	8	33.2	
	**Li song* 李頌	3	53	
	**Lan fu* 蘭賦	5	53	
	**You huang jiang qi* 有皇將起	6	42	
	**Liu li* 鷚鷅	2	48.1	
Vol. 9	**Chengwang wei chengpu zhixing A* 成王爲城濮之行甲	5	33.1–33.3	
	* *Chengwang wei chengpu zhixing B* 成王爲城濮之行乙	4	33.1–33.3	
	**Lingwang sui shen* 靈王遂申	5	33.3	
	**Chengong zhi bing* 陳公治兵	20	44	

	**Juzhi wang tianxia* 舉治王天下	(?)	46	
	**Bangren bu chen* 邦人不稱	13	33	
	**Shi zhou wen yu fuzi* 史蓌問於夫子	12	37	
	**Bu shu* 卜書	10	43.4	
Tsinghua University Collection[92] Vol. 1	*Chi jiu* 赤鳩 (vol.3) +**Yin zhi* 尹至+**Yin gao* 尹誥[93]	24 (15+5+4)	45	0.6
	**Cheng wu* 程寤	9	45	0.6
	**Bao xun* 保訓	12	8.5	0.5
	Qi ye 耆夜	14	45	0.6
	Zhouwuwang youji (金縢)	14	45	0.6
	**Huangmen* 皇門	13	44.4	0.6
	Zhaigong zhi guming 祭公	21	44.4	0.6
	**Chu ju* 楚居	16	47.5	
Vol. 2	**Xinian* 繫年	138	45	0.6
Vol. 3	*Fuyue zhi ming A* 傅說之命 上	7	45	0.6
	Fuyue zhi ming B 傅說之命 中	7	45	0.6
	Fuyue zhi ming C 傅說之命 下	9	45	0.6
	Zhougong zhi qin wu 周公之琴舞	17	45	0.6
	Rui liangfu bi 芮良夫毖	28	45	0.6
	Liangchen* 良臣+Zhuci* 祝辭[94]	21 (16+5)	32.8	
Vol. 4	**Shifa* 筮法	63	35	
	**Biegua* 別掛	7	16	1.1
	**Suanbiao* 算表	21	43.5	1.2
Vol. 5	**Houfu* 厚父	13	44	0.6
	Feng Xu zhiming 封許之命	9	44	0.6
	**Mingxun* 命訓	15	49	

[92] Tsinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin 清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心 [led by Li Xueqin 李學勤 and Huang Dekuan 黃德寬], eds. *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* vol.1–vol.12 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (壹–拾) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2010–2022).

[93] Xiao Yunxiao 肖芸曉, "Shilun Qinghua zhushu Yiyin san pian de guanlian" 試論清華竹書伊尹三篇的關聯, *Jianbo* 簡帛 8 (2013): 471–76; "Restoring Bamboo Scrolls: Observations on the Materiality of Warring States Bamboo Manuscripts."

[94] Editors for these two texts are Shen Jianhua 沈建華 and Li Xueqin 李學勤 respectively. See Tsinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin 清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心 [led by Li Xueqin 李學勤], *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* vol.3 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (壹–拾叁) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2012), 16–19, 156–165.

	Tang chuyu Tangqiu* 湯處於湯丘 +Tang zai chimen* 湯在啻門[95]	40 (19+21)	44.4	0.6
	Yingaozong wenyu sanshou 殷高宗問於三壽	28	45	0.6
Vol. 6	**Zhengwu furen gui ruzi* 鄭武夫人規儒子	18	45	0.6
	**Guanzhong* 管仲	30	44.5	0.6
	**Zheng Wengong wen taibo* 鄭文公問太伯	15/14	45	0.6
	**Ziyi* 子儀	20	41.5	0.6
	**Zichan* 子產	29	45	0.6
Vol. 7	*Zifan Ziyu* 子犯子餘	15	45	0.5
	**Jin Wengong ruyu Jin* 晉文公入於晉	8	45	0.5
	**Zhaojianzi* 趙簡子	11	41.6	0.6
	Yuegong qi shi 越公其事	75	41.6	0.5
Vol. 8	**She ming* 攝命	32	45	0.6
	**Bangjia zhi zheng* 邦家之政	13	45	0.6
	**Bangjia chu wei* 邦家處位	11	41.5	0.5
	**Zhi bang zhi dao* 治邦之道	27	44.6	0.6
	**Xin shi wei zhong* 心是謂中	7	44.6	0.6
	**Tianxia zhi dao* 天下之道	7	41.6	0.6
	**Baqi wuwei wusi wuxing zhi shu* 八氣五味五祀五行之屬	7	41.6	0.6
	**Yu Xia Yin Zhou Zhizhi* 虞夏殷周之治	3	41.6	0.6
Vol. 9	**Zhi zheng zhi dao* 治政之道	43	44.2	0.6
	**Cheng ren* 成人	30	45.2	0.7
	**Naiming A* 廼命一	12	44.6	0.6
	**Naiming B* 廼命二	16	44.6	0.6
	**Dao ci* 禱辭	23	44.5	0.6
Vol. 10	**Sigao* 四告	50	45.7	0.6
	**Sishi* 四時	43	45	0.6
	**Sisui* 司歲	15	45	0.6
	**Xingchen* 行稱	19	32.8	0.6

[95] Editors for these two texts are Liu Guozhong 劉國忠 and Shen Jianhua 沈建華 respectively. See Tsinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin 清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心 [led by Li Xueqin 李學勤], *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* vol.5 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (壹–拾叁) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2015), 10–17, 134–148.

	**Bing fang* 病方	3	32.8	0.6
Vol. 11	**Wu ji* 五紀	130	45	0.6
Vol. 12	**San bu wei* 叁不韋	124	32.8	0.6
Vol. 13	**Dafu shi li* 大夫食禮	51	46	0.6
	**Dafu shi li ji* 大夫食禮記	14	46	0.6
	**Wu yin tu* 五音圖	35	19.3	0.5
	**Yue feng* 樂風	14/12	9.9	0.5
	**Wei tian yong shen* 畏天用身	17	44.4	0.6
Anhui University Collection Vol. 1[96]	**Shijing* 詩經	117/93	48.5	0.6
Vol. 2	**Zhongni yue* 仲尼曰	13	43	0.6
	**Cao Mo zhi chen* 曹沫之陳	46	48.5	0.7

Qin Manuscripts	Title	Quantity (slip)	Length (cm)	Width (cm)
Shuihudi 睡虎地[97]	**Qin lü shiba zhong* 秦律十八種	201	27.5	0.6
	**Qin lü zachao* 秦律杂抄	42		0.6
	**Falü dawen* 法律答問	217	25.5	0.6
	**Feng zhen shi* 封診式	98	25.4	0.6
	**Xiao lü* 效律	61	27	0.6
	**Yushu* 語書	14	27.3–27.8	0.6
	Daybook A 日書甲種	166	25	0.6
	Daybook B 日書乙種	257	23	0.6
	**Bian nian ji* 編年紀	53	23.3	0.6
	**Wei li zhi dao* 爲吏之道	51	27.5	0.6
Fangmatan 放馬灘[98]	Daybook A 日書甲	73	27.5	0.7
	Daybook B 日書乙	379	23	0.6
Longgang 龍崗[99]	**Jinyuan lü* 禁苑律	431	G28	0.5–0.7

[96] Anhui daxue hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 安徽大學漢字發展與應用研究中心 [led by Huang Dekuan 黃德寬 and Xu Zaiguo 徐在國], eds. *Anhui daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* vol.1–2 安徽大學藏戰國竹簡 (壹–貳). Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2019–21.

[97] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心, Hubei sheng bowuguan 湖北省博物館, and Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo 湖北省文物考古研究所 [led by Chen Wei 陳偉], eds., *Qin jiandu heji (yi) Shuihudi Qin mu jiandu* 秦簡牘合集〔壹〕·睡虎地秦墓簡牘 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[98] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 and Gansu jiandu bowuguan 甘肅簡牘博物館 [led by Chen Wei 陳偉], eds., *Qin jiandu heji (si) Fangmatan Qin mu jiandu* 秦簡牘合集〔肆〕放馬灘秦墓簡牘 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[99] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心, Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo 湖北省文物考古研究所, and Sichuan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiuyuan 四川省文物考古研究院 [led by Chen Wei

Wangjiatai 王家臺[100]	Daybook 日書	unknown	22.6–22.9	
	**Zheng shi zhi chang* 政事之常	unknown	34.5	
Zhoujiatai 周家臺[101]	Daybook 日書	178	29.3–29.6	0.5–0.7
	*Bing fang 病方	73	22.7–23	0.4–1
	**Qin shi huang 34, 36, 37 lipu* 秦始皇 34，36，37 曆譜	130	29.3–29.6	0.5–0.7
Yuelu 岳麓 Academy Collection[102] Vol. 1	**Nianqi nian zhiri* 廿七年質日	54	27	
	**Sasi nian zhiri* 卅四年質日	65	27	
	**Sawu nian zhiri* 卅五年質日	46	30	
	**Weili zhiguan ji qianshou* 爲吏治官及黔首	87	30	
	**Zhan meng shu* 占夢書	48	30	
Vol. 2	**Shu* 數	236	27.5	
Vol. 3	**Weiyu dengzhuang sizhong* 爲獄等狀四種 A	136	27.4–27.5	0.6
	**Weiyu dengzhuang sizhong* B	73	25	0.5–0.6
	**Weiyu dengzhuang sizhong* C	27	22.9	
	**Weiyu dengzhuang sizhong* D	9	22.9	
Vol. 4	Legal Texts Group A	105	29–30	
	Legal Texts Group B	178	27.5	
	Legal Texts Group C	108	27.5	
Vol. 5	Legal Texts Group A	99	27.5	
	Legal Texts Group B	151	27.5	
	Legal Texts Group C	87	27.5	
Vol. 6	Legal Texts Group A	130	27.5	
	Legal Texts Group B	75	30	
	Legal Texts Group C	57	30	
	Legal Texts Group D	53	27.2	
	Legal Texts Group E	16	22.5	

陳偉], eds., *Qin jiandu heji (er) Fangmatan Qin mu jiandu · Haojiaping qinmu jiandu* 秦簡牘合集〔貳〕放馬灘秦墓簡牘·郝家坪秦墓木牘 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[100] Wang Mingqin 王明欽, "Wangjiatai Qinmu zhujian gaishu"王家台秦墓竹簡概述, in *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu——xin chu jianbo guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 新出簡帛研究——新出簡帛国际学术研讨会文集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004), 46.

[101] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 and Jingzhou bowuguan 荊州博物館 [led by Chen Wei 陳偉], eds., *Qin jiandu heji (san) Zhoujiatai Qin mu jiandu · Yueshan Qin mu mudu* 秦簡牘合集〔肆〕周家臺秦墓简牘·嶽山秦墓木牘 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[102] Zhu Hanmin 朱漢民, and Chen Songchang 陳松長, eds. *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qin jian vol.1–vol.7* 嶽麓書院藏秦簡 (壹–柒) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2010–2022).

Vol. 7	Legal Texts Group A	156	29.5	
	Legal Texts Group B	132	23	
	Legal Texts Group C	71f		
	Legal Texts	?		
Peking University Collection (Qin) [103]	**Congzheng zhi jing* 從政之經+ **Jiaonü* 教女[104]	61 (46+15)	27.3–27.5	0.5–0.6
	**Sanshiyi nian zhiri* 三十一年質日	76	27–27.5	0.6–0.8
	**Sanshisan nian zhiri* 三十三年質日	60	29.9–30.2	0.6–0.8
	Daybook 日書	54	36.5–37	0.5–0.7
	**Suanshu bingzhong* 算書丙種	82	22.9–23.1	0.5–0.7
	**Chengtian* 成田	24	23.7–24	0.9–1.4
	Tian shu 田書	51	27.2–27.9	0.5–0.7
	**Gongzi cong jun* 公子從軍	20	22.9–23.1	0.7–0.9
	**Ci zhu zhidao* 祠祝之道	6 slips+1 board	27–27.3	0.6
	*Zachao 雜抄 (Volume 4)[105]	309	22.6	0.5–0.7
	**Jiu ling* 酒令	50	27.2–27.9	0.5–0.6
	**Hechao* 合抄	62	27.5–27.9	0.5–0.6
	**Bainang* 白囊	12	22.9–23.1	0.9–1.1
	**Yinshu* 隱書	9	23	0.8–1.2

Han Manuscripts	Title	Quantity (slip)	Length (cm)	Width (cm)
Wuwei Mozuizi 武威磨咀子[106]	**Wang zhang zhaoshu ling* 王杖詔書令	10	23–24cm	
	**Jiaben "Yili"* 甲本《儀禮》	木簡 401	55.5–56	0.7
	**Yiben "Fuzhuan"*乙本《服傳》	木簡 37	50.5	0.5

[103] Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學出土文獻研究所 ed, *Beijing daxue cang Qin jiandu* 北京大學藏秦簡牘 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2023).

[104] *Beijing daxue cang Qin jiandu*, 61.

[105] This multi-text manuscript is the longest in the Peking University collection and can be reconstructed to comprise 309 slips, each with text on both sides. It contains a total of 10 texts: four are found on the recto — Suanshu A (算書甲種), Rishu A (日書甲種), Zhi yi (製衣), and six on the verso — Suanshu B (算書乙種), Bi she si ren (避射死刃), Bing fang (病方), Dao li shu (道里書), Yu jiu ce (禹九策), Fu chu (祓除),Ri shu B 日書乙種. See *Beijing daxue cang Qin jiandu*, 741–742.

[106] Gansu Sheng Bowuguan 甘肅省博物館 and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所 eds, *Wuwei Hanjian* 武威漢簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005)

	**Bingben "Sangfu"* 丙本《喪服》	34	56.5	0.9
	Daybook	13	23	
Yinqueshan 銀雀山[107]	**Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法	223 (?)	27.5	0.7
	**Sunbin bingfa* 孙膑兵法	222 (?)	27.5	0.7
	**Weiliaozi* 尉繚子	72 (?)	27.5	0.7
	**Yanzi* 晏子	103 (?)	27.5	0.7
	**Liutao* 六韜	136 (?)	27.5	0.7
	**Shoufa shouling deng shisanpian* 守法守令等十三篇	134 (?)	27.5	0.7
	**Tiandi bafeng wuxing ke zhu wuyin zhiju* 天地八风五行客主五音之居	(?)	g18	0.5
M2[108]	**Hanwudi Yuanguang yuannian lipu* 漢武帝元光元年曆譜	32	69	1
Mawangdui 馬王堆[109]	**Shi wen* 十問	101	23	0.6
	**He yin yang* 合陰陽	32	23	0.9
	**Za jin fang* 雜禁方	11	22–23	1.1–1.2
	**Tianxia zhidao tan* 天下至道談	56	29	0.5
Zhangjiashan 張家山 M247[110]	**Lipu* 曆譜	18	23	
	**Er nian lü ling* 二年律令	526	31	
	**Zouyan shu* 奏讞書	228	28.6–30.1	
	**Suanshu shu* 筭數書	190	29.6–30.2	
	**Mai shu* 脈書	66	34.2–34.6	
	**Yin shu* 引書	112	30–30.5	
	**Gai lu* 蓋盧	55	30–30.5	
Zhangjiashan	**Gongling* 功令	184	29.8–30	0.5

[107] Yinqueshan hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 銀雀山漢墓墓竹簡整理小組 ed., *Yinqueshan hanmu zhujian (yi)* 銀雀山漢墓竹簡 (壹) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985). The entire corpus is fragmentary—the slip number count represents the total of the surviving fragmentary pieces. As such, I have not included the statistics of this corpus in my calculation of the slip-count for the constitution of the manuscript.

[108] Yinqueshan hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 銀雀山漢墓墓竹簡整理小組 ed., *Yinqueshan hanmu zhujian (er)* 銀雀山漢墓竹簡 (貳) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2010).

[109] Hunan sheng bowuguan 湖南省博物館 and Fudan daxue chutu wenxian yu gu wenzi yanjiu zhongxin 復旦大學出土文獻與古文字研究中心 [led by Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭] eds., *Changsha Mawangdui Hanmu boshu jicheng* 長沙馬王堆漢墓帛書集成. 7 vols (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014).

[110] Zhangjiashan er si qi hao hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 張家山二四七號漢墓竹簡整理小組 ed., *Zhangjiashan hanmu zhujian—Er si qi hao mu*張家山漢墓竹簡—二四七號墓 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001).

張家山 M336[111]				
	**Daozhi* 盜跖	44	29.8–30	0.6
	**Chegushiqi* 徹穀食氣	93	26.2	0.7
	**Cimayi* 祠馬禔	10	23	0.7
	**Hanlüshiliuzhang* 漢律十六章	375	29.9	0.5
	**Qinian zhiri* 七年質日	71	37.2	0.55–0.6
Yinwan 尹灣[112]	**Shenwu fu* 神烏賦	21	22.5–23	0.8–1
	*日書、曆譜 *Rishu, Lipu*	37	22.5–23	0.3–0.4
Huxishan 虎溪山[113]	*計簿	188 (?)	14	0.7
	*Yanzhao A 閻昭上	163 (?)	27	0.8
	*Yanzhao B 閻昭下	639 (?)	27	0.8
	*Shifang 食方	300	46	0.8
Kongjiapo 孔家坡[114]	**Lipu* 曆譜	78	27	0.5–0.7
	**Rishu* 日書	703(?)	34	0.7–0.9
Xufu 胥浦 [115]	**Xianlingquanshu* 先令券書	16	22.3	
Peking University Collection (Han)[116]	**Cangjiepian* 倉頡篇	86	30.2–30.4	0.9–1.0
	Zhaozhengshu 趙正書	51	30.2–30.4	0.8–1.0
	Laozi 老子	223	31.9–32.2	0.8–0.9
	Zhouxun 周馴	221	30.2–30.4	0.9–1.0
	Wang ji 妄稽	107	32.0–32.2	0.8–0.9
	**Fanyin* 反淫	59	29.7–29.9	0.9

[111] Jingzhou bowuguan 荊州博物館 [led by Peng Hao 彭浩 ed., *Zhangjiashan hanmu zhujian (sans an liu hao mu)* 張家山漢墓竹簡 (三三六號墓) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2022).

[112] Lianyungang bowuguan 連雲港博物館, Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 中國社會科學院簡帛研究中心, Donghai xian bowuguan 東海縣博物館, and Zhongguo wenwu yanjiusuo 中國文物研究所 eds., *Yinwan hanmu jiandu* 尹灣漢墓簡牘 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997).

[113] Hunansheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo 湖南省文物考古研究所 ed., *Yuanling huxishan yihao hanmu* 沅陵虎溪山一號漢墓 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2020). Since the texts present rather fragtmentary as well, I have not included the statistics of this corpus in my calculation of the slip-count for the constitution of the manuscript.

[114] Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu suo 湖北省文物考古所 and Suizhou shi kaogu dui 隨州市考古隊 Suizhou kongjiapo hanmu jiandu, eds., *Suizhou kongjiapo hanmu jiandu* 隨州孔家坡漢墓簡牘 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006).

[115] Li Junming 李均明 and He Shuangquan 何双全, *Sanjian jiandu heji* 散見簡牘合輯 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1990).

[116] Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學出土文獻研究所 ed., *Beijing daxue cang xihan zhushu* 北京大學藏西漢竹書 (壹–伍) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012–15).

	Daybook	695 (?)	45.8–46.1	0.7–0.9
	**Riji* 日忌	414	45.8–46.1	0.9–1.0
	**Riyue* 日約	183	45.8–46.1	0.9–1.0
	**Kanyu* 堪輿	77	29.4–46.1	0.8–0.9
	Yushu 雨書	65	32.1–32.2	0.8–0.9
	**Liubo* 六博	49	29.9–30	0.8–0.9
	**Jingjue* 荊決	39	32.2–32.5	0.9
	**Jie* 節	65	29.8–30.0	0.8–0.9
	**Yishu* 醫書	711 (?)	23.0–23.2	0.7–0.9
Laoguanshan 老官山[117]	**Bixi yilun* 敝昔醫輪	57	10–23	?
	**Mai si hou* 脈死候	51	27	0.8
	**Liushi bingfang* 六十病方	215 (?)	34.5	0.8
	**Chi jian* 尺簡	20	22.7	1
	**Bingyuan lun* 病源論	18	27.6	0.7
	**Zhubing zhenghou* 諸病症候	268 (?)	35.7	0.9
	**Jing mai shu* 經脈書	(?)	35.7	
	**Mai shu* 脈數	41	30	0.9
	**Wuse maizang lun* 五色脈臟論	66	15–25	0.9

4. Findings

Two key arguments of this chapter—and of the dissertation more broadly—concern the tremendous diversity and dynamics of writings in Chinese antiquity, and the emerging attempts to establish standards and order. Although the two focal points might initially seem incompatible, the paradox between the overall changeability vis–a–vis an individual's intention to establish a sort of convention should be understood by articulating individual autonomy in the making and using of material texts. By gathering and laying out the data, I use statistics to emphasize the

[117] Chengdu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 成都文物考古研究所 and Jingzhou wenwu baohu zhongxin 荊州文物保護中心, "Chengdu tianhui zhen laoguanshan Hanmu fajue jianbao" 成都天回鎮老官山漢墓發掘簡報, *Nanfang minzu kaogu* 南方民族考古 12 (2019), 215–246. Since we only have the brief report so that we do not know how fragmentary they are, I still have not included the statistics of this corpus in my calculation of the slip-count for the constitution of the manuscript.

quantitative evidence of the manuscripts' length and size to support my points. Synthesizing the data and formulating it in this chart may be an oversimplification, but several key points can be extrapolated.

Average	Quantity (slip) per MS	Height (cm) per slip	Width (cm) per slip
Warring States	25.2	44.8	0.62
Qin	102.6	30.55	0.6
Han	119.7	30.3	N/A

First, across the different genres (with the difference in genres as also a part of the chronological evolution), there was a steady growth in the length of the manuscript scrolls over the span of approximately six hundred years.[118] Second, as the length of the individual manuscripts increased, on average the individual slips became shorter; at the same time, the height of the individual slips of both the Warring States and Han tend to be more varied than that of the Qin slips. Third, because both the individual slips and the composition of the manuscripts still present tremendous diversity, we can posit a general lack of standardization. Finally, despite this general lack of standardization, we can still observe some material similarity within the early imperial legal writing and within manuscripts that were produced by the same hand, suggesting some scribal autonomy behind the making of the ancient manuscripts. The following section articulates these points.

4.1 Enlarging the Manuscripts

The first intriguing characteristic is a chronological increase in the volume of manuscripts; figs. 12–14 present the main results of the gradual, steady change. As is readily seen

[118] So far, the earliest excavated texts are the Geling Warring States Chu manuscripts. See Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉 and Peng Hao 彭浩], *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (er) Xincai geling chujian, Changtaiguan chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(二): 新蔡葛陵楚簡, 長臺關楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2013).

in fig. 12 pre-imperial scrolls usually consist of only several dozen slips, while those with over one hundred slips are considered large-sized manuscripts. During this early time, most book manuscripts consisted of literary, philosophical/cosmological, historical texts, in contrast to the legal texts that predominated in Qin and a significant diversity in genres in Han. Pre-imperial legal writings are comparatively rare with the ones in the Baoshan 包山 corpus as the only example.[119] Examples of long manuscripts from this time are the reconstructed manuscripts Guodian **Cheng zhi wen zhi* 成之聞之+**Zun de yi* 尊德義+**Liu de* 六德 (128 slips), Tsinghua University **Xinian* 繫年 (138 slips), *Wuji* 五紀 (130 slips), **Sanbuwei* 參不韋 (124 slips),[120] and Anhui University **Shijing* 詩經 (numbering up to slip 117, with 24 slips missing.[121] In other words, while we have not yet encountered any pre-imperial manuscript exceeding 150 slips, we know of at least five examples with more than 100 slips. Taking the **Xinian* (138 slips), the longest extant pre-imperial manuscript, as an example, each slip is approximately 0.6 centimeters wide and 45 centimeters long, with about 30 characters per slip, suggesting a large size close to 1 meter long and containing approximately 3,875 words in total (fig. 15).[122]

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[119] Hubei sheng jingsha tielu kaogudui 湖北省荊沙鐵路考古隊, *Baoshan chujian* 包山楚簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991).

[120] Tsinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin 清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心, ed., *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian (er)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (貳) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2011), 135; Tsinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin, ed., *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian (shi yi)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (拾壹) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2021), 89; *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian (shi er)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (拾貳) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2022), 109.

[121] Anhui daxue hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 安徽大學漢字發展與應用研究中心, ed., *Anhui daxue cang zhanguo zhujian (yi)* 安徽大學藏戰國竹簡 (一) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2019), 1.

[122] For the word-count result, see Ma Nan 馬楠, *Qinghua jian 'Xi-nian' jizheng* 清華簡《繫年》輯證 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2015), 4.

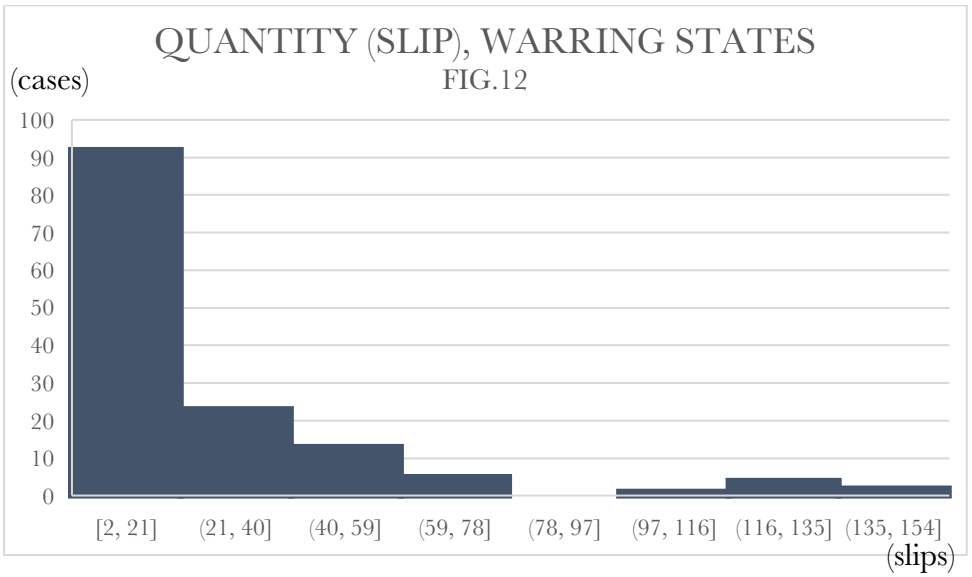


FIG.12

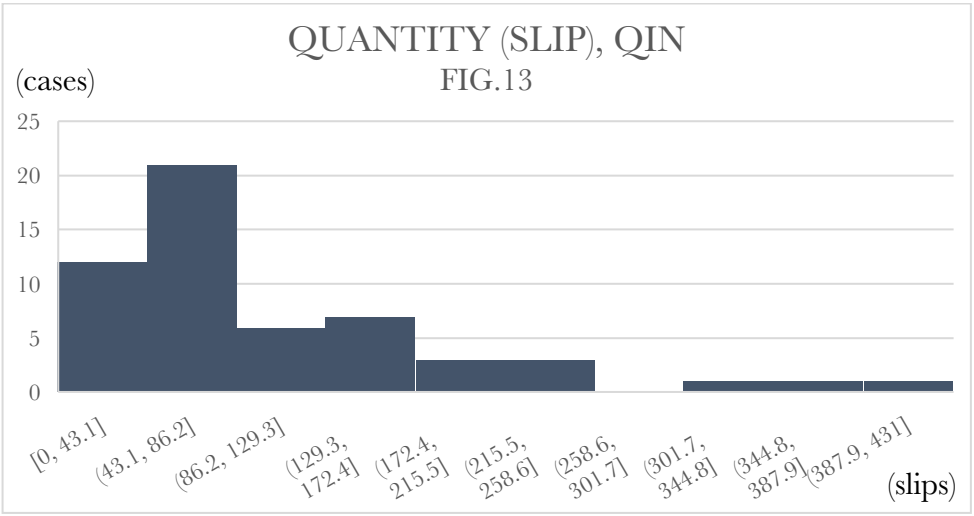


FIG.13

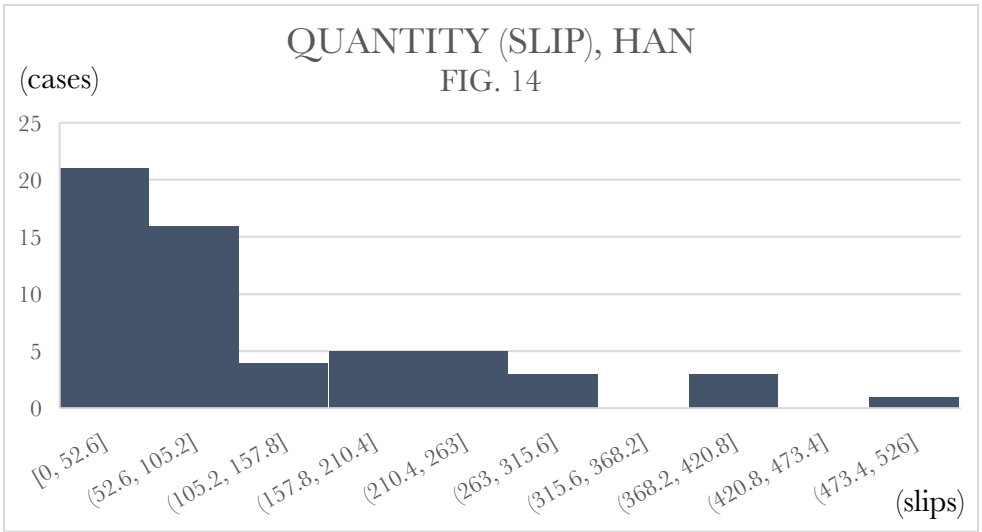


FIG. 14

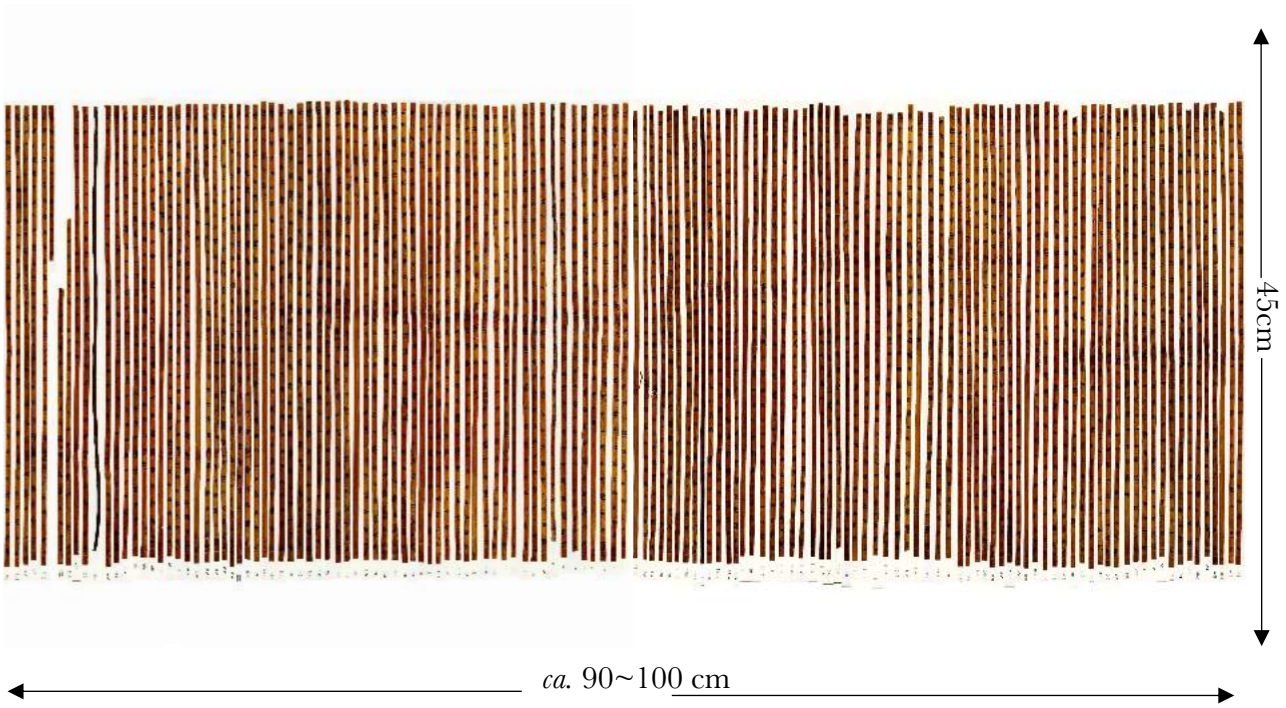


Fig. 15 Tsinghua **Xinian*, 138 slips,
The longest Warring States manuscripts

Thereafter, as the Qin-Han empire was known for its documentary administration and exhaustive legal infrastructure, discovered legal manuscripts in this period went through substantial growth in both quantity and length.[123] After the establishment of the Qin empire, legal texts became predominant and grew increasingly voluminous. If we outline all the Qin–Han manuscripts, we observe a dramatic growth in the number of slips in one manuscript compared to the pre-imperial manuscripts, especially for the early imperial legal books of which many comprise over one hundred slips.

(reconstructed) Qin-Han Manuscripts[124]	*Slips*
Shuihudi 睡虎地 Han MS, *Panglü* 旁律	544
Zhangjiashan 張家山 No. 247 Han MS, **Er nian lü ling* 二年律令	526

[123] See Chen Wei 陳偉, "Qin-Han jianduo suojian de lüdian tixi" 秦漢簡牘所見的律典體系. *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 2021.1: 104–121.

[124] Chen Wei. "Qin-Han jianduo suojian de lüdian tixi."

Mawangdui 馬王堆 tomb 1 Han MS, **Qiance* 遣册	400
Fangmatan 放馬灘, Qin MS **Rishu B* 日書乙	382
Zhangjiashan No. 336 Han MS, **Han lü shiliu zhang* 漢律十六章	375
Peking University Qin MS, **Zachao* (Volume 4)	318
Shuihudi Han MS, *Mou lü* □律	306
Shuihudi Qin MS, **Rishu B* 日書乙種	259
Zhangjishan Han MS, *Zouyanshu* 奏讞書	238
Peking University Han MS, *Laozi* 老子	223
Shuihudi Han, **Suanshu* 算書	216
Peking University Han MS, *Zhouxun* 周馴	211
Shuihudi Qin MS, *Falü dawen* 法律答問	210
Xiejiaqiao 謝家橋 Han MS, **Qiance* 遣册	208
Shuihudi Qin MS, *Qin lü shiba zhong* 秦律十八種	201
Zhangjiashan No. 247 Han MS, **Suanshu shu* 筭數書	190
Zhangjiashan No. 336 Han MS, **Gong ling* 功令	184
Peking University Qin MS, **Riyue* 日約	183
Shuihudi Qin MS, **Rishu A* 日書甲種	166
Yuelu Vol. 4 **Weiyu dengzhuang sizhong* A 爲獄等狀四種	136
Yuelu Vol. 7 Legal Text Group B	132
Yuelu Vol. 6 Legal Text Group A	130
Zhoujiatai 周家臺 **Qin shi huang 34, 36, 37 lipu* 秦始皇 34, 36, 37 年曆譜	130
Zhangjiashan no. 247 **Yin shu* 引書	112
Yuelu Vol. 4 Legal Text Group C	108
Peking University **Wang ji* 妄稽	107
Yuelu Vol. 4 Legal Text Group A	105
Mawangdui **Shi wen* 十問	101

A significant number of large early imperial manuscripts can be found. To date, we have observed nineteen cases of manuscripts exceeding 150 slips, and there are also nine instances of manuscripts containing between 100 and 150 slips. Compared to the mere five known cases from the Warring States period, at least 28 large scrolls from the Qin–Han period that exceed 100 slips have been identified. Among them, the newly found Shuihudi *Panglü* 旁律 (Lateral Statutes) and the Zhangjiashan no. 247 **Ernian lü ling* 二年律令 (Statutes and Ordinances of the Second Year), both Han manuscripts, are notable for their enormity, as they both contain over five

hundred slips. While we await more details about the contents of *Panglü*, which has not yet been published, we have been struck by the fact that the second-longest scroll, **Ernian lü ling*, comprises 526 bamboo slips, spans approximately 3 to 4 meters (depending on the material of the binding thread, which would add different amounts of space between slips), and each slip is approximately 31 centimeters long and 0.6 centimeters wide and contains a single column of writing, totaling 14,444 characters,[125] —more than three times the length and the word-count of the longest pre-imperial manuscript, **Xinian*. In other words, not only did the quantity of documents increase enormously, but the physical size of the writing medium did as well, suggesting that both the total number of the legal texts and length of individual manuscripts, viewed as a codicological unity, as well as the length of a text (or texts), underwent tremendous expansion.

The discovery of the expansion of the total number of the legal texts and the length of individual manuscripts led us to consider the numerous descriptions of "information overload" associated with the legal texts from the early imperial era. Han Shufeng 韓樹峰 has demonstrated that the general structure of imperial law reached its maximum capacity, even

[125] See *Zhangjiashan hanmu zhujian—Er si qi hao mu*, 133. For its exceptionally large size, scholars believe that although it is huge, the *Er nian lü lingmanuscript*was more of a personal selection or collection rather than a full version of laws of the time; it was not made for daily reading or practical use, but for a burial purpose to illustrate the tomb owner's social status and official capabilities in the underworld. See Li Jingrong 李婧嶸, "*Er nian lü ling* jianshu xingzhi tanxi"《二年律令》簡書性質探析, *Shilin* 5 (2016): 41–48; "The Nature and Function of the *Ernian Lüling* Manuscript Unearthed from Zhangjiashan Han Tomb No. 247," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 82.1 (2019): 143 –158. See also You Yifei 游逸飛, "Shilun Zhangjiashan Hanjian Ernian lüling de jichu ewu" 試論張家山漢簡《二年律令》的幾處訛誤, *Luo jia shi yuan* 1 (2013): 41–50. As for the burial purpose of the *Er nian lü ling* manuscript, see Tomiya, Iratu 冨谷至, "Jiangling Zhangjiashan ersiqihao Hanmu chutu zhujian—tebie shi guanyu *Ernian lulling*" 江陵張家山二四七號漢墓出土竹簡—特別是關於《二年律令》, in *Jianboyanjiu erlinglingba* 簡帛研究二零零八, ed. Bu Xianqun 卜憲群 and Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2010), 296–310; Zhang Zhongwei 張忠煒, "Muzang chutu lüling wenxian de xingzhi yu qita" 墓葬出土律令文獻的性質與其他, *Zhongguo renmin daxue xuebao* 5 (2015): 41–50. As for manuscript's word-count, see Zheng Jiexuan 鄭介弦, "*Zhangjiashan hanjian · Ernian lüling* wenzi bian"《張家山漢簡·二年律令》文字編, M.A. Thesis, National Changhua University of Education, 2011.

prolixity, during the reign of Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 BCE). After that, the legal system gradually evolved through explicit editorial endeavors to systemize and simplify it: from the Han to the Jin, it gradually transformed into a more organized infrastructure.[126] As the overabundance of texts reached its apogee during Emperor Wu's reign, anxiety over the collective inability to manage the texts was ubiquitous. For example, in the "Monograph on Penal Law" (刑法志 *Xingfa zhi*) chapter of the *Hanshu* 漢書, Ban Gu (32 – 92 CE) recorded the prevalent statutes, ordinances, and other various kinds of legal writings during Emperor Wu's reign and stated:

> At the time that Emperor Wu ascended the throne…the Statutes and Ordinances comprised 359 chapters: for the death penalty, there were 409 articles covering 1,882 cases, and 13,472 cases of judicial precedents for crimes deserving death. Tables and cabinets were overflowing with texts and documents, and the textual experts in charge were unable to read them all."
> 及至孝武位，[…]。律令凡三百五十九章，大辟四百九條，千八百八十二事，死罪決事比萬三千四百七十二事。文書盈於几閣，典者不能徧睹。[127]

In discussing the vast number and the specific types of legal writings, Ban Gu expounded on the legal texts not only in terms of their quantity and genres, but also their materiality: legal codes made of bamboo as physical written objects took up substantial space and required resources for storage and utilization. Books were piled up on both the reading furniture, the tables (*ji* 几), and in the storage rooms, the cabinets (*ge* 閣), suggesting an overabundance of laws in both reading space and storage capacity: there were not only too many to be read for any given case, but also many more to be read for the next one. Even though it is difficult to verify the accuracy of these huge numbers, we can be certain that there were various types of texts and a complicated structure, and the regulations were exhaustive—even the finest legal experts were probably

[126] See Han Shufeng 韓樹峰, *Han Wei falü yu shehui: yi jiandu, wenshu wei zhongxin de kaocha* 漢魏法律與社會：以簡牘、文書為中心的考察 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian, 2011).

[127] Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 23.1101.

incapable of having a grasp of every law, due not only to intellectual capacity but also to physical limitations.

Even worse, Huan Kuan 桓寬 (ca. 1st c. BCE) depicted a scenario in which official clerks not only had to grapple with an epistemic crisis from the vast numbers and types of books per se but also with another formidable enemy of knowledge: the (literal) book worm:

> The legal statutes and ordinances, which are lying in stacks and cabinets, gathering dust and being eaten by worms—[are so numerous that] officials are unable to read all of them.
> 律令塵蠹於棧閣，吏不能徧覩。[128]

In this situation, it was not only that the vast number of legal manuscripts were piled up on one another on the table for immediate reading or even cross-reading, but also that there were so many books that they were spilling out of the storage spaces. In the matter of there being insufficient reading space, this phrase focuses only on storage; conceivably, if the issue were purely about sorting and preserving, then it would point less to an epistemological challenge and more to a logistical one, especially when the rate of book accumulation was far exceeding the availability of storage space to house them. In other words, it was not only in an actual reading scenario where a reader had too many books to digest at one time, but also that overflow of books was already spilling out of the space where they were supposed to be stored for a longer time. The conundrum of there being too many books is both about not being able to finish reading the books and having a place to sort them, but also about the readers' reading speed that could not keep pace with the speed of the accumulation of bamboo and wood books, which were also quickly being ravaged by dust, worms, and time.

On a related note, Ban Gu hence articulated:

[128] Wang Liqi 王利器, *Yantielun jiaozhu* 鹽鐵輪校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 565–566.

> At present (however) the Statutes and Ordinances are vexatiously numerous and not concise. [This] starts with those who deal with these documents not being able to distinguish between or understand [them].
> 今律令煩多而不約，自典文者不能分明。[129]

In this depiction, the problem of there being too many laws is compounded by the epistemological challenge of the texts becoming too difficult to comprehend: if the previous passages pose the issue of "too many for the scribe to read," this quote, to my mind, redirects the focus to the issues that actually resided in the internal problems and in the documents themselves. If we change the perspective to that of a reader, the difficulty was not being able finish the reading of all of the texts, as well as the difficulty of making sense of, synthesizing, searching, internalizing, and hence utilizing the legal knowledge. Thus, the handicap of early imperial legal knowledge was not merely that there were too many texts and that the books were huge, but also there was too simply much to know, intellectually, psychologically, and physically. Many other records also prove this point.[130]

Then, how can we understand this epistemic crisis in light of the discovered manuscripts? If we consider that the substantial increase in the volume of early manuscripts may resonate with these literary anecdotes, either confirming or refuting the accuracy of any of Ban Gu's figures,

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[129] *Hanshu* 23.1103; Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law Vol. I: Introductory Studies and Annotated Translation of Chapters 22 and 23 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty*. (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 339.

[130] For example, Han Shufeng had surveyed historical documents and observed that many of them noted the proliferation of legal texts. These include 1) Hanshu 23. 1103: "The Statutes and Ordinances are vexatiously numerous, consisting of more than a million words; 'extra requests' and irrelevant precedents increase by the day. Even perspicacious and well-versed people do not know which (law) to follow." 律令煩多，百有餘萬言，奇請它比，日以益滋，自明習者不知所由。See also A.F.P. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law,* 340. 2) *Houhanshu* 46.1555–1556: 初，父寵在廷尉，上除漢法溢於甫刑者，未施行，及寵免後遂寢。而苛法稍繁，人不堪之。3)《鹽鐵論·刑德》：昔秦法繁於秋茶，而網密於凝脂。然而上下相遁，姦僞萌生。4) *Jinshu* 30.922–923: 凡斷罪所當由用者，合二萬六千二百七十二條，七百七十三萬二千二百餘言，言數益繁，覽者益難。天子於是下詔，但用鄭氏章句，不得雜用餘家。5) *Weishu* 111.2872: "于定國為廷尉，集諸法律，凡九百六十卷，大辟四百九十條，千八百八十二事，死罪決比，凡三千四百七十二條，諸斷罪當用者，合二萬六千二百七十二條。諸斷罪當用者，合二萬六千二百七十二條。後漢二百年間，律章無大增減.

the vast quantity of legal texts of various kinds would still be precarious. It is likewise risky to historicize Huan Kuan's critique of the legal officials' inability to manage the enormous legal texts, given the fact that the debates on the entire book, *Discourses on Salt and Iron*, were taking place between the reformists (literary/Confucian scholars) and the modernists (legal officials), and the former always criticized the latter. Rather, the quintessential significance of the anecdotes regarding the enormity of the imperial laws lies precisely in how they complicate our imagination of the history of media and of reading, in which the significance of the bamboo and wood documents, especially in the domain of legal writing, was not merely that they were marvelous objects serving as ritual tokens, epistolary artifacts, or recordkeeping-devices, but instrumental, instructive, and even independent informational apparatus that could provide a result-oriented, purpose-driven reading event.

It might be true that the statutes and ordinances became voluminous individually (each volume) and holistically (the total number)—as is shown in both discovered and transmitted sources—yet the lesson from the enormity of the quantity and size should extend beyond the books and the texts, as it is also about the actual readers' and writers' experience, psychology, methods, and practices, in producing and managing and the huge volumes. The confluence of the physical expansion of books and the recorded anxiety over the informational crisis formed the significance of the bamboo-made media, once again, lies in its accessibility and adaptability to mediating between epistemic needs and material reality—the books becoming bigger and the texts becoming longer was not something that suddenly happened in the Qin-Han, but the result, pre-condition, and symptom of the early empire's institutions and administration.

At this point, the bamboo manuscripts as a knowledge medium interfaced not only with the lost Shang and the victorious Zhou, or the ancient sagacious king and Mozi and his posterity; the enormous-sized legal scrolls now mediated between the common reader and the daunting

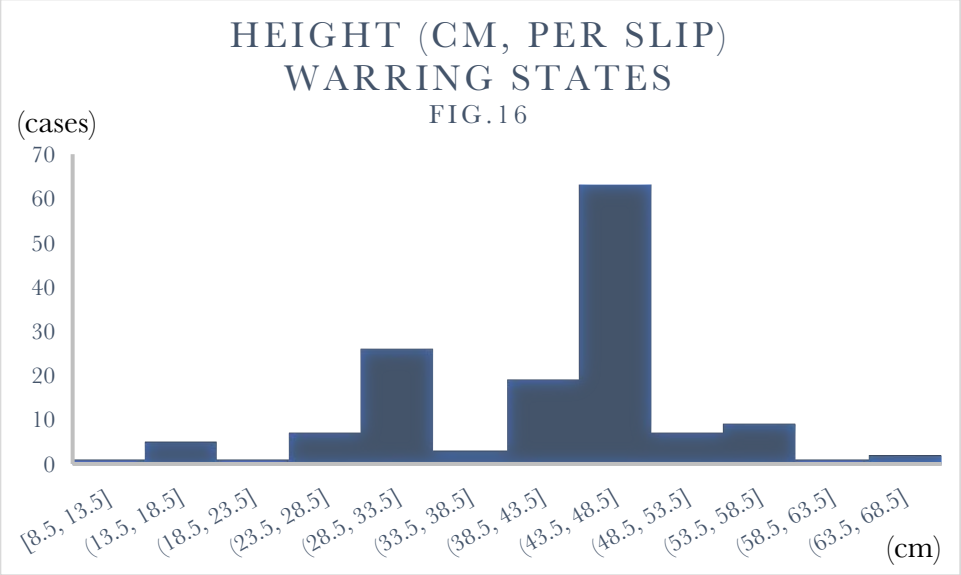
voice of the universal imperial law, which itself was a token and culmination of the sophistication of writing technology. After all, books becoming bigger was not achieved by merely adding slips, but entailed a whole set of skills and crafts for the creation, processing, and managing of Qin-Han "big data" that was indispensable in the ever-proliferating and ever-systematizing of the laws and knowledge.

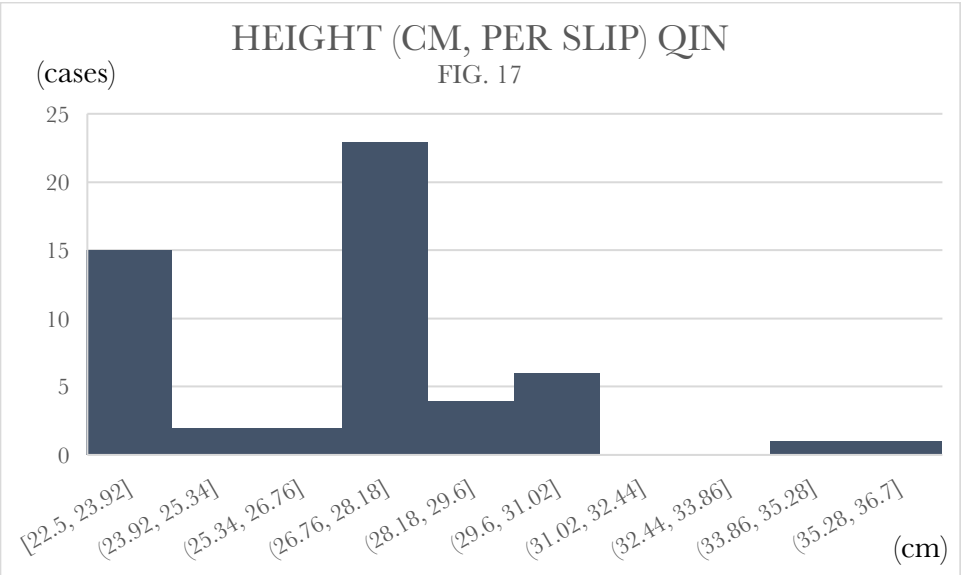
4.2 Shortening the Slips

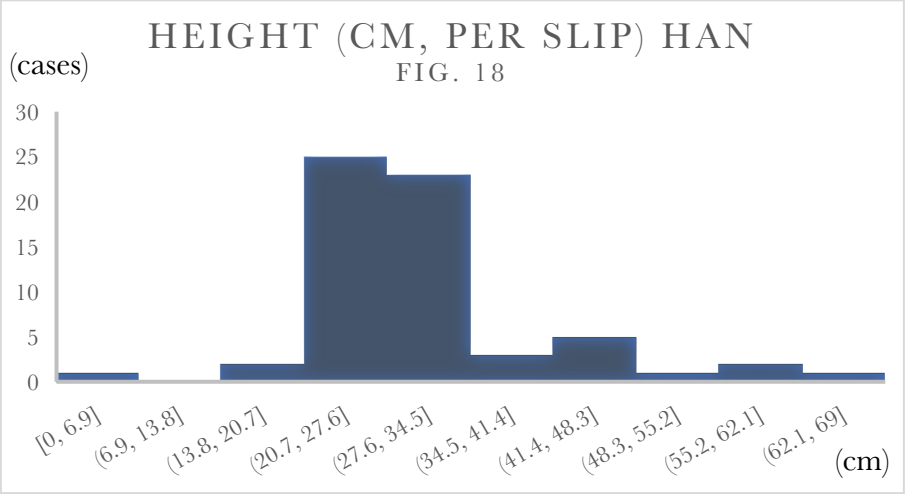
In the previous section, I highlighted the statistics between the longest pre-imperial manuscript that we know of, the **Xinian*, and the second longest, the **Ernian lüling*. However, while discussing their representativeness and comparability, one curious aspect diverged from my expectations: although the **Ernian lüling* consists of about four times as many slips (526) as the **Xinian* (138) and has approximately four times the number of characters (14,444 to 3,785), which suggests a similar character count per slip, there seems to be a discrepancy in their size. Despite the similar character count per slip, the height of the **Ernian lüling* is 31 cm, while the **Xinian* is 45 cm, making it roughly 1.5 times longer, which means that the arrangement of characters on the **Xinian*, a literary text, was much more generous in the use of space than that of the **Ernian lüling*, a text of imperial law. Once again, a variety of factors could account for this difference, which leads to a related question about changes in the height of the individual slips.

If we do not thoroughly gather and synthesize the data, our knowledge of the ancient manuscripts' materiality, usability, portability, as well as various other aspects regarding the sociology of writing and reading can only remain impressionistic. As in-depth inquiries into the various aspects of the practices of reading are reserved for the following chapters, in this last section, I will limit myself to outlining the most evident findings regarding the size of the ancient manuscripts. To begin, a crude average calculation reveals a chronological change in the

individual slips' height, summarizing a trend towards shorter slips during the early imperial period: Warring States (44.8 cm), Qin (30.55 cm), and Han (30.3 cm). However, the numbers reveal a more complex story. During each period, the height of individual slips presented a different degree of variance: slips produced in the Warring States and Han dynasties varied more significantly in height—ranging from 9.5 to 75 cm for the Warring States manuscripts, and from 5.5 to 67 cm for Han slips. In contrast, Qin slips demonstrate more uniformity in size, ranging from 23 to 35 cm. Figures 16–18 reveal this point.







Specifically, by far the longest slips, 75 cm, are the tomb inventories found in the Zeng hou Yi (Marquis Yi of Zeng) Chu tomb,[131] whereas the shortest slips are found in the **Yue feng* (Musical Airs 樂風) Chu manuscript from the recently published thirteen volume of the Tsinghua University collection, measuring only 9.9 cm.[132] Most of the Warring States slips were between 43 to 48 cm (63 cases). Hence, in general, pre-imperial administrative records are comparatively long, with the Baoshan manuscript, the Xiyangpo manuscript, and the Zhuanwachang all measuring more than 60 cm. Within the literary text corpora, slip sizes were even less standardized: aside from the **Yue feng*, another set of short slips are those of the Chu manuscript Guodian **Yu cong* B 語叢二 and **Yu cong* D 語叢四. In both of these manuscripts the slips are about 15 cm in length,[133] while the longest slips for a literary text are the **Xing qing lun*

[131] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin and Hubei sheng wenwu gaogu yanjiusuo, eds., *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji vol.3: Zenghou Yi mu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(三): 曾侯乙墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2019).

[132] Tsinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin 清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心 [led by Huang Dekuan 黃德寬], *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* vol.13 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (拾叁) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2023), 14, 85, 137.

[133] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin and Jingmen shi bowuguan 荊門市博物館 eds., *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji vol.1: Guodian chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(一): 郭店楚墓竹書 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2011).

性情論 and **Cai feng qu mu* 采风曲目 in the Shanghai Museum collection and they are up to 57 cm long.[134] Within this range, the length of the literary texts varies: it seems that there was little correlation between the literary manuscripts' material aspects and their content and archeological context, but that the length of the slips was more closely related to the producers or owners, since materials from the same corpus were more likely to be of a similar size.

In contrast, the Qin manuscripts present more regularities regarding the height of each slip. Qin slips, which primarily contain legal and technical texts, have a height that remains in a comparatively narrow range—between 23 and 35 cm; hence, a substantial number of the slips are either 23 cm (1 *chi*) or 27 cm (1.2 *chi*). Conceivably, the consistency in the materiality of Qin documents is an aspect of the unification of the empire. In Han times, regulations for the size of written documents appeared in transmitted sources. "Two *chi* and four *cun* in length" (*er chi si cun* 二尺四寸) was the standardized length of the core parts of the Han Confucian classics, and less important texts were supposed to be written on shorter slips.[135] For instance, Wang Chong 王充 (ca. 27–100 AD) mentions that the slips for manuscripts that words and sayings of the sages should be two *chi* and four *cun* in length.[136] According to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–220 AD), the six classics were likewise all written on slips of that size. At the same time, slips for less important texts like the *Xiaojing* 孝經 were one *chi* and two *cun*, and for the *Lunyu* 論語, eight *cun* only.[137]

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[134] Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 et al, eds., *Shanghai bowuguan cang zhanguo zhushu (yi)*上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (一) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001); *Shanghai bowuguan cang zhanguo zhushu (si)* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (四) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005).

[135] Wang Guowei 王國維, Jiandu jianshu kao *jiaozhu* 《簡牘檢署考》校注, comm. Hu Pingsheng 胡平生 and Ma Yuehua 馬月華 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), 14.

[136] Wang Chong 王充, *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋, comm. Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1990), 557.

[137] *Yili zhushu*, 725.

However, judging from the recently discovered manuscripts, regardless of whether they were pre-imperial or early imperial finds, and especially for earlier manuscripts, it is rare to find slip sizes matching these descriptions; yet the *Yili* 儀禮 manuscript from Wuwei, that dates from the late the Western Han, measures 55 cm, which equals precisely the "two *chi* and four *cun* in length" standard mentioned in the transmitted sources.[138] This suggests that such explicit regulation in terms of slip length and the text genre might have emerged by this time.

With the growing number of archaeologically discovered manuscripts, multiple scholars have attempted to summarize certain rules that apply to determining the early documents' physical scale. Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 proposed that "The importance of a book is determined by the length of the slips" (以策之大小定書之尊卑)[139]); in other words, the more important the text is, the bigger the slips should be. Likewise, based on the Guodian corpus, Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五 has suggested that in the Warring Sates, the "main body of the classical texts" *(jing* 經) was written using longer slips, while the "commentaries" (*zhuan* 傳) were composed on shorter slips.[140]

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[138] See Gansu sheng bowuguan 甘肅省博物館 and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所, eds., *Wuwei Han jian* 武威漢簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005).

[139] See Chen Mengjia, "You shiwu suojian handai jiance zhidu" 由實物所見漢代簡册制度, in Chen, *Han jian zhui shu* 漢簡綴述 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980[2004]), 301.

[140] See Zhou Fengwu, "Guodian zhujian de xingshi tezheng jiqi fenlei yiyi" 郭店竹簡的形式特徵及其分類意義, in *Guodian Chu jian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000), 43–63.

Other import works on this topic include Hu Pingsheng 胡平生, "Jiandu zhidu xintan" 簡牘制度新探, *Wenwu* 文物 (2000: 3), 66–73; Feng Shengjun 馮勝君, "Cong chutu wenxian tan xian Qin liang Han gushu de tili" 從出土文獻談先秦兩漢古書的體例, *Wenshi* (2004).4, 25–35; "Chutu cailiao suojian xian Qian gushu de zaiti yiji goucheng he chuanbu fangshi" 出土材料所見先秦古書的載體以及構成和傳布方式, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 4 (2011): 195–214; Momiyama Akira 籾山明, *Shin Kan shutsudo moji shiryō no kenkyū: keitai, seido, shakai* 秦漢出土文字史料の研究: 形態・制度・社会 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 2015); Cheng Pengwan 程鵬萬, *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu* 簡牘帛書格式研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2017); Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔, *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji*

These tentative summaries might have some validity within certain corpora, but if we look at the entirety of the discovered manuscripts, especially materials from before the Eastern Han dynasty, we can rarely find a stable criterion or unitary size for written documents. The actual scenario of the discovered manuscripts presents far more complexity than the clear regulations in transmitted sources.

4.3 (Un)changed Interface

If we do not thoroughly gather and synthesize the data, our knowledge of the ancient manuscripts' materiality, usability, portability, as well as various other aspects regarding the sociology of writing and reading can only remain impressionistic. Although profound in its meaning, the vast quantity of materials brings us not only clarity but also confusion: in this initial attempt to discover the meaning of early manuscripts as ancient media, in its most face-value dimension, we have discovered the expansion of the Qin-Han manuscripts' overall length, meanwhile there is an apparent decrease in individual slip's height and the conveyed texts have characters presented in a more squeezed, condensed manner. In other words, while we are fully aware of and admit to the tremendous complexity inherent in each individual manuscript, the general trend is that early Chinese manuscripts transformed from a "shorter in width and longer in height" dimension to a "longer in width and shorter in height" format. Within this overall change, we would find manuscripts from the earlier Warring States and the later Han are more diverse in term of size than those of the Qin, and that the quantity of Han manuscripts apparently outnumbers the pre-imperial materials.

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xiangguan wenti yanjiu—yi Tsinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian wei zhongxin 戰國竹書形制及相關問題研究——以清華大學藏戰國竹簡爲中心 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2015).

Finally, the questions of the manuscripts' size and length bring us to consider the question of the opened scroll as an informational surface and an epistemological realm. With a bamboo/wood manuscript at hands, the height is fixed when the individual slips' length is determined, yet the scroll's width can be managed by the reader through rolling or laying it out. This epistemological dimension is defined by the manuscript's length and height, constituting various-sized and various-shaped information surfaces, which provide a variety of interface experiences. These experiences are, surprisingly, déjà vu for us modern readers—since the actual size of the dimension of reading, after two thousand years, does not change too much.

Specifically, if we consider that reading a tall, pre-imperial manuscript (50 cm in height) is not too different from viewing at an Apple Display monitor or a typical-sized newspaper, then reading a usual sized early imperial manuscript (30 cm in height) would be somewhat similar to looking at a laptop computer or an A4 paper. Perusing a "pocket-book-size" manuscript like **Yue feng* (9.9 cm) or **Yu cong* (15 cm) would resemble reading from the screen of a cell phone. Accordingly, each size offers a specific experience and these differently-sized devices were designed and manufactured for various purposes and users; despite the fact that some tasks can be conducted on any of these devices—like checking email or browsing the internet. Furthermore, if the task is solely watching a movie, then a big monitor would be the ideal choice; if the task requires a quick response as well, a laptop is probably more convenient. However, no matter how wonderful a monitor or laptop is, we would hesitate to bring them along for hiking or for a party. As such, in this comparison, the lesson is that media's difference in size hence the diversity in materiality provides varied experiences for its users, both today and in antiquity; yet the choice of media, in whatever condition, results from the particular user and context, not the technological affordance per se. What we can learn from the various physical sizes of bamboo manuscripts is that people in ancient China might have been guided by similar considerations in

producing different-sized books or interfaces to facilitate various epistemic and informational needs—the roots of crafting and tailoring media to meet the varied purposes of reading can be traced back to the particular early moments of media in the ancient era.

Now, this line of thoughts of reading practices directs us the second chapter: paratexts on bamboo.

Chapter 2

Paratexts: Mediating the Readers

1. Whose Literary Pragmatics?
2. Overview of the Materiality and Paratextuality of the Tsinghua Manuscript
3. Distinction among Hands
4. Overlaps in Scribal and Codicological Dispositions
    4.1 Titles
    4.2 Slip Numbers
    4.3 Punctuation Marks
    4.4 Verso Lines and Verso Preparation
4 Conclusion: Paratext—Mediating between Fact and Goal

As the previous chapter provided an overview of the material designs–especially about their size and volume—of ancient bamboo and wood books, this chapter delves into the meanings and implications of their various codicological and paratextual arrangements.[1] It's important to note, despite the tremendous diversity and fluidity in material designs emphasized in the previous section, that ancient hand-written bamboo books were not invariably haphazard artifacts. Instead, as the following chapter will suggest, there was a level of local regulation,

[1] Important studies on parateexts in early Chinese texts, see Du Heng, 'The Author's Two Bodies: Paratext in Early Chinese Textual Culture.' Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2018; "The Author's Two Bodies: The Death of Qu Yuan and the Birth of Chuci zhangju 楚辭章句," T'oung Pao 105.3–4 (2019): 259–314; Thies Staack, "From Copies of Individual Decrees to Compilations of Written Law: On Paratextual Framing in Early Chinese Legal Manuscripts," in Copying Manuscripts: Textual and Material Craftsmanship, eds. Antonella Brita, Giovanni Ciotti, Florinda De Simini, Amneris Roselli. Napoli: Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Dipartimento Asia Africa e Mediterraneo, 2020. More recently and importantly, see Du Heng, "The Paratextual Functions of the Early Chinese Anecdote – with *Tang zai Chimen 湯在啻門 and *Tang chu yu Tangqiu 湯處於湯丘 as Examples," *Bamboo and Silk* 7, 1 (2024): 1–52; Matthias L. Richter, "Towards a Broad Concept of Punctuation," *Bamboo and Silk* 7, 1 (2024): 159–185.

emerging notions of standardization, and methods to exert some control over textual knowledge that were already prevalent in bookmaking practices two thousand years ago.

1. Whose Literary Pragmatics?

We know very little the principle and meaning of almost every paratextual arrangements on bamboo: where they came from—from the manuscript's producer or user? and who the message's sender or addressee was. The different origins of the paratextual devices represent drastically different epistemic scenarios. For example, who arranged the punctuation marks,[2] and were the inserted marks a reader's marks that signified someone's interpretation or interest, or a producer's marks to stipulate the correct meaning and attempt to resolve the inherent semantic ambiguity? Also, why do some titles share handwriting similar to that in the text, while others appear to have been added by a later hand? Did the original titles that were occasionally used stand for the producers' control and (re)organization of an existing group of texts, or were they employed by readers to assign their own titles and order to a collection?[3] Furthermore, who

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[2] Although most scholars consider the punctuation on discovered manuscripts to have been added by the scribes, Kim Byeong Jun 김병준 proposed that a large portion of the marks were added by readers. See Kim Byeong Jun [金秉骏], "Ruhe jiedu zhanguo Qinhan jiandu zhong judou fuhao jiqi yu yuedu guocheng de guanxi" 如何解讀戰國秦漢簡牘中句讀符號及其與閱讀過程的關係, *Jianbo* 簡帛 4 (2009): 403–10. Other important studies include Derk Bodde, "Punctuation: Its Use in China and Elsewhere," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 47.2 (1991): 15–23; Peng Hao 彭浩, *Guodian chujian* Laozi *jiaodu* 郭店楚簡《老子》校讀 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000), 4–7; Guan Xihua 管錫華, *Zhongguo gudai biaodian fuhao fazhan shi* 中國古代標點符號發展史 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2002), 31–108; Lin Su-Ching 林素清, "Jiandu fuhao shilun" 簡牘符號試論, in *Di yi jie jianbo xushu taolunhui lunwenji* 第一屆簡帛學術討論會論文集 (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua daxue shixuexi, 2003), 93–108; Chen Wei 陳偉, *Chu jiance gailun* 楚簡册概論 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2012), 15-25; and Richter, "Punctuation, Premodern," in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. Rint Sybesma (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 3:501–6.

As for the punctuation that appears in the medieval manuscripts, see Imre Galambos, "Punctuation Marks in Medieval Chinese Manuscripts" in *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*, eds. Jörg Quenzer, Dmitry Bondarev and Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 341–358.

[3] Yu Jiaxi believed that all titles of classical Chinese texts were added by a later hand (instead of by the "author") see Yu, *Gushu tongli* 古書通例 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), 27–28. Judging from the

deployed the slip serial numbers—the ancestor or embryo of the page number as it was used in the age of codex and printing?[4] Did these numerical devices indicate the producers' endeavors to stabilize the order and integrity of the text, or do they stand for an attempt by a later hand to tally or estimate the text's length and structure? Finally, we do not know who marked the verso lines and readied the slips for writing—did the duties of preparing the writing, the support for it, and the composing of the texts belong to a single group of people, or was there a comparatively mature book industry in the Warring States with a clear division of labor?

Bearing in mind all these questions, it should be noted that, to some degree, the meaning and signification of the early manuscripts' codicological and paratextual properties were contingent on the kinds of roles that were played by the very people who deployed them. However, one dilemma that is especially true of handwritten texts is that the writers' and readers' voices were very easily mingled together and thus not as self-evident as in printed text: also, whether a handwritten manuscript was brand new, or used and punctuated, is also not always transparent. So if we have no idea about who the people were that arranged these paratextual elements, we also cannot know whether we are examining the mechanics and activities of manuscript production or delving into the methods and practices of reading and learning. In this regard, the first question apropos of the social and historical signification of the many codicological designs and paratextual devices is to determine *who* arranged them.

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discovered manuscripts, scholars have pointed out that the Shanghai Museum manuscript *Zigao* 子羔 and most of the titles of the Tsinghua manuscripts were more likely added by the producer; at the same time, the titles of the Shanghai Museum *Rong cheng shi* 容成氏 and Tsinghua *Zhaigong zhi gu ming* 祭公之顧命, *Houfu* 厚父, and *Feng Xu zhi ming* 封許之命 were considered not to share the same handwriting. See Feng Shengjun, "Cong chutu wenxian" 32–33; Jia Lianxiang, *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu*, 208–9.

[4] In the Tsinghua corpus, most of the serial numbers have the same handwriting as the main text, but Jia Lianxiang pointed out that the **Huang men* manuscript's serial numbers were added by a different hand. See Jia, *Zhanguo zhushu*, 195–96.

The following sections aim to elucidate the meaning and implications of the many paratextual elements that have been found in the recently discovered Warring States literary manuscripts in the Tsinghua University collection.[5] From comprehensively examining the material dispositions and scribal hands, it appears that many Tsinghua scribes were not passive or merely "copyists," but that they played an active, autonomous role not only in writing the texts but also in deciding on the calligraphy, materiality, and paratextuality. After an overview of the important material properties of the extant fifty-six Tsinghua manuscripts,[6] I will analyze the interconnectedness among their codicological and paratextual arrangements and their handwriting. Although the manuscripts may at first sight appear to be rather random or not standardized in terms of well-known Warring States paratextual designs that we have previously known about in the general picture of the Warring States, a closer inspection reveals a strong correlation among the various paratextual properties and the classification of scribal hands. This indicates that many important physical arrangements such as titles, slip numbers, punctuation marks, and size were closely associated with the scribes who wrote the texts, while the verso lines and verso preparation were less important to them. The careful arrangement of these paratextual elements bespeak a growing concern with preserving textual integrity, order, and meaning; thus, these literary devices were not merely something "additional" to the texts, but were a purposeful,

[5] I consider the Tsinghua manuscript corpus an ideal dataset because 1) the comparatively large number of bamboo slips provides a better opportunity to do both close and distant reading of the manuscript than shorter manuscripts do; 2) the relative intactness of the manuscripts and relatively few cases of disputed slip sequences as compared with other corpora allows us to retrieve their original situation better; and 3) equally important, better preservation and up-to-date photographic equipment make the quality of the images remarkably better than those of earlier publications. Also, both sides of the slips have been published, which gives us much more physical information than do the Guodian and Shanghai Museum collections.

[6] I have incorporated the first eleven volumes of the Tsinghua manuscripts, published from 2010 to 2021. Li Xueqin 李學勤 and Huang Dekuan 黃德寬 eds.-in-chief, Qinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin 清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心 ed., *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (yi) – (shiyi)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (壹) – (拾壹) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2010–2021).

pragmatic means of preserving and guarding the texts' completeness and correctness. Finally, the significant role played by the scribes in both textual transmission and manuscript production reminds us of the multidimensional role of the manuscripts' actual producers and potential users—although nameless even invisible, they could also be substantially involved in the making of the early Chinese texts.

2. Overview of the Materiality and Paratextuality of the Tsinghua Manuscript

It is difficult to summarize a general standard or local conventions that underlay the material and paratextual properties of the discovered Chu manuscripts composed of literary, historical, and philosophical treatises. From the size, length, layout, and book-format, to the titling, numbering, and punctuation practices, these physical and paratextual properties can differ from case to case; whether or not to apply, and where to put these paratextual elements—verso or recto, beginning or end of the text, upper or lower position on the slip—vary from one to another.[7] Especially for the Warring States textual culture, as many scholars have emphasized in depth, readers and writers, whether humans or spirits,[8] all embraced a high tolerance of fluidity of written texts and

[7] For example, see Chen Wei 陳偉, *Chu jiance gailun* 楚簡册概論 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2012), 1–27. As a counterargument, see Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五, "Guodian zhujian de xingshi tezheng yu fenlei yiyi" 郭店竹簡的形式特徵與分類意義, Wuhan daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu yuan 武漢大學中國文化研究院 ed., *Guodian chujian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000), 53–63.

[8] Multiple studies have proposed that the manuscripts preserved in tombs were equipped with ritual, funerary, or religious purposes, they were made not for living people's actual use but for the tomb occupant's afterlives. Important surveys on this topic include Zhang Zhongwei 張忠煒, "Muzang chutu lüling wenxian xingzhi ji qita" 墓葬出土律令文獻性質及其他, *Zhonguo renmin daxue xuebao* 中國人民大學學報 2015.5, 41–50; Zhou Haifeng 周海鋒, "Qin lüling zhi liubu ji suizang lüling xingzhi wenti" 秦律令之流布及隨葬律令性質問題, *Huadong zhengfa daxue xuebao* 華東政法大學學報 2016.4, 44–54; Yang Hua 楊華, "Zhongguo gumu weihe suizang shuji" 中國古墓爲何隨葬書籍, *Lingnan Journal of Chinese Studies* 嶺南學報 10 (2018): 187–209.

flexibility in orthography,[9] and their material properties were also presented with an apparent lack of any over-arching rules or conventions.

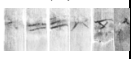
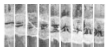
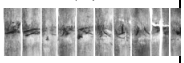
For the Tsinghua University manuscript collection, at first glance, the assessment "non-standardized" seems to be valid. The following tables provide an overview of the related properties: I chronologically enumerate manifold aspects that I consider most important, including original titles,[10] number of slips, numerical devices, verso lines,[11] treatment of the bamboo joints on the verso,[12] and the size of the fifty-six texts in the first eleven volumes. As a result, we can see that these do, in fact, appear as "non-standardized":

[9] As for variability in pre-imperial orthography, see Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, *Wenzixue gaiyao* 文字學概要 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2013 [first edition 1985]), 56–74, 198–213; English translation by Gilbert L. Mattos and Jerry Norman, *Chinese Writing* (Berkeley, Calif.: Society for the Study of Early China: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2000), 78–88, 321–65; William G. Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1994), 158–67; Imre Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing* (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2006); "Graphic Variation in Early Chinese Writing," in *China Across the Centuries: Papers from a Lecture Series in Budapest*, ed. Gabor Kosa (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2017), 33–60; Matthias Richter, "The Fickle Brush: Chinese Orthography in the Age of Manuscripts," *Early China* 31 (2007): 171–92.

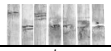
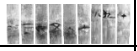
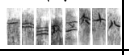
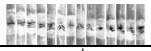
[10] In this article, I mark all the titles that are assigned by the modern editors with "*". In the following tables, "S+number" suggests slip number; "R" or "V" stands for "Recto" or "Verso;" "U" or "L" for "Upper section" or "Lower section;" "B" or "E" for "Beginning" or "End;" e.g., "S14VEL" means that the title was located in the lower section of the slip 14's verso, which is the end of the verso.

[11] For verso lines in the following tables, "S" stands for the verso line was "scattered (as opposed to sequential);" "RR" for "Reversed;" "D" for "Doubled."

[12] For treatment of bamboo joints on the verso, "W" means the whole slip was scraped and polished; "J" means only bamboo joints were scraped; if the slip is too short so that we cannot find bamboo joints, I mark it as "N."

Tsinghua Vol.1 (9)	*Yin zhi 尹至	*Yin gao 尹誥	*Chen gwu 程寤	*Bao xun 保訓	Qi ye 耆夜	Zhou Wu wang...[Jinteng] 周武王...[金縢]	*Huang men 皇門	Zhaigong zhi guming 祭公之顧命	*Chu ju 楚居
Title	×	×	×	×	S14VEL	S14VEL	×	S21REL	×
Number of slips	5	4	9	11	14	14	13	21	16
Slip numbers	√V 	√V 	×	×	√V 	√V 	√V 	√V 	×
Verso line	√	√	√	√S	√	√	√RR	√S	√RR
Verso	J	J	J	N	W	W	J	W	J
Size (cm)	45 /0.6	45 /0.6	44.5 /0. 6	28.6 /0. 5	45 /0.6	45 /0.6	45 /0.6	45 /0.6	47.5 /0.6

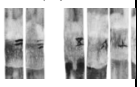
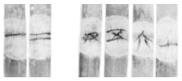
Tsinghua Vol.2 (1)	*Xinian 繫年
Title	×
Number of slips	138[13]
Slip numbers	√V 
Verso line	√
Verso	W
Size (cm)	45/0.6

Tsinghua Vol.3 (8)	Fu Yue zhi ming A 傅説之命上	Fu Yue zhi ming B 傅説之命中	Fu Yue zhi ming C 傅説之命下	Zhougong zhi qinwu 周公之琴舞	*Rui liangfu Bi 芮良夫芯	*Liang chen 良臣	*Zhuci 祝辭	Chijiu zhiji Tang zhi wu 赤鳩之集湯之屋
Title	S7VEL	S7VEL	S10VEL	S1VBU	S1VBU	×	×	S15VEL
Number of slips	7	7	10	17	28	11	5	15
Slip numbers	√V 	√V 	√V 	√V 	√V 	×	×	√V 
Verso line	√S	√S	×	×	×	√D	√D	√
Verso	W	W	W	W	W	N	N	J
Size (cm)	45/0.6	45/ 0.6	45/0.6	45/0.6	45/0.6	32.8/ 0.6	32.8/ 0.6	45/0.6

TsinghuaVol.4 (3)	*Shifa 筮法	*Biegua 別卦	*Suanbiao 算表
Title	×	×	×

[13] A numbering error occurred in the *Xinian* manuscript's numbers: the scribe repeated "fifty-three" twice, and then corrected this mistake at "eighty-nine" by skipping "eighty-eight." see *Qinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* (2), 118–124.

Number of slips	63	7	21
Slip numbers	√R 	×	×
Verso line	√	×	√
Verso	J	N	W
Size (cm)	35/0.8	16/0.5	43.6/1.2

Tsinghua Vol.5 (6)	*Houfu* 厚父	*Feng Xu zhi ming* 封許之命	***Ming xun* 命訓**	**Tang chuyu Tangqiu* 湯處於湯丘	**Tang zai Chimen* 湯在啻門	*Yin Gaozong wenyu san shou* 殷高宗問於三壽
Title	S13VEL	S9VEL	×	×	×	S28VU
Number of slips	13	9[14]	15	19	21	28
Slip numbers	√V 	√V 	√V 	×	×	√V 
Verso line	×	×	×	×	×	√
Verso	J&W[15]	J	J	J	J	J
Size (cm)	44/0.6	45/0.65	49/0.65	44.4/0.6	44.4/0.6	45/0.6

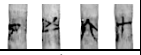
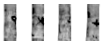
Tsinghua Vol.6 (6)	**Zheng Wu furen gui ruzi* 鄭武夫人規孺子	**Guanzhong* 管仲	**Zheng Wen gong wen taibo A* 鄭文公問太伯甲	**Zheng Wen gong wen taibo B* 鄭文公問太伯乙	**Ziyi* 子儀	**Zichan* 子產
Title	×	×	×	×	×	×
Number of slips	18	30	14	12	20	29
Slip numbers	×	×	×	×	×	×
Verso line	√	×	×	×	×	√
Verso	W	J	W	W	W	W
Size (cm)	45/0.6	44.5/0.6	45/0.6	45/0.6	41.6/0.6	45/0.6

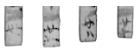
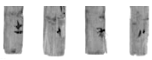
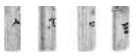
Tsinghua Vol.7 (4)	*Zifan Ziyu* 子犯子餘	**Jin Wen gong ruyu Jin* 晉文公入於晉	**Zhao Jianzi* 趙簡子	**Yue gong qishi* 越公其事
Title	S1VBU	×	×	×
Number of slips	15	8	11	75
Slip numbers	×	×	×	×

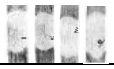
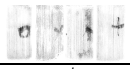
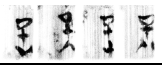
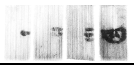
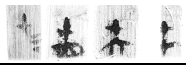
[14] It should be noted that two slips, slip 1 and 4, in *Feng Xu zhi ming* are missing, yet the slip numbers signify that the text originally contained 9 slips. See *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (wu)*, 117.

[15] The treatment of the slip's verso on *Houfu* is not as coherent as on the other manuscripts: on slips 1–10, the bamboo joints were only scraped, on slips 11–13 the entire surface was polished. See *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (wu)*, 3.

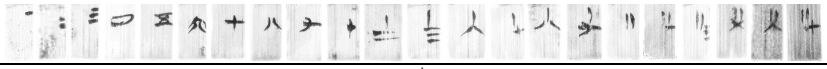
Verso line	√S	√S	×	√
Verso	J	J	W	W
Size (cm)	45/0.5	45/0.5	41.6/0.6	41.6/0.6

Tsinghua Vol.8 (8)	**She ming* 攝命	**Bangjia zhizheng* 邦家之政	**Bangjia chuwei* 邦家處位	**Zhi bang zhi dao* 治邦之道	**Xin shiwei Zhong* 心是謂中	**Tianxia Zhidao* 天下之道	**Baqiwu wei wusi* 八氣五味	**Yu Xia Yin Zhou* 虞夏殷周
Title	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Number of slips	32	13	11	27	7	7	7	3
Slip numbers	√V 	√V 	√V 	×	×	×	×	×
Verso line	√D	√R	√D	√	√	√S	√S	√S
Verso	W	W	J	J	J	W	W	W
Size (cm)	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	41.5/ 0.5	44.6/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6

Tsinghua Vol.9 (5)	**Zhi zheng zhi dao* 治政之道	**Chengren* 成人	**Naiming A* 迺命一	**Naiming B* 迺命二	**Daoci* 禱辭
Title	×	×	×	×	×
Number of slips	10	30	12	16	23
Slip numbers	√R 	×	√R 	√R 	√R 
Verso line	√	√	√	√	√
Verso	J	J	J	J	J
Size (cm)	44.5/0.6	45.2/0.7	44.5/0.6	44.5/0.6	44.5/0.6

Tsinghua Vol.10 (5)	**Sigao* 四告	**Sishi* 四時	**Sisui* 司歲	**Xingchen* 行稱	**Bingfang* 病方
Title	×	×	×	×	×
Number of slips	50	43	15	16	3
Slip numbers	√V 	√R[16] 	√R 	√R 	√R 
Verso line	×	√	×	×	×
Verso	J	J	J	J	J
Size (cm)	45.7/0.6	45/0.6	45/0.6	32.8/0.6	32.8/0.6

[16] According to the editor, the **Sishi* and **Sisui* manuscripts can be reconstructed as one scroll so their serial numbers are sequential. At the same time, there are a few numbers that were miswritten. *See Qinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian (shi),* 127.

Tsinghua Vol.11 (1)	*Wuji 五紀
Title	×
Number of slips	130
Slip numbers	√R 
Verso line	√
Verso	J
Size (cm)	45/0.6

When we visualize the physical properties and paratextual arrangements of the eleven volumes of fifty-six manuscripts by sorting them into these eleven tables, it still seems difficult to find any regularities in manuscript production. So, does such a lack of overarching standards for the materiality suggest that the Warring States manuscript makers had fewer concerns about the texts' material design? Can we conclude that pre-imperial manuscript-making was in a state of anarchy—that every producer relied on their own random criteria every time they produced a written text?

As mentioned earlier, the meaning of the paratextual elements was closely associated with the maker—thus, I propose to connect the studies of the scribal hands to the examination of the materiality and paratextuality. As the following sections will demonstrate, if we bring the categorization of handwriting into the discussion, it becomes immediately apparent that there are clear overlaps among the typology of the material properties and the classification of the handwriting. But before analyzing the tentative patterns, let us pause and examine the Tsinghua corpora's scribal hands.

3. Distinction among hands

As it plays a decisive role in reconstructing the scattered and fragmented discovered manuscripts, tremendous progress has been made in recent years in the study of discerning and cataloguing

scribal hands.[17] The two fundamental aspects of the presentation of handwritten graphs, the calligraphic style and orthographic structure, are also the most common rationale for grouping and differentiating the handwritings of manuscripts of different eras. In his 2005 essay, Matthias Richter divides graphic variants into "non-structural" and "structural": the former, such as two {行} graphs written as  and , or two {必} as  and , helps to "distinguish different hands"; the latter, such as {有/又} as  and , {其/亓} as  and , elucidates "the degree of arbitrariness or orthographic standard." He concluded that the two Mawangdui *Laozi* manuscripts were each written by a single hand.[18] With the growing number of archeological finds, there is now almost a consensus that orthographic flexibility was one of the most fundamental qualities of pre-imperial writing in general—that is, the same character could be written in different graphic structures, even within the same document, by the same hand, and on the same slip, and the graphic variation does not denote a different reading: for example, {爲} is written in four different graphic forms () in the Guodian 郭店 **Laozi* A 老子甲, and in six different forms () in the Shangbo 上博 *Rong cheng shi* 容成氏 manuscript. Under these circumstances, looking solely at structural arrangement of the recurrent characters of the Warring States texts is insufficient to discern the scribal hands.

[17] For studies of the handwriting in the Baoshan 包山 manuscripts, see Li Shoukui 李守奎, "Baoshan bushi wenshu shuji de fenlei yu shuxie de jiben qingkuang" 包山卜筮文書書跡的分類與書寫的基本狀況, *Zhongguo wenxi yanjiu* 中國文字研究 1 (2007): 63–67; see also Zhu Xiaoxue 朱曉雪, "Baoshan bushi jidaojian ziji fenxi fenlei" 包山卜筮祭禱簡字迹分類分析, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 12 (2014): 47–57. I will unpack the discussions of the pre-imperial literary manuscripts handwriting of the Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua corpora in the following sections.

[18] Richter, "Towards a Profile of Graphic Variation: On the Distribution of Graphic Variants within the Mawangdui Laozi Manuscripts," in *Methodological Issues in the Study of Early Chinese Manuscripts: Papers from the Second Hamburg Tomb Text Workshop*, ed. idem, *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005): 169–207.

Instead, the non-structural graphic features such as the specific manner of presenting strokes, ways of connecting strokes, angles of the strokes, or the stroke or component placement or proportion, also plays a decisive role in discerning scribal hands. Taking this graphological approach as well as adopting multiple methodologies often applied in forensic handwriting analysis, Li Songru 李松儒 and Matthias Richter have made great strides in pre-imperial handwriting studies.[19] The biggest difference between these two eminent scholars, though, is that Li sees the pre-imperial literary texts as having been written as a result of spontaneous, generally fixed, personal writing habits, which means that one kind of handwriting can basically stand for one individual. Richter however, thinks that a Warring States scribe might have purposefully imitated a certain calligraphic style or even type of script, and thus an advanced scribe might have mastered multiple styles and types of scripts; thus, multiple scribes might share the same handwriting after enough training—and as such, a given handwriting cannot necessarily be attributed to one individual scribe.[20] Despite their disagreement on whether one form of handwriting can equate to one biological person, both agree that different scribal hands are discernable, and both have made extraordinary advances in discriminating hands while making methodological reflections. Li Songru's comprehensive survey and categorization of the scribal hands of the three major collections of the pre-imperial literary corpora (that of Guodian, the

[19] For the analysis and cataloging of scribal hands in pre-imperial literary texts, see Li Songru 李松儒, "Guodian Chu mu zhujian ziji yanjiu" 郭店楚墓竹簡字迹研究, M.A. thesis, Jilin University, 2006; *Zhanguo jian bo ziji yanjiu: Yi Shangbo jian wei zhongxin* 戰國簡帛字迹研究—以上博簡爲中心 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015); Jia Lianxiang, *Zhanguo zhushu*, 166–182; Matthias Richter, "Tentative Criteria for Discerning Individual Hands in the Guodian Manuscripts," in Rethinking Confucianism: Selected Papers from the Third International Conference on Excavated Chinese Manuscripts, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass., April 2004; Li Mengtao 李孟濤 [Matthias L. Richter], "Shitan Guodian Chujian zhong butong shouji de bianbie" 試談郭店楚簡中不同手蹟的辨別, *Jianbo yanjiu er ling ling liu* 簡帛研究二〇〇六, ed. Bu Xianqun 卜憲群 and Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2008), 10–29.

[20] Richter, "Tentative Criteria for Discerning Individual Hands in the Guodian Manuscripts."

Shanghai Museum, and Tsinghua University) has largely been accepted by the field; at the same time, her compelling scrutiny has also greatly advanced the reconstruction and understanding of the scattered and fragmented slips. Delving not only into the general lexical, stylistic, and regional characteristics of the graphs, but also the penmanship, placement, proportion, structure, and posture of both strokes and components,[21] she has identified five different scribal hands in the sixteen texts in the Guodian collection, thirty-nine hands in the extant sixty-two texts in the Shanghai Museum corpus,[22] and as at least twenty-one hands in the Tsinghua collection.[23] In the

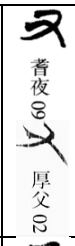
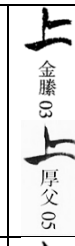
[21] Li utilizes a comprehensive methodological framework for analyzing handwriting. For instance, when she introduces "placement and proportional characteristics," she mentions five aspects: 1) connections between brush strokes, or the position of the connecting point between one brush stroke and another, 2) placement and distance of brush strokes, or the distance between neighboring brush strokes, 3) proportional length of brush strokes, or the relative length of different brush strokes, 4) configuration of character components, and 5) proportional size and width of character components. When she identifies "penmanship characteristics," she surveys 1) initial stroke characteristics, 2) final stroke characteristics, and 3) stroke characteristics to analyze aspects such as dynamic strength and direction of motion. See Li Songru, "Excavated Manuscripts and the Study of Warring States Handwriting," *Chinese Studies in History* 50.3 (2017): 199–212.

For another, although it has been strongly disagreed by many, it should be mentioned that Noel Barnard had proposed the theory of "constancy of character structure" of ancient scripts, which served as his criteria to determine forgery of bronzes. See "New Approaches and Research Methods in Chin-Shih-Hsüeh," *Tôyô kenkyûjo kiyô* 東洋文化研究所紀要 19 (1959): 1–31.

[22] See Li Songru, "Guodian Chu mu zhujian ziji yanjiu," 37–76; *Zhanguo jian bo ziji yanjiu*, 203–550.

[23] Important studies on the handwriting of the Tsinghua manuscripts include Li Songru, "Qinghua jian shufa fengge qianxi" 清華簡書法風格淺析, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 13 (2014): 27–33; "Qinghua wu ziji yanjiu" 清華五字迹研究, *Jianbo* 簡帛 13 (2016): 79–89; "*Qinghuadaxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* liu zhi **Guanzhong* ziji yanjiu" 《清華大學藏戰國竹簡》(陸) 之《管仲》字迹研究, *Shufa yanjiu* 書法研究 (2016: 4): 34–45; "Zailun Zhaigong yu Yin zhi deng pian de ziji" 再論《祭公》與《尹至》等篇的字迹, in Fudan daxue chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin 復旦大學出土文獻與古文字研究中心 ed, *Zhanguo wenzi yanjiu de huigu yu zhanwang* 戰國文字研究的回顧與展望 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2017), 252–60; "Qinghua qi *Zifan Ziyu* yu **Zhao Jianzi* deng pian ziji yanjiu" 清華七《子犯子餘》與《趙簡子》等篇字迹研究, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 11 (2019): 177–92; "Qinghua jian **Liangchen* **Zhuci* de xingzhi yu shuxie" 清華簡《良臣》《祝辭》的形制與書寫, *Hanzi hanyu yanjiu* 漢字漢語研究 6 (2020): 32–38; "Qinghua liu *Zheng Wu furen gui ruzi* deng si pian ziji yanjiu" 清華六《鄭武夫人規孺子》等四篇字迹研究, in *Di sanshiyi jie Zhongguo wenzixue guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 第三十一屆中國文字學國際學術研討會論文集 (Hualian: Zhongguo wenzi xuehui, 2020), 95–114; "Qinghuajian **Zhi Zheng zhi dao* **Zhi Bang zhi dao* zhong de "Yinmi wenzi" jiqi zuoyong," 清華簡《治政之道》《治邦之道》中的"隱秘文字"及其作用, *Wenshi* 文史 2 (2021): 5–26; "Tan Qinghua shi **Sishi* **Sisui* **Xingchen* de zhizuo yu shuxie" 談清華十《四時》《司歲》《行稱》的製作與書寫, in *Guwenzi yu chutu wenxian qingnian xuezhe xihu luntan* 古文字與出土文獻青年學者西湖論壇 (Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan, 2021), 107–21.

following table, I have enumerated a few recurrent, representative characters with a simpler structure to show their morphological differences, or, in Li's words, their distinct "ductus" (*yunbi* 運筆) characteristics:[24]

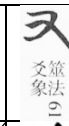
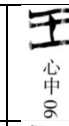
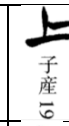
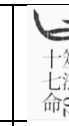
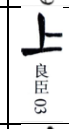
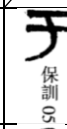
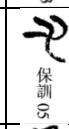
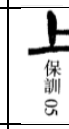
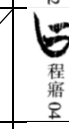
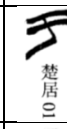
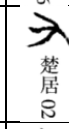
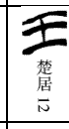
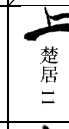
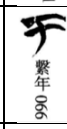
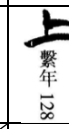
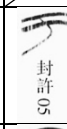
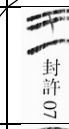
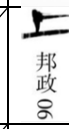
Hand A (11+3=14)[25] A. (11): **Yin zhi, *Yin gao, Chijiu, Qiye, Zhou Wu wang* [*Jinteng*], *Fu Yue zhi ming A, B, C, Zhougong zhi qinwu, Rui liangfu, Yin Gaozong* A' (3): *Zhaigong, Houfu, *Sheming*					
Hand B (12) **Huang men, *Zheng Wufuren, *Zheng Wengong A, B, *Ziyi, Zifan Ziyu, *Jin Wengong ruyu Jin, *Zhao Jianzi, Yue gong qishi, *Tianxia Zhidao, *Baqiwuwei, *Yu Xia Yin Zhou*					
Hand C (10) **Suanbiao, *Tang chuyu Tangqiu, *Tang zai Chimen, *Guanzhong, *Naiming A, B, *Daoci, *Sishi, *Sisui, *Bingfang*					

Jia Lianxiang also wrote a series of influential articles on the Tsinghua manuscripts' handwriting; see "Zhanguo zhushu zhengli de yidian fansi—cong **Tianxia zhidao* **Baqi wuwei wusi wuxing zhishu* **Yu Xia Yin Zhou zhizhi* sanpian de bianlian tanqi" 戰國竹書整理的一點反思—從《天下之道》《八氣五味五祀五行之屬》《虞夏殷周之治》三篇的編連談起, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 23 (2018): 142–152; "Cong Qinghuajian **Zhi bang zhi dao* **Zhi zheng zhidao* kan Zhanguo zhushu de 'tong pian yizhi' xianxiang" 從清華簡《治邦之道》《治政之道》看戰國竹書的"同篇異制"現象, *Qinghua daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 清華大學學報(哲學社會科學版) 1 (2020): 43–47; "Qinghuajian **Sigao* de xingahi jiqi chengshu wenti tanyan" 清華簡《四告》的形制及其成書問題探研, in *Guwenzi yu chutu wenxian qingnian xuezhe xihu luntan,* 90–106; "Qinghua jian '*Yin zhi* shushou' ziji de kuoda jiqi xiangguan wenti taolun" 清华簡《尹至》書手字迹的扩大及相關問題探討, *Chutu wenxian zonghe yanjiu jikan* 出土文獻綜合研究集刊 13 (2021): 79–100.

Other important works on this topic include Luo Yunhuan 羅運環, "Qinghuajian (yi-san) ziti fenlei yanjiu" 清華簡（壹–叁）字體分類研究, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 13 (2014): 62–67; Shi Zhenying 史楨英, "Yeshuo Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (qi) xieshou wenti" 也說清華大學藏戰國竹簡（七）寫手問題, Wuhan daxue jianbo wang 武漢大學簡帛網, http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=3167 (accessed June 15, 2018); Li Meichen 李美辰, "Qinghuajian shushou chaoxie yongzi xiguan tanyan" 清華簡書手抄寫用字習慣探研, *Hanyushi xuebao* 漢語史學報 23 (2020): 150–57.

[24] For the characters that did not appear in the manuscripts, I have left the corresponding modules blank.

[25] Jia Lianxiang had further distinguished that texts in Hand A were produced in two batches (and six subgroups): *Zhaigong, Houfu,* and **Sheming* were written later than the other eleven manuscripts, see Jia, "Qinghua jian '*Yin zhi* shushou' ziji de kuoda," 80–93.

Hand D (4) **Shifa, *Zichan, *Xin shiwei Zhong, *Wuji*					
Hand E (2) **Liangchen, *Zhuci*					
Hand G **Baoxun*					
Hand H **Chengwu*					
Hand I **Chuju*					
Hand J **Xinian*					
Hand K **Biegua*					
Hand L *Feng Xu zhi ming, *Sigao (Handwriting D)*					
Hand M **Mingxun*					
Hand N **Bangjia zhizheng*					
Hand O **Bangjia chuwei*					
Hand P **Zhi bang zhi dao*					
Hand Q **Zhi zheng zhi dao*					
Hand R **Chengren*					

The graphological differences between "scribes" are discernable when we enumerate a few commonly used characters:[26] each of the hands has its peculiarity in its treatment of stroke, component, general proportion, and ways of connection. Together with other orthographic evidence, as shown in Li's and Jia's studies, the categorization of the scribal hand, even if they were from twenty-one different people, is largely convincing.

On the other hand, in contrast to the Guodian and the Shanghai Museum manuscripts, the Tsinghua collection generally presents a high degree of orthographic consistency within each hand. Except for a few cases such as **Xinian* and *Yuegong qi shi*, the scribal hands enacted fairly consistent orthographic standards; normally one graph did not drastically change in its structure as was the case in most of the other contemporaneous materials; e.g., 34 cases of {爲} were all written with the same graphic structure: .[27] This phenomenon thus decreases the possibility that in the Tsinghua collection, one scribe could have written in more than two different hands, since if a scribe had changed hands, it would not only consistently alter the calligraphic style, but it would also have meant switching to an entirely different set of orthographic standards for over hundreds even thousands of graphs, which is not impossible, but highly implausible. Hence, in terms of the same scribe slightly changing their handwriting in different temporal or spatial circumstances, Li Songru and Jia Lianxiang have shown multiple cases of texts in the same hand, such as A and A', as examples of the same scribe using slightly different handwriting at different times and in different circumstances—that is, with largely the same compositional proportion

[26] I have chosen these characters due to 1) the fact that they are common words with relatively few paleographic disputats; 2) their simpler structure, which reveals more of the strokes' characteristics and penmanship.

[27] *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (shi yi)*, 152.

and structure yet slightly different stroke management.[28] To be sure, it is too early to exclude the possibility of complexity behind each of the scribal hands; there might have more than one person behind each of the hands. The situation of each of the corpora might have been different—but at least for the Tsinghua collection's orthographic condition, the possibility that one man might have mastered multiple hands is lower than for the other corpora. Besides the graphic features, what were the relations between the scribes of the texts and the designers of the materiality and paratextuality? To answer these questions, I have analyzed the classifications of scribal hands together with the material/paratextual features.

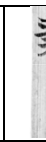
4. Overlaps in scribal and codicological dispositions

Under the scheme of the twenty-one different hands, interestingly, clearer patterns surface: material arrangements such as titles, slip numbers, the size of the slips, and even punctuation almost dovetail in the classification of different hands. After summarizing the material features under the classification of the hands as in the following tables, it is evident that within the Tsinghua corpus the codicological and paratextual properties largely coincide with the distinction of scribal hands.[29]

Hand A. (14)	*Chijiu*	**Yin zhi*	**Yin gao*	*Qiye*	*Jinteng*	*Fuyue A*	*Fuyue B*	*Fuyue C*	*Zhoug ong*	*Rui lingfu*	*Yingao zong*	*Zhai gong'*	*Hou fu'*	*She ming'*
Title	√V			√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	
Slip numbers	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V	√V
Size (cm)	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/0 .6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	44/ 0.6	45/ 0.6
Verso line	√	√	√	√	√	√S	√S	×	×	×	√	×	√	√
Verso	J	J	J	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	J	W	J	W

[28] Li Songru "Zailun *Zhaigong* yu *Yin zhi*"; Jia Lianxiang, "Qinghua jian '*Yin zhi* shushou.'"

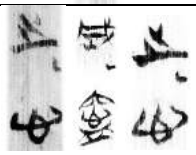
[29] In the following tables, I do not include texts that do not share scribal hand with any other text (or those in which a scribal hand only appears in one text).

Chapter mark														
Inserted mark														

Hand B. (12)	*Hua ng men	*Zhe ngwu	*Zhe ng A	*Zhe ng B	*Ziyi	*Zhaojia nzi	*Zifan	*Jin Wengong	*Yue gong	*Tianxia zhi dao	*Baqi wuwei	*Yu Xia Yin Zhou
Title	×	×	×	×	×	×	√V	×	×	×	×	×
Slip numbers	√V	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Size	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6	45/ 0.5	45/ 0.5	41.6/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6	41.6/ 0.6
Verso line	√	×	×	×	×	×	√	√	√	√	√	×
Verso	J	W	W	W	W	W	J	J	W	W	W	W
Chapter mark												
Inserted mark												

Hand C. (10)	*Tang chuyu	*Tang zai	*Guan zhong	*Nai ming A	*Nai ming B	*Daoci	*Suan biao	*Si shi	*Si sui	*Bingfa ng
Title	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Slip numbers	×	×	×	√R	√R	√R	×	√R	√R	√R
Size	44.5/ 0.6	44.5/ 0.6	44.5/ 0.6	44.5/ 0.6	44.5/ 0.6	44.5/ 0.6	43.6/ 1.2	45/ 0.6	45/ 0.6	32.8/0 .6
Verso line	×	×	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
Verso	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	W
Chapter mark										
Inserted mark										

Hand D. (4)	*Shifa	*Zichan	*Xin shiwei zhong	*Wuji
Title	×	×	×	×

Slip numbers	√R	×	×	√R
Size	35/0.8	45/0.6	45/0.6	45/0.6
Verso line	√	√	√	√
Verso	J	J	J	J
Chapter mark				
Inserted mark				

Hand E. (2)	**Liangchen*	**Zhuci*
Title	×	×
Slip numbers	×	×
Size	32.8/0.5	32.8/0.5
Verso line	√	√
Verso	N	N
Chapter mark		
Inserted mark		

Curiously, the material and paratextual properties remain largely the same within each scribal hand. For example, of the fourteen manuscripts written in hand A, are almost all titled and numbered on the verso, and a long and sharp hook was used to mark the text's termination.[30] In contrast, among the twelve texts written in Hand B, only one text, *Zifan Ziyu*, has a title, and only one text, ***Huang men*, is numbered, while all the terminators were written as a short, flat dot. None of the ten manuscripts in hand C has a title or slip numbers on the verso,

[30] Based on multiple codicological properties, especially the sequential verso lines and the placement of bamboo nodes, I have reconstructed *Chijiu*, ***Yin zhi*, and ***Yin gao* as one multiple-text manuscript. Thus, the title "*Chijiu zhiji Tang zhi wu*" is for the entire manuscript roll. See note 39.

and the numerical devices of the six numbered texts are all found on the recto. The three manuscripts in hand D have no title or slip numbers on the verso, and the divination text, **Shifa*, has slip numbers on the recto. In short, by tabularizing these physical properties under the categorization of scribal hands, we can conclude that within the manuscripts that share the same hand, most of the codicological and paratextual dispositions such as title, serial numbers, size, and punctuation remain generally consistent.[31] In other words, as there were no universal rules governing the material designs of the entire corpus, the scribes might have relied on their own standards or preferences to guide them. Beyond this taxonomic mapping, the literary functions of each of the paratextual elements can be analyzed as follows.

4.1 Titles

The titles in the Tsinghua collection particularly correlate with certain scribal hands. Among the fifty-six published Tsinghua manuscripts, thirteen manuscripts are titled.[32] Eleven of which are

[31] This phenomenon, at least in the case of the Tsinghua collection, decreases the possibility that one scribe would have had multiple scribal hands.

[32] Although the editor considers the last four characters, "Yue gong qi shi" 越公其事 (The affairs of the lord of Yue) as the original title of the text, these four characters were not arranged in the usual location of titles, which were normally written at a considerable distance from the main text, regardless of whether it was verso or recto, beginning or end. These four characters were placed right after the main text—for this reason, whether this is a title or just the last four characters of the main text is still under debate. See Wang Hui 王輝, "Shuo *Yuegong qi shi fei pianti jiqi shidu" 說"越公其事"非篇題及其釋讀, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 11 (2017): 239–41; Shi Xiaoli 石小力, "Qinghua jian **Yuegong qishi* yu *Guoyu* hezheng," 清華簡《越公其事》與《國語》合證, *Wenxian* 文獻 2018.3, 60–65. For discussion on a similar situation of other discovered texts, see Lin Ching-Yuan, *Jiandu boshu biaoti geshi yanjiu*, 73–87.

Jia Lianxiang has proposed that the *Houfu*, from Hand A, shares multiple slips that were the same size and in the same position as the bamboo nodes in the *Feng Xu zhi ming*; since such material affinity was rare and normally signified that they shared slips from the same stalk of bamboo, the two texts were likely written in a comparatively close time or space. See Jia Lianxiang, "Qinghua jian '**Yin zhi* shushou,'" 98. I have also noticed that only *Houfu* and *Feng Xu zhi ming* are marked with a small dot after the title, and thus such material similarities in writing titles can be similarly observed. So, even if only the *Houfu* was from Hand A and *Feng Xu zhi ming* was not, their physical interconnectedness and similar genre would suggest that *Feng Xu zhi ming* might have been written by someone closely associated with the scribe of Hand A.

written in hand A, which wrote fourteen texts in total; the three non-titled texts in Hand A, **Yin zhi*, **Yin gao*, and **Sheming*, can all be reconstructed as having been bound together with other titled texts. The two exceptionally short texts, **Yin zhi* and **Yin gao*, can be reconstructed as belonging to a multi-text manuscript together with *Chijiu* and thus sharing *Chijiu*'s title from the same codicological unit.[33] Similarly, as Jia Lianxiang has proposed, there is also evidence that **Sheming* and *Houfu* were originally bound together, so the non-titled * *Sheming* likewise shares the title of the neighboring text.[34] Thus, all of the texts written by Hand A either have a title, or share the title with the adjacent texts on the same scroll.

For another, it should be noted that a substantial portion of texts written in Hand A are *Shi-* or *Shu-*related texts; the special status of these texts might explain why they have a title.

[33] As **Yin zhi* and **Yin gao* are much shorter in length than the other texts in length, with only five or four slips in total, they were less likely to have been a stand-alone codicological unit as a scroll and more likely to have been bound with other texts. In 2013, I proposed that these two texts could be reconstructed with the titled, content-related text *Chijiu* as part of the same scroll because 1) the three texts were written on the same sized slips and their bamboo nodes are in the same position, which indicates that the slips were manufactured from the same stalk of bamboo. (Since each bamboo stalk could only produce 25 to 30 slips in total, slips with the bamboo nodes in the same position would be a strong indication that they are related texts written at a similar time); 2) they shared the same handwriting, the same amount of space between words, and thus the same layout, and there is a continuous diagonal knife-carved line on the verso. (The verso line is an important piece of evidence that the texts were manufactured together, with the diagonal line itself often serves as a hint to the original sequence. See Sun Peiyang 孫沛陽, "Jiance bei huaxian chutan" 簡册背劃綫初探, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 4 (2011): 449–62); and 3) the three texts are all accounts about the minister Yi Yin 伊尹 and the Shang ruler Tang 商湯, and they unfold in chronological order. Thus, it can therefore be inferred that the three texts were arranged one after another, and that **Yin zhi* follows *Chijiu* and **Yigao* comes next.

Despite the relatedness of multiple textual and material aspects, it should also be noted that the three texts are vastly different in style, language, and genre. The coexistence of both uniformity and heterogeneity in the same written document bespeak precisely the complexity of pre-imperial knowledge making and using. See Xiao Yunxiao 肖芸曉, "Shilun Qinghua zhushu Yiyin san pian de guanlian" 試論清華竹書伊尹三篇的關聯, *Jianbo* 簡帛 8 (2013): 471–76; "Restoring Bamboo Scrolls: Observations on the Materiality of Warring States Bamboo Manuscripts," *Chinese Studies in History* 50.3 (2017): 235–54. See also Sarah Allan, "When Red Pigeons Gathered on Tang's House": A Warring States Period Tale of Shamanic Possession and Building Construction Set at the Turn of the Xia and Shang Dynasties," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 35.3 (2015): 419–438; Nicholas Vogt, "Consumption, Knowledge, and the Limits of the Body in the Xiaochen Texts," in *Qinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin* 清華大學出土文獻研究與保护中心 ed., *Qinghua jian yanjiu (di san ji)* 清华簡研究 (第三輯), (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2019), 237–60.

[34] The two texts have slips whose bamboo nodes are in the same position, as well as a continuous verso line, and thus were doubtless bound together; see Jia Lianxiang, "Qinghua jian **Yin zhi* shushou ziji de kuoda ji

In contrast, among the forty-two texts not written in Hand A, titles rarely appear: only two texts, *Feng Xu zhi ming* and *Zifan Ziyu* were composed with original titles, in Hand B and Hand L, respectively. In other words, in the Tsinghua collection, since the practice of titling is closely related to a few scribal hands, we can conclude that a title was not a universal requirement nor a shared convention, but rather an individual preference, choice, or special requirement for certain scribes, certain texts, or certain types of texts.[35] At the same time, such individual treatment of titles can be surprisingly consistent within each hand.

However, noting the connection between scribal hands and titles does not lead to the conclusion that the titles were necessarily created by the scribes;[36] titles may have been properties of the texts, not of the manuscripts. Although it is possible that the same people who wrote the titles came up with them by themselves, it is equally possible that these titles derived from their source documents. In other words, the degree to which the scribe's individual intention was involved in the making of the titles remains hard to know. As scholars have emphasized, in the process of writing the texts, both faithfully transcribing and deliberately or inadvertently

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xiangguan wenti tantao" 清华簡"《尹至》書手"字迹的擴大及相關問題探討, *Chutu wenxian zonghe yanjiu jikan* 出土文獻綜合研究集刊 13 (2021): 79–100.

[35] It should be noted that a substantial portion of texts written in Hand A are Shi- or Shu- related texts, and the special statutes for these texts could be the reason for them to have a title.

[36] Jia Lianxiang has proposed that except for *Zhaigong*, *Houfu*, and *Feng Xu zhi ming*, the handwriting of the titles of the rest of the nine texts are the same as the handwriting of the content. Hence, the title of *Feng Xu zhi ming* has the same handwriting as the correction section of **Zhi bang zhi dao* slip 15 (i.e., the refined reconstruction of **Zhi zheng zhi dao* slip 58). In other words, this hand not only scraped and corrected the content of **Zhi bang zhi dao*, but also added the title of *Feng Xu zhi ming*, suggesting that the producer had a special status in comparison with other scribes. See Jia Lianxiang, *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu*, 208; "*Feng Xu zhi ming* zhuibu ji xiangguan wenti tanyan"《封許之命》綴補及相關問題探研, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 3 (2020): 13–20.

deviating from the source texts can be observed in the extant manuscripts;[37] this suggests that pre-imperial scribes had considerable autonomy.[38] In light of this possible autonomy, the scribes may have played a significant role in the making of the Tsinghua manuscript titles. Even in the most extreme scenario in which all the titles had already existed on their master copies, faithfully transmitting them was still a decision that the scribes had to make—since as we observed elsewhere, they very often chose not to do so.

Pragmatically, a title is not merely a part of the text, but builds a channel to communicate with the text. Being placed separately from the main text, the title's special location physically creates immediacy and efficacy in directing a potential reader to find the appended bits of the essential information about the texts, sometimes even without opening the bamboo scroll. Here, it should be noted that regarding the material condition of bamboo manuscripts, texts can be enormous in length (as long as over one hundred slips, e.g., the Tsinghua **Xinian* contains 138 slips), yet the size of each graph is tiny (as small as 0.6 cm in width), and their layout is normally *scriptio continua* with sporadically and enormously imbalanced punctuation, such that the texts exhibit in a presentation that is linear and minuscule. Vertically there might be a generous use of space but horizontally, it is inevitably crowded.[39] If we imagine holding such a bamboo scroll in hand, the conceivable reading practice, by nature, cannot be straightforward or as fast as

[37] For example, see Zhou Fengwu, "Guodian zhujian de xingshi tezheng yu fenlei yiyi"; Feng Shengjun; "Cong chutu wenxian kan chaoshou zai xianqin wenxian chuanbu guocheng zhong suo chansheng de yingxiang" 從出土文獻看抄手在先秦文獻傳佈過程中所產生的影響, *Jianbo* 簡帛 3 (2009): 419–29.

[38] From a comparative perspective, for examples, see Gerald Bruns, "The Originality of Texts in a Manuscript Culture," *Comparative Literature* 32:2 (1980): 113–29; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); David D. Hall, *Ways of Writing: Practice and Politics of Text-making in Seventeen-Century New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[39] For a group of demonstrative examples of how diverse the vertical arrangement of characters on bamboo slips can be, see Richter, "Manuscript Formats and Textual Structure in Early China," 201–3.

glancing at a slogan on an advertisement poster, no matter how advanced the reader is; rather, engaging with a bamboo text had to be time-consuming and demanded prerequisite knowledge and skill. Under this material precondition, to give a separate title was to grant the text a threshold, a gate with a tag for entering the text: by summarizing the essential information and placing it separately, titles made the undefined, undecided flow of words immediately identifiable.[40]

In Gérard Genette's definition, the paratextual elements (titles, pseudonyms, forewords, notes, epilogues, etc.) are liminal devices mediating between the book, the reading public, the editor, and the author.[41] Based on Charles Grivel's and Leo H. Hoek's works, Genette concluded on theoretical grounds that titles have three functions: 1) to designate, 2) to indicate the subject matter, and 3) to tempt the public.[42] As it is still difficult to guess the identity of these bamboo manuscripts' target readers (presumably within comparatively limited communities), the first two points also apply to the Tsinghua manuscripts' titles, which predominantly present as: 1) indicating the protagonists (e.g., Duke of Zhou, King Wu of Zhou, Master Yue); 2) specifying the text's genre (e.g., mandate [*ming* 命]) or the protagonists' action (e.g., to replace [*dai* 代], to declaim [*song* 颂], to dance [*wu* 舞]); and 3) having titles that vary in length although many of

[40] This point further suggests a close relationship between readers and writers; certain level of familiarity of the text is prerequisite—otherwise, it would be extremely difficult to comprehend the texts. Another example of the intimate relations between readers and writers, for the texts' stability in sound/language and fluidity in writing, see Kern, "Speaking of Poetry: Pattern and Argument in the 'Kongzi shilun'," in *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China*, ed. Dirk Meyer and Joachim Gentz (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 175–200.

[41] Gérard Genette, "Introduction to the Paratext," *New Literary History* 22:2 (1991): 261–72; *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1–15.

[42] Grivel, *Production de I'interet Romanesque*, 169–70; Hoek, *La Marque du titre,* 17; Gérard Genette hence pointed out that the three functions are not necessarily all fulfilled at the same time, with only the first being obligatory; Genette, *Paratexts*, 55–94.

them follow the format of "[protagonist]+之+[action or genre]," in which 之 served as an auxiliary, a marker used between the subject and the predicate to form a nominal phrase.

Original Titles in the Tsinghua collection[43]

1.	耆夜	*Toasting (the state of) Qi*
2.	周武王有疾周公所自以代王之志	*King Wu of Zhou being ill, the Duke of Zhou's aspiration to replace the King's account*
3.	祭公之顧命	*The Duke of Zhai's retrospective command*
4.	傅說之命 (上)	*Fu Yue's command A*
5.	傅說之命 (中)	*Fu Yue's command B*
6.	傅說之命 (下)	*Fu Yue's command C*
7.	封許之命	*The command establishing (the state of) Xu*
8.	周公之琴舞	*The Duke of Zhou's zither dance*
9.	周公之頌志	*The Duke of Zhou's recitation of aspiration (Poetry)*
10.	赤鳩之集湯之屋	*Red Pigeon's gathering at Tang's House*
11.	殷高宗問於三壽	*Yin Gao Zong asked the Three Elders*
12.	厚父	*Houfu*
13.	子犯子餘	*Zifan, Ziyu*

Bearing these characteristics, most titles in the Tsinghua collection function well in terms of briefly pointing out the gist of the text—the people and the theme, designating the texts without too much risk of confusion with each other. Apropos of the principles of titles among traditional classical texts, Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 concluded that titles were "predominantly attached by people of later generations" (古書之命名，多後人所追題); the titles were made either by "taking a person's name as a title" (以人名書) or "taking the gist of the text and then marking it as a title"

[43] In this table, I mark people's names as ____, the action as____, and the genre as____, with 之 in a light-gray highlight.

(取篇中旨意，標爲題目).[44] His observations echo with the titles from the discovered Tsinghua collection, which appear to either to use the central figures or to summarize the essential elements of the texts. In comparison, the Guodian corpus barely has explicit, separate titles,[45] and the titles in the Shanghai Museum collection are normally much shorter and less formulaic.[46] In this regard, the Tsinghua texts' characteristic title format of "[protagonist] +之 +[action/genre]" or simply "[protagonist]" suggests that many of the titles were composed with a similar standard or convention, even if not necessarily by the same person. In the history of textual transmission, it could be that one person created all these titles at one time, or that multiple people composed them over time by following the previous patterns or altering them into a new formula. In other words, regardless of whether there was any explicit overarching rule governing the making of the titles in the Tsinghua corpus, or of the pre-imperial textual culture in general, still, there were titles created to a certain standard. More importantly, such a largely

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[44] Yu Jiaxi, *Gushu tongli*, 27–28. For the principles of composing titles among the entire discovered corpus, see Lin Ching-Yuan's important survey: *Jiandu boshu biaoti geshi yanjiu*, 52–58; see also Li Rui 李鋭, "Xinchu jianbo yu gushu shuming yanjiu—*Gushu tongli, gushu shuming zhi yanjiu* bu" 新出簡帛與古書書名研究——《古書通例・古書書名之研究》補, *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 2010.5: 140–147.

Furthermore, Ye Dehui 葉德輝 and Li Ling 李零 both highlighted the difference between the "major title or section title" (*dati* 大題) and "minor title or subsection/chapter title"(*xiaoti* 小題), which is unseen in the Tsinghua corpus. See Ye Dehui, *Shulin qinghua* 書林清話 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957), 12–13; Li Ling, *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu* 簡帛古書與學術源流 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2008), 122.

[45] Ikeda Tomohisa 池田知久 speculated that the first two characters of the **Wu xing* 五行 manuscript comprised the original title of the manuscript, but most scholars (e.g., Lin Su-Ching) have disagreed. See Ikeda, trans., Cao Feng 曹峰, "Guodian chujian **Wu xing* yanjiu" 郭店楚簡五行研究, *Chitian Zhijiu jianbo yanjiu lunwenji* 池田知久簡帛研究論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 49–53; Lin Su-Ching, *Jiandu boshu biaoti geshi yanjiu*, 80–84. For a comprehensive survey and reflection on similar situation among discovered manuscripts, see Lin Ching-Yuan, *Jiandu boshu biaoti geshi yanjiu*, 39–52, 70–90.

[46] For instance, titles from the Shanghai Museum corpus are shorter and less "patterned," as exemplified by *Zigao* 子羔, *Rong Cheng shi* 容成氏, *Zhong gong* 中弓, *Jinggong Nue* 競公虐, *Ming* 命, *Wu Ming* 吳命, *Heng xian* 恆先, *Shenzi yue Gongjian* 愼子曰恭儉, and *Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流形 and others.

consistent and individually characteristic manner of handling titles bespeaks a potentially strong working autonomy of the scribes: just as they might have changed or remained loyal to their source texts,[47] the Tsinghua scribes might have manipulated the texts' names as well.

Finally, no matter who it was that came up with these titles, the practices of creating and controlling the names of the classical texts demonstrates a growing awareness of making different texts physically identifiable, referable, and thus discussable. Serving as purposeful literary pragmatics, the functions of titles in the Warring States were manifold—as a liminal device, a title opens the gate of the text both inwardly and outwardly: that is, a title not only helps readers to enter the text, but it also defines and animates the text in another context by giving it an identifiable name to refer to. In other words, other than designation, titles also play an indispensable role in the practice and discourse of textual utilization and the culture of quoting that lay at the very core of the early Chinese textual tradition. As a detailed discussion of this line of thought goes beyond the scope of the current study, let us turn to the second feature closely tied to certain scribal hands.

4.2 Slip Numbers

Among the fifty-six presently available manuscripts of the Tsinghua University collection, thirty of them are numbered, the phenomenon of numbering the slips being predominantly associated with just a few scribal hands. Specifically, the fourteen manuscripts written in Hand A are all

[47] For example, see Zhou Fengwu, "Guodian zhujian de xingshi"; Feng Shengjun, "Cong chutu wenxian"; Qiu Xigui, "Tantan Shangbo jian he Guodian jian zhong de cuo bie zi" 談談上博簡和郭店簡中的錯別字, in *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji: Jiandu boshu juan* 裘錫圭學術文集・簡牘帛書卷 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2012), 372–77; Li Mengtao 李孟濤 [Matthias L. Richter], "Shi tan shuxiezhe de shizi nengli ji qi dui liuchuan wenben de yingxiang" 試探書寫者的識字能力及其對流傳文本的影響, *Jianbo* 簡帛 4 (2009): 395–402. See also Xiong Jiahui 熊佳暉, "Guodian jian *Wu xing* pian de chengshu fangshi yu shushou wenhua shuiping tanxi" 郭店簡《五行》篇的成書方式與書手文化水平探析, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 1 (2020): 91–101.

marked with slip numbers, and are all positioned on the bamboo nodes on the verso; whereas for the twelve manuscripts written in Hand B, only one text, **Huang men*, has serial numbers, and it is the only case in which the handwriting of the numbers is different from the main text, suggesting that Hand B did not write any numbers.[48] Of the ten texts written in Hand C, most have slip numbers, but most are found at the bottom of the recto of each of the slip and none is marked on the verso. Other hands who were in charge of more than one text also basically followed this rule. Although this pattern is not absolute, whether to arrange the serial numbers, as well as where to place these numbers, was closely associated with certain scribes who were quite consistent in sticking to their rules of numbering slips. As such, the numbering system should not be viewed as a later hand's action to tally or estimate the manuscripts, but as the producers' attempt to control and secure the text's order and integrity. Again, it may be too early to claim that the numbering practice was completely based on the scribes' personal decision—other possible scenarios could be, for example, that the source texts already had slip numbers on them and the scribes just followed them, or less likely, a supervisor behind the making the corpus selected a few specific scribes to adopt the numbering system for certain texts. Yet, we can at least theorize that the numerical devices of the Tsinghua manuscripts were introduced during the procedure of manuscript production rather than during a later utilization.

At this moment, due to the scarcity of related materials and the complete absence of an archeological background, it is difficult to know much about the historical background of the Tsinghua corpus's numbering system—such as when the numbers were attached to the related texts for the first time, or who exactly made the decisions about arranging them. But it is still

[48] As Jia Lianxiang proposed, **Huang men* is the only text that has serial numbers written in a different hand from the main text. See Jia Lianxiang, *Zhanguo zhushu*, 189–96. After comparing the graphs, I believe the numbers on **Huang men* were added by Hand A. Thus, Hand A not only arranged all the texts made by its own hand, but also added numbers to the Shu-related text **Huang men*.

possible and meaningful to ask about the kind of psychology and functions that lay behind these "numerical paratexts." To my mind, the wide adoption of the numerical devices signifies a concern about losing the text's order and completeness in the prospective textual posterity, which echoes with the themes of textual loss, material fragility, temporality, and the limited durability of writing that appeared among the transmitted corpora and were reflected by other unearthed finds. Losing or misplacing bamboo slips must have frustrated and confused the ancient readers as much as they do us: the modern scholars: among the early Chinese writings, there are not many records regarding the materiality of the written texts, but lamentations over the bamboo manuscripts' material frailty were common. Famous examples include the anecdote of Confucius, who "read the *Book of Changes* so often that the horizontal binding threads of the manuscript had fallen apart three (or multiple) times ([孔子]讀易，韋編三絕);[49] or the situation recorded in the *Hanshu* 漢書 that took place during Emperor Wu's reign (141–87 BCE): "The writings were incomplete and slips were missing" (書缺簡脫).[50] Or the one that occurred during Emperor Cheng's reign (33–7 BCE): "Some classics had missing slips, and some commentaries were bound together incorrectly " (經或脫簡，傳或間編).[51] In other words, anxiety about and the sad fact of missing slips and sequential disorder kept lingering with many readers and writers of the early texts.[52] Under these circumstances, the numerical system on the bamboo slips should

[49] *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 47.1937.

[50] *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 30.1701.

[51] *Hanshu*, 36.1970.

[52] See Chen Jian 陳劍, "Shangbo jian *Min zhi fumu* 'Er de ji sai yu si hai yi' ju jieshi" 上博簡《民之父母》「而德既塞於四海矣」句解釋, in *Shangbo guan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu yanjiu xubian* 上博館藏戰國楚竹書研究續編 Shanghai daxue gudai wenming yanjiu zhongxin 上海大學古代文明研究中心 and Qinghua daxue sixiang wenhua yanjiusuo 清華大學思想文化研究所, eds., (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), 253. See also Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*, 45–49; Richter, *The Embodied Text*, 97–98. For

be viewed not as a mere appendage, but as a pragmatic, purposeful technique, as a form of unspoken resistance against the ever-declining fate of the classical texts.

It should be noted that arranging a number on each slip required substantial work—taking the long numbered texts like **Xinian* (138 slips) or **Wuji* (130 slips) as examples, the entire added numbering system demanded writing almost three hundred extra characters (multiple ligatures included) in total;[53] by comparison, the entire text of the **Xinian* or **Wuji* is roughly less than four thousand characters which means that to apply the numerical system was to write an additional eight percent of the text, not to mention that the process of calculating and situating a number on the recto's margin or on the bamboo nodes on the verso all required time and effort. Yet despite the extra exertion, the Tsinghua scribes still scrupulously adopted the miniature number on each slip; such devoted efforts stand precisely for the serious concern over textual loss, and as an effective method to prevent it. Numbering the slips happened during the manufacturing process in order to verify and mark the order and accuracy of the text, thus extending textual durability by securing its material integrity for future generations. More broadly, numeric devices were not new among the unearthed bamboo and wood manuscripts—in previous finds, multiple literary, technical, and legal texts were also numbered.[54] The

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another, accounting section number (the Guodian **Ziyi* manuscript's ending phrase, "twenty and three" 二十又三, as a summary of the number of sections, functions similarly to the serial number.

For an exemplary study of the missing or misplaced slips that can be found in the transmitted corpus see Ma Nan 馬楠, "Chuanshi Jing bu wenxian suojian tuojian cuojian xianxiang zai taolun"傳世經部文獻所見脫簡錯簡現象再討論, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 7 (2015): 305–18. An important survey and methodological reflection on manuscript reconstruction from pre-imperial and early imperial China to today, see Thies Staack, "Reconstruction of Early Chinese Bamboo and Wood Manuscripts: A Review (1900–2010)," *Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures Occasional Papers* 5 (2016), 1–52.

[53] From 一(one) to 百三十七 (one hundred and thirty seven), 279 characters. The last slip of the **Xinian*, slip 138, does not have a number. See *Qinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* (2)*,* 18, 132.

[54] For example, the Cili 慈利 and Guodian Chu manuscripts both have serial numbers. See Zhang Chunlong 張春龍, "Cili chujan gaishu" 慈利楚簡概述, in Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allen) and Xing Wen 邢文

continued and increased adoption of numerical devices hence indicates an intensifying awareness of the need for and corresponding strategies to secure textual order and integrity, which were intensively shared by diverse readers and writers from different knowledge communities.

Technically, giving a number to every slip is to divide the lineal and lengthy flow of texts into smaller, individual textual units with an explicit numerical signifier. By adopting this granular system, the numerical scheme created an order parallel to the individual codicological unit: in addition to the implicit semantic connections between each slip, the numerical system could explicitly and physically stabilize, as well as continuously protect the textual order and integrity in its material form. Theoretically, guarded by these numerical devices, the text itself bestowed extra authority and reliability for its potentially longer durability and material posterity. With the goals of perpetuating the accuracy and integrity of the text in future generations, the bamboo manuscripts were thus produced not merely for one-time use, but for conceivable recurrent, even repetitive consultations. In this regard, they became not only "texts with a history" in Kern's words,[55] but also "texts with an intended future," no matter whether they were for living humans or spirits.[56]

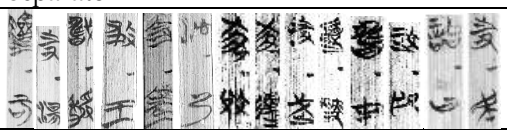
4.3 Punctuation Marks

eds., *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu—Xinchu jianbo guoji xueshu yantaohui wenji* 新出簡帛研究—新出簡帛國際學術研討會文集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004), 5–7; Chen Jian 陳劍, *"Guodian jian* *Zun de yi he **Chengzhi wenzhi* de jianbei shuzi yuqi jianxu guanxi de kaocha" 郭店簡《尊德義》和《成之聞之》的簡背數字與其簡序關係的考察, *Jianbo* 簡帛 2 (2007): 209–26. The Wangjiatai 王家臺 Qin manuscripts also have serial numbers—see Wang Mingqin 王明欽, "Wangjiatai Qin mu zhujian gaishu" 王家台秦墓竹簡概述, in *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu*, 47. For a comprehensive survey on this topic before 2015, see Cheng Pengwan, *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu*, 163–68. See also He Jin 何晉, "Qianyi jiance zhidu zhong de 'xulian'—yi chutu Zhanguo Qin Han jian wei li" 淺議簡册制度中的"序連"——以出土戰國秦漢簡爲例, *Jianbo* 簡帛 8 (2013): 561–69.

[55] Kern, "Methodological Reflection," 145–47.

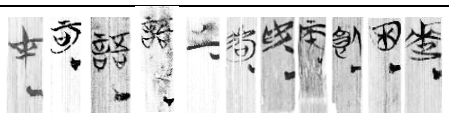
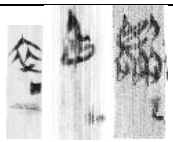
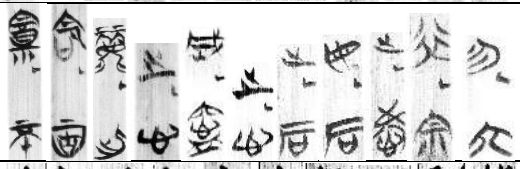
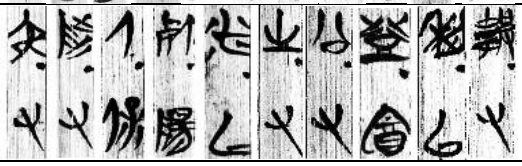
[56] See note 14.

We also observe a correlation, although not definite, between the scribal hand and the characteristics of punctuation marks, suggesting a substantial portion of the marks were more likely added by the producers. Thus, the embedded punctuation system should be read as the producers' regulation of an intended reading, rather than a reader's interpretation and explanation. To be more specific, except for the two divinatory manuals, **Shifa* and **Biegua* that incorporate a series of divinatory symbols in their complex tabular layout, the other fifty-four manuscripts generally contain three kinds of punctuation marks: terminators, separators, and ligatures (*hewen* 合文) or duplication (*chongwen* 重文). In Richter's definition, "terminator" signals the end of a textual unit and an inserted separator marks linguistic units, i.e., words, phrases, sentences, or entire text sections.[57] Duplication marks suggest the repetition of the indicated character, and the ligature mark indicates that the featured character is a graphic combination of two or more characters by borrowing strokes or components of each other. Since the ligature and repetition marks an immediate part of representing words, they were almost certainly written together with the texts and made by the scribes unless they were corrections. However, the other two, especially the separators, possibly have a different origin, as scholars have proposed.[58] For the Tsinghua manuscript, under the division of scribal hands, we see that the placement and shape of the punctuation marks, especially the separators, remained largely unchanged within each hand.

	Terminator	Separator
Hand A		

[57] Richter, "Punctuation, Premodern."

[58] Kim Byeong Jun, "Ruhe jiedu Zhanguo Qin Han jiandu zhong judou fuhao," 403–410.

Hand B		
Hand C		
Hand D		
Hand E		

In this table, all the terminators in Hand A are written as a long and sharp hook, whereas all the terminators in Hand B are a short dot; the two terminators in H and E are a wide, thick horizontal stroke while the terminators in Hands C and D vary. On the other hand, most of the separators in Hand A were placed between the two characters, whereas the separators in Hands B, C, D, and E are predominantly located immediately after the preceding characters. Many of the separators in Hand C are thicker than those of the other hands; most of the separators in Hand D appear as short, flat hooks; while the separators in Hand E are round dots.[59] In short, except for the terminators in Hands C and D, the presentation of a punctuation system within each hand is generally consistent and has a characteristic nature. Thus, the most straightforward explanation, especially for the separators, is the that the marks were made by the scribe, or less likely, by someone (e.g., an assistant or proofreader) closely associated with them, who conducted their work in a characteristic, consistent manner.

[59] As Jia Lianxiang pointed out, it should also be noted that a few texts do not have any inserted separator, including **Yin gao*, **Baoxun*, **Huang men*, **Chuju*, *Houfu*, *Feng Xu zhi ming*, **Ziyi*, while **Chengwu* and **Xinian* only have one separator in total. See Jia Lianxiang, *Zhanguo zhushu*, 159.

To be sure, we need to admit that such a pattern is not perfect and the cataloging itself is not absolute, since occasional differences in marks do exist among texts from the same scribal hand.[60] Conversely, marks from different hands might also somtimes look the same.[61] Here, I am by no means attempting to exclude the potential complexity behind the making of the punctuation in each text and by each scribe, hence the suggested complexity in the epistemological scenarios. Just as one could write the graphs with tremendous variability, so too would a scribe writing these tiny, one- or two-stroke marks a scribe would have a much higher risk of deviating from their habitual way of writing or imitating the characteristics of others. Moreover, multiple possible epistemological scenarios lie behind the making of these marks: they could have been adopted as the main texts were being written or added afterwards while proofreading was being done. On the other hand, they could have been based entirely on the scribes' own scholarly decisions, or derived from their source documents or a collaborator. All of these questions await detailed case studies in the future.

Here, no matter whether it was the scribes themselves or someone else who came up with the editorial choices of where to punctuate the text, the scribes still subtly intervened in the text-making by imposing their own habits on the physical presentation of the marks, just as they often added innovation after innovation in writing the texts. Despite all the complexity, the distinctive patterns between hands suggests that a substantial portion of the marks, especially the separators, were not added by a later hand, but were more likely added during the process of manuscript production. If we take a printed book as an analogy, these punctuated manuscripts are more like

[60] We should mention that separators from *Zhaigong* look distinctively different from the others. This phenomenon deserves further investigation.

[61] It should be noted that in comparison with the other marks, the terminators made by Hand C are especially inconsistent.

a set of new books that come with a printed notational system than used books that are read and punctuated by later readers. So, what these separators stand for is not later readers as they interpreted, explained, or highlighted a personal interest, but the producers as they executed their editorial authority—to adjudicate a preferred reading by resolving any inherent semantic ambiguity of the text's visual presentation. They marks were more likely inserted during the process of producing the manuscripts in their "current lives" or from their source materials as the texts' "previous lives," instead of in their later uses as "afterlives."

On the other hand, although the Tsinghua corpus suggests that most punctuation marks were not inserted during later usage, the very purpose of building such a notational system is to facilitate an imagined, or even intended reader's engagement with the text. The primary function of punctuation, to quote Malcolm B. Parkes, is to "resolve structural uncertainties in a text, and to signal nuances of semantic significance which might otherwise not be conveyed at all, or would at best be much more difficult for a reader to figure out."[62] Richter has extended a broader definition of punctuation that appears in early Chinese writings as comprising other properties, such as layout, script, and symbols, that might serve to secure the textual identity and make its structure explicit; depending on the genre of the texts, some were in greater need of punctuation than others: that is, some texts needed to be consulted whereas others were supposed to be memorized.[63] Over time, as Rens Krijgsman proposed, the punctuation's increasing use and gradual systemization greatly boosted the visual organization of later texts, and leading to a more

[62] Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect*: *An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1992), 1–3.

[63] Richter, "Punctuation, Premodern."

unambiguous readability of texts.[64] Here, if we situate punctuation into the "reader/text (abstract knowledge)/(physical) manuscript" tripartite model of the interplay of learning, for the reader, a punctuation system provides a silent, visual (as opposed to aural and intangible) instruction on how to engage with the text; for the text, the notational apparatus lays out visual annotations that help resolve potential linguistic ambiguities; for the manuscript, punctuation functions as a "geometric or symbolic paratext," creating non-textual liminal devices to guide the readers in communicating with the textual knowledge.

Nevertheless, in the Tsinghua corpus, it should be noted that the punctuation system is far from a full-fledged system of instruction for comprehending the text if a reader did not have a certain level of familiarity with the text. That is, the consistency in the marks' physical presentation within each scribal hand suggests that the marks are not visually distinguishable for signifying a different semantic instruction; conversely, the discrepancies between the marks from different hands also mean that the particular shape or location of a mark cannot explicitly indicate a clearly defined function. To be more specific, in the punctuation system of the Tsinghua corpus as well as in the pre-imperial scribal culture in general, all the marks that are used for different functions (e.g., to signal different meanings (paragraphs, sentences, clauses, special terms, emphasis, a person's or place's name, etc.) could be written identically. At the same time, marks performing the same function could also look different—a short dash, a round dot, a square, a hook, etc. That is, although patterns appear in each hand shows certain patters, the entire punctuation system of the pre-imperial literary texts was not yet standardized or stabilized, but individualized and sometimes inconsistent. What the marks signified was more of a pause than a semantic indication: in the modern sense, they are not functional enough to be used to

[64] Rens Krijgsman, "An Inquiry into the Formation of Readership in Early China: Using and Producing the **Yong yue* 用曰 and *Yinshu* 引書 Manuscripts," *T'oung Pao* 104.1–2 (2018): 2–65.

decode a specific hermeneutic instruction, but are more like a reminder of where to pause the text. Thus, contextually, they help the reader to come up their own solutions for linguistic uncertainties, drawing on their previous training with the same text, their own literary ability to analyze, or interpersonal instruction from their mentor. As the obscurity of the punctuation system could not fully achieve the goal of resolving the semantic ambiguity in pre-imperial textual culture, we can thus construe different epistemological practices and diverse scenarios of learning and reading.

Finally, if we consider that the creation of a title and numerical system demonstrates an emerging anxiety about the name, order, and integrity of a given text, the frequent and sometimes extensive adoption of punctuation marks among different corpora and genres also signifies an intensifying concern about the texts' accuracy in both sound and meaning. At the same time, the enormously imbalanced nature of pre-imperial punctuation also suggests that the epistemological activities and the ways of learning, reading, and practicing knowledge, were likewise astonishingly diverse.

4.4 Verso Lines and Verso Preparation

Finally, in comparison with the title, serial number, and punctuation, the use of the verso line and the ways of shaving and polishing the verso side seem to have been less related to the scribal hands. Normally, there were two types of verso preparation: shaving only the bamboo joint and shaving the entire slip. However, some slips that have a sequential diagonal line carved by a knife on the verso side do not show such preparation. These two features appear within each scribal hand of the Tsinghua corpus, and we see cases both of verso lines and verso treatment; some have a sequential or discontinuous verso line while others do not; in some slips only the bamboo joints are shaved while on other texts in the same hand the entire surface of the verso is shaved

and polished. Such lack of consistency suggests that preparing the writing support and writing texts on the slips might have been two separate procedures, such that the characteristics of verso line and verso preparation are irrelevant for the typology of scribal hands. For instance, it has been proposed that for the Peking University **Laozi* manuscript, the carving of the verso line likely took place prior to than the splitting of the bamboo culm into thin slips,[65] which means that it was also done prior to than the writing of the texts. For the **Sigao* manuscript, because that manuscript contains bamboo slips with different verso types, Jia Lianxiang proposed that preparing the writing support and writing the texts were two independent procedures.[66] As such, the coexistence of different verso treatments within each of the scribal hands suggests that in general, the job of readying the writing support and writing the texts were two tasks that were probably independent of each other, indicating that there might have been a division of labor behind the making of the manuscripts.

5. Conclusion: Paratext—Mediating between Fact and Goal

To summarize, in our examination of the Tsinghua manuscripts, we find imperfect yet clear overlap between the classifications of scribal hands and the typology of multiple codicological and paratextual properties, suggesting that the titles, slip serial numbers, and a substantial portion of the punctuation marks are closely associated with a few scribal hands, indicating that these properties were more likely added by the scribes themselves rather than some later hand.

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[65] Han Wei 韓巍, "Xihan zhushu Laozi jianbei huahen de chubu fenxi" 西漢竹書老子簡背劃痕的初步分析, in *Beijing daxue cang Xihan zhushu (er)* 北京大學藏西漢竹書[貳] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 227–335; Thies Staack, "Identifying Codicological Sub—units in Bamboo Manuscripts: Verso Line's Revisited," *Manuscript Cultures* 8 (2015): 157–86.

[66] Jia Lianxiang, "Qinghua jian **Sigao*," 93–94.

The titled, numbered, and/or punctuated texts should be viewed as fully equipped with purposeful, pragmatic, and surprisingly advanced codicological techniques and paratextual devices used for securing the texts' name, order, and meaning. Specifically, the title as a threshold to navigate the text designates the identity and the gist of the text (e.g., personages, genre, and actions) while making the text and the manuscript identifiable, and even referable in another textual context. Serial numbers create a numerical scheme as a granular system, and physically bestows material protection on the order and integrity of the text for posterity. A substantial portion of the punctuation marks stands for the textual producers' hermeneutic instructions for an intended reading, their desire to grant the prospective readers a regulated sound and meaning, and at the same time to secure the correctness of the text. Altogether, these codicological and paratextual arrangements on the discovered bamboo manuscripts profoundly resonate with the intensifying concerns about textual loss among the transmitted sources: the inherent fragility of the written medium and the growing number and importance of the textual knowledge drove the pre-imperial scribes and scholars, as a team, to create these crafts and techniques to preserve, protect, and stabilize the classical texts' completeness.

Textual loss was real, in every sense. Yet the frustrating result of the scarcity of the extant pre-imperial texts that later readers have had to face does not mean that the Warring States scribes and scholars did not care about, or had no way to grasp at least some control of their knowledge. Besides the discovery of the function of the paratextual devices, an equally important lesson from the Tsinghua corpus is that we have found that pre-imperial scribal culture was full of dynamics, diversity, and tensions between reality and hope, anxiety and solution, crisis and methods, and also individuals and their circumstances. As a whole, pre-imperial written culture was replete with a fluidity of written texts and flexibility in orthography, as many scholars have noted. Nevertheless, the codicological designs and paratextual apparatus that we have discussed

remind us that at least some individuals, for example the scribe(s) of Hand A, and many others who participated in the making of their antecedent texts, dedicated great efforts to protect the order, integrity, and significance of the classics. Moreover, different individuals worked with diverse methods and preferences. Even within the Tsinghua corpus, there was no overarching rule governing the designs of the codicological and paratextual properties, but still, each scribal hand executed surprisingly consistent and mutually distinctive codicological and paratextual standards in almost all the texts they wrote. These patterns, while not absolute, are evidence that the paratextual elements of the Tsinghua manuscripts were not a random occurrence, but the result of careful design.

Finally, while acknowledging the tremendously rich historical information embedded in its material presentation, we also need to note that the Tsinghua manuscripts that survived are tiny fragments, *disiecta membra*—a rather random snapshot of the entirety of the pre-imperial textual inventory. These manuscripts cannot stand for the synchronic panorama of writing at its specific moment, nor do they fully afford us a view of the diachronic change of certain texts. However, by analyzing manuscripts as physical results of a series of interlocking epistemological activities, at least, it is worth devoting more efforts to inquire about the kinds of practices and environments that fostered these written objects, and to ask, for those hidden, nameless readers and writers, what kinds of concerns mattered to them.

Chapter 3

Orthography: Remaking the Graphs

1. Introduction: Before the Unification of Writing
2. Rethinking Graphic Variants
    2.1 Regional Graphic Differences
    2.2 Different Objects for Different Functions
    2.3 Graphic Variations in the Same Document
3. Making the Differences Differently: The Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua
4. Distinctions between Hands
    4.1 Methods and Practice of Orthographic Standardization
    4.2 Scribal Agency

1. Introduction: Before the Unification of Writing

Shu tong wen zi 書同文字, or the "standardization of graphs and characters," has long been deemed one of the most far-reaching cultural legacies of the short-lived Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE).[1] The creation and implementation of the orthographic reform resonated with every

[1] For example, Derk Bodde noted, "Of all Li Ssü's (Li Si's) reforms, therefore, not even excepting his political ones, the standardization of the Chinese written language has probably been the most important. …And to the continuity and universality of her [China's]written language, inherent in its beginnings, but first put on a firm basis by Li Ssü, this can probably be attributed, more than any other single factors." See Bodde, *China's First Unifier, A Study of the Ch'in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssu* (Leiden: Brill, 1938; rpt. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1967), 160–161. In the earliest extant lexicographic dictionary, *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (comp. *ca.* 100 CE), Xu Shen 許慎 (*ca.* 58–*ca.*148 CE) stated: "when the Qin First Emperor just now unified the entire territories (of other states), the chancellor Li Si then proposed to unify (the script system), and to abolish the characters that differ from the Qin scripts" 秦始皇帝初兼天下, 丞相李斯乃奏同之，罷其不與秦文合者. *Shuowen jiezi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 316. In this regard, Qing scholar Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735–1815) noted, "unifying the scripts of the whole world with the script of the Qin; the Qin script is the Small Seal script on which the following paragraph will elaborate" 以秦文同天下之文，秦文即下文小篆也, in *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Sh: Shanghai guji chubanshe,1988), 15.10, 758.

Important modern works on the social and historical significations of the *shu tong wen zi* include Herrlee G. Creel, "On the Nature of Chinese Ideology," *T'oung Pao* 32 (1936): 85–161; Guo Moruo 郭沫若," Gudai wenzi zhi bianzheng de fazhan" 古代文字之辯證的發展, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 (1972).1, 1–14;Yu Weichao 俞偉超 and Gao Ming 高明, "Qin Shihuang tongyi du liang heng he wenzi de lishi gongji" 秦始皇統一度量衡和文字的歷史功績,

corner of the new empire, and its influence was profound and ubiquitous—a more standardized script system creates immediacy and transparency in communication in the written form, so it immensely boosted efficacy and productivity in both the administrative system and scholastic praxis. With the growing number of unearthed manuscripts, we now know that the social and historical significance of *shu tong wen zi* was not confined to the fact that the Qin script system replaced the archaic characters or the Six States' regional variations in the shape of character, but that it also redefined the political and intellectual environment through the standardization of scripts, lexicon, and language.[2] In other words, while *shu tong wen zi* signaled a transitional moment in the history of Chinese language, literature, and society, it was both the product of and instrument for the institutional and scholastic necessities to establish new orders. Every political

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Wenwu 文物 1973.12: 6–13; Zhu Dexi 朱德熙 and Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, "Qin shihuang 'shu tong wen zi' de lishi zuoyong" 秦始皇"書同文字"的歷史作用, *Wenwu* 文物 1973.11: 2–7, also in *Zhu Dexi wenji* vol. 5 朱德熙文集·第五卷 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999), 73–82; Noel Barnard, "The Nature of the Ch'in 'Reform of the Script' (t'ung-su wen-tzu) as Reflected in Archaeological Documents Excavated under Conditions of Control," in David T. Roy and Tsuen-hsiun Tsien eds., *Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978), 181–213; William G. Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven, Conn: American Oriental Society, 1994), 156–158.

In recent years, this topic has been greatly advanced by a series of important archeological finds such as Qin bronzes, seals, and a substantial amount of bamboo and wood manuscripts, etc. Important studies include Chen Zhaorong 陈昭容, "Qin 'shu tong wen zi' xintan" 秦"書同文字"新探, in Chen, *Qin xi wenzi yanjiu: cong hanzi shi de jiaodu kaocha* 秦系文字研究：從漢字史的角度考察 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuan yanjiusuo [Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica], 2003), 69–105; Imre Galambos, "The Myth of the Qin Unification of Writing in Han Sources," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57.2 (2004): 181–203; Chen Kanli 陳侃理, "Liye qin fang yu 'shu tong wen zi'," 里耶秦方与 "書同文字" *Wenwu* 文物 2014.9: 76–81; Ōnishi Katsuya 大西克也, Ōnishi Katsuya, "Moji tōitsu to shinkan no shisho" 文字統一と秦漢の史書, *Shogaku shodo shi kenkyū* 書学書道史研究 24 (2014): 93–103; more recently and importantly, Tian Wei 田煒, "Lun Qinshihuang 'shu tong wen zi' zhengce de neihan ji yingxiang—jian lun panduan chutu qin wenxian wenben niandai de zhongyao biaochi" 論秦始皇"書同文字"政策的內涵及影響—兼論判斷出土秦文獻文本年代的重要標尺, *Bulletin of the Institute of History Philology Academia Sinica* 89.3 (2018): 403–450.

[2] Recent studies have suggested that the *Shu tong wen zi* reform included at least three dimensions: 1) regulation of the graphic forms (*zheng zixing* 正字形), 2) rectification of the associations between graphs and words (*zheng yongzi* 正用字), and 3) standardization of the proper words or phrases for certain meanings (*zheng yongyü* 正用語). See Chen Zhaorong, "Qin 'shu tong wen zi' xintan"; Chen Kanli, "Liye qin fang yu 'shu tong wen zi'"; Ōnishi Katsuya, "Moji tōitsu to shinkan no shisho"; and Tian Wei, "Lun Qinshihuang 'shu tong wen zi.'" For a useful survey on this topic, see Olivier Venture, "L'écriture de Qin," in *Les Soldats de l'Eternité: l'armée de Xi'an*, edited by Alain Thote and Lothar von Falkenhausen (Paris: Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008), 209–215.

apparatus and intellectual enterprise that involved writing—from the Qin-Han administrative documentation system[3] to enaction of every edict, from the imperial bibliographic project as the genesis of the Sinitic textual culture to the circulation every literature—all were fostered by and contributed to this dynamic, convoluted, and long-lasting standardization of script and language,[4] as both the enabling infrastructure of the newly established empire and the epistemological paradigm of the transformation of knowledge

changing paradigm of knowledge

Although the nuances of the related terms *shu tong wen zi* 書同文字, *tong shu wen zi* 同書文字, *tong tian xia shu* 同天下書, *tong wen shu* 同文書, *ping wen zhang* 平文章, and *yi wen zhang* 壹文章 are still under debate, the rich vocabulary of the script standardization in the *Records of the Historian* (*Shiji* 史記; c. 100 BCE) and recently discovered texts amply bespeak the weight of the presentation of the script standardization in early imperial treatises.[5] Understandably, from a

[3] For instance, see Etienne Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy: Variations on a Theme.* Trans. H. M. Wright. Ed. Arthur F. Wright, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); Tomiya Itaru 冨谷至, *Bunsho gyōsei no Kan Teikoku: mokkan chikukan no jidai* 文書行政の漢帝国：木簡・竹簡の時代 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010); a comprehensive survey, see Robin D. S. Yates, "Introduction: The Empire of the Scribes," in Yuri Pines, Gideon Shelach, Lothar von Falkenhausen, and Robin D.S. Yates eds., *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2014), 141–154; Charles Sanft, *Communication and Cooperation in Early Imperial China: Publicizing the Qin Dynasty* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 2014); *Literate Community in Early Imperial China: the Northwestern Frontier in Han Times* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019).

[4] Multiple studies have highlighted that the procedure of script standardization was dynamic and long-lasting, for example, see Xu Yong 徐勇, "Lue lun xiaozhuan ziti de chansheng he liubian—jian ping qinshihuang xiaozhuan tongyi wenzi de lishi zuoyong" 略論小篆字體的產生和流變——兼評秦始皇以小篆統一文字的歷史作用, *Tianjin shida xuebao* 天津師大學報 (1985).2, 55–59; Xi Chunnian 奚椿年, "'Shu tong wen zi' zhengce de shishi jiqi shibai—cong chutu wenwu kan qinshihuang tongyi quanguo wenzi de gongzuo" "書同文字" 政策的實施極其失敗——從出土文物看秦始皇統一全國文字的工作, *Jianghai xuekan* 江海學刊 (1990).4, 117–121. More important works include Zhao Ping'an 趙平安, "Shi lun Qin guo lishi shang de sanci 'shu tong wen'" 試論秦國歷史上的三次"書同文", in Libian yanjiu (xiuding ban) 隸變研究 (修訂版) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2020), 164–173; Imre Galambos, "The Myth of the Qin Unification of Writing in Han Sources," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57.2 (2004): 181–203.

[5] The *Shiji* mentions the Qin script standardization five times, in "The Basic Annals of the First Emperor of the Qin" 秦始皇本紀, "Yearly Chronicle of the Six States" 六國年表, and "The Biography of Li Si" 李斯列傳, respectively. See *Shiji* 5: 308,"一法度衡石丈尺，車同軌，書同文字"; *Shiji* 5: 314, "器械一量，同書文字"; *Shiji*

microscopic perspective, every Qin-Han writer and reader, including Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–85 BCE) himself, was unavoidably disciplined by and benefited from the more standardized script system; their works and their names became better known as they were intertwined with the increased readability, accessibility, and controllability of the written texts that employed a more standardized orthography. Because the subsequent dynasties inherited and developed their writing system from the Qin scripts, the writing system used today is still the heir of the *shu tong wen zi* movement.

In retrospect, what made the Qin script standardization of monumental importance were not only the practical merits and political consequences of the new script system for the newly established empire, but also the situation of writing in the Warring States (453–221 BCE) that differed drastically from the later generations. Just as the postscript of the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 states, "The [Warring States] spoken languages varied in their sounds, and the written characters differed in their graphic forms" 言語異聲，文字異形[6]—this perception has been further reinforced and complicated by the massive amount of discovered paleographic materials, especially since the beginning of the twentieth century. At present, there is almost a consensus that the vast graphic fluidity and orthographic changeability is an intrinsic and pervasive feature

15: 907, "(二十七年) 命民曰黔首，同天下書，分爲三十六郡"; *Shiji* 87: 3091, "明法度，定律令，皆以始皇起。同文書"; *Shiji* 87: 3106, "更剋畫，平斗斛、度量、文章，布之天下，以樹秦之名。" The recently discovered Beijing University Han manuscript *Zhao Zheng Shu* 趙正書 records the script standardization as "更劾（刻）畫斗甬（桶）度量，壹文章，布之天下，以樹秦之名者." See Beijing daxue chutuwenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學出土文獻研究所 ed., *Beijing daxue cang hanjian (san)* 北京大學藏漢簡 (叁) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015), 192.

[6] *Shuowen jiezi,* 316. On this paragraph, Duan Yucai commented, "Each state uses its regional, popular spoken and written language, has their own understanding, and abbreviates and alters the graphs and words. If the spoken languages vary in their sounds, then the initials and rhymes bifurcate; if the written characters differ in their forms, then the arrangements of the literary crafts become perplexing." 而各用其方俗語言，各用其私意省改之文字也。言語異聲，則聲韻歧；文字異形，則體制惑。see *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 1312.

in all kinds of pre-Qin writings. That is, from the inscriptions on oracle bones to bronze vessels, from writings on jade tablets to bamboo slips, whether the writing was ritual, administrative, or literary, one graph could be written in various forms ("graphic variants"), and various characters could refer to the same word ("lexical variants"); at the same time, the same form could also stand for different words ("homographs"). In other words, the associations between a graphic form and a graph, a graph and a word, hence a word and a certain meaning were not as definite and exclusive as in the later eras; instead, they were very often open-ended and context bound. As Galambos summarized, "the writers and readers, whether humans or spirits, as a group tolerated a considerable degree of structural fluidity."[7]

As modern scholars delve into the textual variants on the recently discovered bamboo and silk materials, they often criticize the pre-imperial scribes as having limited literary capabilities because they use too many variants and even "erroneous characters"[8]—these

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[7] See Imre Galambos, "Graphic Variation in Early Chinese Writing," in *China Across the Centuries: Papers from a Lecture Series in Budapest*, ed. Gabor Kosa (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2017), 33–60; Imre Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing* (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2006), 145.

[8] Especially from the perspective of paleography, we frequently see modern scholars' criticisms of the scribes' writing skills; for example, Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 and Li Xüeqin 李學勤, the two most prominent paleography scholars, both believe that the scribes of the Guodian corpus "did not reach an advanced level of education" (文化程度不高). See Sarah Allan, Crispin Williams, and Wen Xing, *Guodian Laozi—dongxi fang xuezhe de duihua* 郭店老子—東西方學者的對話 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2002), 127–128; Qiu Xigui, "Tantan shangbo jian he guodian jian zhong de cuo bie zi" 談談上博簡和郭店簡中的錯別字, in *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji ·jiandu boshu juan* 裘錫圭學術文集 ·簡牘帛書卷 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2012), 372–377. See also Xiong Jiahui 熊佳暉, "Guodian jian *Wu xing* pian de chengshu fangshi yu shushou wenhua shuiping tanxi" 郭店簡《五行》篇的成書方式與書手文化水平探析, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 (2020.1): 91–101.

At the same time, multiple scholars have also attempted to complicate the picture of "erroneous graphs"; for instance, Li Ling 李零 considered that after substantial repetitive use, previously orthodoxically graphs could become accepted or become "lawful erroneous graphs" (合法錯字). See Li, "Jianbo gushu de zhengli yu yanjiu" 簡帛古書的整理與研究, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化 (2003).4, 4–12; *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu* 簡帛古書與學術源流 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004), 171. See also Zhang Xinjun 張新俊, "Shangbo chujian wenxi yanjiu" 上博楚簡文字研究 , Ph.D. diss., Jilin University, 2005, 36–55; Liu Xinfang 劉信芳, "Guanyu zhushu 'cuo bie zi' de tantao" 關於竹書 "錯別字" 的探討, *Kaogu* 考古 (2006).10, 66–76; Cao Jingjing 曹菁菁, "Cong guodian jian kan chujian 'cuo bie zi' wenti" 從郭店簡看楚簡"錯別字"問題, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化 (2014).1, 150–155.

scholars condemn what they see as the "careless, undereducated" scribes for the traditional degenerative model of textual transmission in which the scribes are to blame for causing misrepresentation and misinterpretation. However, as this chapter argues, "writing one word or one graph differently" should not be taken as a sign of the writers' incompetence or carelessness: tolerance for the semantic obscurity and the textual instability in the Warring States written object does not equate to an absence of notions about the writing's accuracy or a standard, nor should all of the pre-imperial orthography be described as "ad hoc" or "random." It suggests, rather, an astonishingly diverse epistemological practices in which the pre-imperial readers and writers had their own ways of interacting with material written artifacts. That is, people read, wrote, learned from, and learned with their textual objects in drastically different manners. It was not only the notion of orthography, the principles of good writing, the fact that writing media itself evolved from bamboo and silk to paper and even electronic devices, or that textual production transformed from a written culture into a print culture and even a digital culture, but that the epistemic paradigms and circumstances, the very ways that people engaged with their learning tools and the textual lore also radically changed over time.

It should be noted that not all the textual differences were meant to be competed, nor were they supposed to help us to decide which version is "better" or "closer to the original meaning."[9] Behind the vast number of textual dissimilarities, there are also various types and degrees of the differences, suggesting not a hierarchy, but a spontaneous, or staged exhibition of the manuscripts' own histories, politics, and logics. "Writing the same word in the same way" became a criterion for "good writing" only after a well-recognized standard emerged. Without a

[9] The idea that discovered text is not necessarily better or more "original" than its transmitted counterpart, see Kern, "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1-4 (2002): 151-152; Matthias Richter, The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 7.

better sense of what the pre-imperial conventions or notions were, blaming the pre-imperial writers for a lack of the writing regulations that we are now familiar with is completely anachronistic.

A handwritten text in any age always has to oscillate between unconstrained changeability and rigid disciplines—in two written graphs of the same word, there is no absolute "differentness" nor a complete "similarity." Beyond choosing which variant is better, how and why the textual differences came into being would be a meaningful question.[10] The graphic presentation of characters, the type of script, calligraphic style, and graphic structure, and even words or phrases chosen[11] are inseparable aspects of a text's physical presentation and semiotic meaning; and it illuminates us, to quote Roger Chartier, to "the significance, or better yet, the historically and socially distinct significations of a text."[12] Enlighted by this idea, the changing or unchanging graphic presentation is, by itself, a manifestation of the material history of the written artefact and the sociology of writing and reading. The vast number of graphic variants in the Warring States texts, despite being great obstacles to comprehension, are a tremendously rich source for understanding the entire habitus of epistemological praxis and paradigms. Once we view a manuscript as not merely a copy or a version of certain text but as a physical outcome

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[10] Exemplary studies on this topic, see footnote 15.

[11] Matthias Richter proposed three dimensions of the graphic form: (1) types of script, (2) styles of script, (3) hands; see Richter, "Towards a Profile of Graphic Variation: On the Distribution of Graphic Variants within the Mawangdui Laozi Manuscripts," in *Methodological Issues in the Study of Early Chinese Manuscripts: Papers from the Second Hamburg Tomb Text Workshop*, ed. idem, *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005): 169–207. "Tentative Criteria for Discerning Individual Hands in the Guodian Manuscripts," in Rethinking Confucianism: Selected Papers from the Third International Conference on Excavated Chinese Manuscripts, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass., April 2004; 儒學的再思考: 第三屆國際簡帛研討會論文集, ed. Xing Wen (San Antonio: Trinity University, 2006), 132–147; "The Fickle Brush: Chinese Orthography in the Age of Manuscripts," *Early China* 31 (2007): 171–192.

Similarly, Zhou Bo 周波 also categorized these aspects in the pre-imperial writings: (1) calligraphic style 書體風格, (2) graphic structure 字形結構, and (3) word- or phrase-chosen 用字習慣; see Zhou, *Zhanguo mingwen fenyu yanjiu* 戰國銘文分域研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019), 16–22.

[12] Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 22.

from the actual scribal and scholarly activities of the ancient people themselves as the second chapter has argued, no matter how complex and immensely interlocking these practices are, our questions and goals thus will no longer be confined to finding the "correct reading" of the text per se, but to examining the unearthed written artefact as a rare means of access into the very scenario of how the ancient scribes and readers produced and engaged with their textual knowledge.

In the following section, I will first review the history of studying the pre-imperial orthography by surveying three dimensions of the Warring States graphic variants: 1) regional graphic difference, 2) graphic variants that resulted from different purpose of the written object, and 3) graphic variations in the same document. I will then highlight the varying degree of orthographic inconsistency among the discovered Waring States manuscripts with literary treatises: some manuscripts are clearly more standardized than others, suggesting a surprisingly diverse standard of orthography in the Warring States scribal culture. Finally, I highlight the significant roles of the scribes' working autonomy and methods in deciding a text's graphic fluidity or uniformity. That is, for pre-imperial literary manuscripts, different scribes could have had astonishingly different working methods: some of them composed texts with pervasive graphic variations, while others strove to standardize and regulate the texts with consistent orthography. Not all the scribes worked as mere copyists whose job was only to transcribe texts passively, or even incorrectly from an existing text, nor did they all appear as "destroyers" in a degenerative model of textual transmission. There is the possibility that the pre-imperial scribes worked as a combination of scribes, editors, and scholars, remaking the texts while producing a new physical artefact based on numerous scholarly decisions. Although it did not apply to all characters in all the texts, a large portion of the Tsinghua manuscripts' orthographic consistency demonstrates that there were scribal or scholarly actions taken that regulated the previous

orthographic irregularities, unified the varied graphic forms, and presented the characters in a surprisingly consistent manner. This observation encourages us to reflect on the nature of the scribal culture in the Warring States: as the growing community of texts kept proliferating and subsequently generating more textual variants, tremendous efforts were made to ensure that the texts were stable and standardized, at least on some very basic local or even personal level. Even if such efforts were eclipsed by the unavoidable fate of the fading of the written material objects or the future generations of willful users of the texts, the Warring States' editorial methods and the growing awareness of orthography lasted much longer than any of the manuscripts per se—they became the prototype, precursor, even the methodological foundation of the culmination of the standardization of script and language in the Qin, under the First Emperor (r. 221–210 BCE), as a more centralized, unified polity came to the power.

2. Rethinking Graphic Variants

The occurrence of textual variants between texts and within the same text can be found everywhere among the transmitted sources of early texts that we have access to. In the traditional philological accounts, scholars had a long history in which to look back and compare and decide which variant was more reliable or closer to the original meaning. Systematic reflections on textual variants, chiefly from the perspective of textual criticism, were launched by William G. Boltz in the 1980s. Initially, he divided the variants into "graphic variants" and "character variants," and then he refined the catalogue into "graphic/orthographic variants" and "lexical variants." Graphic variant refers to the same word written in different graphic forms: for example, a standardized character {衛} (to guard, protect) has the graphic variants 衞 and 衛. On the other hand, lexical variant suggests the same word in different phonetically related characters: for example, the lexical variant for {聖} (sage, *ˀleŋs) could be written as {聲} (to

hear, *l̥eŋ) in reference to the meaning of the word {聖} due to their phonetic closeness.[13] In 2002, Martin Kern revamped Boltz's twofold categories into three general types: graphic variants, lexical variants, and scribal errors, and thus offering a more detailed typology of nine kinds of textual variants.[14] As the typology became more specific, Kern and Matthias Richter also reminded us that there was no clear-cut boundary between the types, and some variants thus should be understood as a hybrid of more than one type. More importantly, scholars have gradually realized that textual variant itself can be a means of recovering the mode of manuscript production.[15] By so doing, textual variants became not only a remarkable feature of pre-imperial manuscripts but are also traces of the actual scenario of the manuscripts' production.

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[13] See William G. Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1994); "Textual Criticism *More Sinico*," *Early China* 20 (1995): 393–105; "Manuscripts with Transmitted Counterparts," in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts,* edited by Edward L. Shaughnessy (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1997), 253–283.

We should also note that in the 1950s, based on a limited number of materials, a few scholars such as Noel Barnard also proposed a Chinese character constancy theory that stated: (1) "Inconstancy is not a characteristic of Chinese calligraphy, whether ancient or modern" and (2) "It is quite permissible to regard inconstancy as a definite proof of forgery." As such, he identified *Maogongding* 毛公鼎 and *Sanshipan* 散氏盤 as modern forgeries. See Barnard, "Chou China: A Review of the Third Volume of Cheng Te-k'un's Archaeology in China," *Monumenta Serica* XXIV (1965): 307–459; "The nature of the Ch'in 'Reform of the Script' as Reflected in Archeological Documents Excavated under Conditions of Control," in *Ancient China: Studies in Early Chinese Civilization*, edited by T. Roy and Tsien Tsuen-hsuin (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press), 181–213.

Barnard's statements about graphic constancy were criticized by Cheng Te-k'un, who considered character inconstancy as one of the most common features of Chinese writing. See Cheng, Cheng Te-k'un, *Archaeology in China* (Cambridge UK: W. Heffer, 1959); "The Inconstancy of Character Structure in Chinese writing," *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies* 4.1 (1971): 137–170.

[14] Kern further provides a systematic typology of nine kinds of textual variants: [a] variant forms of characters that stand for the same word; [b] characters with different, omitted, or added semantic classifiers that belong to the same *xiesheng* series; [c] characters conventionally standing for words that are semantically related and also homophonous or near-homophonous; [d] characters conventionally standing for words that are semantically unrelated but homophonous or near-homophonous; [e] characters conventionally standing for unrelated words that serve similar purposes or grammatical or rhythmic particles; [f] characters that are graphically similar but otherwise unrelated and therefore appear to be scribal errors; [g] characters that are similar only in meaning but not in shape or sound; [h] characters that are unrelated in any visual, phonetic, or semantic aspect; [i] characters that are left out, added, or transposed. See Kern, "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1–4 (2002): 143–181.

[15] For instance, see Marc Kalinowski, "The Xingde 刑德 Texts from Mawangdui," *Early China* 23 (1998): 125–202; "La Production Des Manuscrits Dans La Chine Ancienne: Une Approche Codicologique De La

Within the genre of graphic variants, in 2005, Richter differentiated graphic variants into "non-structural" and "structural" through the lens of the Mawangdui *Laozi* manuscripts. The former, such as two variants for {行},  and or two for {必},  and , helps to distinguish different hands, while the latter, such as {有/又} as  and , {其/亓} as  and , elucidates the "degree of arbitrariness or orthographic standard."[16] Another important theoretical reflection on graphic variants was conducted in a thorough case study by Imre Galambos in 2006 and 2017.[17] In order to eliminate the possibility that the graphic dissimilarities in philosophical texts may suggest lexical differences, Galambos chose the corpus of the Houma covenant texts (*Houma mengshu* 侯馬盟書), which consists of hundreds of examples of formulaic texts, as an ideal corpus to investigate graphic variants. He proposed that graphic variability was an inherent quality of early Chinese handwriting and that variant graphs generally did not necessarily signify lexical variance; at the same time, they were accepted or tolerated by the communities of both readers and writers.[18] Methodologically, Galambos carefully examined an entire corpus rather than one or two documents, since he believed that one case would be

Bibliothèque Funéraire De Mawangdui," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005): 131–68; Kern, "Methodological Reflections," Matthias Richter, "Faithful Transmission or Creative Change: Tracing Modes of Manuscript Production from the Material Evidence," *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 63.4 (2009): 889–908; Feng Shengjun 馮勝君, "Cong chutu wenxian kan chaoshou zai xianqin wenxian chuanbu guocheng zhong suo chansheng de yingxiang" 從出土文獻看抄手在先秦文獻傳佈過程中所産生的影響, *Jianbo* 簡帛 (2009).3, 419–429; Edward Shaungnessy, See "Unearthed Documents and the Question of the Oral Versus Written Nature of the Classic of Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 75.2 (2015): 331–375; "Varieties of Textual Variants: Evidence from the Tsinghua Bamboo-Strip **Ming Xun* Manuscript," *Early China* 39 (2016): 111–44; from a statistic approach with arbitrary categorization of five types of textual variants (stylistic, graphic, phonetic, lexical, omitted/additional) Daniel Morgen drew a similar conclusion as Shaungnessy. See "A Positive Case for the Visuality of Text in Warring States Manuscript Culture," Paper for The Creel-Luce Paelography Forum, University of Chicago, 24–25 April 2010.

[16] Richter, "Towards a Profile of Graphic Variation."

[17] Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*; "Graphic Variation," 33–60.

[18] Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*; 35.

"insufficient for documenting wider patterns."[19] However, to my mind, this same question about representativeness can still be asked about the degree to which the Houma corpus can epitomize the entire picture of early Chinese handwriting. Can the conclusions that are drawn from the Houma utilitarian covenant texts from the state of Jin 晉 apply to all administrative, literary writings across the vast region of the multiple states? In other words, were the "texts without a history" and the "texts with a history" in Kern's terms,[20] all invariably composed using the same orthographic standards? Is there a single appropriate corpus that we can employ to determine the overarching rules that applied to *all* pre-imperial writings?

To my mind, the issue of the pre-imperial text's orthography is two-fold: on one hand, each graph might have varied graphic presentation; on the other hand, each manuscript, or each scribe, might also have varying degree of orthographic inconsistence. In other words, in addition to a pre-imperial text exhibiting considerable graphic changeability, the *level* of such changeability might also differ from case to case, with some texts being more orthographically stable (or unstable) than others. Galambos' insights into graphic fluidity are compelling in both the Houma and Guodian corpora, holistically it may remain valid for many other pre-imperial texts. Yet it still could be an overgeneralization to assume that the entire community of reading and writing, across the vast region of the many states, invariably adhered to a similar standard of orthography, whether it was for a utilitarian or funerary occasion, an administrative purpose, or for literary writings.

The following section aims to illustrate the idea that for a Warring States written text, the presented orthographic fluidity was a materialized consequence of the very way it was made and

[19] Galambos, "Graphic Variation in Early Chinese Writing,"43.

[20] Kern, "Methodological Reflection," 145–147.

practiced—it was not that the pre-imperial writing itself conveyed more orthographic flexibility, but that the actual practitioner in this writing culture might have had more autonomy to decide which form, graph, or even word they were going to compose, and every individual could do their work in ways that differed drastically from others.

For every scribe in their own context, multiple factors might have entailed graphic variations: 1) the scribe's or the source texts' geographical background, 2) the different functions of the written object, or 3) even personal preference in calligraphic creativity—all might be reasons for forming a graphic variation. Before we launch a case study about how different scribes handled orthography differently, let us first look at what we already know about how the components might cause graphic differences.

2.1 Regional Graphic Differences

The first factor leading to graphic variants is the regional characteristics of different geographic areas during the Warring States. Historically, although graphic variation never really disappeared in the history of Chinese writing, orthography was comparatively stable in the both the earlier and later periods, first because of the limited genres and a somewhat restricted writing community[21] in the previous writings on bronze and oracle bones, and second due to strong political interference and regulations of language in the subsequent writings after the unification that began in the Qin dynasty. The *Shuowen jiezi*, summarizes the condition of writings in the Warring States as being extremely changeable, and it also explains how the so-called "orthodox" writing system had ramified into different systems in each state.[22] Furthermore, Xu Shen's

[21] For instance, see Adam Smith, "The Evidence for Scribal Training at Anyang," in Writing and Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar, ed. Li Feng and David Prager Branner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 173-205.

[22] *Shuowen jiezi,* 316.

observations on pre-imperial writing have been advanced and complicated by the explosion of archeological finds since the beginning of the last century: with the growing number of the paleographic materials, scholars have observed still not yet definite but clear geographic characteristics of the graphic forms; in both calligraphic and structural dimensions, many graphs were written quite differently from one state to another. The founding father of Chinese paleography, Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877–1927) first proposed that writings in the Warring States had bifurcated into two major divisions: "scripts of the western land, the Qin state" (西土秦國文字) and "scripts of the eastern land, the six states" (東土六國文字).[23] After that, the two-fold categories gradually evolved into Qin 秦, Jin 晉, Qi 齊, Yan 燕, and Chu 楚 as the five major systems of the Warring States scripts.[24] Within this categorization, not only did the eastern states scripts differ markedly from that of the Qin in the west, but differences between those states themselves were also significant. Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 sees "the use of variant forms in each state" 各國文字異形 and "the currency of popular forms" 俗體流行 as the two most prominent

[23] See Wang Guowei, "Shizhou pian shuzheng xu"史籀篇疏證序, in *Wang Guowei quanji di ba juan · Guantang jilin* 王國維全集第八卷 · 觀堂集林 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009), 197–198; "Zhanguo shi qin yong zhouwen liuguo yong guwen shuo" 戰國時秦用籀文六國用古文說, in *Wang Guowei quanji di ba juan · Guantang jilin*, 161–165.

[24] Important studies on the establishment of the categorization of the Warring States regional writing system, include Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Zhanguo shidai de qin guo tongqi" 戰國時代的秦國銅器, *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 文物參考資料 1957.8; *Zhanguo timing gaishu* 戰國題銘概述 (Hongkong: Shenzhou tushu gongsi, 1974) Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋, "Shilun sanjin bingqi de guobie he niandai jiqi xiangguan wenti" 試論三晉兵器的國別和年代及其相關問題, *Kaogu xuebao* 1974.1: 13–44; Tang Lan 唐蘭, *Gu wenzi xue daolun* 古文字學導論 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1981), 33, 315; Zhu Dexi and Qiu Xigui, "Qin shihuang 'shu tong wen zi' de lishi zuoyong."

The two most important works on this topic are (1) Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, *Wenzixue gaiyao* 文字學概要 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2000), English translation by Gilbert L. Mattos and Jerry Norman, *Chinese Writing* (Berkeley, Calif. : Society for the Study of Early China : Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2000); and (2) He Linyi 何琳儀, *Zhanguo wenzi tonglun* 戰國文字通論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989). More recent studies include Xu Xueren 許學仁, "Zhanguo wenzi fenyu yu duandai yanjiu" 戰國文字分域與斷代研究, PhD diss., Taiwan Normal University, 1986; Zhou Bo, *Zhanguo mingwen*.

features of the Warring States writing.[25] Taking two common words {者} (auxiliary indicator) and {市} (n. "market") from different regions as examples, Qiu enumerated the use of variant forms in each state (Table 1). In another study, Ōnishi Katsuya 大西克也 also gave us multiple representative examples by layout out them on a geographic map, such as {馬} (n. "horse") and {乘} (v. "to ride") from the five major regions with distinctive graphic characteristics (Fig. 1,2).[26] As plenty of similar examples would demonstrate, characters from different regions differed in both calligraphic style and graphic structure, so the regional characteristics appeared differently in both their aesthetic presentation and constitutional structure.

	Qin 秦	Chu 楚	Qi 齊	Yan 燕	San Jin 三晉
{者}					
{市}					

Table 1

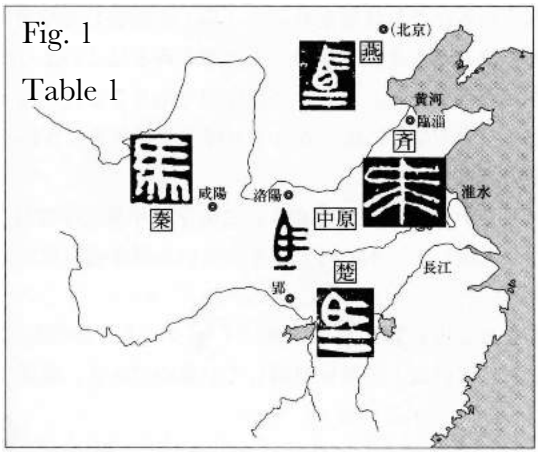


Fig. 1 {馬}

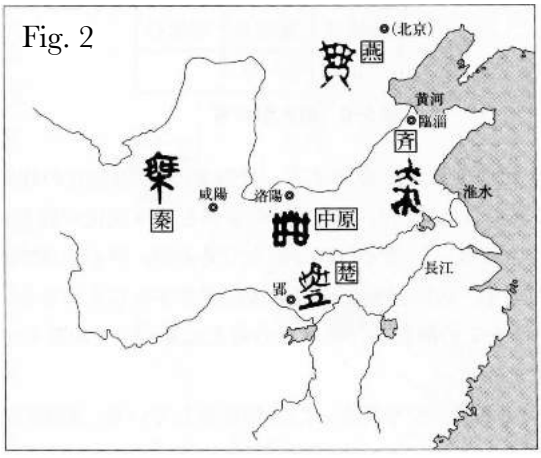


Fig. 2 {乘}

At the same time, it is equally important to note that the geographical differences between the characters were by no means rigid or universal—the various states of the Warring States

[25] *Chinese Writing*, 86–87.

[26] Ōnishi Katsuya 大西克也, "Moji tōitsu to shinkan no shisho" 文字統一と秦漢の史書, *Shogaku shodo shi kenkyū* 書学書道史研究 24 (2014): 93–103; Ōnishi and Miyamoto Tōru 宮本徹, *Ajia to kanji bunka* アジアと漢字文化 (Tokyo: Hōsō Daigaku Kyōiku Shinkōkai, 2009), 107.

period influenced one another, and there was considerable overlap and graphic relatedness between states. With the accumulation of the extant materials, it has gradually become clear that each division might incorporate more than one state.[27] Within each division, tremendous work in the mainstream study of paleography has been done in deciphering, differentiating, and contextualizing the scripts in their geographical and historical background.[28] Although certain

[27] For example, the Qi division also included writings from the Lu 魯 and Zou 邾 states, and the Chu division also included the Zeng 曾, Wu 吳, Yue 越 areas. He Linyin has discussed how every division of the script system also includes multiple adjacent states: the Qi division also included writings of the Lu 魯 and Zou 邾 states, and the Chu division also included the Zeng 曾, Wu 吳, Yue 越, Xu 徐, Cai 蔡, Song 宋 areas. See He Linyi, *Zhanguo wenzi tonglun* 戰國文字通論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 85-201.

[28] Within each of division, there are a series of important works. A selective list of studies on the Jin division include Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋, "Shilun sanjin bingqi de guobie he niandai jiqi xiangguan wenti" 試論三晉兵器的國別和年代及其相關問題, *Kaogu xuebao* 1974.1: 13–44; "Sanjin tongqi de guobie, niandai, yu xiangguan zhidu" 三晉銅器的國別、年代與相關制度, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 17 (1989): 1–66; Qin Xiaohua 秦曉華, "Dongzhou Jin xi wenzi ziliao yanjiu" 東周晉系文字資料研究, 2008. Ph.D. diss., Zhongshan University, 2008; Tang Zhibiao 湯志彪, *San Jin wenzibian* 三晉文字編 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 2013); Yu Miaomiao 余淼淼, "Jinxi jinwen zhengli yu yanjiu" 晉系金文整理與研究, Ph.D. diss., Huadong Normal University, 2013; Liu Gang 劉剛, "Jin xi wenzi de fanwei ji neibu chayi yanjiu" 晉系文字的範圍及內部差異研究, Ph.D. diss., Huadong Normal University, 2013; Yang Kun 楊坤, "Zhanguo Jin xi tongqi mingwen jiaoshi ji xiangguan wenti chutan" 戰國晉系銅器銘文校釋及相關問題初探, M.A. thesis, Jilin University, 2015.

On the Qi division, see Jiang Shuhui 江淑惠, "Qiguo yiming huikao" 齊國彝銘匯考, M.A. thesis, Taiwan University, 1984; Huang Shengzhang, "Yan, qi bingqi yanjiu" 燕、齊兵器研究, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 19 (1992): 1–65; Xu Zaiguo 徐在國, "Lun wan zhou qi xi wenzi de tedian" 論晚周齊系文字的特點, M.A. thesis, Jilin University, 1992; Sun Gang 孫剛, *Qi Wenzi bian* 齊文字編 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2010.); Zhang Zhenqian 张振谦, *Qi xi wenzi yanjiu* 齊系文字研究 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2019).

On the Yan division, see Feng Shengjun, "Zhanguo yan xi guwenzi ziliao zongshu" 戰國燕系古文字資料綜述, M.A. thesis, Jilin University, 1997; Zhu Qixiang 朱啟祥, "Lun Zhongshan yiqi mingwen ziti de xitong" 論中山彝器銘文字體的系統, in *Lianhe shuyuan sanshi zhounian jinian luwenji* 聯合書院三十周年紀念論文集 (Hong Kong: Hongkong zhongwen daxue lianhe shuyuan, 1989), 59–70; Liu Binhui 劉彬徽, "Chuguo you ming tongqi biannian gaishu" 楚國有銘銅器編年概述, *Gu wenzi yanjiu* 9 (1984): 331–372; Li Ling 李零, "Chu guo tongqi mingwen biannian huishi" 楚國銅器銘文編年匯釋, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 13 (1986): 353–397; Huang Xiquan 黃錫全, "Chu xi wenzi lue lun" 楚系文字略論, *Huaxia kaogu* 華夏考古 (1990).3, 99–108; Dong Chuping 董楚平, *Wu Yue Xu Shu jinwen jishi* 吳越徐舒金文集釋 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1992); Liu Binhui, *Chu xi qingtongqi yanjiu* 楚系青銅器研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995); Zou Fudu 鄒芙都, *Chu xi mingwen zonghe yanjiu* 楚系銘文綜合研究 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2007).

On the Chu division, see Liu Binhui and Liu Changwu 劉長武, *Chu xi jinwen huibian* 楚系金文彙編 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009); Huang Jinqian 黃錦前, *Chuxi tongqi mingwen yanjiu* 楚系銅器銘文研

corpus' regional categorization is still under debate,[29] we can conclude that there were substantial geographic divergencies of graphic forms that appeared among the writings from certain areas in the Warring States.

As clear geographic features of the Warring States writings have emerged, more than a few manuscripts, especially literary texts, have betrayed a curious mixture of multiple regional paleographic traits. That is, these manuscripts contain more than one regional feature, suggesting a certain level of textual or scribal mobility or collaboration at the time. (I will discuss this aspect in chapter 5.) For the Chu scripts, which comprise the largest number of materials on hand, Chen Wei, Olivier Venture, and Li Shoukui have proposed that there were more local and

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究, Ph.D. diss., Anhui University, 2009; Li Tianhong 李天虹, *Chuguo tongwi yu zhujian wenzi yanjiu* 楚國銅器與竹簡文字研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2012); Zhang Han 張晗, "Chu tongqu mingwen zhengli yu yanjiu" 楚銅器銘文整理與研究, Ph.D. diss., Huadong Normal University, 2015; Li Shoukui 李守奎, "Chu wenzi yanjiu yu 'chu wenzixue' de jiangou" 楚文字研究與"楚文字學"的構建, in Li, *Hanzi xue lungao* 漢字學論稿 (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2016); Ma Xiaowen 馬曉穩, "Wu yue wenzi ziliao zhengli ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu" 吳越文字資料整理及相關問題研究, Ph.D. diss., Jilin University, 2017; Guo Liyuan 郭理遠, "Chu xi wenzi yanjiu" 楚系文字研究, , Ph.D. diss., Fudan University, 2020.

On the Qin division, ses Wang Hui 王輝, *Qin tongqi mingwen biannian jishi* 秦銅器銘文編年集釋 (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1990); *Qin wenzi jizheng* 秦文字集證 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1999); *Qin chutu wenxian biannian* 秦出土文獻編年 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2000); see also Chen Zhaorong, *Qin xi wenzi yanjiu: cong hanzi shi de jiaodu kaocha*.

[29] For instance, concerning the belonging of scripts of the Zeng 曾, Song 宋, Wu 吳, and Yue 越 states , or, whether they should belong to the Chu division, scholars have different ideas. See Wang Ziyang 王子楊, "Zengguo wenzi yanjiu" 曾國文字研究, M.A. thesis, Beijing Normal University, 2008, 24–26, 30–31; Zeng Ziwei 曾紫薇 separated Zeng script from the Chu division, in "Zengguo wenzi gouxing yu shuti yanjiu" 曾國文字構形與書體研究, M.A. thesis, Hunan University, 2014; Ma Xiaowen 馬曉穩 considered Wu and Yue scripts belong to the Chu division, see "Wu yue wenzi ziliao zhengli ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu" 吳越文字資料整理及相關問題研究, Ph.D. diss., Jilin University, 2017; Li Shoukui proposed that Song 宋 scripts should not belong to the Chu division, see "Chu wenzi yanjiu yu Chu wenzixue de jiangou." Guo Liyuan summarized a series of local scripts that should not belong to Chu division, see Guo "Chu xi wenzi yanjiu," 39–47.

Meanwhile, few scholars challenged the idea of the regional features of script, see Li Yunfu 李運富, "Zhanguo wenzi 'diyu tedian' zhiyi" 戰國文字"地域特點"質疑 *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 1997.5: 170–182; *Chuguo jianbo wenzi gouxing xitong yanjiu*, 90–94.

typical "Chu writing habits" among the spontaneous writings including utilitarian, funerary, or administrative records such as the Baoshan 包山, Geling 葛陵, and Wangshan 望山 corpora.[30] In comparison, in the Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua corpora, multiple cases of philosophical/historical/literary treatises were written in a combination of typical Chu and non-Chu paleographic forms.[31] In other words, for those pre-imperial funerary, divinatory, utilitarian, administrative texts, as "texts without a history (Kern)"[32] with "handwriting representing the writer's own voice" 自述型筆跡 (Li Songru),[33] typical Chu regional orthography and calligraphy were more likely used. On the other hand, "texts with a history" with "handwriting not

[30] See Olivier Venture, "Looking for Chu People's Writing Habits," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 63.4 (2009), 943–57; Li, "Chu wenzi yanjiu yu 'Chu wenzixue' de jiangou."

[31] Examples include the Guodian **Tang Yu zhidao* 唐虞之道, **Zhong xin zhidao* 忠信之道, **Yucong A-C* 語叢 1–3, **Wuxing* 五行, the Shangbo manuscripts **Ziyi* 緇衣, **Jinggong nue* 競公瘧, **Kongzi jian Jihuanzi* 孔子見季桓子, etc, and the Tsinghua manuscripts **Houfu* 厚父, **She Ming* 攝命, **Xinian* 繫年, etc. Conceivably, as Feng Shengjun proposed, since the philosophical/historical/literary texts might be "the result of a succession of copies made by multiple people, possibly including non-Chu people." See Feng Shengjun, Guodian jian yu shangbo jian duibi yanjiu 郭店簡與上博簡對比研究 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2007), 255; Chou Feng-wu (Zhou Fengwu) 周鳳五, "Guodian zhujian de xingshi tezheng jiqi fenlei yiyi" 郭店竹簡的形式特徵及其分類意義, in *Guodian chujian guoji xueshu yantaohui wenji* 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集, edited by Wuhan daxue zhongguo wenhua yanjiuyuan 武漢大學中國文化研究院 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000) , 53–63; "Chujian wenzi de shufashi yiyi" 楚簡文字的書法史意義, in *Guwenzi yu shangzhou wenming——di san jie guoji hanxue huiyi lunwenji wenzixue* zu 古文字與商周文明——第三届國際漢學會議論文集文字學組, edited by Jung Bor-Sheng (Zhong Baisheng) 鍾柏生 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishiyuyan yanjiusuo [Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica], 2002), 195–221; Lin Su-ch'ing (Lin Suqing) 林素清, "Guodian, Shangbo *Ziyi* zhi bijiao——jianlun zhanguo wenzi de guobie wenti" 郭店、上博〈緇衣〉簡之比較——兼論戰國文字的國別問題, in *Xin Chutu wenxian yu gudai wenming yanjiu* 新出土文獻與古代文明研究, edited by Xie Weiyang 謝維揚 and Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清 (Shanghai: Shanghai daxue chubanshe, 2004), 83–96 .

Song Yawen 宋亞雯, "Qinghua jian Zhong de fei dianxing chu wenzi yinsu wenti yanjiu" 清華簡中的非典型楚文字因素問題研究 Ph.D. diss., Fudan University, 2016; Wang Yongchang 王永昌, "Qinghua jian wenzi yu jin xi wenzi duibi yanjiu" 清華簡文字與晉系文字對比研究 Ph.D. diss., Fudan University, 2018; Qiu Yang 邱洋, "Qinghua jian Houfu *Sheming Feng Xu zhiming *Sigao de fei dianxing chu xi wenzi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu" 清华简《厚父》《摄命》《封许之命》《四告》的非典型楚系文字及相关问题研究, M.A. Thesis, Wuhan University, 2021. An important survey on this topic, see Guo Liyuan 郭理遠, "Chu xi wenzi yanjiu" 楚系文字研究, , Ph.D. diss., Fudan University, 2020,182-214.

[32] Kern, "Methodological Reflection," 145–148.

[33] Li Songru, *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu*, 107-108.

necessarily representing the writer's own voice" 非自述型筆跡 are more likely displayed the orthographic traits from other regions accordingly, no matter whether they were from the scribe or from source texts. In short, as the geographic orthographic characteristics distinguished one region from another, the dynamics of textual transmission further complicated the picture of the orthography as it appeared in a text.

2.2 Different Objects for Different Functions

Along the previous lines, the second factor that might entail a graphic variation is the different purposes or functions of a written object. Conceivably, writings on formal, official, or solemn objects would convey more standardized or accurate writings, whereas texts on personal, informal, or casual occasions might carry more simplified or cursive graphs. With the accumulation of archeological finds, a series of studies have corroborated this point. As early as 1926, Wang Guowei pointed out that inscriptions on two typical bronzes from the state of Qi, the Chenhou Wu *dui* 陳侯午敦 and the Chenhou Yinqi *dui* 陳侯因資敦, were produced with much more caution and orthographic regulation, since they were important ancestral temple vessels, which explains why the graphic forms on them would be fairly dissimilar from those appearing on pottery objects, weapons, coins, and seals of the same regions.[34] Later, Sun Haibo 孫海波 also differentiated graphs into two categories: "official graphs" (官府文字) and "popular graphs" (民間文字); the former was adopted in official writings and used in formal bronze inscriptions, while the latter usually appeared on coins, pottery objects, and seals, and were used

[34] Wang Guowei, *Wang Guowei quanji di shiwu juan · shuxin* 王國維全集 第十五卷 · 書信 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009), 885–887.

by the wider scope of common people.[35] The differences between the "official graphs" and "popular graphs" have been articulated by multiple scholars along with the growing number of discovered materials. For example, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 depicted the official forms in the Warring States, which were inherited from the Western Zhou graphic orthodoxy as "standardized and systematic," whereas the popular forms were "simplified, cursive, and hasty."[36] Similarly, Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 describes the official graphs as "conservative, stable, complicated, and ubiquitous/unconditional (無地方性)," whereas the popular graphs were "creative, fluid, simplified, and local."[37] More concretely, Qiu Xigui compared Chu scripts from two different occasions: in the "Ejun Qi *jie*" 鄂君啟節 (bronze tallies issued to Ejun Qi's trade troops) cast during the reign of King Huai of Chu (r. 328–299 BCE), the graphic forms comprising their inscriptions are relatively complete and regulated. By contrast, the graphic forms appearing on the Wangshan Chu manuscripts for funerary purposes, which were close in time and space to the "Ejun Qi *jie*," are comparatively simple and cursory. For instance, when Qiu takes {馬}, {金}, and {則} as examples (Table 2), it is apparent that the graphic forms were distinctly different: the characters on the Ejun Qi *jie* are more complete and closer to the earlier writings, while the graphs on the Wangshan manuscripts are comparatively simplified, and some strokes are combined into one. [38]

Table 2

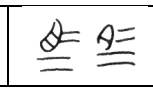
	{馬}	{金}	{則}
Ejun Qi *jie* (Officially issued)			

[35] Sun Haibo, *Zhongguo wenzi xue* 中國文字學 (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1979), 61–22.

[36] Guo Moruo, "Gudai wenzi zhi bianzheng fazhan," 6–9.

[37] Chen Mengjia, *Zhongguo wenzi xue*, 132–135.

[38] Qiu Xigui, *Wenzi xue gaiyao* 文字學概要 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2013), 62–63.

Wangshan manuscripts (locally made)			

Chen Mengjia also reminds us that although there are considerable graphic differences between official writing and popular/local writing, it does not mean that the graphs in the two categories are mutually exclusive. In the Warring States, although graphic forms might have changed their appearance according to different occasions, "formal and informal" writings, or "official and non-official," are comparative, rather than definite concepts. As Zhou Bo stressed in his recent works, between the official and non-official texts, there is substantial sharing of orthographic similarities as well as dissimilarities; if we compare the ancient scripts 古文 of the *Shuowen*, such as the Han records of the Warring States scripts from nonofficial literary texts from the eastern states, with the official scripts on many Chu bronze inscriptions, or the legal texts excavated from the Baoshan Chu tomb, we still would find numerous similarities and differences at the same time.[39] In short, although the orthography and a written object's function might be related, the occasion itself, whether official or unofficial, cannot be the sole factor in determining the graphic form of every word. The graphic discrepancies within the same corpus and even the same document demonstrate that even on the same or similar occasions that are thus are close in time and space, there still a huge space for graphic inconsistencies to be created by different individuals. Thus, one's individual traits, peculiarities, even contingencies might also play a decisive role in shaping the orthographic nature of a given text.

[39] Zhou Bo, *Zhanguo shidai gexi wenzi jian de yongzi chayi xianxiang yanjiu* 戰國時代各系文字間的用字差異現象研究 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2012), 27.

2.3 Graphic Variations in the Same Document

The third factor that might contribute to graphic variation in the Warring States writings is the individual producer's preference. That is, as Galmabos summarized, "orthographic variability in Warring States writings was not always due to temporal or geographical factors but…could occur within the same written dialect, sometimes within the same manuscript."[40] The occurrence of different graphic forms appearing on the same document can be traced back to the oracle bone and bronze inscriptions. In 2000, Li Xueqin 李學勤 proposed the concept of "variation in graphic forms of the same word and the same character" (tongci tongzi yigou 同辭同字異構), describing the phenomenon in which the same graph is composed of different structures in the same oracle or bronze inscription, but these graphic variations do not signify any lexical differences. He enumerated multiple examples such as {車} on the Shi Wen ding 師問鼎, suggesting that the coexistence of the standardized graphic form and the simplified one in the same inscription was driven by the calligraphic or aesthetic purposes.[41] Furthermore, scholars have pointed out that graphic variants that appear on oracle bone and bronze inscriptions are often mirrored or horizontally reversed: for instance, two {勿} graphs on the Shi Dong ding 師働簋 were written as and ; two {易} graphs on the Shi Qiu ding 師俅鼎 as and .[42] With the accumulation of similar cases, scholars have confirmed the idea that graphs that mirror

[40] Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*, 8.

[41] Li Xueqin, "Jiaguwen tongci tongzi yigou li" 甲骨文同辭同字異構例, *Jianghan kaogu* 江漢考古 (2000): 1, 30–32.

[42] Liu Zhiji 劉志基, "Jiaguwen tongci tongzi jingxiang shi yigou yanjiu" 甲骨文同辭同字鏡像式異構研究, *Zhongguo wenzi yanjiu* 中國文字研究 17 (2013): 1–10; Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄, *Seishu seidoki to sono kokka* 西周青銅器及其國家 (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1980), 66–70, 88–91; Liu Zhao 劉釗, *Guwenzi gouxingxue* 古文字構形學 (Xiamen: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2011), 9–16.

each other normally do not signify a lexical difference, but are only for aesthetic purposes such as calligraphic creativity or the "avoidance of graphic repetition" (*bifu* 避複).

The first methodological reflection on this topic was conducted by Xu Baogui 徐寶貴 in 2002 when he listed 204 groups of graphic variants that appeared on the same bronze vessels. He also gave a very detailed analysis with thirty-three divisions of typology, elucidating the different ways of presenting the same graph, none of which denotes differences in meaning. The variations include changes in overall structure, component(s), or certain stroke(s); and element(s) that can be added, eliminated, borrowed, or replaced by others.[43] In a more recent survey, Liu Zhiji 劉志基 and Zou Ye 鄒燁 listed seven general kinds of graphic variations that appear in the same document. Some of the examples include (Table 3):

Table 3

two {永} in Heng cong xu 哼從盨: 	two {沈} in Shenzi Ta gui gai 沈子它簋: 
three {我} in Shi Hen gui 師獸簋: 	two {虎} in Shi Hu gui 師虎簋: 
two {其} in Qiu Wei he 裘衛盉: 	two {衛} in Qiu Wei he 裘衛盉: 
three {何} in He zun 何簋: 	two {金} in Bogong fu gui 伯公父簋: 
two {公} in Chugong Ni zhong 楚公逆鐘: 	two {孚} in Duoyou ding 多友鼎: 

At the same time, scholars found that there was a diachronic increment of the same document's graphic variation: in the later generation vessels, there were more possibilities of conveying graphic changeability in the same characters.[44] For the Warring States materials, it has almost become a consensus that orthographic flexibility was ubiquitous.

[43] Xu Baogui 徐寶貴, "Shang zhou qingtongqi mingwen bifu yanjiu" 商周青銅器銘文避複研究, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 (2002): 3, 261–276.

[44] Liu Zhiji 劉志基 and Zou Ye 鄒燁, "Xizhou jinwen yongzi bifu zai yanjiu" 西周金文用字避複再研究, *Hanja yeongu* 한자연구 7 (2012): 21–45.

The most demonstrative or even dramatic extant example of graphic variants might be the Houma covenant texts. Just as Galambos emphasized, the highly formulaic and repetitive language largely eliminates the possibility that different graphic forms stand for different meanings, so the Houma corpus is a revealing snapshot for studying the Warring States orthography in its own context. On the issue of orthographic changeability, Kang Youn-ok 강윤옥 commented on the prevalence of the orthographic variation as one of the inherent qualities of Houma writing; for example, he found that in some extreme cases, {敢} has ninety-two different graphic forms, and {腹} has more than one hundred.[45] (Fig.3) Likewise, as a series of studies have shown, this phenomenon of graphic changeability can also be found among almost all the Warring States bamboo or silk manuscripts, from administrative documents and funerary texts such as the Baoshan, Xinyang, Zenghou Yi manuscripts[46] to philosophical and historical texts such as the Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua manuscripts.[47]

Fig. 3



[45] Kang Yun-ok 강윤옥, "Huma maengsŏ 'ilcha tahyŏng' chung ŭi isaja koch'al" 후마맹서(侯馬盟書) "일자다형(一字多形)" 중의이사자(異寫字) 고찰, *Chungguk hakpo* 중국학보 64.0 (2011): 3–28.

[46] Li Yunfu 李運富, *Chuguo jianbo wenzi gouxing xitong yanjiu* 楚國簡帛文字構形系統研究 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1997).

[47] Lin Suqing, "Chujian wenzi zonglun" 楚簡文字綜論, in *Guwenzi yu shangzhou wenming* 古文字與商周文明 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 2002), 145–157. For example, she enumerated {喪} in Guodian **Laozi* C, {惡} in **Lu Mugong wen Zisi*; {情}, {貪}, {倍}, {吁}, {乘}, {弱}, {狂} in **Yucong* 1~3. Concerning this topic in the Guodian and Shangbo corpora, see Liu Zhiji, "Chujian 'yongzi bifu' chuyi" 楚簡"用字避複"芻議, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 29 (2012): 672–681. In the Tsinghua corpus, **Xianin* 繫年, *Yuegong qi shi* 越公其事 are the two have multiple cases of graphic variations. As we will discuss later, it is noticeable that Li Songru suggests graphic variations on the Xinian manuscript resulted from the complicated

Although Galambos carried out his study only on the Houma and Guodian corpora, his conclusion is valid for numerous other Warring State writings: "the writers and readers, whether humans or spirits, as a group tolerated a considerable degree of structural fluidity."[48] He also convincingly noted that although while the notion of standardization had not yet come up at this time, scribes might have had their "dominant forms"—forms that were much more frequently used than others. He sees the preferred dominant form as being the scribe's personal choice; because his major source for this conclusion is the Houma covenant texts, it would be reasonable to think that scribes who were in charge of utilitarian writings ("texts without a history") could have composed the texts completely from their own preference of graphic forms. However, again, what was the situation for the philosophic, historical, literary texts ("texts with a history")?[49] When scribes wrote those texts, they did so not only according to their own writing habits, but sometimes they also had to familiarize themselves with the existing sources from elsewhere, whether from their teachers, a physical referential text, or even, in some circumstances, a master copy. What if a graphic form in the existing texts that they were going to consult or copy, was different from the scribes' personally preferred "dominant form"? When pre-imperial scribes had to decide between an existing text and their own orthographic habit,

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sources behind it editorial process, whereas that appeared in the Yuegong qi shi was from the scribe's purposeful alteration. See Chen Meilan 陳美蘭, "Qinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian (er) *Xinian* yongzi xianxiang kaocha — yi tong ci yi zi weili" 清華大學藏戰國竹簡（貳）〈繫年〉用字現象考察—以同詞異字爲例, in *Di ershiwu jie zhongguo wen xue guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 第二十五届中國文字學國際學術研討會論文集 (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua daxue zhongguo wenxue xi, 2014), 393–424; Li Songru 李松儒, "Shi xi Xinian zhong de yici duoxing xianxiang" 試析〈繫年〉中的一詞多形現象, in Li, *Qinghua jian* Xinian *yu gushi xintan* 清華簡〈繫年〉與古史新探 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2016), 455–486; Li shoukui 李守奎 and Xiao Pan 肖攀, *Qinghuajian* Xinian *wenzi kaoshi yu gouxing yanjiu* 清華簡〈繫年〉文字考釋與構形研究 (Shanghai: Zhong xi shu ju, 2015), 42–61; Li Songru, "Qinghua qi *Yuegong qishi* Zhong de yici duoxing xianxiang" 清華柒〈越公其事〉中的一詞多形現象, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 17.1 (2018): 73–96.

[48] Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*, 145.

[49] Kern, "Methodological Reflection," 145–148.

what did they choose? The complex history of the literary texts makes the origins of the graphic variations even harder to trace.

Concerning the orthographic changeability on one textual object, previous studies normally ascribe it either to 1) the producer's own aesthetic or calligraphic creativity[50] or 2) the supposition that it was influenced by the "master copies."[51] However, to my mind, although these solutions might fit well with many cases, the two explanations are fundamentally incompatible. The former theory suggests that a scribe was allowed or even expected to be "creative" in their writings: they could write whatever graphs they preferred, hence implying that scribes were strongly autonomous in their work. The latter explanation, however, assumes that all graphic variations invariably succeeded from the "master copies," thus a rigid visual copying model with absolute requirement of accuracy, which relentlessly removed all scribal agency and see all scribes as functioning in a completely instrumental role. That is, while the former scenario implies that a pre-imperial scribe worked not only an artisan but also an artist who strove to write differently, the latter indicates that a scribe worked as a copying machine with no power at all to decide on a graphic form. If we compromise a bit and suggest that the reality was a mixture of these two possibilities, then we still have to ask the degree to which the Warring States scribes produced graphic variations through their own choice. What were the occasions on which they decided to create more visual (and semantically irrelevant) changes, and why did they do so? Even if we leave the questions of individuality and specificity unanswered and ascribe all the textual variants to the scribes' capriciousness and incompetence, "arbitrariness" as a conclusion is neither comprehensive nor accurate, thus it should not be the final answer to our discovery of

[50] Xu Baogui, "Shang zhou qingtongqi," 3, 261–276.

[51] For example, see Feng Shengjun, "Cong chutu wenxian kan chaoshou zai xianqin wenxian chuanbu guocheng zhong suo chansheng de yingxiang;" and Li Songru, "Shi xi Xinian zhong de yici duoxing xianxiang."

pre-imperial orthography. In other words, it is true that the writing environment had much higher acceptance and tolerance of graphic variants, but it is inaccurate to depict it as "everyone could write whatever form or graph they preferred and no one cared," as if the texts were produced in a state of anarchy. Rather, it was not only that the scholarly community accepted and tolerated orthographic fluidity, but that a comparatively open environment of writing gave individuals the autonomy to foster their own habits, work using different methods, and execute different levels of criteria of writing. In this regard, the characteristics and signification of the manuscript culture, especially in pre-imperial China, inhered precisely in its complexity and diversity, not just its universality and patterns. In other words, we cannot truly understand the textual culture without asking what roles were played by the people who were actually associated with it. The question of pre-imperial orthography, or the issue of the entire pre-imperial written culture, is inherent intertwined with the working mechanisms of the individual scribes in their specific knowledge communities.

In the following section, I foray into how different Warring States literary scribes from various corpora approached orthography differently.

3. Making the Differences Differently: The Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua

In regard to the Warring States bamboo literary text manuscripts, the Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua manuscripts are three of the most important materials of the very few that are available to us. Quantitatively, they also comprise the majority of that entire corpus.[52] Shortly after the excavation of the Guodian Chu manuscripts in Jingmen, Hubei in 1993, the Shanghai Museum and Tsinghua University were able to retrieve Warring States manuscripts that appeared on the

[52] Other than these three, we only have 1) the Cili 慈利 Chu manuscripts (excavated in 1987), which are unfortunately too fragmented and thus largely illegible, and 2) the Anhui University collection (entered in the collection in 2015), which is still in the process of being edited, with only two volumes published to date.

Hong Kong antique market in 1994 and 2008, respectively. These manuscripts were all presumably produced at a similar time period (the middle-late Warring States) and region (areas in the state of Chu), and have a strong affinity in terms of interconnectedness in paleography and intertextuality. They all cover philosophical, historical, literary, cosmological, and even mechanical topics. As there are multiple parallel texts, the three corpora play a mutually significant role in terms of our understanding of them, insofar as they illuminate numerous passages in the transmitted corpus. As for their materiality, they are analogous since they all exhibit a comparatively high degree of visual appeal and legibility; although there are some cases of less organized handwritings in the Shangbo corpus, most of their layouts are generally balanced and regulated. Altogether, they have greatly advanced our knowledge of pre-imperial texts.

Despite all of this textual and material interconnectedness, it should be accentuated that a curious difference among the three corpora is that in general, the Guodian and Shangbo texts present much higher graphic variability, structurally and non-structurally, whereas the Tsinghua texts have a much higher degree of orthographic and calligraphic consistency. That is, although they were written with largely typical Chu scripts, the Guodian and Shangbo manuscripts present far more graphic irregularities in both the graphic structure and calligraphic style of the characters, which is similar to the contemporaneous administrative and funerary writings; yet most of the Tsinghua manuscript shows a consistent, even identical way of writing the same word throughout the entire body of texts. For instance, let us take the two intensively recurrent words {爲} and {者} as examples (Table 4,5). Semantically, {爲} means "to make/do/act as/serve as," and {者} is a common suffix used as verb/verb-phrase nominalizer or noun/noun-phrase generalizer. Due to its repetitive use and largely stable syntax structure, as well as the parallel

texts among other transmitted and discovered sources, we are fairly certain that the different graphic forms do not signify a different reading.

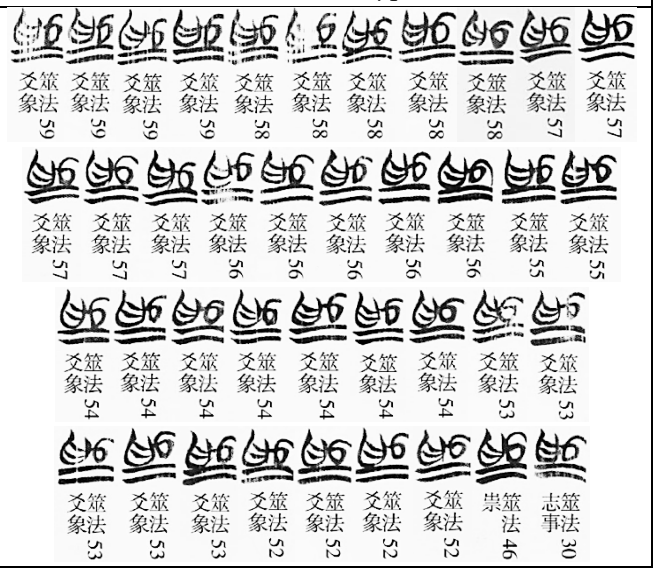
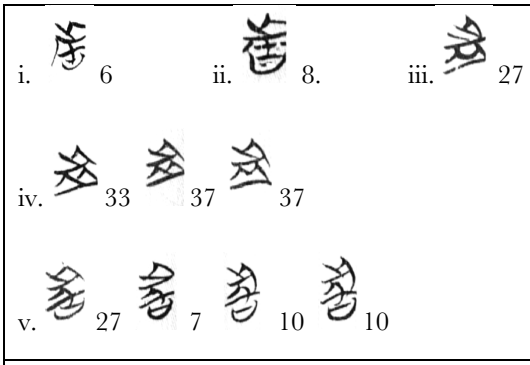
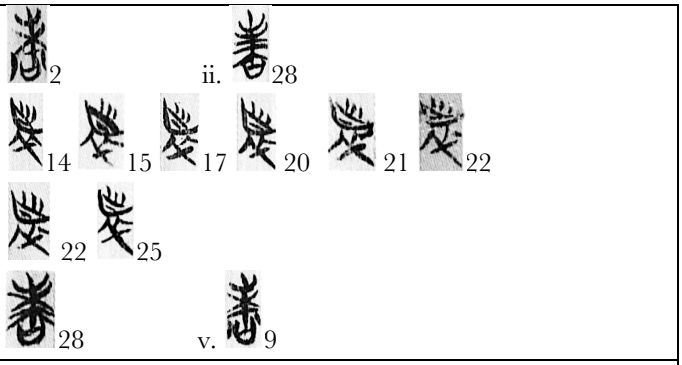
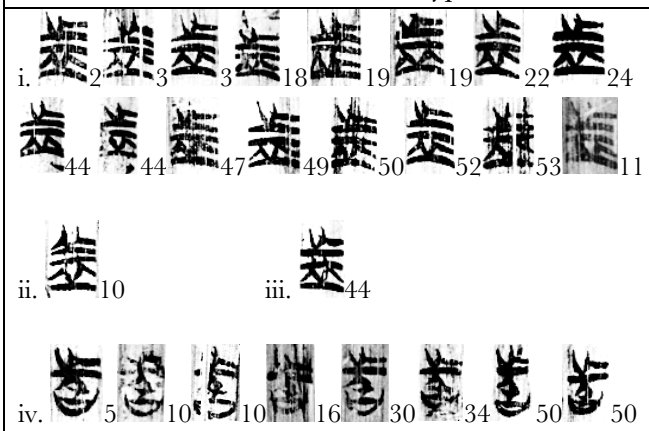
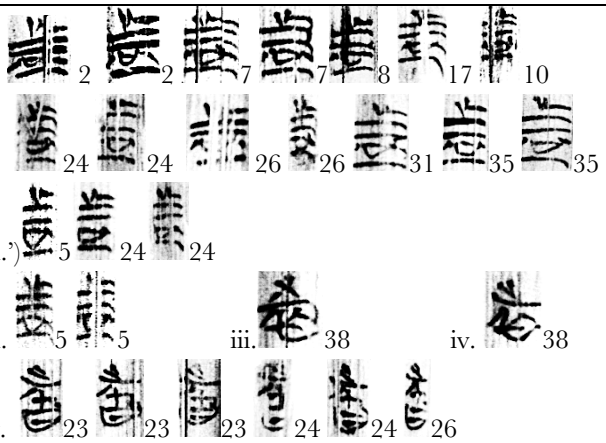
Guodian *_Laozi_ A 老子甲: {爲} 11 cases, 4 types	Shangbo _Rong cheng shi_ 容成氏: {爲} 42 cases, 6 type[53]
i. 6 ii. 14 iii. 8 13 15 Table 4 iv. 2 3 10 17 17 25	i. 7 9 9 12 12 14 17 31 31 31 38 51 ii. 27 28. iii. 2 16 17 20 22 29 30 30 33 33 38 42 42 44 45 iv. 13 53. v. 28 vi. 48
Tsinghua *_Wu ji_ 五紀: {爲} 34 cases, 1 type	Tsinghua *_Shi fa_ 筮法: {爲} 39 cases, 1 type
	

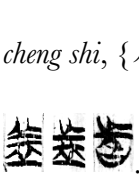
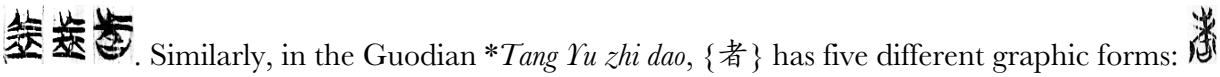
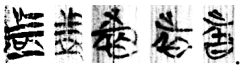
Table 5

Guodian *_Laozi_ A: {者} 10 cases, 5 types	Guodian *_Tang yu zhi dao_ 唐虞之道: {者} 12 cases, 5 types

[53] For the sake of clarity, I did not list all the graphs in the listed Guodian and Shangbo texts, since many of them are fragmented or illegible—in these cases, I only listed representative graphs. For the Tsinghua examples, I listed all the graphs within the same text. The purpose of this chart is to demonstrate that the Guodian and Shangbo corpora have varied graphic forms in the same manuscript whereas the Tsinghua corpus normally does not.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Shangbo Rong cheng shi: {者}
26 cases, 4 types</td><td>Shangbo *Xing qing lun 性情論: {者}
28 cases, 5 types</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Tsinghua *Guanzhong 管仲:
{者} 14 cases, 1 type</td><td>Tsinghua *Yuegong qi shi 越公其事:
{者} 14 cases, 1 type</td><td>Tsinghua *Dao ci 禱詞:
{者} 13 cases, 1 type</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

It is evident that the characters from the Guodian and Shangbo texts exhibit much more graphic changeability than those in the Tsinghua texts. In the Guodian *Laozi A, {爲} has at least four

different forms: , and {者} five: ; likewise, in the Shangbo *Rong cheng shi*, {爲} has at least six different graphic forms: ; and {者} four: . Similarly, in the Guodian **Tang Yu zhi dao*, {者} has five different graphic forms: ; and {者} in the Shangbo **Xing qing lun* also has at least five: .

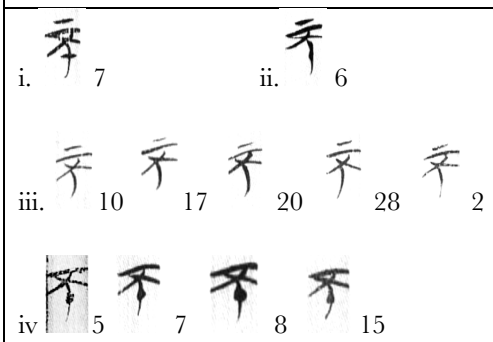
In these various graphic forms, certain elements have different shapes or components, the proportion of the strokes and components is changed, there is more variation in certain strokes, or extra decorative strokes have been added (*xianbi* 羨筆). In contrast, in the Tsinghua **Wuji*, **Shifa*, **Guanzhong, Yuegong qishi*, and **Daoci*, although there may occasionally be some minor variations in the direction or length of certain strokes, such as  (the bottom element is shorter than in the others ), or  which has a thinner stroke in the middle part than the other examples , in general, {爲} and {者} both present a much higher degree of consistency in their graphic appearance. Without structural variation and only a few non-structural variations, the five listed Tsinghua texts consistently maintain all the {爲} and {者} in the same graphic form and calligraphic style; in Richter's terms, they are structurally and non-structurally consistent,[54] throughout the texts.

Furthermore, looking at two other reccurent characters with a simpler structure, {不} and {民} (Table 6,7), it is likewise apparent that the difference is not only graphic form—orthographic flexibility can also be observed widely in the three corpora:

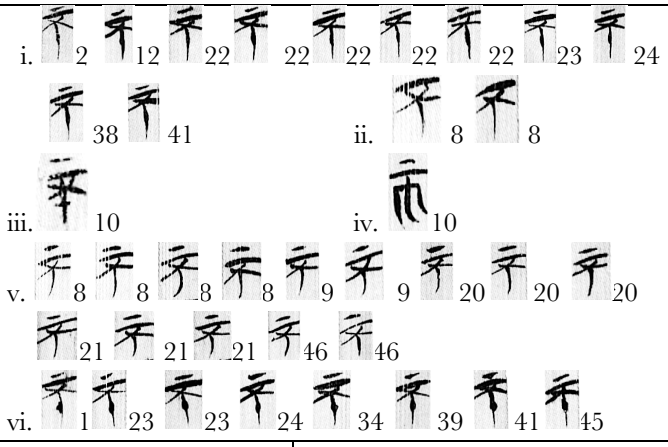
Table 6

[54] Richter, "Towards a Profile of Graphic Variation."

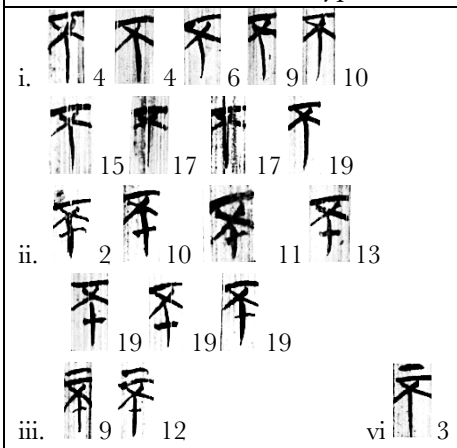
Guodian **Laozi A*: {不} 11 cases, 4 types



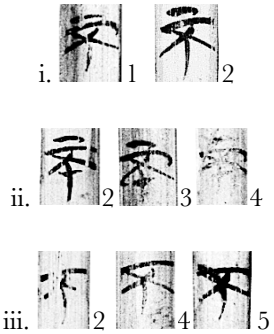
Guodian **Wu xing* 五行: {不} 11 cases, 6 types



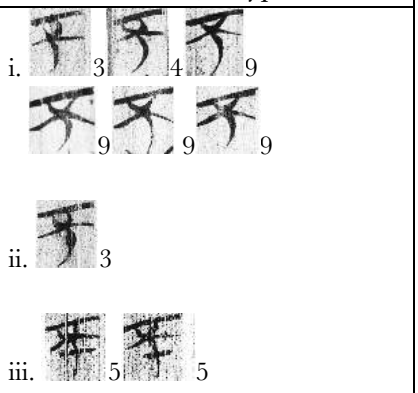
Shangbo **Yong yue* 用曰: {不}
19 cases, 3 types



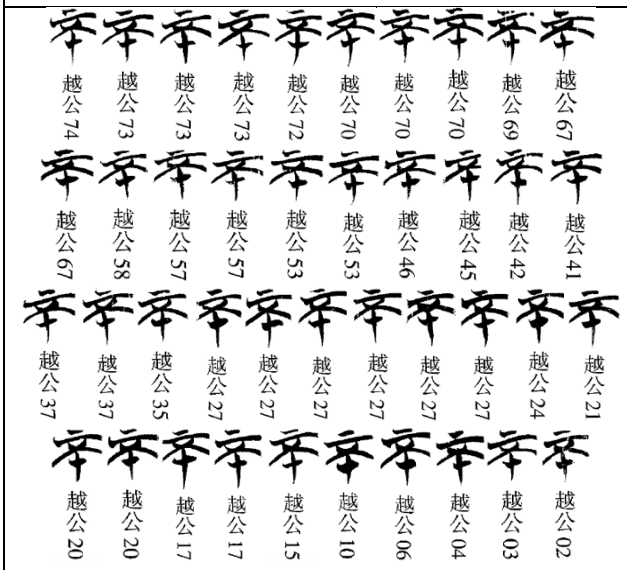
Shangbo **Lan fu* 蘭賦: {不}
8 cases, 3 types



Shangbo **Wu ming* 吳命: {不}
9 times, 3 types



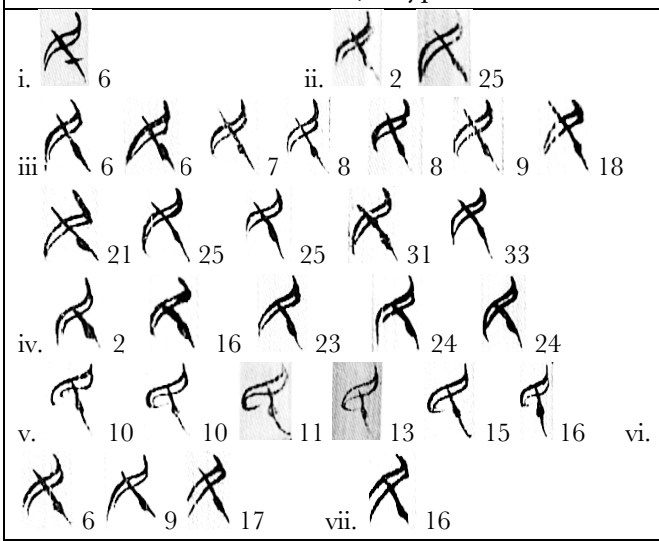
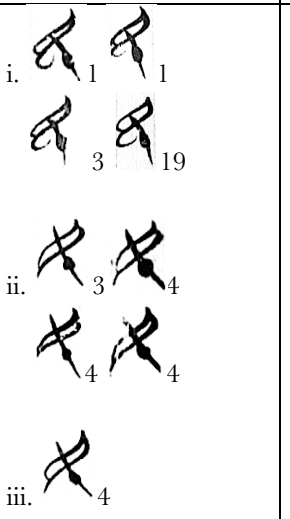
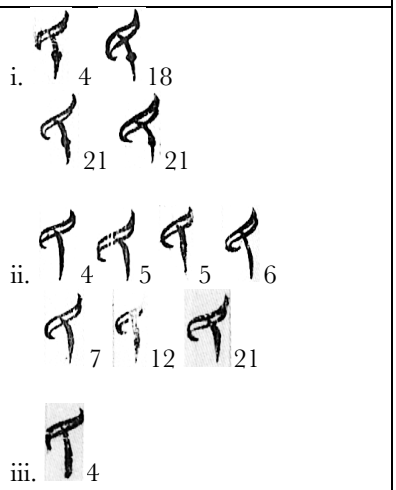
Tsinghua *Yuegong qi shi* 越公其事:
{不} (41 times, 1 type)

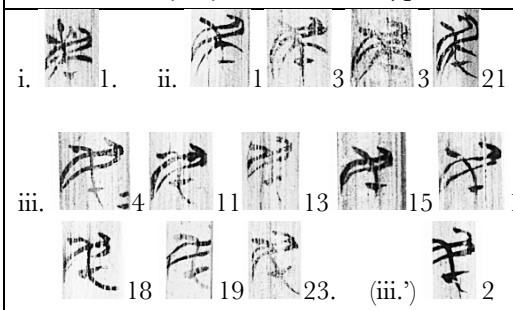
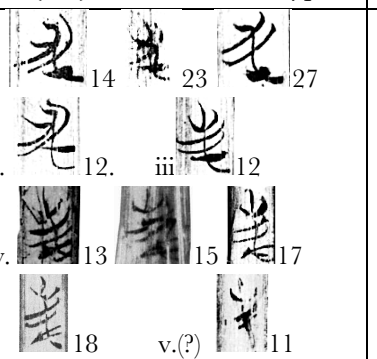
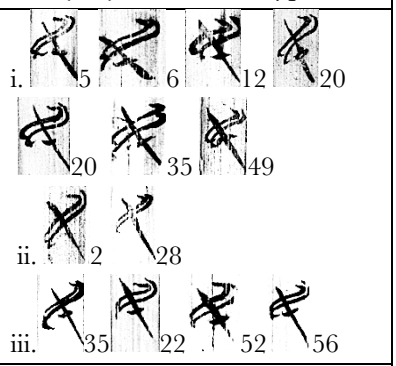


Tsinghua**Zhibang zhi dao* 治邦之道:
{不} (48 times, 1 type)

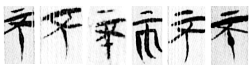
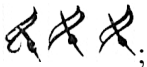


Table 7

Guodian *Ziyi* 緇衣: {民} 33 cases, 7 types	Guodian*Laozi*: {民}9 cases, 3 types	Guodian*Tangyu zhidao*: {民} 12 cases, 3 types
		

Shangbo *Jigengzi wenyu Kongzi*: {民} 14 times, 3 types	Shangbo *Kongzi wen Jihuan zi*: {民} 10 times, 4/5 types	Shangbo *Cao Mo zhi chen*: {民}13 cases, 3 types
		

Tsinghua *Yuegong qishi*: {民} 21 cases, 1type	Tsinghua *San shou*: {民} 13 cases, 1type	Tsinghua *Zichan*: {民} 14 cases, 1 type
		

Regarding the semantic meaning, {不} is a common generic pre-verbal negative and {民} means "people" or "commonfolk"; again, both {不} and {民} were extensively used, so we have enough evidence to believe that the graphic difference does not render a different reading. In comparison with the previous examples {爲} and {者}, {不} and {民} have a less complex graphic composition: they are both constituted of a single component instead of multiple ones. Similarly, the differences in orthographic standards for the same characters in different corpora can also be detected. In the Guodian **Laozi* A, depending on whether or not a horizontal stroke is added on top, or a round dot appears on the lower vertical stroke, there are four structural variations of "不: . Similarly, in the Guodian **Wu xing*, Shangbo **Yong yue*, **Lan fu*, and **Wu ming*, {不} also has multiple graphic presentations: 1) **Wu xing*: ; 2) **Yong yue*: ; 3) **Lan fu:*; 4) **Wu ming*: . Likewise, depending on whether the downward oblique stroke crosses the two diagonal strokes at the top, or a horizontal stroke or a round dot appear in the lower part, or on how the primary connection is composed, the Guodian **Ziyi* presents at least six ways of writing "民": ; the other Guodian and Shangbo texts similarly exhibit: 1) * *Laozi*: ; 2) **Tangyu zhidao*: ; 3) **Jigengzi wenyu Kongzi*: ; **Kongzi wen Jihuan zi*: ; 4) **Cao Mo zhi chen*: . In comparison, in all the listed Tsinghua texts, {不} and {民} remain unchanged in both form and style: one character has only one graphic form and coherent calligraphic style throughout the entire text.

To summarize, it is clear that a substantial number of the Tsinghua texts present a much higher degree of orthographic stability, which forms a sharp contrast to what is exhibited in the Guodian and Shangbo corpora. The recurrent characters in the Tsinghua examples normally did not add, eliminate, or alter the appearance of the component or strokes, nor did they change the proportion, length, angle of the strokes. They are not only structurally consistent in orthography, but to some degree their calligraphy also presents an almost "machine-like" stability—it curiously contradicts to what we previously knew about the non-standardized nature of written culture before the Qin unification. Although it is almost a truism that the Warring States' environment of writing was non-standardized or even heterogenous, yet the drastically varying degree of orthographic consistency informs us that different materials and different people in different contexts could adhere to drastically divergent orthographic standards, to calligraphic constancy, and that they were produced with various working principles: some texts are more disciplined than others, and different people might have used different working methods to produce them.

For every character that I have been able to discuss in-depth, scores of others also prove my point. At the same time, as we address the pervasive instability of the Warring States' orthography, it is definitely not the case that *every character* changes its graphic form *every time* it appears. For the more standardized Tsinghua corpus, a few texts also display a high level of orthographic changeability, such as the **Xinian* and the **Yuegong qi shi*, as Li Songru underscored.[55] But as we have shown earlier, the graphs that more frequently presented more variability in the Guodian and Shangbo corpora still kept their graphic structure consistently in

[55] Chen Meilan, "Qinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian (er) *Xinian* yongzi xianxiang kaocha — yi tong ci yi zi weili"; Li Songru, "Shi xi Xinian zhong de yici duoxing xianxiang"; "Qinghua qi *Yuegong qishi* Zhong de yici duoxing xianxiang." See footnote 42.

the Tsinghua collection. The overall more standardized graphic nature of the Tsinghua collection shows that at least, different orthographic standards were applied to different texts. As three different sets of "things," the Guodian, Shangbo, and Tsinghua collections have a vast number of intertextualities, related paragraphs, parallel texts, and overlapping quotations from the *Odes*, the *Documents*, and other transmitted classics. This strong textual relatedness bespeaks a substantial body of shared literary repertoire. These deeply interconnected yet differently arranged written texts were instances of mutually independent textual instantiation (Richter) or realizations (Owen and Kern),[56] and they were created by drastically different material, paratextual, and orthographic standards.[57]

As scholars have stressed that the discovered manuscripts should not be seen as any "better" or more "reliable" than the transmitted texts,[58] we should neither explain the graphic regularity of the Tsinghua texts as being "superior," or more "reliable," nor claim that the more standardized Tsinghua corpus is "better" than the Guodian and Shangbo manuscripts solely because the recurrent characters are more consistent. Clearly, the scribe of the Guodian **Laozi* are good for being "artistic and creative," while most of the Tsinghua scribes are also good for

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[56] Kern, "'Xi shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') and Its Consequences: Issues in Early Chinese Poetry and Manuscript Studies," *Early China* 42 (2019): 32; see also Stephen Owen, The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006); see also Joseph R. Allen, *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1992).

[57] Li Shoukui speculated that the Tsinghua manuscripts were more likely to have been authoritative editions preserved in a public library, whereas the Guodian manuscripts were more possibly a personal collection or assemblage of excerpts arranged under certain topics. See Li Shoukui, "Chu wenxian zhong de jiaoyu yu qinghua jian Xinian xingzhi chutan" 楚文獻中的教育與清華簡《繫年》性质初探, *Chutuwenxian yu Guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 6 (2015): 291–320.

However, this "public/authoritative vs private" theory might explain for the varying nature of the materiality and orthography at first sight—however, setting a dichotomy between public and private purposes also prevents us from reflecting on the dynamics and multiplicity of use of a given written object in various manners by multiple people.

[58] Kern, "Xi shuai ("Cricket") and its Consequence," 35.

more "disciplined and standardized"—yet which criteria we shall follow? Instead of asking which one is better, we shall summarize that at least the entire knowledge environment allowed different individuals or different communities to work based on their own preferences for or disciplines of orthography and writing; manuscripts as different "things" were produced from and for various contexts.

More importantly, the orthographic regularity in the Tsinghua collection bespeaks the growing awareness of the need for certain practices to standardize potential orthographic irregularities, which must have existed in the history of making these texts, no matter how localized, small-scale, even personal of these actions were. That is, the different thingness derives from the different processes in making them; the contrast between the Tsinghua and the Guodian/Shangbo corpora lies not only the different orthographic standards, but also in the different scribal habits, working methods, and editorial principles that shaped them. In the following section, we examine the Tsinghua collection's different treatments in different scribal hands.

4. Distinctions between Hands

In the previous section, we emphasized that the Tsinghua texts often present much higher orthographic uniformity than the Shangbo and Guodian corpora. If we delve into the Tsinghua corpus, we find that the calligraphic and orthographic constancy can be very often observed not only within one text but also in the manuscript rolls that comprise more than one text, [59] such as

[59] "+" stands for the texts that were believed to have been bound together as one manuscript roll. For more the discussions of the interrelationship between textual and codicological units, see Kalinowski, "La production des manuscrits dans la Chine ancienne;" Staack, "Identifying Codicological Sub-units in Bamboo Manuscripts;" Friedrich and Schwarke, eds., *One-Volume Libraries*.

Fu Yue zhi ming A+B+C,[60] **Tang chuyu Tangqiu*+**Tang zai Chimen*,[61] *Chijiu*+**Yinzhi*+**Yingao*,[62] or **Liangchen*+**Zhuci*.[63] (Table 8,9)

Table 8

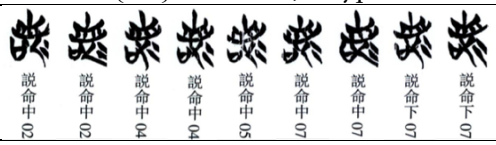
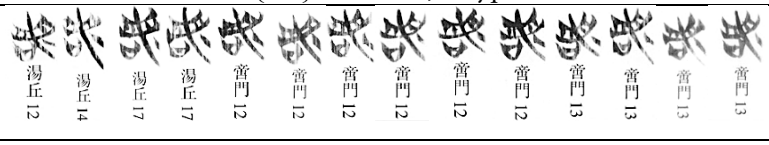
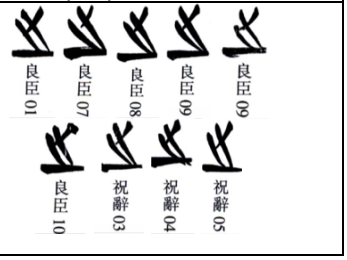
Tsinghua *Fu Yue zhi ming* A+B+C: {若}[64] 9 cases, 1 type	Tsinghua **Tang chuyu Tangqiu*+**Tang zai Chimen*: {若} 14 cases, 1 type
	

Table 9

Tsinghua *Chijiu*+**Yinzhi*+**Yingao*: {之} 29 times	Tsinghua **Liangchen*+**Zhuci*: {之} 9 times
	

Here, the orthographic and calligraphic consistency is maintained in one multi-text manuscript, but it is also important to note that different manuscript rolls present varied yet respectively characteristic orthographic standards. For instance, the middle element of "若" in *Fu Yue zhi ming* A+B+C is uniformly written as "," while the corresponding part in **Tang chuyu Tangqiu*+**Tang zai Chimen* was invariably composed as one single stroke continuous with the upper part of the character: "." Similarly, in the upper connection of "之" in the *Chijiu*+**Yinzhi*+**Yingao* manuscript, the right top stroke consistently does not cross through the

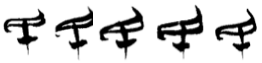
[60] *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (san)*, 121.

[61] *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (wu)*, 134.

[62] Xiao, "Shilun Qinghua zhushu Yi Yin san pian de guanlian."

[63] *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (san),* 156.

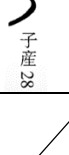
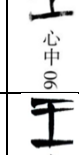
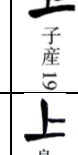
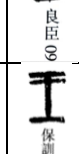
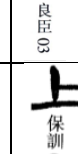
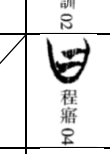
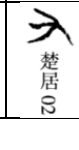
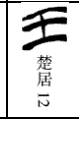
[64] "若" does not appear in *Fu Yue zhi ming* A.

two parallel downward strokes, as in "," whereas in the **Liangchen*+**Zhuci* manuscript, the top stroke consistently crosses the middle parallel stroke and connects with the lower one: "." While highlighting the graphic uniformity within each of the manuscript rolls, we should also note that the same graphs appearing in different manuscript rolls are also different: {若} and {之} in each case present differently. In other words, although the graphic forms are largely consistent within the same text, they can appear differently from text to text. For instance, in the previous table 7, we find in the Tsinghua *Yuegong qishi* manuscript that 21 cases of {民} are invariably written as ; in the Tsinghua **San shou* manuscript, all 13 cases of {民} are written as , and all 14 cases of {民} in the Tsinghua **Zichan* are written as . Although these graphs remain consistent within each of the manuscripts, they are also structurally different from each other. This phenomenon suggests the possibility that behind the making of the entire corpus, there was no overarching rule to regulate how to write certain graph in general. In the previous chapter, we observed that the Tsinghua collection presents a strong correlation between the scribal hands and the codicological and paratextual dispositions—so, what kinds of roles were played by the scribes in deciding the orthography?

As we summarized in the previous chapter, taking a graphological forensic analysis approach, scholars such as Li Songru and Jia Lianxiang have distinguished at least twenty-one scribal hands in the Tsinghua corpus:[65] (Table 10)

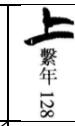
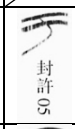
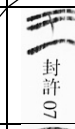
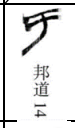
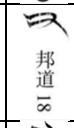
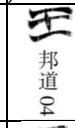
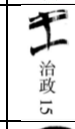
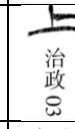
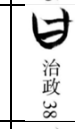
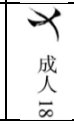
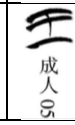
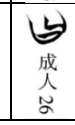
Table 10

[65] Important works include Li Songru, "Guodian chumu zhujian ziji yanjiu" 郭店楚墓竹簡字跡研究, M.A. thesis, Jilin University, 2006; "Zhanguo jian bo ziji yanjiu: Yi Shangbo jian wei zhongxin" 戰國簡帛字跡研究

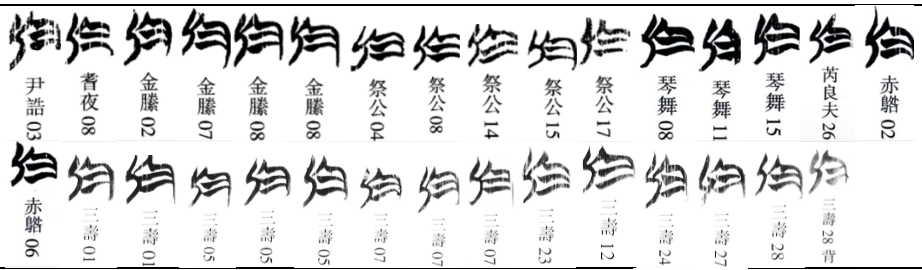
Hand A. (11+3=14) A. (11): **Yinzhi, *Yingao, Chijiu, Qiye, Zhou Wu wang [Jinteng], Fu Yue zhi ming A, B, C, Zhougong zhi qinwu, Rui liangfu, Yin Gaozong* A.' (3): *Zhaigong, Houfu, *Sheming*					
Hand B. (12) **Huangmen, *Zheng Wufuren, *Zheng Wengong A, B, *Ziyi, Zifan Ziyu, *Jin Wengong ruyu Jin, *Zhao Jianzi, Yue gong qishi, *Tianxia Zhidao, *Baqiwuwei, *Yuxiayinzhou*					
Hand C. (10) **Suanbiao, *Tang chuyu Tangqiu, *Tang zai Chimen, *Guanzhong, *Naiming A, B, *Daoci, *Sishi, *Sisui, *Bingfang*					
Hand D. (4) **Shifa, *Zichan, *Xin shiwei Zhong, *Wuji*					
Hand E. (2) **Liangchen, *Zhuci*					
Hand G. **Baoxun*					
Hand H. **Chengwu*					
Hand I. **Chuju*					

—以上博簡爲中心, Ph.D. diss., Jilin University, 2012, (later published by Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015); Jia, *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu*, 166–182.

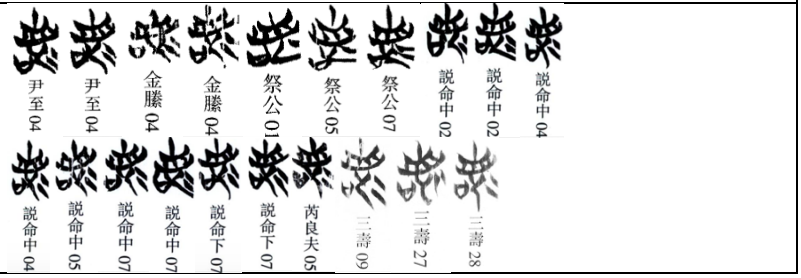
[65] Li Songru 李松儒, "Qinghuajian shufa fengge qianxi" 清華簡書法風格淺析, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 13 (2014): 27–33; Luo Yunhuan 羅運環, "Qinghuajian (yi-san) ziti fenlei yanjiu" 清華簡（壹-叁）字體分類研究, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 13 (2014): 62–67; An useful summary of the first five volume, see Jia, *Zhanguo zhushu xingzhi ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu*; also see Li Songru, "Qinghua wu ziji yanjiu" 清華五字跡研究, *Jianbo* 13 (2016): 79–89; from sixth to ninth volumes, see idem, "*Qinghuadaxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* liu zhi **Guanzhong* ziji yanjiu" 《清華大學藏戰國竹簡》(陸) 之《管仲》字跡研究, *Shufa yanjiu* (2016: 4): 34–45; "Qinghuaqi *Zifan Ziyu* yu **Zhao Jianzi* deng pian ziji yanjiu" 清華七《子犯子餘》與《趙簡子》等篇字跡研究, *Chutu wenxian* 11 (2019): 177–192; "Qinghuajian **Liangchen *Zhuci* de xingzhi yu shuxie" 清華簡《良臣》《祝辭》的形制與書寫, *Hanzi hanyu yanjiu* 6 (2020): 32–38; for a different opinion of the classification of **Zhao Jianzi* and **Yue gong qishi* by Hand B, see Shi Zhenying 史楨英, "Yeshuo qinghuadaxue cang zhanguo zhujian (qi) xieshou wenti" 也說清華大學藏戰國竹簡（七）寫手問題, Wuhan daxue jianbo wang 武漢大學簡帛網, http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=3167 (accessed June 15, 2018).

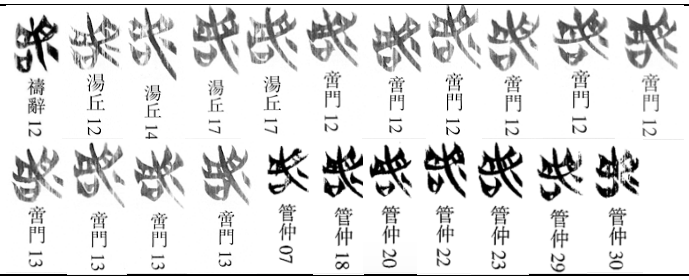
Hand J. **Xinian*					
Hand K. **Biegua*					
Hand L. *Feng Xu zhi ming, *Sigao (Handwriting D)*					
Hand M. **Mingxun*					
Hand N. **Bangjia zhizheng*					
Hand O. **Bangjia chuwei*					
Hand P. **Zhibang zhidao*					
Hand Q. **Zhizheng zhidao*					
Hand R. **Chengren*					

If we link the orthography and handwriting of the Tsinghua manuscripts, what strikes us further is that this largely orthographic consistency extends to almost all the manuscripts written in the same hand, which contrasts with what we have concluded about the general picture of the Warring States writing in general: that one character could be written in various graphic forms, even in the same document, by the same hand. Yet while this consistency is maintained within one hand, the orthographic standards appear to be distinctively different from hand to hand. For instance, if we list all of the 於 characters in Hand A and Hand B, we can see an almost perfect uniformity within one hand, and clear distinctions between the hands. (Table 11)

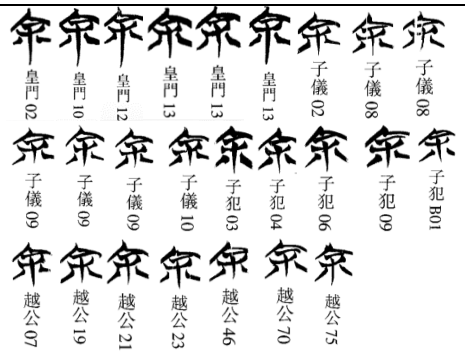
Table 11	“於”
Hand A. (14) **Yinzhi, *Yingao, Chijiu, Qiye, Zhou Wu wang* [*Jinteng*], *Fu Yue zhi ming A, B, C, Zhougong zhi qinwu, Rui liangfu, Yin Gaozong, Zhaigong, Houfu, *Sheming*	
Hand B. (12) **Huangmen, *Zheng Wu furen gui ruzi, *Zheng Wen gong wen taibo* A, **Zheng Wen gong wen taibo* B, **Ziyi, Zifan Ziyu, *Jin Wen gong ruyu Jin, *Zhao Jianzi, *Yue gong qishi, *Tianxia Zhidao, *Baqiwuwei wusi wuxing zhishu, *Yuxiayinzhou zhizhi*	

In Hand A, we can see two horizontal strokes in the lower right quarter of 於, whereas in hand B, there are three strokes. In another example, the orthographic consistency of 若 is not restricted to a single text or multiple-text manuscripts as we discussed earlier, but can be observed throughout all the manuscripts written in the same hand. (Table 12)

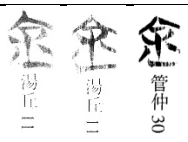
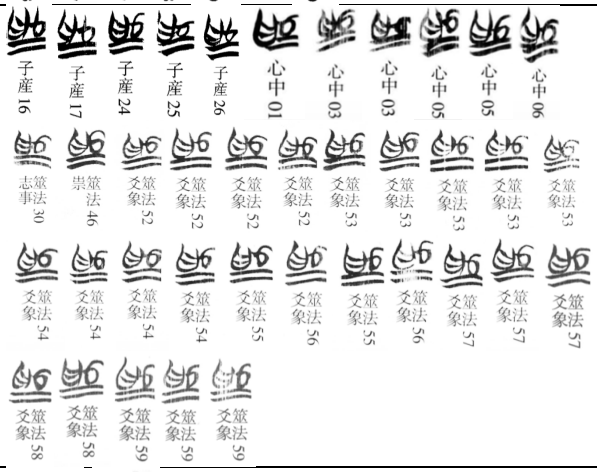
Table 12	“若”
Hand A. (14) **Yinzhi, *Yingao, Chijiu, Qiye, Zhou Wu wang* [*Jinteng*], *Fu Yue zhi ming A, B, C, Zhougong zhi qinwu, Rui liangfu, Yin Gaozong, Zhaigong, Houfu, *Sheming*	

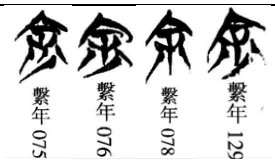
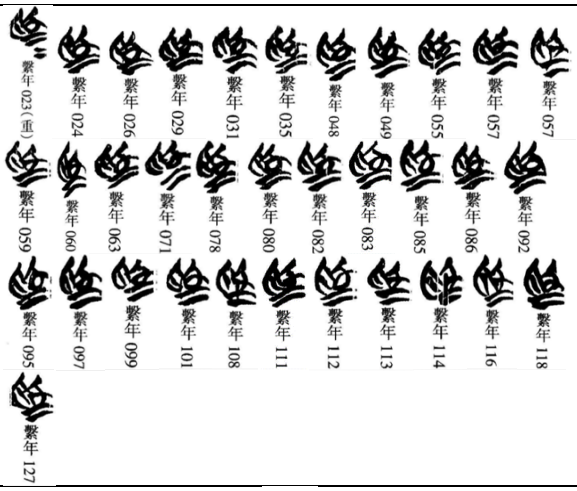
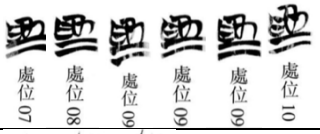
Hand C. (10) **Suanbiao, *Tang chuyu Tangqiu, *Tang zai Chimen, *Guanzhong, *Naiming A, B, *Daoci, *Sishi, *Sisui, *Bingfang*	

In addition, if we list more characters to the twenty-one hands classification, the fact that the orthography stays consistent within one hand and differs radically from hand to hand becomes even clearer. Horizontally, we can see how the orthography of 余 and 爲 appears almost unchanged within one hand; vertically, it is also evident that the orthographic standards and calligraphic features can be distinctive between hands. There are many other such examples supporting this conclusion.[66] (Table 13)

Table 13	"余"	"爲"
Hand A. (14) **Yinzhi, *Yingao, Chijiu, Qiye, Zhou Wu wang, Zhaigong zhi guming, Fu Yue zhi ming* A～C, *Zhougong zhi qinwu, *Rui liangfu Bi, Yin Gaozong, Houfu, *Sheming*		
Hand B. (12) **Huangmen, *Zheng Wu furen gui ruzi, *Zheng Wen gong wen taibo* A, **Zheng Wen gong wen taibo* B, **Ziyi, Zifan Ziyu, *Jin Wen gong ruyu Jin, *Zhao Jianzi, *Yue gong qishi, *Tianxia Zhidao, *Baqiwuwei*		

[66] Because "余" and "爲" do not appear in **Baoxun*, **Chengwu*, **Biegua*, *Feng Xu zhi ming*, **Mingxun*, and **Bangjia zhizheng,* these entries are not included in the following table.

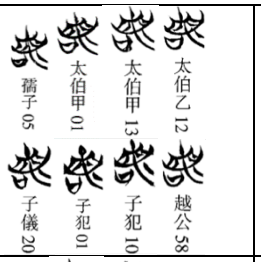
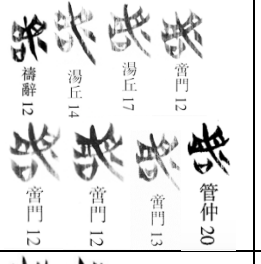
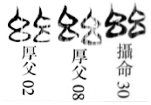
*wusi wuxing zhishu, *Yuxiayinzhou zhizhi*		
Hand C. (10) **Suanbiao, *Tang chuyu Tangqiu, *Tang zai Chimen, *Guanzhong, *Naiming A, B, *Daoci, *Sishi, *Sisui, *Bingfang*		
Hand D. (3) **Shifa, *Zichan, *Xin shiwei zhong*		
Hand E. (2) *Houfu, *Sheming*		
Hand F. (2) **Liangchen, *Zhuci*		
Hand I. **Chuju*		

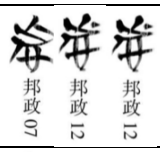
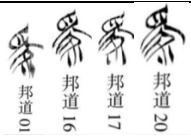
Hand J. **Xinian*		
Hand O. **Bangjia chuwei*		
Hand Q. **Zhibang zhidao*		

For every character I have been able to discuss in-depth, there are many others that also prove my point. Four other recurrent characters, {者}, {若}, {茲}, and {家}, further illustrate the orthographic consistency and constancy within one hand, as well as the clear and peculiar distinctions between different hands:[67] (Table 14)

Table 14	{者}	{若}	{茲}	{家}
Hand A. (14) **Yinzhi, *Yingao, Chijiu zhiji, etc.*				

[67] Due to formatting restrictions, in this table, if certain characters reappeared more than eight times, I chose eight of the most representative examples instead of listing all of them. In addition, because these four characters do not appear in **Liangchen*, **Zhuci*, **Zhibang zhidao*, and **Bangjia zhizheng*, so I eliminated the whole entries for these manuscripts correspondingly.

Hand B. (12) **Huangmen, *Zheng Wu furen gui ruzi, etc.*				
Hand C. (7) **Suanbiao, *Tang chuyu Tangqiu, etc.*				
Hand D. (3) **Shifa, *Zichan, *Xin shiwei zhong*				
Hand E. (2) *Houfu, *Sheming*				
Hand G. **Baoxun*				
Hand I. **Chuju*				
Hand J. **Xinian*				
Hand L. *Feng Xu zhi ming*				
Hand M. **Mingxun*				

Hand N. **Bangjia zhizheng*				
Hand O. **Bangjia chuwei*				
Hand P. **Zhibang zhidao*				
Hand Q. **Zhizheng zhidao*				
Hand R. **Chengren*				

The consistency within one hand and differences between different hands illuminate at least three points: 1) many of the Tsinghua scribes had a certain level of competence with a clear calligraphic and orthographic discipline in writing; 2) in many cases, especially for one hand in charge of multiple texts, indispensable editorial activities that unified the previous or potential orthographic irregularities, such as the prototypal practices of *shu tong wen zi*, were necessarily involved; and 3) no matter how orthographically consistent the writing was within the one hand, there was a lack of universal orthographic standards behind the entire corpus, suggesting comparatively independent and autonomous working paradigms.

Competence and craft.

First, I suggest that most of the Tsinghua scribes were rigorously trained and constantly disciplined in both visuality and textuality. For many of the manuscripts, the careful treatment

and refined quality were not only reflected by the elegant handwriting and balanced layout, but also extended to the meticulous treatment in both strict calligraphic and rigid orthographic standards. Regardless of the fluid, unstable, or capricious nature of the pre-imperial textual culture in general, many of the Tsinghua scribes managed to produce their texts with diverse degree of discipline.

The rigorous orthographic constancy demonstrates that the Tsinghua scribes worked in a completely different manner from the scribes of the Guodian, Shangbo, and Anda collections. In his 2006 and 2017 works, Galambos noted that although "the concept of a standard at this time had not arisen yet," scribes might have had forms that they employed more often. Yet a natural result of presenting one form more often than another, and an almost completely unified orthography stand for two different scenarios, the latter of which, as in many of the Tsinghua manuscripts, necessarily involved discipline and craft to control the structural presentation of the graphs. No matter what the reasons for such orthographic consistency were—they could have been voluntary or under orders, for aesthetic purposes, or in consideration of the text's accuracy—such consistency cannot be accomplished without making an unchanging choice about each of the graphs. Especially when we take the pre-imperial orthographic environment into consideration, we can see that the literary scribes not only had to decide on one graphic form among the other existing choices, but also had to stick to one consistent rule throughout all of the texts. If we look at hand A, for instance, no matter how many actual scribes it may stand for, the ability to maintain such rigorous consistency in both calligraphy and orthography among fourteen different manuscripts should not be taken for granted. As noted earlier, this orthographic consistency is not confined to one or two characters, but maintained through scrupulous, strict control over almost every character in twelve manuscripts of 170 slips with more than 5400 characters, no matter how many times a character recurred, in almost perfectly

identical structure, form, and style. Although a few texts may exhibit more irregularities than others or certain texts may appear to show some unusual regional writing style of the northern states or a lower level of calligraphic competence,[68] for the great majority of the Tsinghua manuscripts, especially for texts written in Hand A, the orthographic constancy could not be accomplished without determined efforts and effective methods for handling the orthographic variants.

For the Tsinghua corpus, no matter who made the decision to keep the orthographic uniformity—whether it was the actual scribe, someone in a position of authority acting as a supervisor or sponsor, or the one in charge of the master copy, and no matter who these orthographic disciplines belonged to, the final orthographic presentation of the Tsinghua manuscript had to be carried out by the scribe. Even if all the orthographic decisions were made by others, accurately presenting such consistency would still demand tremendous craftsmanship and competence; these written manuscripts themselves, with their careful material, calligraphic, and orthographic arrangement, are both a witness and monument to the skills and sophistication of the scribes. Situating the Tsinghua scribes in the context of the Warring States written culture, it suffices to suggest that the entire community of pre-imperial scribes was as diverse and full of the dynamics of making different texts as those during the later generations; some scribes were

[68] For example, several scholars have pointed out that the calligraphy of manuscripts as **Baoxun*, *Houfu*, and **Liangchen*'s is less advanced than that of others and also have some traces/features of the regional style of the Jin area. See Feng Shengjun 馮勝君, "Shilun qinghuajian **Baoxun* pian shufa fengge yu santishijing de guanxi" 試論清華簡《保訓》篇書法風格與三體石經的關係, *Qinghuajian yanjiu* vol. 1 清華簡研究 (第一輯) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2012): 92–98; also see Futian Zhezhi 福田哲之[=Fukuda Tetsuyuki], "Qinghua jian **Baoxun* yu santishijing guwen—kedouti de yuanyuan" 清華簡《保訓》與三體石經古文—科斗體的淵源, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 13 (2014): 62–67; Zhao Ping'an 趙平安, "Tantan zhanguowenzi zhong zhidezhuyi de yixie xianxiang—yi qinghujian *Houfu* weili" 談談戰國文字中值得注意的一些現象—以清華簡《厚父》爲例, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 6 (2015): 303–309; Liu Gang 劉剛, "Qinghua san **Liangchen* wei juyou jinxi wenzi fengge de chaoben fuzheng" 清華三《良臣》爲具有晉系文字風格的抄本補證, *Zhongguo wenzi xuebao* 中國文字學報 9 (2014): 99–107; see also Li Songru "Qinghuajian *Liangchen *Zhuci de xingzhi yu shuxie."

more skilled and careful than others, some were less well-trained or worked with fewer requirements; but every scribe wrote in a specific context for their own purposes.

4.1 Methods and Practice of Orthographic Standardization

Furthermore, we can conclude that a growing awareness of orthographic standardization coupled with the indispensable practices to maintain such consistency underlie the making of the Tsinghua manuscripts. Because many of the texts that share the same handwriting and the same orthographic standards are vastly different in style, language, and genre, this suggests that they originated from not one, but various sources. For example, in the manuscripts written in Hand A, despite the composite nature of each of the texts,[69] some were regarded as proto-Shu chapters or Shu-style texts, such as **Yingao* or *Zhou Wu wang youji* (*Jinteng*), and there are also Shi-related texts such as *Qiye* or *Zhougong zhi qin wu*.[70] At the same time, in the same handwriting, we see also

[69] For example, see William G. Boltz, "The Composite Nature of Early Chinese Texts," in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 50-78; Rens Krijgsman, "Traveling sayings as carriers of philosophical debate: From the intertextuality of the **Yucong* 語叢 to the dynamics of cultural memory and authorship in Early China," *Asiatische Studien* 68.1 (2014), 83-115; Nicholas Vogt and Rens Krijgsman "The One Text in the Many: Separate and Composite Readings of an Early Chinese Historical Manuscript," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 82.3 (2019), 473-492; David J . Lebovitz, "Molecular Incoherence, Continuity, and the Perfection of the Laozi," *Early China* 44 (2021), 237-319.

[70] Concerning the genre of the fourteen manuscripts made by hand A, here is a highly selective list of the related studies.

1) *Shu-related materials*. Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Qinghua jianyu *Shangshu, Yizhoushu* de yanjiu" 清華簡與《尚書》、《逸周書》的研究, *Shixue shi yanjiu* 史學史研究 (2011).2, 104–109; Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅, "Cong Qinghua jian Jinteng kan Shangshu de liuchuan ji zhougong lishi jizai de yanbian "從清華簡《金縢》看《尚書》的傳流及周公歷史記載的演變, *Zhongguo shi yan jiu* 中國史研究 (2012).3, 47–63; Sarah Allan, "On *Shu* 書 (Documents) and the origin of the Shang shu 尚書 (Ancient Documents) in light of recently discovered bamboo slip manuscripts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75.3 (2012): 547–557; Fu Gang 傅剛, "Chutu wenxian gei women de qishi——yi qinghuajian *Shangshu Yueming* weili" 出土文獻給我們的啟示——以清華簡《尚書·說命》爲例, *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 (2013).8, 41–42; Liu Guangsheng 劉光勝, "Tong yuan yi tu: qinghuajian *Shu* lei wenxian yu rujia *Shangshu* xitong de xueshu fenye" 同源異途: 清華簡《書》類文獻與儒家《尚書》系統的學術分野 *Zhongguo gaoxiao shehui kexue* 中國高校社會科學 (2017).2, 116–128; Dirk Meyer, "The Art of Narrative and the Rhetoric of Persuasion in the "Jin Téng" (Metal Bound Casket) from the Tsinghua Collection of Manuscripts," *Asiatische Studien* 68.4 (2014): 937–968; Magnus Ribbing Gren, "The Qinghua "Jinteng" Manuscript: What it Does Not Tell Us about the Duke of Zhou," *T'oung Pao* 102. 4/5 (2016): 291–320; Cheng Hao 程浩, "Cong chutu wenxian kan *Shangshu* de pianming yu cixu"從出土文獻看《尚書》的篇名與序次, *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊 (2018).1, 113–118; Edward L Shaughnessy, "A Possible Lost Classic: The She ming, or Command to She," *T'oung pao* 106. 3/4 (2020): 266–308; Feng Shengjun,

much lengthier folktale or mystical texts that are closer to "the school of minor-talk" (*xiaoshuo jia* 小說家) such as **Yin gaozong wen yu san shou* and **Chijiu zhi ji Tang zhi wu*, and these texts' language and style are clearly much later than the Shu-style or Shi-related texts as the previous types. In other words, these texts, despite being written in the same handwriting and hence sharing the same orthography, cannot have derived from the same textual origin, and it is impossible that they shared the same orthographic standard from the "very beginning." Additionally, many of

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Qinghua jian Shangshu lei wenxian jianzhi 清華簡《尚書》類文獻箋釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2022).

2) *Shi-related materials*. Li Xueqin, "Lun qinghuajian *Qiye* de *Xishuai* shi" 論清華簡《耆夜》的《蟋蟀》詩, *Zhongguo wenhua* 中國文化 (2011).1, 7–10; Li Shoukui, "Qinghua jian Zhong de shi yu *Shi* xue xin shiye" 清華簡中的詩與《詩》學新視野, *Zhongguo gaoxiao shehui kexue* 中國高校社會科學 (2013).3, 85–90; Xu Zhengying 徐正英, "Qinghuajian *Zhougong zhi qin wu* zushi dui *Shijing* yuanshi xingtai de baocun ji bei chuci xingshi de jieshou" 清華簡《周公之琴舞》組詩對《詩經》原始形態的保存及被楚辭形式的接受, *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (2014).4, 51–61; Xu Zhengying, "Qinghua jian *Zhougong zhi qin wu* yu kongzi shan *Shi* xiangguan wenti" 清華簡《周公之琴舞》與孔子刪《詩》相關問題, *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產 (2014).5, 19–28; Huang Tiantian 黃甜甜, "Shilun qinghua jian *Zhougong shi qin wu* yu *Shijing* zhi guanxi" 試論清華簡《周公之琴舞》與《詩經》之關系, *Zhongyuan wenhua yanjiu* 中原文化研究 (2015).3, 52–58; Chen Pengyu 陳鵬宇, "Qinghua jian *Rui liangfu* bi taoyu chengfen fenxi" 清華簡《芮良夫毖》套語成分分析, *Shenzhen da xue xue bao (Ren wen she hui ke xue ban)* 深圳大學學報(人文社會科學版) (2014) 2, 62–70; Zhao Minli 趙敏俐, "*Zhougong zhi qin wu* de zucheng, mingming ji biaoyan fangshi lice"《周公之琴舞》的組成、命名及表演方式蠡測, *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 (2013).8, 39–41; Yao Xiao'ou, "*Qinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* yu *Shijing* xue shi de ruogan wenti" 《清華大學藏戰國竹簡》與《詩經》學史的若幹問題, *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 (2013).8, 34–36; Jiang Linchang 江林昌, "Qinghua jian yu xianqin shi yue wu chuantong" 清華簡與先秦詩樂舞傳統, *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 (2013).8, 43–47; Jiang Wen 蔣文, *Xianqin qinhan chutu wenxian yu* Shijing *wenben de jiaokan he jiedu* 先秦秦漢出土文獻與《詩經》文本的校勘和解讀 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2019); Kern, "'Xi shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') and Its Consequences."

3) Folktale or mystic texts. Huang Dekuan 黃德寬, "Qinghua jian *Chijiu zhi ji tang zhi wu* yu xianqin 'xiaoshuo'" 清華簡《赤鵠之集湯之屋》與先秦"小說"——略說清華簡對先秦文學研究的價值, *Fudan xuebao* 復旦學報 (2013).4, 81–84; Tan Lisheng 譚生力, You Qinghua jian *Chijiu zhi ji Tang zhiwu* kan Yiyin chuanshuo——jianlun gaipian chuanshuo de wenhua neihan 由清華簡《赤鳩之集湯之屋》看伊尹傳說——兼論該篇傳說的文化內涵, *Wenyi pinglun* 文藝評論 (2013).10, 4–6; Yao Xiao'ou, "Qinghua jian *Chijiu* pianyu zhongguo zaoqi xiaoshuo de wenti tezheng "清華簡《赤鳩》篇與中國早期小說的文體特徵, *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 2014 (2), 43–58; Sarah Allan, "When Red Pigeons Gathered on Tang's House": A Warring States Period Tale of Shamanic Possession and Building Construction set at the turn of the Xia and Shang Dynasties," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 35.3 (2015): 419–438; Chen Minzhen 陳民鎮, Zhongguo zaoqi "xiaoshuo" de wenti tezheng yu fasheng tujing——laizi jianbo wenxian de qishi 中國早期"小說"的文體特徵與發生途徑——來自簡帛文獻的啟示, *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu* 中國文化研究 (2017). 4, 59–78; Sun Feiyan, "On the Nature of the Tsinghua Bamboo-Slip Manuscript Chi jiu zhi ji Tang zhi wu," *Bamboo and Silk* 4.2 (2021): 246–270.

the texts themselves are already composite in nature, suggesting multiple sources and a multi-layered formation process embedded within each of the texts. Having diverse origins and complicated or and separate trajectories of transmission, these texts inevitably had orthographic discrepancies before they were written into what we know as the Tsinghua manuscripts, because as discussed in the earlier sections, the flexibility and changeability of orthography lies at the very core of the Warring States writings: even if the texts were made by the same hand in the same document on the same slip, the same graph could be written in various ways. Under these circumstances, the orthographic constancy of Hand A in the Tsinghua collection can only be explained by the idea that some measures certainly must have been taken to eradicate potential orthographic inconsistencies. Even if we cannot pinpoint a specific historical moment or name the specific people who undertook this standardizing work, it suffices to understand that the practices and notions that were necessary for creating the orthographic constancy that we see in the Tsinghua manuscripts. The unifying work could have been executed either by the scribe in charge of the Tsinghua manuscripts, or by someone in the history of these texts' transmission. To be more specific, it could have been done by 1) a scribe who transcribed the text from other existing documents while rearranging the orthography with a coherent standard, 2) a scholar who compiled and composed a new text from existing sources while standardizing the previous inconsistencies in orthography, or 3) a student or a listener who wrote down what they heard in an educational setting, or even from memory, with an unchanging orthographic criterion. More likely, these scenarios could be profoundly intertwined and thus sometimes inseparable; for example, one text could have first been written in an aural teaching setting or from memory, then rearranged with other existing texts, and then partially copied into another. The final presentation of orthographic consistency in Hand A was inevitably the result of a series of complex, tightly interlocking epistemological activities rather than one single action, and each

action was taken as a response to a specific, contingent textual need—there was no *a priori* regulation of how to make a text in the Warring States. Thus, the very way of making a manuscript was a response to specific textual needs in different context.

As such, there are two things that we can state with confidence: 1) in the Warring States, an awareness of consistent orthography, no matter how primitive and circumscribed it was, already existed and 2) corresponding practices and effective methods for achieving orthographic uniformity had already emerged. That is, for the making of pre-imperial texts, there is no single picture of scribes and scholars making the orthography more and more diverse, but there is also the idea that some of them strove to stabilize the written texts at a limited level. Traditionally, historians have long believed that the official unification of the scripts, *shu tong wen zi*, was conducted during the First Emperor's reign; yet what the Tsinghua manuscripts' orthographic consistency demonstrates is that scribal endeavors and methods to regulate orthographic inconsistency, as a prototypal practice of *shu tong wen zi*, already existed in the Chu region of the Warring States.

Conceivably, the culmination of the Qin empire's *shu tong wen zi* did not emerge from a vacuum—it required tremendous political resources, physical support, sufficient and effective technics, and it had to be fostered in a gradual and immensely complex process. For the Qin state in the late Warring States era, Chen Zhaorong and Zhao Ping'an have both speculated that there might have been some unification of scripts carried out on a small-scale, especially in the newly conquered Qin territories. Since all the new political orders and governmental administration was supposed to be executed through the Qin writing system rather than through the local scripts, enacting the new script system and abolishing the old ones became one of the

most urgent political tasks.[71] Zhou Bo also hypothesizes that in the state of Chu there might have been similar editorial practices of standardizing graphic forms in the administrative system. He has provided indirect evidence such as multiple Chu manuscripts excavated from fairly distant areas (e.g., the Baoshan manuscripts from today's Hubei province, the Cili manuscripts from Hunan province, and the Xincai manuscripts from Henan province) that share a substantial amount of orthographic similarity.[72] Although none of these standardizing attempts were recorded in the historical records, works like the Tsinghua manuscripts, especially in Hand A, demonstrate that local level orthographic standardizing work also appeared in the Chu area.

While suggesting a correlation between the pre-imperial and early imperial orthographic standardizing practices, I am by no means trying to challenge the inherent fluidity of the pre-imperial writings, nor to predate the *shu tong wen zi*—since the standardization on a local, limited-scale, or even personal level as the case of the Tsinghua manuscripts fundamentally differed from the official, national script standardization in the bureaucratic and educational system such as the Qin's *shu tong wen zi*. On the one hand, as recent studies have illustrated, the Qin *shu tong wen zi* enterprise changed not only calligraphic or orthographic aspects of the written words, but it profoundly reshaped the script, vocabulary, and language. The excavated Qin manuscripts that are actual artefacts from the standardization process, especially the "Board of Qin Changes in Nomenclature" *geng ming fang* 更名方 (8–461) from Liye, an actual Qin governmental decree, inform us of at least three dimensions of standardization: 1) it regulated the graphic forms (*zheng*

[71] Zhao Ping'an 趙平安, "Shi lun Qin guo lishi shang de sanci 'shu tong wen'" 試論秦國歷史上的三次"書同文", *in Libian yanjiu (xiuding ban)* 隸變研究 (修訂版) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2020), 164–173; Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容, "Qin 'shu tong wen zi' xintan" 秦"書同文字"新探, *Lishi yuyan yanjiu suo jikan* 歷史語言研究所集刊 68.3 (1997): 589–641.

[72] Zhou Bo 周波, *Zhanguo shidai ge xi wenzi jian de yongzi chayi xianxiang yanjiu* 戰國時代各系文字間的用字差異現象研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 240–243.

zixing 正字形),[73] 2) it rectified the associations between graph and word (*zheng yongzi* 正用字),[74] and 3) it also standardized the proper word or phrase for certain meaning (*zheng yongyü* 正用語).[75] This national project was conducted through a slow, dynamic procedure, and the momentum of the standardization enterprise was as much political and ideological as it was practical and academic.[76] On the other hand, for the Tsinghua collection, the standardized traces seem only to appear within the spectrum of graphic form, not in the aspects of words-chosen and graph-word association. Although the specific acts and tactics of eliminating orthographic inconsistencies may have been similar between some pre-imperial and early imperial corpora, the purpose and outcome of the standardization practice are not comparable. For the Tsinghua corpus, such standardization on individual level was more likely driven by a personal, scholarly, or aesthetic preference: it forms a sharp contrast with the early imperial legal scribes who practiced an explicit, compulsory orthographic standardization as a part of their administrative tasks, for practical and political purposes rather than merely textual or aesthetic ones.

Finally, regardless of whether it was for pre-imperial or early imperial intellectual communities, increasing the orthographic uniformity of a written object was to build a more transparent lens between the writers and the readers—by doing so, the readers gained a more accessible channel to the potentially metamorphosizing meaning of the written words, and the

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[73] Taking examples from the "Board of Qin changes in nomenclature" *Geng ming fang* 更名方 from Liye 8–461, e.g., replacing the non-standard variant 皇 as the correct form 皇, or replacing 辠 as 罪.

[74] E.g., replacing the lexical variant 大 for the correct word 泰, or replacing 吏 for 事.

[75] E.g., for the word suggesting "government," stop saying "royal/ducal house" 王室/公室 but use "county office" 縣官.

[76] Chen Kanli, "Liye qin fang yu 'shu tong wen zi'," Tian Wei, "Lun Qinshihuang 'shu tong wen zi' zhengce de neihan ji yingxiang—jian lun panduan chutu qin wenxian wenben niandai de zhongyao biaochi"; Ōnishi Katsuya, "Moji tōitsu to shinkan no shisho"; "Cong Liye qinjian he qin fengni tantao 'tai' zi de zaozi yiyi" 從里耶秦簡和秦封泥探討"泰"字的造字意義, *Jianbo* 8 簡帛 (2013): 139–148.

writers entrusted more power and control over their voices onto the physical written artefact. Ultimately, orthographic uniformity boosted the efficacy of the administration and the epistemological paradigms, which means that the standardization of language contributed to a more systematized, controllable informational apparatus. Yet despite all the practical merits, and although the *shu tong wen zi* enterprise was driven by the fact that the local scripts in the Warring States were becoming incredibly divergent, it could only have been accomplished through a series of effective methods, clear and shared notions, and accumulated efforts by all the individuals from the various writing communities. Behind the culmination of the Qin standardization of writing, numerous pre-imperial scribes and scholars, just as we observed in the Tsinghua corpus, had laid the groundwork and impetus for turning the diversifying, fluctuating textual world into a more stabilized, and even eternal one.

4.2 Scribal Agency

As the orthography is largely consistent within one hand, it should also be noted that the orthography between different hands very often differed from each other, which suggests a lack even absence of an overarching regulation of the orthographic standards of the entire collection. In other words, behind the making of the entire corpus, scribes might have a substantial editorial potency in deciding orthographic forms—a considerable working autonomy was granted to the Tsinghua scribes, who could decide not only the various aspects of materiality, but also the graphic presentation of the texts. In other words, the pre-imperial writers had varying degrees of writing competency and methods, and they also might have had the autonomy to decide and develop their own orthography. It was not only that the knowledge community accepted and tolerated orthographic fluidity, but also that the comparatively open environment gave individuals the autonomy to foster different habits, employ different methods, and execute

different levels of criteria for writing. In this regard, the characteristics and significance of the manuscript culture, especially in pre-imperial China, inhered precisely in its complexity and diversity, not just in universality and patterns.

Once we notice the tremendous scribal autonomy and agency, we can see that the making of the Tsinghua manuscript was not to reproduce a receptacle of existing written or oral sources, but to actively customize a written text that was anchored by specific epistemological needs. Even in their most instrumental roles, scribes might still have inevitably imposed their preference, style, even editorial choices onto the texts they wrote. However nameless and unrecognizable the scribes were, their agential roles made the physical written object a piece of evidence and an eternal remembrance of their knowledge and craftmanship.

Chapter 4

Textuality: Renewing the Knowledge

"Annually, the penal statutes are cross-checked with the Royal Secretary."
—Shuidudi "Eighteen Qin Statutes,
(the statutes concerning) the Commandment, miscellaneous"

"歲讎辟律于御史."[1]
—睡虎地《秦律十八種·尉雜》

1. The Text and the Object
2. Complilation of Imperial Ordinances
3. Classifying of Hands
4. Handwriting and Periodization
    4.1Emperor Wen's personal name
    4.2 Diachronical Editorial Process
5. Editing over the *Longue duree*

1. The Text and the Object

The preceding three chapters have aimed to provide an understand the various scribal practices during the making of an ancient book. Now, let us turn to the changes that took place afterward: editing and revising. Unlike the earlier thematic chapters that involved all the materials related to the topic, this chapter offers a case study, seeking to elaborate the bamboo era's editorial practices with the discovery of one object: the Zhangjiashan 張家山 No. 336 *Gongling* 功令 (Ordinances on Official Promotion) manuscript. A key point of this chapter—and

[1] Hulsewé, A.F.P., *Remnants of Ch'in Law—An Annotated Translation of the Ch'in Legal and Administrative Rules of the 3rd Century B.C. Discovered in Yün-meng Prefecture, Hu-pei Province, in 1975* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 90; Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉], Qin jiandu heji (yi) Shuihudi Qin mu jiandu 秦簡牘合集〔壹〕·睡虎地秦墓簡牘 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014), 150–151, 680, 987.

of the dissertation more broadly—is to highlight the idea that ancient manuscripts can be examined as both words and as things; this chapter in particular, emphasizes words and things as inextricable with their temporality, and this historical timeframe can last from a fleeting moment to a prolonged period.

I will show that the G*ongling* manuscript presents a previously unknown mode of textual emendation as a part of its production: it reveals a diachronic editorial process that took place over decades, in contrast to what we previously knew as a synchronic, collective mode of "multiple scribes writing in turns." Accordingly, it is not only that the content of the *Gongling* text, as a collection of imperial ordinances, has multiple, complicated strata of law-making practices, but also that the manuscript, as a material object, underwent revisions, expansions, corrections, and (re-)organizations several times. I started by identifying five major hands and three secondary hands, and then synthesizing evidence from each scribal hand. This has allowed me to now propose that, contrary to current scholarship that suggests the entire manuscript was produced between the second and seventh year of Emperor Wen's reign (179–157 BCE), approximately 70 percent of the text was actually written before his rule began.

This codicological complexity in scribal hands leads us to reconstruct the actual scenario of law-updating and text-editing , a process which might not have been practiced like the rather modern one of collecting pre-existing, related materials, making a draft of them from scratch, copying them, and then disposing of the drafts and earlier materials. Instead, scribes of the *Gongling* may have directly scraped and rewritten the text on the slips, and added or inserted the revised slips. In this practice, the boundary between bookmaking and book-editing blurred—the new book was a continuation of the old, and the old transformed into the new by constant editing and revising. Ultimately, the prolonged creation of the *Gongling* manuscript resonates with the evolution of the law and the historical changes from Emperor Gaozu (206 [202]–195 BCE) to

Emperor Wen (179–157 BCE), and allows us a vivid glimpse into the transformation of a law collection, not only as public knowledge but also as an actual, physical, epistemological object.

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Within the transmitted corpora, the *Gongling* text is renowned and mysterious. Among its numerous mentions, the most famous is from the Biographies of the Confucian Scholars (Rulin lie zhuan 儒林列傳) chapter of the Shiji. In the opening passage, the Grand Historian remarks, "Whenever I read the *Gongling*, I never fail to lay the book aside with a sigh" (余讀《功令》，至於廣厲學官之路，未嘗不廢書而歎也).[2] In this formulaic introduction to this pivotal chapter, the *Gongling* text serves as both a concise summary of the content and a catalyst for emotional engagement. Owing to its affective appeal and relevance to the Confucian scholars, such usage also underscores the text's significance and widespread popularity. In addition, both the Shiji and Hanshu attribute the *Gongling* text to the eminent Confucian scholar Gongsun Hong 公孫弘 (199–121 BCE), presenting him as the author and describing how he was "requested to compose the *Gongling*" (請著《功令》).[3] The attachment of an eminent figure's name to it confers legendary authorship, adding another layer that demonstrates the text's distinguished status at the time. But, regardless of how well cited it was in these important sources, the *Gongling* text was lost. It was not until the 1930s that fragmentary pieces of the Han *Gongling* finally came to light at the Juyan archeological sites. Ever since, multiple excavated fragmentary manuscripts of it have been discovered at various sites. Then, in 1993, to the great delight of modern scholars, a complete *Gongling* manuscript from the Western Han dynasty was found at the Zhangjiashan site.

[2] *Shiji* 121.3115.

[3] Both *Shiji* and *Hanshu* have biographies of Gong Sunhong. See *Shiji* 112. 2949–53 and *Hanshu* 58. 2613–17.

Unlike the fragmentary *Gongling* manuscripts that were uncovered in the past, the Zhangjiashan *Gongling* manuscript is the first time we have discovered a much more comprehensive version of the *Gongling*.

The *Gongling* manuscript was excavated from Tomb no. 336 at Zhangjiashan, a site located near Jingzhou, Hubei, about1.5 kilometers west of the old walled city, and 400 meters east of the famous Zhangjiashan tomb no. 247.[4] The various documents from Tomb no. 336 were discovered in 1993 and it was not until after decade of preservation, conservation, and editorial work that the manuscript collection was finally released in 2023, and since then it has been drawing considerable scholarly excitement. Comprising 184 bamboo slips, each roughly 30 cm in length, the *Gongling* manuscript is a collection of ordinances related to the promotion and merits of imperial officials. The manuscript is organized into 102 numbered sections, 24 of which are either missing or were absent before entombment. As an exceptionally rare and invaluable surviving early imperial legal document, its significance in revealing the system of official promotions, the initial establishment of provinces and states, as well as the dynamic process of legal compilation is indisputably profound. Given that the four clear chronological records explicitly date to the second year of Emperor Wen's reign, as well as the "seventh year event calendar" (qi nian zhiri 七年質日) of his seventh reign year that was found within the same tomb, current scholarship generally considers this document to have been composed sometime between the second and seventh years, representing the formation of laws regarding merits and promotion during the early period of Emperor Wen's rule. At the same time, although the latest date of the ordinances is construed as the seventh year of Emperor Wen, the manuscript also

[4] For an introduction to the Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247 and texts unearthed from this tomb, see Anthony Barbieri-Low and Robin Yates. *Law, State and Society in Early Imperial China: A Study with Critical Edition and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247*. (2 vols) Leiden: Brill. 2015.

comprises numerous stipulations that echo historical events from the eras of Emperor Gaozu (r. 202–195 BCE), Emperor Hui (r. 195–88 BCE), and Empress Dowager Lü (d. 180 BCE). Given its multi-stratified textual complexity, how can we understand the textual and material formation of *Gongling* as both a text and as an object?

2. Complilation of Imperial Ordinances

The preceding three chapters have aimed to provide an understand the various scribal practices during the making of an ancient book. Now, let us turn to the changes that took place afterward: editing and revising. Unlike the earlier thematic chapters that involved all the materials related to the topic, this chapter offers a case study, seeking to elaborate the bamboo era's editorial practices with the discovery of one object: the Zhangjiashan 張家山 No. 336 *Gongling*. A key point of this chapter—and of the dissertation more broadly—is to highlight the idea that ancient manuscripts can be examined as both words and as things; this chapter in particular, emphasizes words and things as inextricable from their temporality, and this historical timeframe can last from a fleeting moment to a prolonged period.

Through diverse perspectives and texts, generations of scholars have led us to this understanding. Nakata Kaoru 中田薰, Shen Jiaben 沈家本,[5] Siga Shuzo 滋賀秀三[6] Oba

[5] Shen Jiaben 沈家本 has summarized: "Every new decree must be fully prepared before being recorded, and must be clearly written and attached to the existing decrees." See *Lidai xingfa kao* 歷代刑法考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1985), 860–899.

[6] See Shiga Shuzo 滋賀秀三. *Riben xuezhe yanjiu Zhongguoshi lunzhu xuanyi,* vol. 8 日本學者研究中國史論著選譯（第八卷）. Trans. by Yao Rongtao (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 92–93.

Osamu 大庭修,[7] Tomiya Itaru 冨谷至[8] Chen Wei 陳偉,[9] Miyake Kiyoshi 宮宅潔, Hirose Kunio 廣瀨薫雄,[10] Xu Shihong 徐世虹[11] Arnd Helmut Hafner 陶安あんど,[12] and others have discussed various aspects of the continuous law-updating process vis-a-vis the multi-stratified nature of the written laws. Specifically, before the vast quantity of legal documents were discovered, Shen Jiaben had proposed that the Han imperial court must have gone through three essential steps in the making of an ordinance:[13] first, preparing the text of the new decree; second, clearly recording it; and third, adding it to the existing collection of ordinances. After the laws were issued, as the legal articles spread across the vast region of the empire, the various forms of

[7] See Oba Osamu 大庭脩, *Shin Kan hōseishi no kenkyū* 秦汉法制史の研究. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1982, p. 9：“本来法は生きているものであり、そもそも現行法でなければ意味があり.” See also Oba Osamu, “The Ordinances on Fords and Passes Excavated from Han Tomb Number 247, Zhangjiashan,” trans. and ed. David Spafford, Robin D. S. Yates, Enno Giele, and Michael Nylan, *Asia Major* 14. 2 (2001): 119–41.

[8] Tomiya Itaru 冨谷至. *Mokkan, chikukan no kataru Chūgoku kodai: shoki no bunkashi.* 木簡・竹簡の語る中国古代: 書記の文化史 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2003), 221.

[9] Chen Wei 陳偉, Qin-Han jianduo suojian de lüdian tixi” 秦漢簡牘所見的律典體系 *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 2021.1: 104–121.

[10] Hirose Kunio 廣瀨薫雄, *Shiki Shin Kan shi no kenkyū* 史記秦漢史の研究 (Tokyo: Kyoko Shoin, 2015), 92–123; Yu Hongtao 于洪濤, “Lun Dunhung Xuanquan Hanjian zhong de ‘jiuling’——jiantan Handai zhao, lü, ling de zhuanhua” 論敦煌懸泉漢簡 中的“廄令”——兼談漢代“詔”、“律”、“令”的轉化. *Huadong zhengfa daxue xuebao* 華東政法大學學報 2015.4: 141–150; Thies Staack “From Copies of Individual Decrees to Compilations of Written Law: On Paratextual Framing in Early Chinese Legal Manuscripts,” in *Copying Manuscripts: Textual and Material Craftsmanship*, eds. Antonella Brita, Giovanni Ciotti, Florinda De Simini, Amneris Roselli (Napoli: Università degli studi di Napoli “L'Orientale”, Dipartimento Asia Africa e Mediterraneo, 2020), 183–240.

[11] Xu Shihong 徐世虹, Qin Han fazhishi yanjiu 秦漢法制史研究 (Shanghai：Zhongxi shuju, 2017).

[12] Helmut Hafner [=陶安あんど], *Shin Kan keibatsu taikei no kenkū* 秦漢刑罰体系の研究 (Tokyo: Tōkyō gaikokugo daigaku), 2009.

[13] Shen Jiaben 沈家本 has summarized: “Every new decree must be fully prepared before being recorded, and must be clearly written and attached to the existing decrees.” See *Lidai xingfa kao* 歷代刑法考. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985, 860–899.

the law—edicts, ordinance, and statutes—might have changed genre and format to fit specific political pursuits.[14]

In the process of composing individual edicts to changing them into a collection of ordinances and statutes, the content, format, and genre accordingly changed due to continuous updating, expansion, compilation, and reorganization. Furthermore, the interplay between the creation under the central government[15] and the actual implementation by local governments further compounded the issue.[16] In short, the constant and complicated process of issuing and updating various types of legal writings from the central down to the local governments unceasingly reshaped both the structure and the substance of the imperial legal system.[17] Just as

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[14] See Hirose Kunio 廣瀨薰雄, *Shin Kan Ritsuryo Kenkyu* 秦漢律令研究 (Tokyo: Kyuuko Shoin, 2010), 92–177; Xu Shihong 徐世虹, *Zhongguo fazhishi tongshi di er juan: zhanguo qinhan* 中國法制通史第二卷：戰國秦漢 (Beijing: Falü chubanshe, 1999), 239–278; Meng Yanhong 孟彥宏, "Qinahan falü tixi de yanbian" 秦漢法典體系的演變, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2005.1, 28–33; Yu Hongtao 于洪濤, Lun Dunhuang xuanquan hanjian Zhong "jiuling"—jian tan handai "zhao," "lü," "ling" de zhuanhua 論敦煌懸泉漢簡中的"廄令"——兼談漢代"詔"、"律"、"令"的轉化, *Huadong zhengfa daxue xuebao* 華東政法大學學報 2015.4, 141–150. Concerning the historical change of the meaning of ordinance, see Nan Yuquan 南玉泉, "Qin ling de yanhua jiqi zai falü xingshi zhong de diwei" 秦令的演化及其在法律形式中的地位, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2005.2, 57–60. Continuaty and transformation between ordinances in Qin and Han, see Xu Shihong 徐世虹, *Qin lü yanjiu* 秦律研究 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue shubanshe, 2017), 57–105. Thies Staack, "From Copies of Individual Decrees to Compilations of Written Law: On Paratextual Framing in Early Chinese Legal Manuscripts," in *Copying Manuscripts: Textual and Material Craftsmanship*, eds. Antonella Brita, Giovanni Ciotti, Florinda De Simini, Amneris Roselli (Napoli: Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Dipartimento Asia Africa e Mediterraneo, 2020), 183–240.

[15] Chen Wei. "Qin-Han jianduo suojian de lüdian tixi."

[16] Miyake Kiyoshi 宮宅潔. *Zhongguo gudai xingzhi shi yanjiu* 中國古代刑制史研究, trans. by Yang Zhenhong et al. (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2016), 11–38.

[17] Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅. "Cong '*Ernian lüling*' de xingzhi kan Handai fadian de bianzuan xiuding yu lüling guanxi" 從《二年律令》的性質看漢代法典的編纂修訂與律令關係. *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究 2005.4: 27–57; Zhang Zhongwei 張忠煒, "'*Ernian lüling*' niandai wenti yanjiu" 《二年律令》年代問題研究. *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2008.3: 147–163; Zhu Teng 朱騰, "Qin Han shidai lüling de chuanbo" 秦漢時代律令的傳播, *Faxue pinglun* 法學評論 2017.4: 182–196; Liu Hsin-ning 劉欣寧, "Handai zhengwu goutong zhongde wenshu yu koutou chuanda——yi Juyan Jiaqu houguan weili" 漢代政務溝通中的文書與口頭傳達——以居延甲渠候官爲例, *Bulletin of the Institute of History Philology Academia Sinic* 89.3(2018): 451–513; Li Jingrong (李婧嶸) and Chen Songchang (陳松長) ,"The Promulgagtion of Law in Qin and Western Han China," *Early China* 44 (2021): 393–418; Han Shufeng 韓樹峰, "Han Jin falü de qingyue hua zhilu" 漢晉法律的清約化之路, *Bulletin of the Institute of History Philology Academia Sinic* 86.2(2016): 271–315.

with the many other genres discussed in the preceding chapters, the continuous editorial practices reflected and affected the very nature of the texts—what was written is both the consequence and symptom of how it was written.

Of the three major legal forms, edict, ordinance, and statute, the ordinance was especially fluid even while maintaining a comparative level of stability. Ordinances were unlike edicts that often circulated individually: situated between the edict and the more fixed statute, ordinances were an intermediate stage that gave them tremendous fluidity and temporality. Just as Tomiya Itaru stated, the imperial ordinance collection should not be portrayed as a "closed" canon which could not be altered, but rather as an unfinished, temporary file.[18] The major source for Tomiya was the Zhangjiashan no. 247 Statutes and Ordinances of the Second Year (*Ernian lüling* 二年律令). Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅,[19] Robin Yates, and Anthony Barbieri-Low [20] have addressed the composition and compilation process of this source as it underwent through numerous additions, deletions, and revisions. This lengthy document of 526 slips (as mentioned in the first chapter), was created through the addition of numerous supplements and amendments during the beginning years of the Han dynasty. It encompassed legal articles enacted from the later years of Emperor Gaozu (r. 202–195 BCE) up to the era of Lü Empress' (187–180 BCE),[21] exhibiting extremely complex multi-temporality, due to its being composed of laws issued in different time periods.

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[19] Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅, "Cong '*Ernian lüling*' de xingzhi kan Handai fadian de bianzuan xiuding yu lüling guanxi."

[20] See D.S. Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China: A Study with Critical Edition and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247* , 1113–1114, 1154.

[21] Wang Wei 王偉, "Lun Hanlü" 論漢律, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2007.3: 4–19.

Given the ontological difference between the law as text and the written law as textual artifact, there was a definite distinction between the time when the laws were issued and when the manuscript was copied. In other words, while the *Ernian lüling* manuscript contains numerous legal articles enacted in earlier periods, there seems to be no evidence of corresponding texts that were also written during those times. Instead, scholars tend to believe that the manuscript was in fact manufactured during Empress Lü's time—the three different handwritings suggest that three scribes wrote the manuscripts in tandem, with Scribe A taking the lead and the other two providing support.[22] Thus, the *Ernian lüling* is more likely a result of three scribes working concurrently, which suggests that although many legal articles (as text) in it were created in the previous decades, the manuscript (as object) was most likely produced later at one time.

Curiously, the multiple handwritings in the *Gongling* appear to have a strong correlation with the content of the ordinances, unlike the *Ernian lüling* in which multiple scribes wrote in turns and the handwriting appears unrelated to the content. In the following section, I will discuss the *Gongling* manuscript as an evolving entity that was being constantly edited through successive legal updates conducted over decades: scribes over several generations kept revising the prior compilations until the manuscript's final compilation in Emperor Wen's reign. Ultimately, as a materialized text, the *Gongling* recorded two decades of legislative advancements and historical transitions. At the same time, as a written artifact, it also witnessed the historical vicissitudes from the later years of Emperor Gaozu to the early years of Emperor Wen—making the *Gongling* both a prevalent text and a marvelous object.

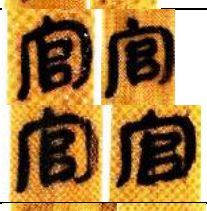
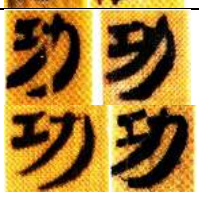
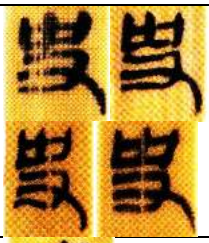
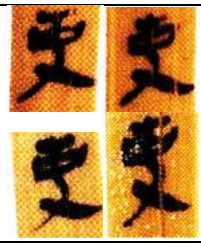
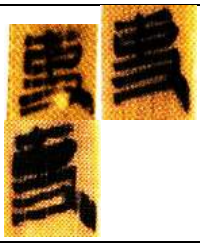
[22] Li Jingrong 李婧嵘, "Zhangjiashan 247 hao Hanmu '*Ernian lüling*' shushou, shuti shixi" 張家山 247 號漢墓〈二年律令〉書手、書題試析, *Hunan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 2016.4: 38–43.

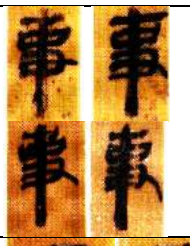
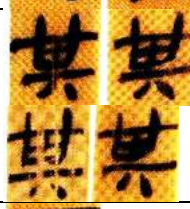
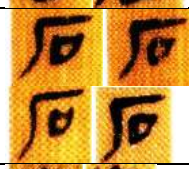
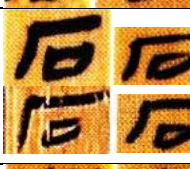
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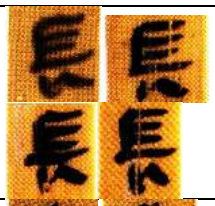
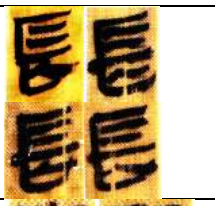
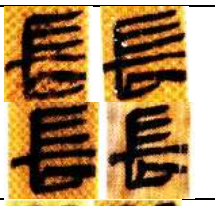
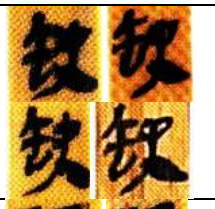
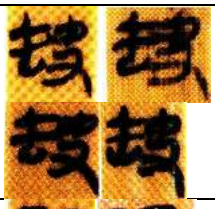
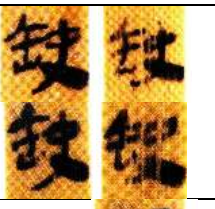
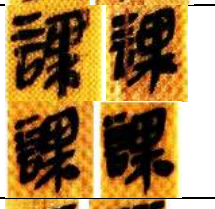
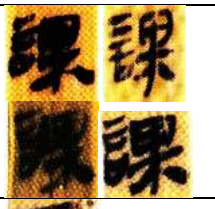
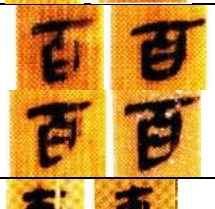
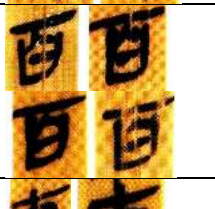
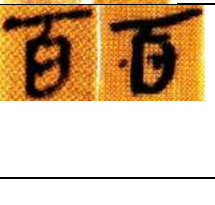
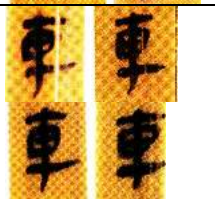
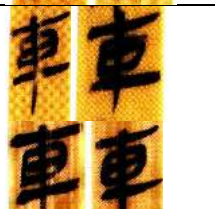
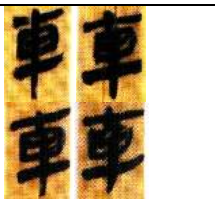
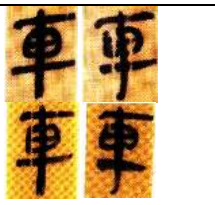
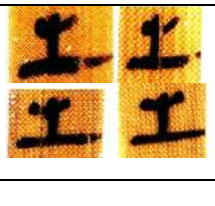
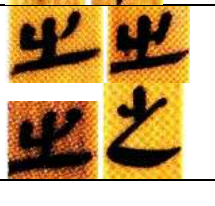
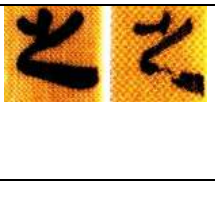
My approach to distinguishing scribal hands involves meticulously collecting and comparing recurrent characters, examining their individual strokes, components, and the overall graphic proportions, as well as the combination of their components.[23] I first identify the scribal hand for each character, and then I can group them together to build a typology of the scribal hands in general. Given that the *Gongling* is comparatively long (184 slips) and its content uniformly deals with imperial laws, the language is more or less formulaic resulting in a substantial portion of characters that constantly recur. These recurrent characters then become the foundation on which to establish a typology of scribal hands. Finally, after collecting, comparing, classifying, and analyzing these recurrent characters, I can suggest that the handwriting in the *Gongling* can be categorized into five primary hands and three secondary hands. The five primary hands wrote over ninety percent of the text, and among those five, the first two major hands alone wrote more than seventy percent. In contrast, the secondary styles are each only represented in one or two articles or short phrases. I will present the classification of hands by listing the representative recurrent characters of the five primary styles in table 1, showcasing the calligraphic characteristics of each scribal hand through the various recurrent characters.

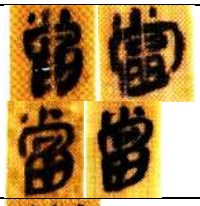
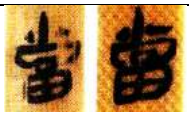
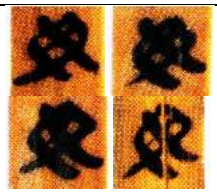
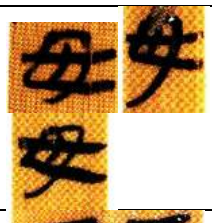
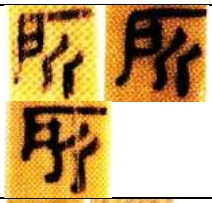
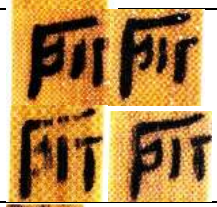
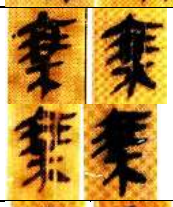
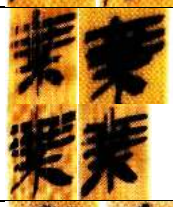
[23] Li Songru 李松儒. "Guodian Chu mu zhujian ziji yanjiu" 郭店楚墓竹簡字迹研究. M.A. thesis, Jilin University, 2006; 李孟涛（Matthias Richter）. "Shitan Guodian Chujian zhong butong shouji de bianbie" 試談郭店楚簡中不同手蹟的辨別, Bu Xianqun 卜憲群 and Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅 eds., *Jianbo yanjiu er ling ling liu* 簡帛研究二〇〇六. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2008: 10–29; Matthias L. Richter, "Faithful Transmission or Creative Change: Tracing Modes of Manuscript Production from the Material Evidence," *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 63.4 （2009): 889–908.

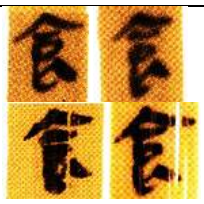
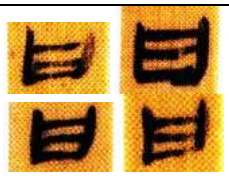
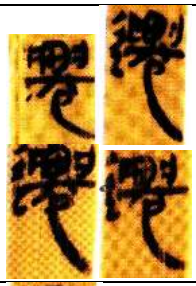
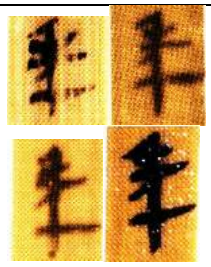
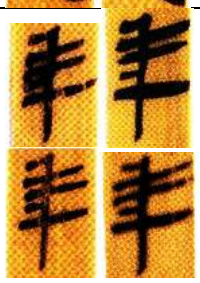
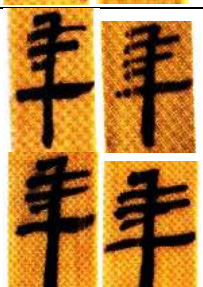
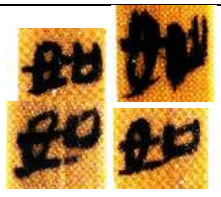
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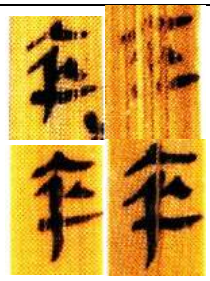
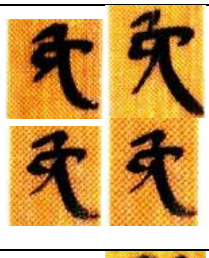
	Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D	Hand E
bu 補					
guan 官					
gong 功					
lao 勞					
zhe 者					
shi 史					
li 吏					

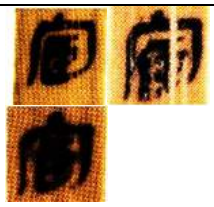
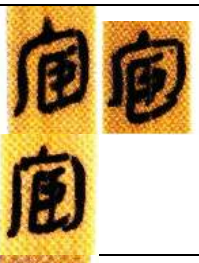
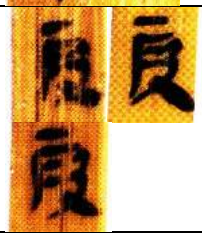
shi 事					
you 有					
zhi 秩					
qi 其					
bu 不					
cheng 丞					
shi 石					
yu 御					
xiang 相					

chang 長					
jun 郡					
wei 尉					
que 缺					
ke 課					
bai 百					
che 車					
zhi 之					

tong 通					
dang 當					
zuo 佐					
wu 毋					
suo 所					
cheng 乘					
shou 守					
dou 斗					

shi 食					
yue 曰					
qian 遷					
nian 年					
ru 如					
ying 盈					

ba 罷					
wei 爲					
zu 卒					
mian 免					
zhi 制					
zhi 置					

se 嗇					
huan 宦					
shi 視					
ze 則					
jia 段					

【Primary Hands】

Hand A (green): 簡 3，4 首～“丞相”、“會十月”～尾，5，6 首～“某功將”[24]，7～14，15 首～“它吏千”，16 首～“補三百石”，17“通課補有秩”～“補卒史”“，20～21，22“御史、丞相襍補”、“以上”～“有秩乘車”，25～31，32 首～“罰金各”，33～34，36，

[24] The first two columns of Slip no. 6 appears lighter in ink color, which might suggest a different writing sequence.

39“議：發弩、校長”、“乘車”～尾，40 首～“皆蠻夷”，41 首～“不平端”，42～43，19[25]，[26]44，49～54，63～67，68 首～“盈三月，得”，70，71 首～“子及其”、“母，同產”～尾，72～74，75“詔遷”～尾，76“尉者，皆”、“與漢吏通課”，77 首～“後以爲”，80，81 首～“調發”、“中它”～尾，82～86，115 首～“二千石官”，184.

Hand B (blue): 簡 1（正背），15“石補二千石”～尾，16“斗食、學”，17“佴”、“補丞相、丞相大尉”，18，37[27]，22“屬尉、佐”、“嗇夫”，35，154～155[28]，38，41“免者，皆遣戍二歲”，45“請：大”、“官屬善書、習馬事者補不足”，46～48，55～61，62“廷爲”～尾，68～69，75“臨光侯相”～“故漢吏，御史以”，76“令上功勞”，78“秦（奉）”、“史、卜”～尾，79，91～94，95 首～“小民”、“不能自給吏”～尾，96，97 首～“令史除”、“勞如”～尾，100～106，107 首～“以爲”，108 首～“四歲”，110～112，113 首～“上郡、雲”、“郡軍吏”～尾，114，115“免之”，116～120，122～136，158[29]，138“以補四百石.”

Hand C (purple): 簡 4“常”，45“僕右廄”～“擇”、“及少府”～尾，62“常”，71“大父”，“77”常，78“常書言”，95“史者少”，97“雁門、代賜”，98～99，107“常”，108“更定視事外”～尾，113“中郡、雁門、代”，138“武士”～“四歲”、“吏”，139～151.

Hand D (red): 簡 32“四兩”，81“國”，152～153，160[30]，156～157，159，137[31]，161～168，121[32]，169～170.

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[25] The adjusted slip sequence should be: 42+43+19. See Huang Haobo 黃浩波. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi” 張家山三三六號漢墓竹簡《功令》編連芻議. 03-20-2023, http://www.bsm.org.cn/?hanjian/8932.html

[26] Slip no. 37 should go after slips no. 15–18. See Huang Haobo. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi.”

[27] The adjusted slip sequence should be: 15+16+17+18+37. See Huang Haobo. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi.”

[28] The adjusted slip sequence should be: 36+154+155. See Huang Haobo. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi.”

[29] The adjusted slip sequence should be: 136+158. See Huang Haobo. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi.”

[30] The adjusted slip sequence should be: 153+160. See Huang Haobo. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi.”

[31] Huang Haobo has suggested to move Slip no. 158 to be after Slip no. 136, and move Slip no. 137 afterSlip no. 159. See Huang Haobo. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi.”

[32] The adjusted slip sequence should be: 168+121, See Huang Haobo. “Zhangjiashan 336 hao Hanmu zhujian ‘gongling’ bianlian chuyi.”

Hand E (yellow)： 2，23～24，40“守課”～尾，171，172 首～“長毋適”，177～183.

【Secondary Hands】
Hand F： Slips 87~90。

Hand G： 172“過，它如請”，173～174，175 首～“上其國”，176。

Hand H： 6“大凡功若干”，175“丞相御史通課”

【Doubtful Hands】： Slip 39“髯長、候長當補”。

After establishing the typology of different scribal hands, two patterns can be summarized: 1) The distribution of the multiple primary hands presents a sequence of hands A-B-C-D-E; 2) at the same time, there are also sections, and even slips, where texts written by different hands coexist on the same slip or the same paragraph.[33] There is evidence of either the insertion of entire slips or changes of hands within the same slip for just a few characters. If we see the change of hand as standing for a rupture in time, space, or people, then, how should we construe the actual writing scenario of the *Gongling*? Does that mean that multiple scribes worked concurrently and took turns writing in a collective mode of production? Or, since an ordinance was the type of legal texts whose contennt related to a specific time, was it that later scribes revised and updated earlier laws, thus making the manuscript a processual object produced over a long time? As for the numerous direct traces of scraping and rewriting that appear, are they merely corrections of unintentional writing errors, or do they signify a deliberate editorial process to update the imperial law and emend the text?

These issues, as were highlighted in the introduction, necessitate a comprehensive survey and systematic analysis of all related occurrences. Theoretically, if each textual modification were

[33] Huang Haobo’s adjustment of the slip sequence generally aligns with my observation of the handwritings: Hand A—B—C—D—E.

completely random and other evidence suggested a sloppy manner of writing, it would more likely be simple error correction. However, if there are any patterns in these corrections, further investigation into the intentions behind these deliberate alteration is warranted. Based on the evidence that I have gathered, I suggest that the changes in scribal hands in the *Gongling* manuscript signify a deliberate, purposeful, and physical editorial process of expanding, inserting, scraping, or rewriting the ordinances. This process was not completed at once; rather, it was a diachronic, rigid, continuous endeavor that unfolded over the course of decades. The following sections will examine this in detail.

Sequence of Scribal Hands

Resonating the internal regulations for judiciary scribes to deliver high-quality calligraphy, the handwriting quality of the *Gongling* manuscript displays a high level of skill, which is particularly true with the first three types of primary handwriting that covers over ninety percent of the text. The layout is also well-organized and of superior quality. The distribution of characters within the same handwriting remains basically uniform in density and balance. Such uniformity in layout suggests that it was more likely that the texts written in the same hand were composed in one breath, rather than being written by the same scribe over multiple sessions. Under this premise, corrections by different scribes would inevitably change the original layout, and if handwriting appears noticeably more compact or sparse compared to the surrounding text, it may be a result of the process of correcting and rewriting the text. Along these lines, we see that the distribution of handwriting in the *Gongling* suggests a different scenario than that of

the *Ernian lüling*,[34] Zhangjiashan no. 247 *Suan shu shu* 筭數書 (Writings on Mathematical Procedures);[35] the Tsinghua **Sigao* 四告(Four Proclamation);[36] and several other manuscripts that were produced by multiple scribes writing in turns, or multiple scribes writing concurrently and cross-checking and proofreading altogether.

This is because first, despite occasional inserted sections, the scribal hands of the *Gongling* show a clear division and the sequence of hands A-B-C-D-E. If two kinds of handwriting coexist on the same slip, then there are either 1) clear traces of scraping or 2) noticeable changes in the text layout—one is more unnaturally squeezed or crowded than the other, suggesting that the imbalanced texts were written at a different time and added later. Collecting and comparing these two types of signifiers of the sequence of writing. Altogether, we can conclude that the *Gongling* manuscript has a clear pattern of only later hands revising preceding hands, and not]preceding hands revising the later hands: for example, as the following tables show, we can only see Hand B correcting Hand A, Hand C correcting Hands A and B, and Hand D correcting Hands A, B, and C; but we do not see Hand A going back to correct Hands B, C, D, E or Hand B correcting Hands C, D, E, or Hand C correcting Hands D and E. As shown in table 2, some bamboo slips have obvious traces of scraping, so the handwriting written on the lighter bamboo

[34] Li Jingrong 李婧嵘. "Zhangjiashan 247 hao Hanmu ' *lüling*' shushou, shuti shixi" 張家山 247 號漢墓〈二年律令〉書手、書題試析, *Hunan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 2016.4: 38–43.

[35] Daniel Patrick Morgan (墨子涵) and Karine Chemla (林力娜). "Writing in Turns: An Analysis of Scribal Hands in the Bamboo Manuscript Suan shu shu 筭數書 (Writings on Mathematical Procedures) from Zhangjiashan Tomb No. 247 (張家山 247 號墓漢簡《筭數書》寫手再探)," *Bamboo and Silk* 1 (2018): 152–190.

[36] Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔, "Qinghuajian **Sigao* de xingahi jiqi chengshu wenti tanyan" 清華簡《四告》的形制及其成書問題探研, in *Guwenzi yu chutu wenxian qingnian xuezhe xihu luntan,* 90–106; "Qinghua jian '*Yin zhi* shushou' ziji de kuoda jiqi xiangguan wenti taolun" 清华簡《尹至》書手字迹的扩大及相關問題探討, *Chutu wenxian zonghe yanjiu jikan* 出土文獻綜合研究集刊 13 (2021): 79–100.

color means that it would have been written after scraping and later than the handwriting on the darker, original bamboo color. Hence, in tables 3 to 6, we see that 1) Hand B added after texts from Hand A's text, or 2) after visible scraping, there are apparent changes in the spacing between the graphs. Altogether, the string of evidence invariably indicates a patterned sequence of hands later in the sequence revising hands earlier in the sequence.

Table 2.

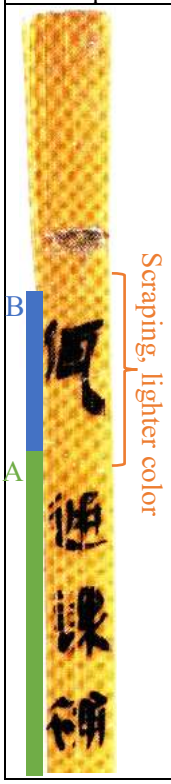
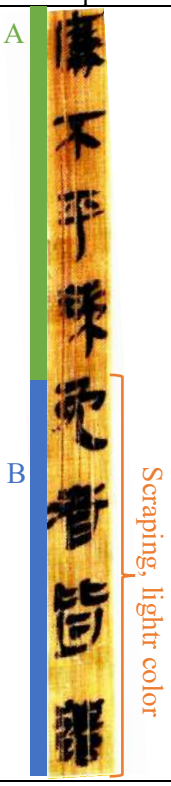
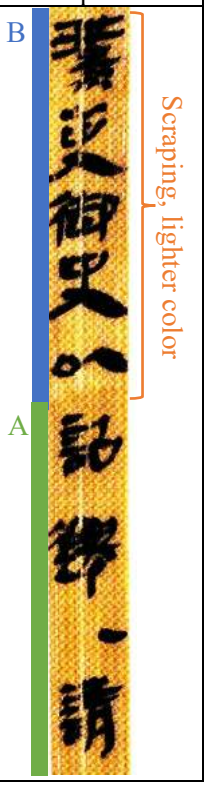
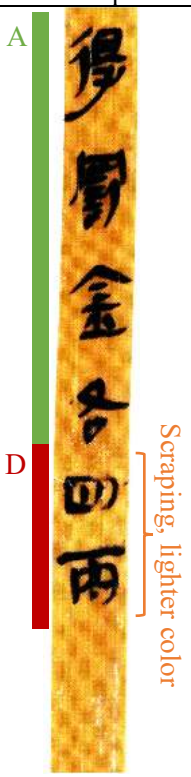
Hand B changed A: Scraping				Hand D changed A: Scraping
Slip17	Slip 22	Slip 41	Slip 75	Slip 32
				

Table 3.

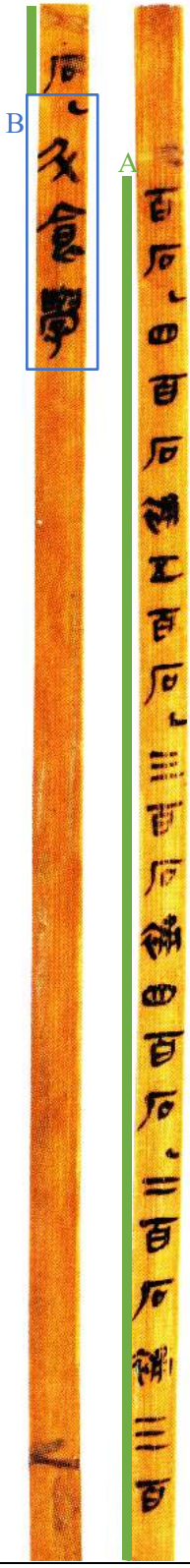
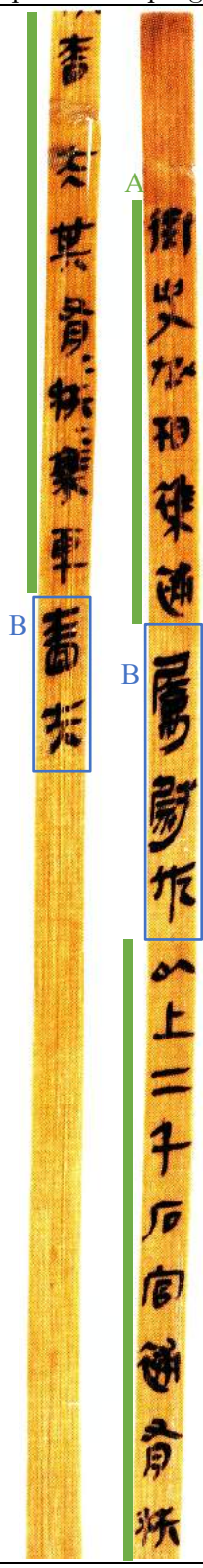
Hand B changed A: inserted characters			
Slip 17, scraping	Slip 16, adding	Slip 15, adding	Slip 22，scraping
			

Table 4.

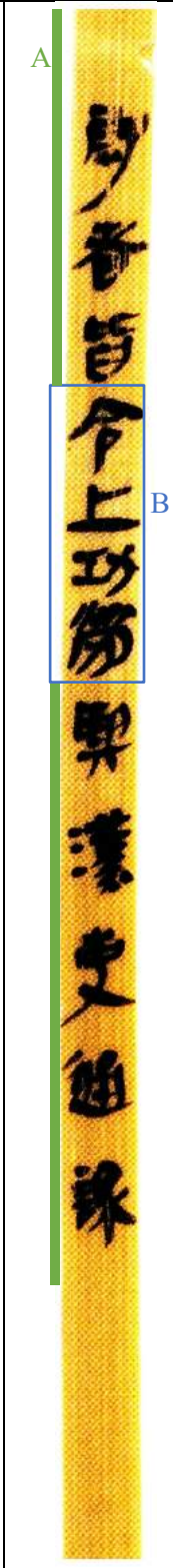
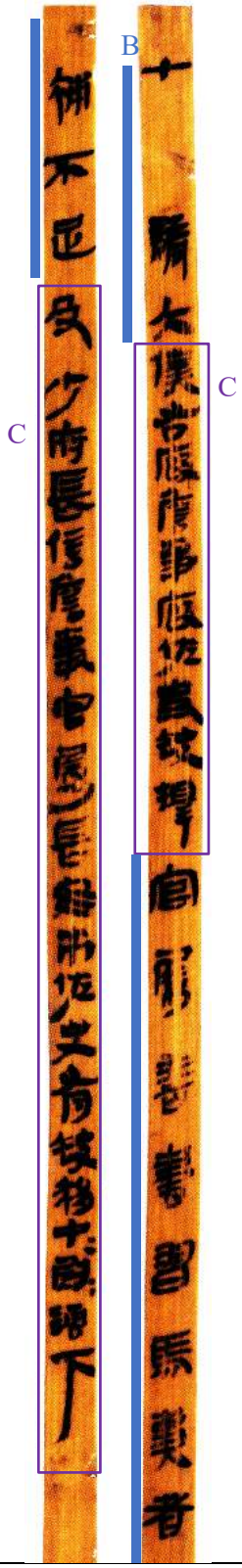
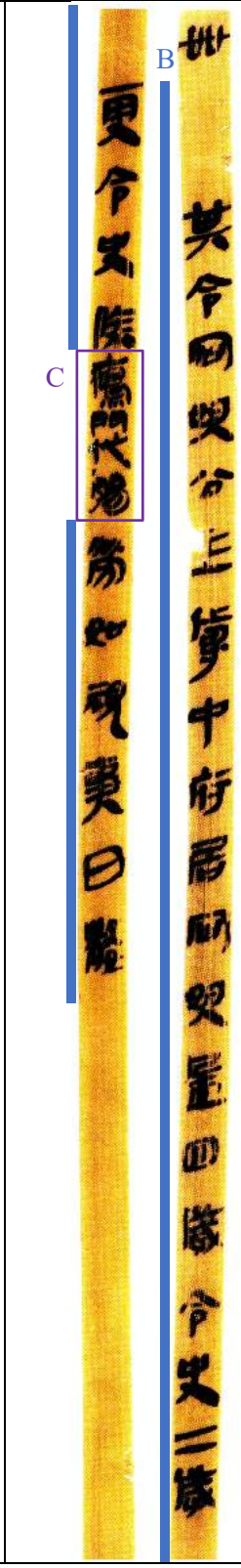
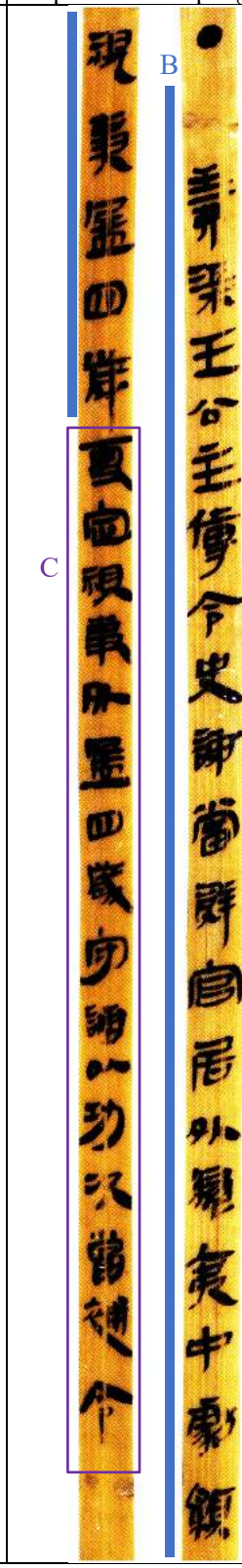
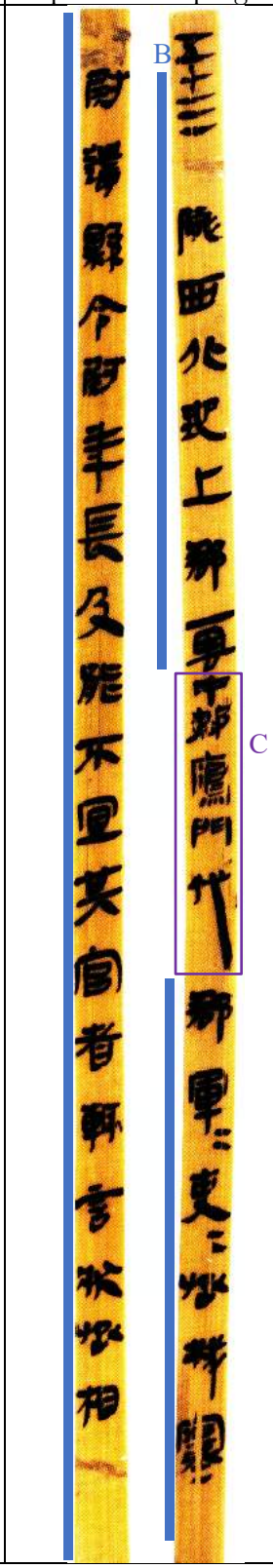
Hand B changed A				
Slip 41: Scraping	Slip 68: Scraping	Slip 75: Scraping	Slip 76: Scr..	Slip 115: Add..
				

Table 5.

Hand C changed B			
Slip 45: Scraping	Slip 97: Scraping	Slip 108: Scraping	Slip 113: Scraping
			

4. Marking times

Moreover, the absence of evidence suggesting that any preceding hands modified the texts of later hands but rather that the later hands changed the preceding, suggests that the transition of scribal hands in the *Gongling* would not have derived from the production mode of multiple scribes writing together, and a conceivable writing and correcting sequence can be construed. In other words, the change of hands is not due to a co-temporal manufacturing model with multiple scribes copying or organizing the edicts or ordinances together, but to a process was diachronic and characterized by sequential additions and revisions over time.

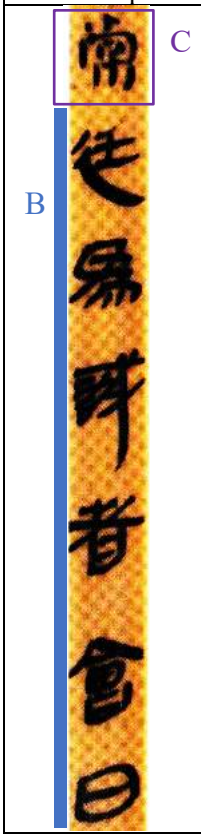
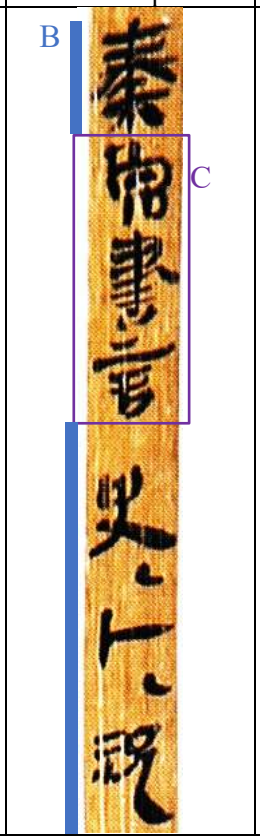
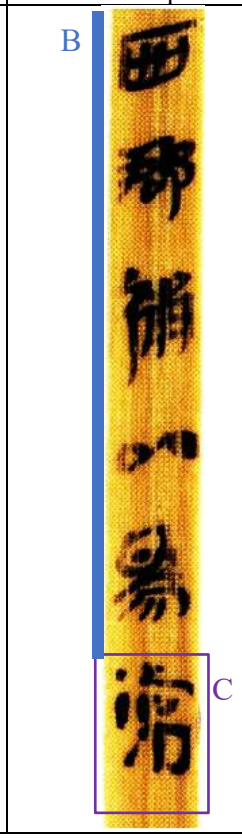
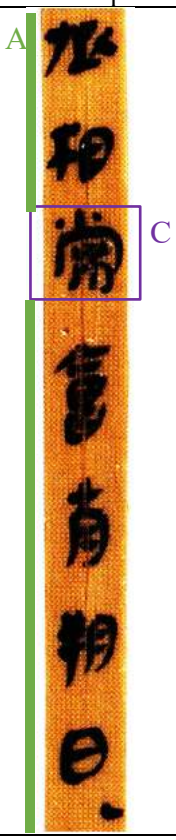
Thus, if we carefully read the texts within each hand, can we likewise build the time sequence between the written ordinances? In the following sections, by associating the text within each hand with specific historical periods, I will show that the time difference between the primary hands of the *Gongling* can likely not be measured in minutes or hours, but rather in months or years—handwritings and the associated ordinances may even span the transitions between different emperors' reigns.

4.1 Emperor Wen's Name Taboo: Changing heng 恒 as chang 常

Table 7. 

Based on the single-directional, "later hands changed the preceding hands" pattern, how should we understand the act of correction—does it mean revising an earlier, unintentional scribal error, or an intentional update of the law? I believe that this question, once again, should be answered through a thorough collection and synthesizing of the data. Among the numerous traces of corrections and revisions, one of the most curious and consistent is that it seems almost all the *chang* 常 (constant) characters in hand A and B present a subtle difference from the surrounding text (with only two exceptions), but they are similar to the *chang* written by Hand C (slips 148 & 151). As shown in table 7, we can see that Slip 101 was uniformly written by Hand B, and Slips 148 and 151 by Hand C. The three instances of the character *chang* are consistent with the other characters on the same slips in terms of brushwork and stroke combination, and can be considered the standard *chang* for Hands B and C. Using these characters as a standard, as the following table shows, although the surrounding text on Slips 62, 78, and 107 is typical of Hand B, it is only the *chang* characters on these slips that differ in brush strokes and style from the surrounding text, and yet they resemble the *chang* of Hand C on Slips 148 and 151. Similarly, while the other characters on Slips 4 and 77 should be from Hand A, the two instances of *chang* diverge in scribal hand from the other characters on the same slips, again resembling the *chang* of Hand C. These changes in hands suggests that Hand C may have intentionally unified some other characters as *chang* when the text originally written by Hands A & B.

Table 8.

(typical) *chang* 常 in Hand B:  101		*chang* 常 in Hand C:  148  151		
Slip 62	Slip 78	Slip 107	Slip 4	Slip 77
				

To illustrate this point, if we compare the questionable *chang* characters written by Hand A and B with the characters *dang* 當 and *chang* 嘗, which share the "⺌" radical, we can further discern that the questionable *chang* more closely resembles the handwriting of Hand C. As shown in table 9, it is apparent that the top three strokes of the "⺌" part of the questionable *chang* characters are different from the writing of related characters by Hands A and B: the strokes of Hands A and B are symmetrical and skilled, with a sharp execution, and the upper left and right strokes extend further outwards; however, for the questionable characters, in the "⺌" part, the

upper left and right strokes are more convergent, often rounded, and the upper left stroke sometimes connects to the right. This indicates that the five questionable *chang* characters were more likely rewritten by Hand C over the bamboo slips that were originally completed by Hand A and B, and were not the original script of A or B.

Table 9.

Hand A	Hand B	Doubtful *Chang*	Hand C
當： 4  21  25  32  33  72  80  80； 嘗： 25  28	常： 101；當：  59  18  78  100  108  114  154； 嘗： 55  92	 4  77  62  78  107	常： 148  151 當： 108  139  140  141

Since the *Gongling* manuscript is roughly dated to the second to seventh year of Emperor Wen's reign, the modification of the character *chang* naturally brings to mind the convention of avoiding Emperor Wen's personal name, (Liu) *Heng* (劉)恒 by changing all the *heng* 恒 to chang, as the two characters are almost interchangeable in meaning.[37] If we synthesize the usage as shown below, the only instance of the character *chang* that was not modified by Hand B appears

[37] Chen Yuan 陳垣. *Shihui juli* 史諱舉例 in *Chen Yuan quanji* vol. 7. Hefei: Anhui daxue, 2009, 122; Lai Guolong 來國龍, "Bihuizi yu chutu Qin Han jianbo de yanjiu" 避諱字與出土秦漢簡帛的研究, *in Jianbo yanjiu 簡帛研究* 2006, ed. Bu Xianqun 卜憲群 and Yang Zhenhong 楊振紅 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008), 126–133.

in Slip 101 as part of the official title, *Fengchang* 奉常; in every other case of Hands A and B, the *chang* characters that mean "usual practice, routine, or principle," are synonymous and interchangeable with heng and were all rewritten by Hand C.

(1). "以爲常": Make this a permanent [policy].

Slip 77: 請令中尉調以近縣補，後以爲【Hand A】常【Hand C】
Order the Commander of the Middle transfer and supplement […] from the nearby counties, and then make this 【Hand A】a permanent [policy] 【Hand C】.

Slip 61–62: 試以爲【Hand B】常【Hand C】。廷爲試者，會日以道里計遣，勿令豫（預）先到長安【Hand B】
Establish the examinations as 【Hand B】a constant practice【Hand C】. Those required to take exams in the central court should be dispatched according to their respective travel distances to ensure they arrive by the specified date; do not arrive in Chang'an in advance. 【Hand B】

Slip 107: 令隴西郡補以爲【B】常【C】
Order the Longxi Commandery to supplement […] and make this a 【B】permanent [policy] 【C】.

(2). "常會+time": constenatly make [xx time] the deadline

Slip 4: 上御史、丞相【A】，常【C】會十月朔日【A】
Forward this to the Imperial Councilor and the Chancellor【A】, constantly 【C】 make the first day of the tenth month the deadline【A】.

(3). subject+常+ predicate

Slip 148: 故中大夫常上門監宜補者御史，御史...【C】
Counsellor of the Palace constantly acend to gate and supervise those who are fit in filling up the appointment of Censor, Censor... 【C】

Slip 151: 賜其嗇夫吏及令史常監者勞歲六月【C】
Grant the Bailiffs, functionaries and the head clerks who have constantly supervised […] with six additional month of work each year.

(4). "奉常": The Minister of Ceremonial (compound official title)

Slip 101: 奉常課其邑有秩、斗食功勞以補【B】
The Minister of Ceremonial evaluate the merits and work of officials with rank and those receiving [irregular] bushel [of grain] as their salary within the town, to [select and] supply…【B】

Slip 78：奉【B】常書言【C】，史、卜、祝、尸、茜、 御、杜主樂【B】
The Minister of 【B】Ceremonial submitted a document【C】, reporting: As for scribes, diviners, invocators, impersonators of the deities, libationers, coachmen, musicians of the cult of Lord Du…【B】

Slip 169：丞相上奏（奉）常書言，令曰【D】
The Chancellor forward [the message] to the Minister of Ceremonial saying, "Order …"【D】

Denoting the meaning of "norm, routine, or principle," the phrases that include *chang* can be summarized as (1) "make this a constant [policy]." 以爲常, (2) "constantly make [xx time] the deadline." 常會+[xx time] indicating "The deadline [of certain administrative duty] is always in the tenth month," and (3) subject + 常(constantly) + predicate, regulating various requirements or the timeline for official duties.

At the same time, as we are well-versed in the practice of avoiding Emperor Wen's personal name in the early imperial writings, the special treatment of the character *chang* naturally reminds us that prior to his reign, substantially similar phrases can be found among numerous unearthed legal documents. In these phrases, for the two words' semantic resemblance and thus interchangeability, the characters corresponding to 常 originally appear as 恒, such as "以爲恒" (make this a permanent [policy]). "恒會"/ "恒以" + time ("the deadline [of certain administrative duty] is always at the [xx time]), or subjective + 恒 (permanently) + predictive; these usages are semantically invariably interchangeable with chang. A substantial quantity of these uses, including in the Qin as well as Han laws before Emperor Wen's ascension to the throne, we can find the many of the following examples:

(1) "以爲恒": This be made a permanent [policy].

“令請出，**以爲恒**。”Yuelu IV《内史二千石官共令》344/0519[38]
“令皆明焉，**以爲恒**。” Yuelu IV《廷内史郡二千石官共令》370/J58[39]
The orders are all very clear; make them constant [regulations]

“貲各一盾，**以爲恒**。” Yuelu IV《廷内史郡二千石官共令》380/0663[40]
Fine each of them one shield, and make it a constant policy

“令其牒牘毋與前同數，**以爲恒**。” Yuelu V《廷卒令》185/1737[41]
Order that the number of tablets and boards be the same with the previous number, and make this a constant [regulation].

“與奏偕上。**以爲恒**。” Yuelu V《廷卒令》187/1785[42]
Submit it together with the memorial. Make this a constant [practice].

“告縣官者，貲一甲。**以爲恒**。”Yuelu V 217/1760[43]
“□一甲，**以爲恒**。” Yuelu VI《廷内史官共令》93/2167[44]
“勿令尼【巾夔】，**以爲恒**。” Yuelu VI《食官共令》111/1938[45]
“給置、傳，**以爲恒**。”ZJS 247《二年律令·津关令》516[46]
...to provide for postal-relay and official conveyance stations, and that this be made a permanent [policy]

(2) “恒會”/ “恒以” + time

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[38] Chen Songchang 陳松長 et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian* 嶽麓書院藏秦簡, vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhongxi, 2015), 21, 179, 209.

[39] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 4, 22, 180, 217.

[40] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 4, 23, 180, 221.

[41] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian* 嶽麓書院藏秦簡, vol. 5 (Shanghai: Zhongxi, 2017), 13, 85, 129.

[42] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 5, 13, 85, 130.

[43] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 5, 14, 86, 140.

[44] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian* 嶽麓書院藏秦簡, vol. 6 (Shanghai: Zhongxi, 2020), 11, 83, 96.

[45] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 6, 12, 84, 102.

[46] Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 張家山二四七號漢墓竹簡整理小組 eds., *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian [Ersiqi hao mu]* 張家山漢墓竹簡[二四七號墓]. Beijing: Wenwu, 2006, 87. See also Peng Hao 彭浩, Chen Wei 陳偉, and Kudō Motoo 工藤元男, eds., *liuling yu Zouyanshu: Zhangjiashan ersiqihao Han mu chutu falü wenxian shidu* 二年律令與奏讞書：張家山二四七號漢墓出土法律文獻釋讀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2007), 321.

“**恒會八月望**。” ZJS 247《二年律令·田律》256[47]
Constantly meet the deadline of the fifteenth day of the eighth month.

“令曰：上葆繕牛車簿，**恒會四月朔日**太守府。”Liye 8-62[48]
Order them to submit the records for the modifications to the ox carts. Constant meet the deadline of the first day of the fourth month [to submit them] to the court of the Commandery Governor.

“……**恒會正月七月朔日**廷”Liye 8-175[49]
Constantly arrive the court on the first day of the first and the seventh month.

“**恒会九月朔日**守府”Liye 8-1258[50]
Constantly meet the Guard of the [county] court on the first day of the ninth month.

“而月壹上廷，**恒會朔日**” Yuelu V《内史仓曹令》253/1925[51]
Arrive the courth once each month, and constantly arrive on the first day [of the month]

“縣**恒以十月**鄰牒，” Yuelu V《廷内史郡二千石官共令》357/0640[52]
The county constantly […] the tablets in the tenth month.

“後**恒以**戶時復申令縣鄉吏……”Yuelu V《廷卒令》202/1796+1969[53]
Later contantly issue a command and order the officials of the county and districts at the time of registering housheolds.

“後**恒以**戶時復申令縣部吏治前。” Yuelu VI《司空卒令》190/0136[54]

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[47] Peng Hao, Chen Wei, and Kudō Motoo, eds., *liüling yu Zouyanshu: Zhangjiashan ersiqihao Han mu chutu falü wenxian shidu*, 193.

[48] Hunan sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 湖南省文物考古研究所 ed., *Liye Qinjian* 里耶秦簡, vol. 1. Beijing: Wenwu, 2012, 21. See also Chen Wei, *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi* 里耶秦簡牘校釋, vol. 1 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue, 2012), 47–48.

[49] Hunan sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo ed., *Liye Qinjian*, vol. 1. Beijing: Wenwu, 2012, 43; See also Chen Wei, *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi*, vol. 1 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue, 2012), 104.

[50] Hunan sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo ed., *Liye Qinjian*, vol. 1. Beijing: Wenwu, 2012, 160; Chen Wei, *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi*, vol. 1 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue, 2012), 301.

[51] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 5, 165, 181.

[52] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 4, 22, 180, 213.

[53] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 5, 14, 86, 135.

[54] Chen Songchang et al., eds., *Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian*, vol. 6, 18, 126, 147.

Later contantly issue a command and order the officials of the county and districts to […in the front] at the time of registering housheolds.

"**恒以**秋七月除阡陌之大草" ZJS 247《二年律令·田律》246[55]
Always in the seventh month of autumn, remove tall grasses from the lengthwise and crosswise roads.698-699

"**恒以八月**令鄉部嗇夫、吏、令史相襍案戶籍"《二年律令·户律》328[56]
Always, in the eighth month, order the Bailiff of the District and the [subordinate] officials and Scribe Director [of the county or march], together, to examine106 the household registers, record a copy of them, and store it at the [County or March] Court. 798-799
"令曰：**恒以朔日**上所買徒隸數"里耶 8-154[57]
"產子者恒以戶時占其……"ZJS 247《二年律令·户律》326[58]
One who gives birth to a child99 is always to report the [child's age and gender (?)] at the time of the household100 [-register examination in the eighth month]796-797

(3) subjective + 恒 + predictive
"官**恒**先計讎。"ZJS 247《二年律令·户律》333-334[59]
Officials are always to cross-check [the summary accounts against the original registers] before the [forwarding of] accounts. 799-798

Laying out all the phrases in which the characters heng and *chang* are used interchangeably among the legal writings, it is evident that the use of heng in the Qin-Han statutes and ordinances prior to Emperor Wen's ascension was synonymous with chang, as seen in the

[55] Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu eds., *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian [Ersiqi hao mu]*, 42. See also Peng Hao, Chen Wei, and Kudō Motoo eds., *lüling yu Zouyanshu: Zhangjiashan ersiqihao Han mu chutu falü wenxian shidu*, 189.

[56] Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu eds., *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian [Ersiqi hao mu]*, 54. See also Peng Hao, Chen Wei, and Kudō Motoo eds., *lüling yu Zouyanshu: Zhangjiashan ersiqihao Han mu chutu falü wenxian shidu*, 222.

[57] Hunan sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo ed., *Liye Qinjian*, vol. 1. Beijing: Wenwu, 2012, 36; Chen Wei, *Liye Qin jiandu jiaoshi*, vol. 1 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue, 2012), 93.

[58] Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu eds., *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian [Ersiqi hao mu]*, 53. See also Peng Hao, Chen Wei, and Kudō Motoo eds., *lüling yu Zouyanshu: Zhangjiashan ersiqihao Han mu chutu falü wenxian shidu*, 222.

[59] Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu eds., *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian [Ersiqi hao mu]*, 54; Peng Hao, Chen Wei, and Kudō Motoo eds., *lüling yu Zouyanshu: Zhangjiashan ersiqihao Han mu chutu falü wenxian shidu*, 225.

Gongling. As such, it is conceivable that the character *chang* that appears among the phrases "make this a constant [policy]" and "constantly make [xx time] the deadline" in the *Gongling* and was initially penned by Hands A and B, was originally composed using heng. On the other hand, this phenomenon would not apply to the official title *fengchang* 奉常, because it was already a fixed term and would not have been originally written as *fengheng* 奉恒. This explains why the phrase in Slip 101 by Hand B remains the sole instance where *chang* was not replaced by Hand C.

Furthermore, despite the many other possibilities, the most straightforward reason for Hand C systematically correcting all of the instances of the character heng is that after the ascent to the throne by Emperor Wen, whose personal name was Liu Heng, there was a subsequent imperative to revise the existing official texts in order to avoid his personal name. In other words, taking Emperor Wen's succession as a watershed, Hand C, while adding new and editing previous laws, not only ensured that the newly written ordinances avoided the word *heng* in Emperor Wen's name but also uniformly scraped and revised the character 恆 character representing "principle, routine, or norm" from the ordinances written by previous generations to *chang* 常. Situating the *Gongling* document in its historical context and the long duration of historical time, we find the reasons for the subtle yet consistent change to the *chang* characters. In the texts of Hands D and E which were most likely written even later, heng disappears in favor of chang. More significantly, Hand C's substitution of heng with *chang* may well mark the chronological difference between hands—using the avoidance of the current emperor's name as a divide, the writings of Hands A and B could predate this, while Hands C, D, and E postdate it. Statistically, it is worth noting that the decrees written by Hands A and B account for about 70 percent (approximately 130 out of 184) of the *Gongling* manuscript, and the handwriting within

these is relatively uniform and stable, and thus more likely to have been written in one sitting. This suggests that it was not only that the content of the *Gongling* text, as a collection of legal codes, had multiple, complex strata of law-making practices, but also that the *Gongling* manuscript, as a material object, underwent physical revisions, expansions, corrections, and (re-)organizations numerous times. Precisely because of its multi-layered formation in both content and in the actual process of production, the *Gongling* manuscript should not be dated to the second to seventh year of Emperor Wen as if it had been made at one time, but rather, that about 70 percent of the text was written before the start of the rule of Emperor Wen. Besides avoiding Emperor Wen's name, there are more clues marking the timing of decrees in the different hand and slip texts within the *Gongling*.

4.2 Diachronical Editorial Process

Aside from the change of hands in the case of the taboo characters, within each hand, numerous other related traces—paleographic forms, numerical features, political terminologies, as well as historical events—also prove this point. Due to the scope of the current chapter, I will refrain from delving into the numerous promising directions of periodization-indicators in detail and only offer a chart to explain my point regarding the diachronic change of scribal hands.

Hand A 198 BCE onward	Chancellor of State (*Xiangguo* 相國),	Recolating sons of former regional lords to the land within the passes 故諸侯子徙關中	 *Ying* 盈[62] Archaic graph, typical in Qin		

[62] All the more archaic form of ying only appear on the texts written by hand A (slips 4, 121, 26, 36, 67, 68), whereas all the ying on Hand B~E written in the typical Han grapic form.

	196 ~ 190 BCE[60]	198~ 197 BCE [61]			
Hand B 184 BCE onward	Chief Minister (*Chengxiang* 丞相) 189 BCE onward		 *Ying* 盈 Typical Han graphic form	Mausoleums of Emperor Gaozu, Hui, Qianshao[63] 184 BCE onward	Laws issued by"Linguang houxiang" 臨光侯相[64] 184~180 BCE
Hand C 180 BCE onward	Chief Minister (*Chengxiang* 丞相) 189 BCE onward	Replace pre-existing *heng* as *chang*,[65]180 BCE onward	 *Ying* Typical Han graphic form		Supervisor of the Household of the Empress Dowager (Changxin Zhanshi 長信詹事) 180 BCE onward[66]
Hand D	Chief Minister (*Chengxiang* 丞相)	Four explicit datings of the year		"Crown prince" 太	Supervisor of the Household of the

[60] The title Chancellor of State (Xiangguo 相國) is mentioned exclusively in texts written by what is identified as Hand A, found on slips 64, 65, 66, 75, and 83. According to various excavated and transmitted sourcess, including the Shiji and the Hanshu, Chief Minister (Chengxiang 丞相) was typically used both before 196 BCE and after around 189 BCE, whereas Xiangguo denotes the timeframe between 196 to 190 BCE. Intriguingly, both titles are found in the *Gongling* manuscript. While Chengxiang is the more common term throughout later sections, Xiangguo appears only in the earliest texts, penned by Hand A, See, for example, Anthony J. Barbieri-Low and Robin D.S. Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China: A Study with Critical Edition and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247* , 1113–1114, 1163; Peng Hao 彭浩, Chen Wei 陳偉, and Kudo Motoo 工藤元男, *Lüling yu zou yanshu: Zhangjiashan er si qi hao mu chutu falü wenxian shidu* 二年律令與奏讞書：張家山二四七號漢墓出土法律文獻釋讀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), 134. See also Oba Osamu 大庭脩, "Cho kasann 247-go kan haka shutsudo no se kan rei ni tsuite" 張家山 247 号漢墓出土の津関令について, *Ōsaka fu ritsuchi katsu asuka hakubutsukan kanho* 大阪府立近つ飛鳥博物館館報 7 (2002): 1–6; Hirose Kunio 廣瀨薫雄, *Shin Kan Ritsuryo Kenkyu*, 100.

[61] The same incident is documented in the Zhangjiashan no. 247 Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases (Zou yan shu 奏讞書), which correlates with accounts in the *Shiji* (8.386) and the *Hanshu* 1.66. All three sources date the events to 198–197 BCE. See *Lüling yu zou yanshu,* 93.

[63] The ordinance on slip 132 mentions the the Emperor Qianshao's mausoleum, indicating that this text must have been written after his death in 184 BCE,

[64] An ordinance issued by Linguang houxiang 臨光侯相 is mentioned exclusively in texts written by what is identified as Hand B, found on slips 75, suggesting Lü Xu 吕嬃, who was titled as Linguang houxiang during the years 184 ~180 BCE. see *Shiji* (9.510) *Zhangjiashan Hanmu zhujian (sans an liu hao mu)* 張家山漢墓竹簡（三三六號墓）108–109.

[65] See previous discussion, on pages 27–36.

[66] The title Supervisor of the Household of the Empress Dowager (Changxin Zhanshi 長信詹事) is mentioned exclusively in texts written by what is identified as Hand C, D, E. This title has been established for Emperess to Emperor Wen, see Zhou Bo 周波, "Shuo Zhangjiashan hanjian *Ernian lüling* zhilü de 'zhan shi' binglun hanchu de taihou huanghou liang gong guan xitong" 說張家山漢簡〈二年律令·秩律〉的"詹事"並論漢初的太后、皇后两宫官系統, *Bulletin of Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 94.1 (2023): 1–58.

179 BCE onward	189 BCE onward	179~178 BCE		子 179 BCE onward	Empress Dowager (180 BCE onward
Hand E	Chief Minister (*Chengxiang* 丞相) 189 BCE onward		 *Ying* Typical Han graphic form		Supervisor of the Household of the Empress Dowager 180 BCE onward

5. Editing over the Longue duree

In short, the prolonged making of the *Gongling* manuscript resonates with the evolution of the imperial law and the historical changes from Emperor Gaozu (206–195 BCE) to Emperor Wen (179–157 BCE). In that it provides a revealing vignette of the transformation of a legal document, not only as public knowledge but also as a physical, actual epistemological object. Hence, as the imperial legal infrastructure constantly transformed over time, the legal books, the emblems and embodiments of legislative and textual practices, were likewise never static. Discerning the typology of the scribal hands, the codicological multiplicity and the multi-strata textuality altogether lead us to identify an executive collectivism in the early imperial book production. Building the connection between scribal hands and the associated texts reveals a multi-temporality and an ephemeral quality that is often overlooked. As the first chapter delineated, both the overall quantity and the individual size of the Qin-Han books experienced steady growth; yet as we have view this ever-accumulating nature in hindsight, the *Gongling* manuscript also demonstrates that parts of the growing edifice of the imperial law also went through substantial and intentional elimination: the traces of scraping denote not only what was reestablished, but also the unseen world of what was gone.

Ultimately, it becomes impossible to gauge whether the multiple scribal hands in fact stand for multiple people or only one—as the writing quality of the major hands suggests, the scribal capability increases the possibility that one advanced scribe deployed different yet

internally consistent handwriting during different moment in his[67] lifetime. As this project is concerned less with any certain scribe's biography,[68] the more crucial point of this chapter and for this project is tracing the interconnectedness between the scribal features and their scribal methods. In doing so, we found a whole set of toolboxes used in the making and remaking of texts over a long period of time.

In the making of the *Gongling*, several writing and editing competencies were necessary. First, was the ability to maintain orthographic and calligraphic consistency, especially in light of the many pre-imperial literary manuscripts containing tremendous graphic irregularities, as shown in chapter three. In contrast, the *Gongling*'s graphic regularity can be partially attributed to the Qin's *shu tong wenzi* script reform, yet we should likewise note that it was the scribes who had to deliver the imperial policy, as numerous contemporaneous materials might present less standardized writings. Moreover, the skillful operation of the balanced layout and equal spacing between characters (if not the correcting of others' writings) also bespeaks the long-years of training and expertise in both writing texts and managing layout. To some degree, both graphic consistency and layout regularity were already reading aids—to achieve this goal, years of training and practicing were indispensable.[69]

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[67] Concerning he possibily of a female scribe, see Robin D. S. Yates, "Soldiers, Scribes, and Women: Literacy among the Lower Orders in Early China," in *Writing and Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar*, eds. Li Feng David Prager Branner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 339–369, esp. 364–367. On a related study, see Yiqun Zhou, "The Status of Mothers in the Early Chinese Mourning System", *T'oung Pao* 99, 1–3 (2013): 1–52.

[68] As a biographical studies of early imperial scribes, see Miyake Kiyoshi 宮宅潔, *Aru Chiho Kanri No Shogai: Mokkan Ga Kataru Chugoku Kodaijin No Nichijo Seikatsu* ある地方官吏の生涯：木簡が語る中国古代人の日常生活 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 2021). Lu Xiqi 鲁西奇, *Xi : yige Qinli he ta de shijie* 喜：一个秦吏和他的世界 (Beijing Shi: Beijing ri bao chubanshe, 2022).

[69] Concerning their training, see Tsang Wing Ma, "Scribes in Early Imperial China," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2017; Robin D.S. Yates, "Introduction: The Empire of the Scribes," in Birth of An Empire: The State of Qin Revisited, ed. Yuri Pines, Gideon Shelach, Lothar von Falkenhausen, and Robin D.S. Yates (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014) "Soldiers, Scribes, and Women," esp. 345–360.

Equally important, the maneuvers in the editorial practices such as the ability to accurately add, delete, and insert slips and then keep the newly added slips in a generally consistent presentation also demonstrates abundant experience in handling similar tasks. To put it more concretely, if we envision adding/inserting newly issued laws in a bamboo manuscript, it inevitably required untying and then retying the bindings of the slips—then, how did they not make mistakes in the slip sequence (and there are no slip numbers)? Or, when they used a knife and brush to scrape and correct, how did they manage to only erase the desired sections and rewrite accordingly?—Judging from the precision of the scraped sections, the individual who used a knife should have been at least as skilled as the one who used a brush. Most importantly, systematically correcting certain content (e.g., changing all the instances of *heng* to *chang*) would inevitably necessitate various searches. Thinking about the various navigational needs especially in the context of the early imperial giant manuscripts and the Han "too much to know" informational crisis (chapter one), it is conceivable a whole set of searching apparatus were essential for the imperial lawmaking and text-editing. Information navigation happens not only in the process of reading, but it also extends to the practices of writing and editing.

In the process of establishing the new and eliminating the old, the editorial practices constantly validate and invalidate knowledge. In this process, the scribe's role(s) is likewise contingent on the temporal circumstances. In editing the *Gongling*, the ingrained temporality not only bestowed the texts with instant validity and authority but it also entrusted the scribes with a different role. Let us imagine when Hand B or Hand C searched, located, and corrected previous laws written by Hand A or Hand B—were they readers, authors, or compilers? If Hand C actively changed all the *heng* characters and at the same time diligently copied the other new laws from a master copy, can that scribe be considered an active writer or a mere mechanical copyist?

This complicated practice necessitated various roles, and we are once again reminded of the enigmatic identity and encompassing nature of the ancient scribe.

Now, let us turn to my final note.

Conclusion

Books Made by and for People

The *Gongling*, the "Ordinances on Officials' Promotion," was made by and for scribes. A compilation of seventy-eight legal articles regarding the various aspects of promotion and demotion in the Han official appointment system, the *Gongling* was not merely one of the numerous collection of laws that Han judiciary scribes had to produce and practice, but was itself an official guideline for the scribe's life-long career path. As the actual producers, scribes governed every nature of the *Gongling* manuscript as a written object; at the same time, their professional trajectory was also rigorously defined by the very contents of the *Gongling* texts that carried the immense weight of imperial law.

Let us suggest that there were "two bodies of the scribes": one was a writer, with the craft and power that his knowledge entailed, and the other was his political identity as an imperial official who served the bureaucracy. In the *Gongling*, these two bodies merged—scribes became not only the producers of the document, but also the document's targeted readers, the potential beneficiaries, or unfortunate offenders. In this regard, the *Gongling* represents much more than the mere product of scribes' labor—it held their aspirations and served as their guide, granting them hope, making them cautious, and it continuously evolved as both emblem and embodiment.

Perhaps we cannot understand the meticulous crafts involved in the making and editing of the *Gongling* if we minimize the importance of the scribes in its texts and in its production. The writer-scribes' maneuver of writing was prepared for their political pursuits, and their political aspirations had to be manifested in and materialized by their written work. Thus, in

understanding the *Gongling*'s articulate, continuous editorial updates, we would suggest that it was partially the result of tremendous ongoing legislative action, partially as a token of the changing status of the imperial scribes in general, partially because for these very scribes, the *Gongling* text mattered so deeply—in searching for the text's meaning, once again, it is worth devoting more efforts to inquire about the kinds of practices and environments that fostered these written objects, and to ask, for those hidden, nameless readers and writers, what kind of concerns that mattered to them.

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This dissertation calls for attentiveness and sensitivity to individual factors and the contingent nature of the books and writers in Chinese antiquity. I have forayed into their material condition, epistemological practices, as well as various writing technologies via the media of bamboo and wood. In discovering various explicit and implicit stories, my findings lie in their astonishingly diverse crafts in bookmaking; through tracing their various sophisticated or idiosyncratic crafts in materiality (chapter one), paratexts (chapter two), orthography (chapter three) and textuality (chapter four), I have emphasized the indispensable roles enforced by various individuals, and their writing practices varied as did the significance of writing in their lives. Our understanding of early Chinese textual culture, which often were portrayed as in a state of tremendous flux, can be further articulated by recognizing not just texts' inherent fluidity, but also the remarkable tolerance for various writing practices and habits by highlighting the individual writer's agency. The choices of writing in the ancient manuscript culture ranged from highly rigid stipulation thus standardized presentation to the complete opposite, featuring advanced technologies alongside practitioners with varying levels of training and expertise. Ultimately, scribal culture experienced both ruptures and continuity from pre-imperial to early imperial periods—the evolving institutional and informational needs should be recognized as the

driven forces behind the material and epistemological transformations. Yet despite of the drastic change in the material format of Chinese books from antiquity to modern age, intriguingly, as the first chapter has shown, the actual size of the dimension of reading, after two thousand years, does not change too much.

This project begins with the idea that the unearthed manuscripts are both witnesses to and products of the very processes that brought them into being; they should be viewed as not merely the earliest versions of transmitted classics or of long-lost texts, but also as physical, contingent literary objects that were created from and for their own epistemological contexts as the results of a dynamic web of learning. They are not only surviving fragments of early Chinese classics or documents but also witnesses of the ancient written culture in its own right, granting us precious opportunities to explore the kaleidoscopic textual practices of the ancient time. Equally important, through the lens of studying the objects and practices, I inquire into the role of figures in the shadows of history—the unseen, unknown, and uncelebrated "common people" behind the grandiose enterprise of creating canonical texts. Ancient Chinese scribes are almost completely silent in traditional sources, but recently discovered manuscripts remind us that they were by no means voiceless.

Analyzing their skills, crafts, and knowledge, this project concludes by addressing how scribal practices and actual occupational activities—scholarly, institutional, and religious—were closely intertwined.[70] Textual knowledge did not only belong to a few elite thinkers and scholars, high officials or noblemen but also to those readers and writers who did not get to leave their names behind. Finally, it should be noted that the history of Chinese writing technology was not a transformation from archaic primitiveness to modern technological sophistication, but rather

[70] I will need to wait for other opportunities to discuss the textual in relation to scholarly and religious practices.

that ancient readers and writers, under different circumstances, developed a variety of crafts and skills to address their informational needs and intellectual pursuits. Writing never handicaps orality but empowers and enables the beauty and power of language; forged from an immense interlocking web of intellectual activities, any piece of writing embedded myriad voices and meanings—in the search for these myriad profound subtleties, the hidden stories of many lives will unfold.

Appendix: Extent Discovered Manuscripts from Ancient China

i. Warring States (Chu) Manuscripts:

1. Changtaiguan 長臺關 M1[71]
2. Tianxingguan 天星觀 M1[72]
3. Wangshan 望山 M1[73]
4. Jiudian 九店 M45, M621, M411[74]
5. Xiyangpo 夕陽坡 M2[75]
6. Baoshan 包山 M2[76]
7. Cili Shibancun 慈利石板村 M36[77]
8. Zhuanwachang 磚瓦廠 M470[78]
9. Xincai geling 新蔡葛陵[79]

[71] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉 and Peng Hao 彭浩], , *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (er) Xincai geling chujian, Changtaiguan chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(二): 新蔡葛陵楚簡, 長臺關楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2013).

[72] Hubeisheng jingzhou diqu bowuguan 湖北省荊州地區博物館, "Jiangling Tianxingguan yi hao chumu" 江陵天星觀 1 號楚墓, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1982. 1, 71–116. Teng Rensheng 滕壬生, *Chuxi jianbo wenzi bian* 楚系簡帛文字編(Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 1171–1175.

[73] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉 and Peng Hao 彭浩], , *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (si) Wangshan chumu zhujian, Caojiagang chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(四): 望山楚墓竹簡, 曹家崗楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2019).

[74] Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所 [et al.], *Jiudian chu jian* 九店楚簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000).

[75] Hunan sheng chu shi yanjiu hui 湖南省楚史研究會, *Chu shi yu chu wenhua yanjiu* 楚史與楚文化研究 (Changsha: Qiushi zazhishe, 1987), 215–218.

[76] Hubei sheng jingsha tielu kaogudui 湖北省荊沙鐵路考古隊, *Baoshan chujian* 包山楚簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991).

[77] Hunan sheng wenwu yanjiu suo 湖南省文物研究所 [et al.], "Hunan cili shibancun 36 zhanguo mu fajue jianbao" 湖南慈利石板村36號戰國墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu*文物 1990.10, 37–46.

[78] Teng Rensheng 滕壬生 and Huang Xiquan 黃錫全, "Jiangling zhuanwachang M370 chumu zhujian" 江陵磚瓦廠 M370 楚墓竹簡, *Jianbo yanjiu er ling ling yi* 簡帛研究二〇〇一 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2001), 218–221.

[79] *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji (er) Xincai geling chujian, Changtaiguan chumu zhujian.*

10. Guodian 郭店 M1[80]

11. Shanghai Museum Collection[81] Vol.1–9

12. Tsinghua University Collection[82] Vol. 1–13

13. Anhui University Collection Vol. 1–2[83]

14. Hong Kong Chinese University Collection (Chu)[84]

15. Xiajiatai 夏家臺 M106[85]

16. Shayang tazhong 沙洋塌冢 M1[86]

17. Gaotai 高臺 J67[87]

18. Zaolinpu 棗林鋪[88]

19. Wangjiazui 王家嘴 M798[89]

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[80] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉 and Peng Hao 彭浩], *Chudi chutu zhanguo jiance heji vol.1: Guodian chumu zhujian* 楚地出土戰國簡冊合集(一): 郭店楚墓竹書 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2011).

[81] Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 et al, *Shanghai bowuguan cang zhanguo zhushu vol.1–vol.9* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (一–九) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001–12).

[82] Tsinghua daxue chutu wenxian yanjiu yu baohu zhongxin 清華大學出土文獻研究與保護中心 [led by Li Xueqin 李學勤 and Huang Dekuan 黃德寬], *Tsinghua daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* vol.1–vol.13 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (壹–拾叁) (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2010–2023).

[83] Anhui daxue hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 安徽大學漢字發展與應用研究中心 [led by Huang Dekuan 黃德寬 and Xu Zaiguo 徐在國], *Anhui daxue cang zhanguo zhujian* vol.1–2 安徽大學藏戰國竹簡 (壹–貳). Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2019–21.

[84] Chen Songchang 陳松長, *Xianggang zhongwen daxue wenwuguan cang jiandu* 香港中文大學文物館藏簡牘 (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue wenwuguan, 2001).

[85] Tian Yong 田勇 [et al.], "Jingzhou Xiajiatai 106 hao chumu chutu zhanguo jian 'Ri shu'" 荊州夏家臺 106 號楚墓出土戰國簡《日書》, *Jianbo* 簡帛 22 (2021), 31–43.

[86] Hubeisheng wenwuju 湖北省文物局 [et al.], *Shayang tazhong chumu* 沙洋塌冢楚墓 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2017).

[87] Jiang Lujing 蔣魯敬 and Liu Jianye 劉建業, "Hubei Jingzhou gaotau zhanguo gujing qun J67 chutu jianbo chutan" 湖北荊州高臺戰國古井群 J67 出土楚簡初探, *Jianbo* 簡帛 12 (2016), 29–34

[88] Zhao Xiaobin 趙曉斌, "Jingzhou zaolinpu chumu chutu bushi jidao jian" 荊州棗林鋪楚墓出土卜筮祭禱簡, *Jianbo* 簡帛 19 (2019), 21–28; "Jingzhou zaolinpu pengjiawan 183 hao, 264 hao chumu chutu bushi jidao jian" 荊州棗林鋪彭家灣 183 號、264 號楚墓出土卜筮祭禱簡, *Chutu wenxian* 出土文獻 2022.1, 1–5

[89] Jingzhou bowuguan 荊州博物館, "Hubei Jingzhou Wangjiazui M798 hao chumu fajue jianbao" 湖北荊州王家嘴 M798 號楚墓發掘簡報, *Jianghan kaogu* 江漢考古 2023.2, 5–13. Jiang Lujing 蔣魯敬 and Xiao Yujun 肖玉軍, "Hubei Jingzhou Wangjiazui M798 chutu zhanguo chu jian 'shijing' gaishu"湖北荊州王家嘴 M798 出土戰國楚簡《詩經》概述, *Jianghan kaogu* 江漢考古 2023.2, 39–42. Zhao Xiaobin 趙曉斌, "Hubei Jingzhou Wangjiazui

20. Qinjiazui 秦家嘴 M1093 [90]

ii. Qin Manuscripts

1. Shuihudi 睡虎地 M11, M4 (Qin)[91]
2. Longgang 龍崗 M6[92]
3. Qingchuan Haojiaping 青川郝家坪[93]
4. Yueshan 嶽山 M36[94]
5. Fangmatan 放馬灘 M1[95]
6. Wangjiatai 王家臺 M18[96]
7. Zhoujiatai 周家臺 M30[97]

M798 chutu zhanguo chujian 'Kongzi yue' gaishu" 湖北荊州王家嘴 M798 出土戰國楚簡〈孔子曰〉概述, *Jianghan kaogu* 江漢考古 2023.2, 43–56.

[90] Jingzhou bowuguan Qinjiazui chujian zhengli xiaozu 荊州博物館秦家嘴楚簡整理小組, "Jingzhou Qinjiazui 1093 hao zhanguo chumu chutu zhujian xuanshi" 荊州秦家嘴 1093 號戰國楚墓出土竹簡選釋, Jianbo wang 簡帛網 accessed December 21, 2023. http://www.bsm.org.cn/?chujian/9306.html

[91] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉], *Qin jiandu heji (yi) Shuihudi Qin mu jiandu* 秦簡牘合集〔壹〕·睡虎地秦墓簡牘 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[92] Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心 [et al.] [led by Chen Wei 陳偉], *Qin jiandu heji (er) Fangmatan Qin mu jiandu · Haojiaping qinmu jiandu* 秦簡牘合集〔貳〕放馬灘秦墓簡牘·郝家坪秦墓木牘 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[93] *Qin jiandu heji (er) Fangmatan Qin mu jiandu · Haojiaping qinmu jiandu* (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2014).
Qingchuan xian wenwu guanlisuo 青川縣文物管理所, *Qingchuan Haojiaping zhanguo mufu kaogu faxian yu yanjiu* 青川郝家坪戰國墓木牘考古發現與研究 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2018).

[94] *Qin jiandu heji (san) Zhoujiatai Qin mu jiandu · Yueshan Qin mu mudu*.

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8. Ejina 額濟納[112]

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10. Wuwei Mozuizi 武威磨咀子 M18, M6[114]

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