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# Aural Texts and the Association of Sound and Meaning in Early China

Rominger, Gian Duri

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# AURAL TEXTS AND THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUND AND MEANING IN EARLY CHINA

Gian Duri Rominger

A DISSERTATION
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OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
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**Abstract**

This dissertation analyzes the role of sound in language use in early Chinese texts. By focusing on developments of sound-based recurrences such as rhyme and paronomasia, focusing on the classical, foundational texts from the third to first centuries BCE, I offer a new understanding of how textuality, the writing system, and language itself were conceptualized during these centuries. Overall, I argue that these sound-based devices underwent transformative functional and structural changes, in which their primary focus shifted from composition to interpretation.

I trace the importance of sound in language use from the Later Mohist textual material through other Warring States texts, including the "Masters' literature" (*zǐ shū* 子書), all the way to Hàn dynasty material. Specifically, this dissertation highlights that sound recurrences in early Chinese texts occur both as a structuring element for longer material – whereby sound coordinates textual units – and as a means to express conceptual and ontological connections valid for ancient language users. Additionally, this dissertation proposes to computationally apply existing historical phonological data at scale to digitized early Chinese textual material in order to detect phonological recurrences.

Key findings of this study include, firstly, that early Chinese rhymes and paronomasia did not only fulfill ornamental and mnemonic functions but could also form the basis for performative segments, arguments, and ontological connections postulated by and in texts. Secondly, functions of paronomasia shift over centuries, changing from compositional devices to decidedly interpretive tools.

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## Introduction

This dissertation is an attempt at analyzing the soundscape of early Chinese texts. It analyzes the role of sound in language use, especially in sound-based recurrences such as rhyme and what could be called wordplay, I use the term 'wordplay' broadly and for lack of a better term. Generally, I understand 'wordplay' to include either a recurrence of phonological material, or a reshuffling thereof, with the aural aspects of an utterance becoming the main focus of the 'wordplay.' I do not mean to imply that early Chinese 'wordplays' had an effect of amusement (although they might potentially have also functioned that way).[1] I focus on classical, foundational texts from the third to first centuries BCE. Recent research on early Chinese texts has highlighted the importance of structural elements – both sound-based and syntactic – to construct meaning in early Chinese texts, especially in largely argumentative texts, which has also profoundly affected translation work.[2]

Specifically, I investigate the question of how devices such as rhyme and wordplay were employed to generate meaning in early China, an area of research largely neglected due to previously held assumptions regarding the universal applicability of the Saussurian *arbitraire du*

[1] See also section 0.3.4, p. 31.

[2] For the importance of sound-based structural devices, compare especially Wolfgang Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 29 (2005): 15-33.

For the importance of syntactic structures, compare Rudolf G. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000); Joachim Gentz, "Zum Parallelismus in der chinesischen Literatur," in *Parallelismus Membrorum*, ed. Andreas Wagner (Göttingen: Academic Press, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 241-269; Dirk Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo: Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and the contributions in Joachim Gentz and Dirk Meyer (eds.), *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), as well as in Karl-Heinz Pohl and Georg Wöhrle (eds.), *Form und Gehalt in Texten der Griechischen und Chinesischen Philosophie: Akten der 11. Tagung der Karl und Gertrud Abel-Stiftung vom 18.-19. Juli 2008 an der Universität Trier* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011).

A good example of translation work that takes the poetic structures of the source text into account is John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, and Harold D. Roth (trans.), *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

*signe*.[3] This dissertation aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of aurality – the sense of hearing – in the production of meaning in early Chinese texts, and to show that the shifting developments in the way aural devices were employed occurred in response to the burgeoning role of authorial writing towards the end of the period.

This introduction will provide an overview of the overall study by first discussing its context and background, its guiding research questions, and its general significance within the study of early Chinese texts and intellectual history, in the form of a literature review. Subsequently, a general outline and survey of the ensuing chapters will follow.

### 0.1 Background and Context of the Study

Many early Chinese texts were undoubtedly deeply euphonic, and the overall importance of sound to early Chinese aesthetics is well understood.[4] Consider, in this context, the following passage from the "Great Preface" (*dà xù* 大序) to the Máo 毛 tradition of the *Shī jīng* 詩經 (*Classic of Poetry*), widely considered the most important piece of early Chinese literary criticism:

> Dispositions are emitted through sounds; when those sounds form patterns, they are called 'tunes.' Tunes of a well-ordered age are peaceful and joyful, and its government is harmonious. Tunes of a disorderly age are bitter and full of anger, and its government is discordant. Tunes of a perishing state are mournful and contemplative, and its populace is in difficulty.
>
> 情發於聲，聲成文謂之音。治世之音安以樂，其政和。亂世之音怨以怒，其政乖。亡國之音哀以思，其民困。[5]

[3] According to this idea, the relationship between a word as a signifier and what it signifies is inherently arbitrary; for Saussure's formulation thereof, compare Ferdinand de Saussure, Tullio De Mauro, and Charles Bally (eds.), *Cours De Linguistique Générale* (Paris: Payot, 1982).

[4] As an example, for the importance of sound in early Chinese music theory, compare Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1982).

[5] Máo Hēng 毛亨; Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄, Lù Déming 陸德明, and Kǒng Xiángjūn 孔祥軍 (eds.), *Máo Shī chuánjiān* 毛詩傳箋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2018), 1.1.

This passage outlines a correlation between acoustic attributes, literary pattern (*wén* 文), and the state of the social order, and the passage suggests that patterned sounds provide an expression or ideation of the degree of order or disorder in a state and in the world at large. In other words, the sounds of poems embody the 'dispositions' (*qíng* 情) prevalent at the very moment of their formulation. The domain of early Chinese poetry is thus marked by the transformative power of sound.[6]

Such an understanding positions sonic phenomena in a continuum, with music forming the highest form of cultivation. The following passage from the *Lǐjì* 禮記 highlights the importance of music and its association with governance and ritual-conforming behavior:

> In general, tunes arise in the human heart. Music is what connects relationships and principles. For this reason, birds and beasts know sounds but do not understand tunes, while the masses know tunes but do not understand music. Only a gentleman can understand music.
>
> For this reason, investigate sounds to understand tunes; investigate tunes to understand music; investigate music to understand government; and thus the Way of administering is prepared.
>
> For this reason, you cannot speak about tunes with those who do not know sounds. And with those who do not know tunes you cannot speak about music.
>
> To know music is to be close to ritual. Attaining both ritual and music is referred to as having virtue. 'Virtue' is 'attaining.'
>
> 凡音者，生於人心者也。樂者，通倫理者也。是故知聲而不知音者，禽獸是也；知音而不知樂者，眾庶是也。唯君子為能知樂。是故審聲以知音，審音以知樂，審樂以知政，而治道備矣。是故不知聲者不可與言音，不知音者不可與言樂。知樂，則幾於禮矣。禮樂皆得，謂之有德。德者得也。[7]

Understanding 'sounds' (*shēng* 聲), 'tunes' (*yīn* 音), and 'music' (*yuè* 樂) is here described in a continuum from wild beasts to gentlemen. The category of 'tunes' presumably also encompasses

[6] Compare Stephen Owen's discussion thereof in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 51.

[7] Ruǎn Yuán 阮元 (ed.), *Shísān jīng zhùshū* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 19.3313.

language use, especially when read together with the above passage from the "Great Preface," which emphasizes their patterned aspect.[8] The passage of the *Lǐjì* above appears to entertain this idea as well, as the very last line contains a so-called paronomastic gloss, as 'virtue' (*dé* 德 *tʰək) and 'attaining' (*dé* 得 *tʰək) are homophonous.

The function of such early Chinese references to sound in language use are less well understood, including regarding the function of sound-based devices such as rhyme or paronomasia in largely argumentative texts. In secondary scholarship on such texts, it is presumed that the purpose of rhymes, alliterations, and word plays is often limited to that of mnemonic device or pure ornamentation. Such a distinction is largely rooted in two assumptions: firstly, that poetry and prose engage language differently; and secondly, that argumentation and logic are to be associated only with prose. The so-called "Masters' literature" (*zǐ shū* 子書) – which is associated with disputation and argumentation – is hence predominantly read under assumptions of prose, and the discourses on language therein are understood separately from pronouncements such as the ones above from the Máo tradition or the *Lǐjì*. If rhyme or wordplay occurs in this corpus of texts, it is usually understood either as an outgrowth of mysticism, or as a result of "essentialist" correlative thought during the Hàn dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE).[9]

[8] Compare Haun Saussy, "Ritual Separates, Music Unites," in *Recarving the Dragon: Understanding Chinese Poetics*, ed. Olga Lomova (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2003), 9–25; Saussy notes that the "the relationship of 'speech' to 'sound' is one of lesser to greater" (16). For an argument built on empirical evidence that such poetic language does in fact build a universal connection between musical melody and language, compare Winfried Menninghaus, "Empirische Ästhetik der Sprache und Literatur: Was kann sie besser als die herkömmliche Literaturwissenschaft – und was nicht?," in *Bilder als Denkformen: Bildwissenschaftliche Dialoge zwischen Japan und Deutschland*, ed. Yasuhiro Sakamoto, Felix Jäger, and Jun Tanaka (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 205-207.

[9] As an example, compare A.C. Graham's differentiation that "you talk about the finite in prose and the infinite in verse;" further note that Graham nonetheless maintains that "…the purpose of some of the rhymed verse is no doubt merely mnemonic," in Angus Charles Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), 214; a similar viewpoint is also suggested by, for example, Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1999), 147.

However, this distinction is problematic for early Chinese textual phenomena. Studies of textual reuse and citation patterns in this so-called "Masters' literature" show that transmitted pre-imperial texts do not behave like the products of a textual culture dominated by revered authors and books.[10] These issues are particularly pertinent for texts that precede the textual compilation and classification efforts of the late Western Hàn imperial library, and recent critical reexaminations of transmitted early sources highlight that this institution may not have just preserved works for posterity, but that it rather reshaped the earlier material according to its own understandings, concerns, and need for legitimation.[11]

The early imperial librarians even left clear evidence of how far they went in their editorial process. Consider the following preface to the text *Yànzǐ chūnqiū* 晏子春秋, which is commonly placed under the "Masters' literature" category:

> The River Conservancy Commissioner of the Left and Grand Master for Radiant Fortune [Liú] Xiàng reports: The *Yànzǐ* in eleven bundles held in the palace collection, carefully collated by Your servant [Liú] Xiàng and [Dù] Cān, the Commandant of Chángshè, by comparing the five bundles from the Grand Historian, one bundle from your servant [Liú] Xiàng, and 13 bundles from [Dù] Cān. In total, from inside and outside [the palace], 30 bundles, forming 838 sections. [I] eliminated twenty-two repetitious bundles [or] 638 sections, deciding on and composing eight bundles [with] 215 sections.

[10] Compare, for example, Esther Klein, "Were There 'Inner Chapters' in the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence About the Zhuangzi," *T'oung Pao* 96 (2010); Michael Hunter, *Confucius Beyond the Analects* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[11] Compare Martin Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han," in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature: Volume 1, To 1375*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 56-66. For more detail see, as examples, Nylan, "Manuscript Culture in Late Western Han, and the Implications for Authors and Authority," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 1.1-2 (2014): 155-185; Martin Kern, "Kongzi as Author in the Han," in *Confucius and the Analects Revisited: New Perspectives on Dating, Composition, and Authorship*, ed. Michael Hunter and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 268-308. The series of articles that analyzes the notion of "schools" as a Hàn construct underscores the importance of this approach; compare, for example Jens Østergård Petersen, "Which Books Did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn? On the Meaning of Pai Chia in Early Chinese Sources," *Monumenta serica* (1995): 1-52; Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions through Exemplary Figures in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 89.1 (2003): 59-99; Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and the Invention of Daoism, 'Legalism,' 'et cetera'," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62 (2003): 129-156; and Paul Goldin, "Persistent Misconceptions About Chinese 'Legalism'," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38.1 (2011): 88–104.

護左都水使者光祿大夫臣向言：所校中書《晏子》十一篇，臣向謹與長社尉參校讎，太史書五篇，臣向書一篇，參書十三篇，凡中外書三十篇，為八百三十八章。除復重二十二篇，六百三十八章，定著八篇，二百一十五章.

…

Six bundles of these writings are all about being loyal and remonstrating the ruler; these patterned sections can be observed, and the inherent righteousness can be taken as model. They all conform to the values of the Six Classics. There were also duplicate [parts whose] wording differed considerably. [As] I did not dare discarding [them], I arranged them again into one bundle. In addition, there were words [that] did absolutely not correspond with the methods of the classics, and seemed to not be Master Yàn's words. Suspecting that they were made by later disputers, I also did not dare discard them, and again made them into a bundle, thus altogether eight bundles, from which [the good] six bundles can be permanently put aside for the emperor's inspection. I have respectfully drawn up this list of contents, [which] Your servant [Liú] Xiàng at the risk of his life submits [to Your Majesty].

其書六篇，皆忠諫其君，文章可觀，義理可法，皆合六經之義。又有復重文辭頗異，不敢遺失，復列以為一篇，又有頗不合經術，似非晏子言，疑後世辯士所為者，故亦不敢失，復以為一篇。凡八篇，其六篇可常置旁禦觀，謹第錄。臣向昧死上。[12]

This description by the imperial librarian Liú Xiàng 劉向 (77-6 BCE) details his editorial process at the end of the Western Hàn dynasty, engaging in what Xú Jiànwěi 徐建委 has called a "textual revolution."[13] While Liú Xiàng also describes the extensive discarding of textual material under the assumption that it was "duplicate," more pertinent to our purpose here is the underlying assumption and desire of Liú Xiàng to "restore" a supposed original text, an assumption that was centered on the author figure. In this sense, the text came to embody the virtues the figure of Yànzǐ (6th century BCE) was credited with, at least through the lens of Liú Xiàng.[14] To complicate matters further, the bibliographical categories – including the "Masters' literature" category – expressed

[12] Zhāng Chúnyī 張純一, and Liáng Yùnhuá 梁運華 (eds.), *Yànzi chūnqiū jiàozhù* 晏子春秋校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2001), 5-8.

[13] See Xú Jiànwěi 徐建委, *Wénběn gémìng: Liú Xiàng, "Hànshū yìwénzhì" yǔ zǎoqí wénběn yánjiū* 文本革命：刘向,"汉书・艺文志"与早期文本研究 (Beijing : Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2017).

[14] For a fuller reading of Liú Xiàng's preface to the *Yànzǐ chūnqiū*, compare Paul R. Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy: Eight Classical Texts and How to Read Them* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020): 5-8.

in the "Yìwénzhì" 藝文志 ("Treatise on Literature") of the *Hàn shū* 漢書 (finished in 111 CE) built largely on the parameters set by the imperial library.

In this sense, the distinction between poetry and prose, and the resulting different treatment of sound in language use, is problematic, and may reflect assumptions from early Chinese imperial genre classifications, or those from even later. Textual research has all too often accepted this distinction, which in turn has resulted in a kind of research bias: alleged prose texts are read under the assumptions of prose, and alleged poetic texts under those of the poetic tradition. In other words, there is a certain circularity in this approach.

### 0.2 Guiding Research Questions

In order to overcome these limitations and to further contribute to the study of both early Chinese literature and intellectual history, this dissertation approaches material that is primarily interpreted as prose, often seen as the basis of early Chinese philosophy and centered around the so-called "Masters' literature," in order to investigate the following guiding research questions:

1) *What are the purposes of sound patterns in early Chinese texts? What do they achieve?*
2) *Do they support, enhance, or contribute to the process of generating meaning?*
3) *Do they reveal how language use was conceptualized in early China?*

By approaching these questions, I aim to read texts in the terms of ancient readers themselves, as far as these terms can be reconstructed. As such, this dissertation relies on the most recent systems of reconstructing Old Chinese phonology in order to better approximate reading experiences in early China.[15]

[15] William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). While classical works of literature attest to the wide usage of Old Chinese, its phonology must be reconstructed through methods of historical linguistics, especially historical phonology.

Altogether, these research questions aim to bridge the two separate domains of early Chinese intellectual history and literature, and stem more broadly from what I perceive as a gap in scholarship. Contributing to this gap is the fact that these questions are located at the intersection of different scholarly fields and discourses. The following literature review aims at highlighting pertinent strands of thought in different fields.

## 0.3 Literature Review

### 0.3.1 Beyond Rhetoric

The emphasis on the employment of sound-based patterns specifically to generate meaning is what sets this dissertation apart from other studies, particularly from studies of Chinese rhetoric. Even the term for rhetoric, *Xiūcíxué* 修辭學, inherently implies a focus on ornamental and embellishing functions through the use of figures or elaborate styles.[16]

Nonetheless, this dissertation also benefits from previous approximations towards textual patterning, especially the "phonorhetorical" approach recently undertaken by Jeffrey Tharsen in his dissertation at the University of Chicago that extensively describes the continuity inherent in aural patterning from Western Zhōu bronzes to transmitted literature such as chapters of the *Shàngshū* 尚書 and speeches in *Zuǒ zhuàn* 左傳.[17]

Within modern Chinese studies of rhetoric, some of the most influential works were produced by scholars of the early 1930s, marking this as a foundational period for this field. This includes

[16] Note, however, that a pejorative usage of 'rhetoric' and rhetorical ornamentation is also anachronistic for Western Classical antiquity.

[17] See Jeffery R. Tharsen, "Chinese Euphonics: Phonetic Patterns, Phonorhetoric and Literary Artistry in Early Chinese Narrative Texts" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2015). This dissertation was published recently as Jeffrey R. Tharsen, *Chinese Euphonics: Phonetic Patterns, Phonorhetoric and Literary Artistry in Early Chinese Narrative Texts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), but I have not yet had the chance to review the published version.

Chén Jièbái's 陳介白 *Xiūcíxué* 修辭學 from 1931 and Chén Wàngdào's 陳望道 *Xiūcíxué fāfán* 修辭學發凡 from 1932. Both authors were heavily influenced by the New Culture Movement, and their work is also representative of a general assimilation of Western theories of rhetoric.[18] A second wave of interest in Chinese rhetoric began around the 1990's, with a general call for its reevaluation and an overall focus on early Chinese systems and discourses. This tendency is most evident in Xing Lu's *Rhetoric in Ancient China*, where she argues for the applicability of the term 'argumentation' (*biàn* 辯 or *míng biàn* 名辯).

However, sound-based techniques continue to attract relatively little interest in these studies. Interest in the effects of usage of sound within early Chinese rhetoric came, instead, from German scholars around the same time as the previously mentioned work, i.e., around the 1990's. Ursula Heidbüchel points out the importance of sound as follows:

> Bei einer Untersuchung der antiken Rhetorik sind nicht nur Grammatik und Lexik des Altchinesischen zu berücksichtigen; auch die zeitgenössische lautliche Form des Wortes muß beachtet werden. Dies wird besonders bei der Behandlung der *Figura etymologica*, der Paronomasie, des Wortspiels und der reimenden Passagen deutlich.[19]

Shortly thereafter, Ulrich Unger (Heidbüchel's doctoral advisor) published his *Rhetorik des Klassischen Chinesisch*, where he included a section on "Akustische Kunstmittel." Unger describes three features directly relating to phonetic patterning, namely rhythm, as well as assonance and rhyme. While Unger's approach is quite comprehensive, he resorts to identifying devices and features as they occur exactly in the rhetorical tradition of ancient Greece and Rome.

[18] At the same time, both rejected a wholesale adoption of Western terminology and classification. Their exposure to Western theories of rhetoric occurred through a mediation of Japanese works. For a historical contextualization of modern Chinese rhetoric as influenced by Western theories thereof, compare Xiaoye You, *Writing in the Devil's Tongue: A History of English Composition in China* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 49-59.

[19] Ursula Heidbüchel, "Rhetorik im Antiken China: Eine Untersuchung der Ausdrucksformen höfischer Rede im *Zuo Zhuan*, Herzog Zhao" (PhD diss., Westfälische Wilhelms-Universitat Münster, 1994), 20-21.

Unger manages to show a considerably high degree of overlap between the Western categories and their usage in Classical Chinese texts, but this approach hinges upon the assumption of universal rhetorical strategies.[20]

Overall, the study of early Chinese rhetoric is somewhat problem-ridden, mostly because of the general assumption of the existence of a rhetorical tradition in China, and the subsequent assimilation of various modes of persuasion appearing in early Chinese texts under the umbrella term of "rhetoric." Lisa Indraccolo therefore calls for a broadening of the term in order to reconcile these problems and in order to avoid the thickets of this terminological confusion. According to her, "the case of early Chinese 'rhetoric' is not so much a matter of assimilation or domestication of a foreign term, but rather of the necessary extension of the semantic field of a term as it is usually interpreted in the West, so that it covers, comprises, and reconciles in itself also the characteristics a particular manifestation of a phenomenon assumes within a specific cultural context and historical period."[21]

Such a widening of the term is useful in its applicability to early Chinese instances of persuasion, but this dissertation's focus goes beyond the domain usually ascribed to persuasive speech. This is primarily due to the focus on the role of sound-based techniques as part of a structural dimension of textual strategies of creating meaning.

### 0.3.2 Beyond a Dichotomy of Poetry versus Prose

A second pertinent discourse stems from the overall dichotomy of poetry on the one side, and prose on the other, as I alluded to above. Of course, the poetic qualities of certain texts of the

[20] See Ulrich Unger, *Rhetorik Des Klassischen Chinesisch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994).

[21] Lisa Indraccolo, "What is 'rhetoric' anyway? Briared in words in Early China," *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 68/1 (2014): 338

"Masters' literature" have been recognized in the past, but even in those moments of collision between the two supposed genres, many descriptions were still rooted in the dichotomy itself. In general, poetic expression in prose texts is thus either interpreted as mere ornamentation or as occurring at places where deductive reasoning and argumentation reaches its limits.

**a) Logic versus "Poetic" Discourse**

This is, unsurprisingly, epitomized in discussions of a text filled with fables, allegories, and lines of verse: the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子. The "poetic discourse" of *Zhuāngzǐ* has notably also been described by A.C. Graham, namely as an "open revolt against reason," in opposition to an "autonomous realm of reason emerging in the *Canons*" of the text *Mòzǐ* 墨子.[22] In this description, poetic expression becomes the antithesis of logic. Graham emphasizes, however, that this dichotomy ends with the 3rd century BCE and texts such as the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 and the *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子 (which Graham labels "ruthlessly prosaic"): he writes that he detects "no sense of collision between logic and poetry … The two are accepted as alternative modes of philosophical discourse, roughly corresponding to the realms of means and ends."[23]

[22] Graham, *Disputers of the Tao,* 214. Graham's description of a poetic discourse in the *Zhuāngzǐ* in direct opposition to logic has been disputed by Lisa A. Raphals, who highlights the argumentative functions of poetry within other parts of writing: "The creators of the Chinese philosophical tradition seem to have accepted poetry as an authoritative mode of argument and persuasion, but on the basis of claims to authoritative discourse, not of truth;" see Lisa A. Raphals, "Poetry and Argument in the *Zhuangzi*," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 22 (1994): 112. Raphals further emphasizes the different role of poetic expression in *Zhuangzi*, where it acts as a clear element in the text's "claims about the limitations of logic and argument" (111). In the *Zhuāngzǐ,* poetic expression does not substitute arguments, resulting in a "back-and forth between sustained arguments and poetry" (109). The function of verse passages is thus to "illustrate, emphasize, and frame the logical arguments … by setting up or reiterating key distinctions" (111). More specific functions of verse in the *Zhuāngzǐ* include "admonition or criticism;" and "statements that praise the sages of the past" (104). Raphals further provides a brief account of these functions within different intellectual currents, highlighting the "mode of argument or proof" employed by the "Ruhists" in their usage of *Shījīng* lines, giving the example of the text *Xúnzǐ* 荀子, where "poetic quotation" is used "as a mode of authoritative speech, and poetry as an element of disputation" (109).

[23] Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 214.

At the core of such a discussion of the functions of poetry and prose is thus an investigation into early Chinese logic, partially in search of an equivalent to Western philosophy.[24] Certainly, a few distinct and quite well-known textual examples exhibit techniques of analytic precision, most prominently the so-called "Sophists," but also the later "Mohists" that Graham had in mind.[25] However, the majority of early Chinese philosophical texts establish illocutionary force through different means, namely through what appear to be fundamentally non-deductive forms of argument.[26]

This is epitomized in treatments of the *Dàodéjīng* 道德經 (*Classic of Way and Virtue*) or *Lǎozǐ* 老子, a text that relies heavily on rhyme and other patterns of sound. For Graham, this text "presents itself as a full-scale philosophical poem,"[27] and "is the masterpiece of a kind of

[24] Note, however, that reading strategies derived from the study of Western philosophy and philology, focusing on analyses of the logical capacities of a text's argument, show only limited use in the study of early Chinese intellectual and literary history, partially due to the loss of information over the ages; compare especially Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*; and also Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett, *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[25] For an in-depth study of the "Sophist" material, compare Rafael Suter, Wolfgang Behr, and Lisa Indraccolo (eds.). *The Gongsun Longzi and Other Neglected Texts: Aligning Philosophical and Philological Perspectives* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020); for the later Mohists, compare Angus Charles Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978). For a comprehensive overview over early Chinese theories of logic and reactions to it, see Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 7, Part 1: Language and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 286-352.

[26] See Paul R. Goldin, "Non-deductive Argumentation in Early Chinese Philosophy," *in Between History and Philosophy: Anecdotes in Early China*, ed. Paul van Els and Sarah Queen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017), 41-62; and Martin Kern, "Style and Poetic Diction in the *Xunzi*." in *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Xunzi*, ed. Eric L. Hutton (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016): 8-16. Also note that recent work on argumentation theory further establishes the acceptability of non-linguistic modes of argumentation, including sound; compare especially Leo Groarke, "Auditory Arguments: The Logic of 'Sound' Arguments," *Informal Logic* 38.3 (2018): 312-340, and furthermore also Leo Groarke, "Going Multimodal: What is a Mode of Arguing and Why Does it Matter?," *Argumentation* 29.2 (2015): 133-155; Marc Champagne, "Sound Reasoning (Literally): Prospects and Challenges of Current Acoustic Logics," *Logica Universalis* 9.3 (2015): 331-343; Justin Eckstein, "Sound Arguments," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 53 (2017): 163-180; and Gabrijela Kišiček,"Persuasive Power of Prosodic Features," *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 54.4 (2018): 345-350. Further note that within argumentation theory, it was particularly the "visual turn" that propelled these concerns forward; compare in particular David S. Birdsell and Leo Groarke, "Toward a Theory of Visual Argument," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 33 (1996): 1–10.

[27] Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 214; Graham speculates on the text's "perhaps originating in shamanistic hymns."

intelligence at the opposite pole from the logical."[28] Similarly, for Lisa A. Raphals, it consists of "extended passages of gnomic verse, but no argument or demonstration."[29]

Altogether, such assessments are certainly not without justification, as the *Lǎozǐ* appears to have come to stand for a whole distinct subgenre of philosophical discourse that relies not on deduction, but on syntactic and phonological patterning to communicate its message.[30] However, such accounts often situate the rise of rhyming in philosophical writings in the context of the emergence of "correlative" theories during the Late Warring States period (esp. during the late 3rd century BCE), and their subsequent dominance during the Hàn dynasty.[31] Such an account is, in turn, tied to a general narrative of an overall decline of Chinese philosophy during its heyday of the Warring States period, as the subsequent "syncretistic" tendencies under the influence of "correlative cosmology" and the emerging empires of Qín and Hàn allegedly brought philosophical activity slowly to a halt.[32]

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[28] *Ibid.*, 218.

[29] Lisa A. Raphals, "Poetry and Argument in the *Zhuangzi*," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 22 (1994): 109.

[30] This sort of patterning has also been noted in particular by William H. Baxter, who remarked on the *Lǎozǐ*'s frequent repetitions, as individual passages in the text utilize rhyme in conjunction with semantic patterning, creating "paradoxical statements" in absence of narrative; see William H. Baxter, "Situating the Language of the *Lao-tzu*: The Probable Date of the *Tao-te-ching*," in *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, ed. Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 234-240. Further note that for Baxter, the *Lǎozǐ* and related texts "emerged from a distinctive tradition of philosophical verse with strong oral elements and little concept of individual authorship" (249).

[31] Compare, for example, Angus Charles Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 315-325; and John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 12-16; 85-95.

[32] Compare, e.g., A.C. Graham's summary that "[t]he three hundred years of radiant originality and variety end with the unification by the Ch'in in 221 B.C. … The tendency is now towards syncretism, the formation of an Imperial administrative apparatus and ideology out of the usable elements in the pre-Han schools … The one significant novelty is the introduction of correlative cosmos-building, formerly the province of … technicians outside the philosophical schools" (Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 313). Graham further connects correlative thinking to language on pp. 320-21. Overall, such a narrative circles back to a direct juxtaposition of analytic thinking and the exuberant poetic flights that ultimately took over, thus subsuming specific sound-based devices such as rhyming or word plays under the general category of poetry; compare Graham's description that "[w]e do get pure analytic thinking in the Sophists and Later Mohists; it is what they understand as *pien* [辯] 'argumentation'. … From another direction we have *Lao-tzu* resorting to a poetic language to undermine conventional oppositions, in a manner which we have compared with Derridan deconstruction" (pp. 322-3).

**b) Excavated Texts**

In recent years, the question of coherence in and connections established by texts has been productively approached from a new angle, in part because the amount of recently excavated (or otherwise surfaced) early Chinese manuscripts has necessitated different approaches. Interpretative horizons for early Chinese texts have therefore been broadened, not just in regard to questions of academic disciplines, literary genres, or the place of logic in early Chinese intellectual history, but also in essentially structuralist ways. Coherence and connections within excavated texts stem rather from insights derived from non-argumentative markers, including form and materiality on the part of the carrier of these pieces of writing.[33] In some cases, excavated manuscripts can lead to new insights into previous instantiations of classic texts, as the example of the "Zīyī" 緇衣 ("Black Robes") suggests: compared to the two manuscript versions from Guōdiàn 郭店 and the Shanghai Museum corpus, the received version in the *Lǐjì* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) is decidedly inferior.[34]

**c) Renewed Attention to Syntactic Structures**

The bulk of transmitted texts does not, however, offer excavated counterparts. Closer attention has been paid in recent years to both types of source material, especially regarding different kinds of textual strategies of argumentation in early Chinese texts, including devices that give structure to texts. This includes, notably, syntactic structures such as parallelism.

[33] Compare, for example, Matthias L. Richter, *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), or Rens Krijsman, *Early Chinese Manuscript Collections: Sayings, Memory, Verse, and Knowledge* (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

[34] See Martin Kern, "Quotation and the Confucian Canon in Early Chinese Manuscripts: The Case of 'Zi Yi' (Black Robes)," *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005): 293–332; and Marc Kalinowski, "Systèmes de croyances et de pensée du monde sinisé," *Annuaire EPHE, Section des sciences religieuses* 109 (2000-01): 141–48.

As Rudolf G. Wagner has shown in his extensive analysis of what he calls "interlocking parallel style," such seemingly non-deductive, non-narrative, and paradoxical chains of verse in fact do fulfill argumentative functions. "Interlocking parallel style" allows for the treatment of seemingly distinct, opposite topics by taking turns, thus allowing for a means of expression that "presupposes an argument," and pointing to a unified whole that cannot be described in language itself.[35] This identification of "interlocking parallel style" could, as Wagner argues, "open another – structural and nonverbal – dimension of these texts' philosophical argumentation."[36] The application of this reading strategy certainly lends support to Wagner's claim, not just in his own writing, but also in Dirk Meyer's explication of the parallel style in texts found at Guōdiàn.[37]

David Schaberg continues this line of thought and highlights the wide usage of "*Laozi*-style verse" found across several texts, ranging from chapters in the *Xúnzǐ*, sections of the *Lǚshì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋, to passages in the *Guóyǔ* 國語, and, most importantly, the *Zhuāngzǐ*. According to Schaberg, this kind of verse consists of a highly reduced language and is overwhelmingly concerned with "descriptions of the *dao* and the sage, to illustrations of the *dao*'s workings in nature and in human life, and to prescriptions for the ruler who would become a sage user of the *dao*."[38] This non-deductive "*Laozi*-style" argumentation hence allows for a different function of language itself, in which the Way's twists and turns can be mimetically enacted, experienced and communicated. Schaberg elaborates as follows:

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[35] Rudolf G. Wagner, "The Impact of Conceptions of Rhetoric and Style upon the Formation of Early *Laozi* Editions: Evidence from Guodian, Mawangdui and the Wang Bi *Laozi*," *Kokusai tōhō gakusha kaigi kiyō* 國際東方學者會議紀要 44 (1999): 57.

[36] Rudolf G. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 57. For a full discussion of the role of "interlocking parallel style" in generating meaning, see pp. 53-113.

[37] See Dirk Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo: Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[38] David Schaberg, "On the Range and Performance of Laozi-Style Tetrasyllables," in *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China*, ed. Joachim Gentz and Dirk Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 101.

> [I]t is possible to think of exercises in *Laozi*-verse not as external to their subject (reflections on, analyses of), but as attempts to create a verbal model of the subject, a microcosmic version of it that illustrates some of its functions by putting them in play in the words themselves. Since this would not be analysis, nothing like deduction would be necessary or even desirable. The satisfactions of patterning that come with the interlocking parallel style, the repetitions and successive modulations, would not be about the *dao*, but would be the *dao* in a miniature, experimental version.[39]

The play of words inherent in such verse is therefore not simply ornamental but fulfills the very function of non-deductive forms of argumentation specific to this style. This way of communication thus has little to nothing in common with logic: Schaberg follows Graham in juxtaposing this kind of language to that of the Mohist *Canons*, and observes that both styles utilize a highly reduced, quasi-artificial language.[40]

Altogether, recent scholarship has shifted away from a simple juxtaposition of poetry and sustained argumentation, and instead presented a more comprehensive descriptions of the functional and structural specifics of the particular style of verse found in the *Lǎozǐ* and related material.

### 0.3.3 Towards Sound and Meaning

Separate from the discourse on early Chinese argumentative strategies, including through specific syntactic structures such as verse, is a discourse focused on the role of sound as a meaning-making device. The connection between meaning and sound within early Chinese texts has been described to various degrees in recent scholarship, frequently only as a side note.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] See Schaberg, "On the Range and Performance of Laozi-Style Tetrasyllables," 100.

### a) On the Connection between Sound and Meaning in Early China

For example, Haun Saussy describes rhyme in the *Shījīng* as "a semantic glue," which connects "things which under other circumstances tend to fly apart."[41] The effect of rhyme is therefore to form a "bond, both logical and acoustic."[42] In quite a similar vein, but avoiding the pitfalls of the term logic, Paul Goldin describes onomatopoetic reduplicatives, traceable to bronze inscriptions (particularly to inscriptions on bronze bells), as representing "both an appropriate sound and an appropriate meaning" within respective texts.[43]

Besides these two devices that inherently build on recurring phonological elements, longer structures, extending over more extensive lines of text, have also been described. The connection of meaning to these sound-based structural patterns has been broached by two scholars in particular. Firstly, Wolfgang Behr discusses a series of such patterns and describes as an example in a passage in the *Lǚshì chūnqiū* (3/3.2). This passage thematizes the relationship between sound, body, and universe, and moreover embeds a *Shījīng* quotation. According to Behr, a "rhyme net" and a number of alliterations in this passage "associate the motives of *rectification* via self-cultivation with the concepts of 'sageliness', 'acuity' and 'sonorance'," with this connection being primarily established through sound.[44] In other words, present in this passage is a technique much more elaborate than "*Laozi*-style verse," capable of argumentatively interweaving multiple themes and an authoritative *Shījīng* quotation through phonological patterns.

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[41] Haun Saussy, "Repetition, Rhyme, and Exchange in the *Book of Odes*," *HJAS* 57.2 (1997), 532.

[42] *Ibid.*, 532-533.

[43] Paul Goldin, "The Legacy of Bronzes and Bronze Inscriptions in Early Chinese Literature," in *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions*, ed. Constance A. Cook and Paul R. Goldin (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2016.), *lxiii*. Also note Lohar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime-bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 101-02, where von Falkenhausen discusses the connection between musical quality and onomatopoeic expressions.

[44] Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," 28. Note that I discuss this passage also in section 2.5.

Similar functions of aural patterns have also been described by Martin Kern, who emphasizes the mimetic capacities of sound patterns within Western Hàn *fù* 賦, through which linguistic properties of a text both perform and represent the subject of that text.[45] Kern similarly argues that the final chapter of *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 (before 139 BCE), the "Overview of Essentials" (*yào lüè* 要略), is akin to a Western Hàn *fù* and exhibits similar features, but adds the following caveat:

> However, the rhymes are only one aspect of the overall patterning of this sequence. Equally important, the passage is composed as a mantra-like litany of repeated words and parallel phrases that lend themselves to easy memorization and recitation. If we consider both the interlocking repetitions and the density of rhyme, what dominates this entire section is not what it says; it is the overall order of how to speak. In this modular order, each word is assigned its proper place exactly as each phenomenon of the natural and social spheres has its place both in the universe and in the text of the *Huainanzi*, which is the verbal replica of that universe. Altogether, the core message of this section – namely, that the entire *Huainanzi* is tightly unified and cannot be broken apart into isolated essays – is mimetically represented in a pattern of linguistic artistry that likewise precludes any gaps or discontinuities.[46]

For Kern, this effect of strengthening and adding an additional layer of meaning to the text's claim is therefore not just achieved through the rhymes employed, but through the overall patterning of the passage he discusses. The *Huáinánzǐ* is further "using, embodying, and unifying the varied totality of all such [literary] forms – poetic and prose," to achieve this effect of a claimed unified vision embodied within *Huainanzi*."[47] Quite similarly, when writing about the first chapter of the text *Xúnzǐ*, Kern argues that its "rhythmic and euphonic sections offer a series of analogies that illustrate the principle of sympathetic resonance in the natural world: because things respond

[45] See Martin Kern, "Western Han Aesthetics and the Genesis of the 'Fu,'" *HJAS* 63.2 (2003): 383-437, esp. 411-424.

[46] Martin Kern, "Creating a Book and Performing It: The 'Yao lüe' Chapter of the *Huainanzi* as a Western Han *Fu*," in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, ed. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 145.

[47] *Ibid.*, 131.

to one another according to their *lei* 類 (‘categories’) of natural disposition, actions have their specific and inevitable consequences.”[48]

**b) Music and what Sages listened to**

Altogether, sound-based text-structuring devices have therefore been shown to fulfill functions beyond mere ornamentation. The connection of sound and meaning is also at play beyond phonological text-structuring patterns, specifically also for early Chinese names. Frequently, names in early Chinese texts reveal certain characteristics for those they refer to: examples for this include a negligent priest named Guāngū 觀辜 (literally “Faulty Observance”), the personal name of Lord Wén of Jìn晉文公 (r. 635-627 BCE) as Chóng’ěr 重耳 (“Double-ears”), and even the name of Sūn Bìn 孫臏 (which can be interpreted as “The Legless One Who Fled”), the famous military strategist. In other words, these names as epithets appear to say something about the people who bore them.[49]

Such a broad view on early Chinese texts can help to clarify salient aspects in their approach towards aurality.[50] Discourses relevant to this sense of hearing focus mostly on the ability of a

[48] Martin Kern, “Style and Poetic Diction in the *Xunzi*,” in *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Xunzi*, ed. Eric L. Hutton (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016), 14.

[49] See Paul Goldin, *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 6-10. For the interpretation of Sun Bin’s name, compare Jens Østergård Petersen, “What's in a Name? On the Sources concerning Sun Wu,” *Asia Major* 5.1 (1992): 1-31, where Petersen argues that the name of Sūn Wǔ 孫武 should similarly be taken as an epithet, in that the supposed surname should be taken as ‘to flee’ (*xùn* 遜).

[50] By focusing on the term aurality, I wish to steer clear of the topic of orality. Note that both topics have been steeped in communication theory. I thus follow Charles Bernstein in the departure from the notion of orality, who instead highlights instead the “aurality” of text, which he calls the “sounding of the writing,” a departure best expressed in the following comparison: “Aurality precedes orality, just as language precedes speech,” in Charles Bernstein, *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13. Aurality therefore focuses on the written evidence rather any given performance thereof. Expressed differently, text does not represent in sound directly, but it can still offer indications of aural features, even if it represents aurality rather imperfectly. Bernstein further points back to the intricate relationship between sound and meaning, arguing that “[s]ound enacts meaning as much as designates something meant. … They are aspects of each other, neither prior, neither independent” (*ibid*., 17). Hence, the double-function of language to both present and represent meaning allows for such an expressivity of sound itself to contribute to the process of generating meaning, which is why

Sage (*shèng* 聖) to influence others through the specific medium of music (*yuè* 樂), and through sound (*shēng* 聲) more broadly. This culturally specific association between Sage and sound appears deeply meaningful to early Chinese texts, especially given that 'Sage' (OC *l̥eŋ-s) sounded like 'sound' (OC *l̥eŋ).[51] Overall, while such discourses on the transformative effects of music yield some of the biggest insights into early Chinese understandings of aurality,[52] their overall applicability to the issue of sound in language use is less clear.

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Bernstein cautions us to listen closely to the written text. Compare also Bernstein's broader theoretical considerations on pp. 12-23.

Compare this perspective with that of Walter J. Ong, who famously points out that "Writing can never dispense with orality." For him, "Written texts all have to be related somehow, directly or indirectly, to the world of sound, the natural habitat of language, to yield their meanings. 'Reading' a text means converting it to sound, aloud or in the imagination," which had to be done either "syllable-by-syllable" or more "sketchily." See Walter J. Ong and John Hartley, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 8. Note that Ong's work is marked by a focus on the "orality" of text as a testament of the history of oral cultures, *vis-à-vis* fully literate cultures, and while his is a "version of the 'great divide between orality and literacy" that for a time "dominated the approach to literacy," more recent work has shifted away from this opposition between the two aspects; for this account, see Brian V. Street, "A Critical Look at Walter Ong and the 'Great Divide,'" in *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography, and Education*, ed. Brian V. Street (New York: Routledge, 1995), 153–59..

Further note that Ong was associated with Marshall McLuhan and the Toronto School of communication theory, which further included Harold Innis and Eric A. Havelock. The main focus of this group was on the notion that human communication is central to understanding the structures of both human culture and human minds. For a general overview, compare Derrick de Kerckhove, "McLuhan and the Toronto School of Communication," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 14.4 (1989): 73–79. Central works of the group include Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950); and Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

[51] Compare especially Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices," 28-30.

[52] For discussions of the transformative effects of music, poetry, and sounds, see Haun Saussy, *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 77-105; and Steven Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality. Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 95-103. On the important relationship between music and rulership in early China and its assumed transformative or cultivating effects, see Kurihara Keisuke 栗原圭介, *Chūgoku kodai gakuron no kenkyū* 中國古代樂論の研究 (Tokyo: Daitō Bunka Daigaku Tōyō Kenkyūjo, 1978), 361-374, 402-427, 455- 460, 489-499, 499-511; Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two. Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies; Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies no. 42, 1982), 13-14, 85- 98; Scott Cook, "Xunzi on Ritual and Music," *Monumenta Serica* 45 (1997): 27-36; Roel Sterckx, "Transforming the Beasts: Animals and Music in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 86.1 (2000): 1-46, esp. 3-5. On the relation between wind and music and the effects of music on social hierarchies, see Kurihara, *Chūgoku kodai gakuron no kenkyū*, 460-466; Mark E. Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 219-21. For the cosmic origins of music, see Ronald Egan, "Nature and Higher Ideals in Texts on Calligraphy, Music, and Painting," in *Chinese Aesthetics: the Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, ed. Cai Zong-qi (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 277–309, esp. 293–299.

### 0.3.4 Beyond the Rectification of Names

General accounts of the role of language in early Chinese philosophy do not discuss these issues, and instead cling to a narrative focused on the lens of the "Masters' literature."[53] However, there is no theory of language *per se* in early Chinese texts.[54] Instead, such texts may discuss the 'Rectification of Names' (*zhèng míng* 正名), an essentially philosophical concern of importance to early Chinese discourse, focusing on the problems between 'names' (*míng* 名) and 'forms' (*xíng* 形) or 'actualities' (*shí* 實), of the efficacy of speech (*yán* 言), or of the dangers of 'persuasions' (*shuì* 說). As Hans-Georg Moeller puts it, "Chinese philosophy did not operate with a general notion of 'language' subordinating those concepts and establishing a general and explicit discourse of 'language philosophy.'"[55]

Most importantly, a comparison between the concept of language and those concepts operating in early Chinese discourses reveals grave differences. Even in what can be read as the closest equivalent to the Saussurian *arbitraire du signe* in early China, namely the "nominalist" theories

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[53] Compare, for example, Marshall D. Willman, "Logic and Language in Early Chinese Philosophy," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/chinese-logic-language/>.

[54] In general, theorization itself may not be the best of terms due to its associations in the ancient Mediterranean context. As such, its appearance as *theoria* θεωρία in ancient Greek texts should be considered within its own cultural context; compare Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in its Cultural Contex*t (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. 95-127. This does not, however, imply a lack of logic in early Chinese texts; for an overview of early Chinese approaches to logic, compare Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 7, Part 1: Language and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 256-358.

[55] Hans-Georg Moeller, "Chinese Language Philosophy and Correlativism," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 72 (2000): 91, footnote 2. To be clear, the absence of a term does not *a priori* imply the absence of a concept. Bryan van Norden argues that "we have to look at the particulars of the two languages being compared in order to determine whether the presence or absence of a particular term is significant," listing the example of the word 'aglet' for the concept of the tip on the end of a shoelace, but unknown as a term even to the vast majority of native speakers of the English language; see Bryan van Norden, *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 22-23. The issue with language is somewhat more complicated, in that the concept is more abstract and can stand for any systematic means of communication (e.g., sign language, or formal language).

in Later Mohist writings and in the *Xúnzǐ*, wherein the connection between 'names' and 'actualities' are fundamentally arbitrary,[56] the emphasis is more on the power structures inherent in practices of designating. Ultimately in such a *Xúnzǐ*-style approach, there still exist "correct" correspondences between names and objects, proven through the effectiveness of communication.[57]

However, the overall narrative of the 'Rectification of Names' forming a major concern in early China may be historically inaccurate. In a recent article, Carine Defoort describes the formation of the discourse in the early 20th century, and highlights the role of Hú Shì 胡適 (1891-1962) in identifying the 'Rectification of Names' as an equivalent to Western logic.[58] Consider especially Defoort's description of Hú's influence on the subsequent scholarly discourse:

> Its three most pervasive aspects are the specific cluster of four *Analects* quotes cited as textual evidence, the identification of a long Chinese tradition of various lineages discussing *zhengming*, and the appraisal of its philosophical importance. These aspects were strikingly original in that nobody before him had come up with them [...][59]

The focus on the narrative of the 'Rectification of Names' may hence obscure, rather than elucidate early Chinese approaches to language, especially regarding the issue of sound patterns in language use. This necessitates a more general questioning of the applicability of both the

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[56] Compare Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 51-65.

[57] Compare Goldin, *After Confucius*, 17; and Moeller, "Chinese Language Philosophy and Correlativism," 103. Taking a different approach to this seeming parallel between Western thought and early Chinese discourses, Jane Geaney emphasizes that the binary of *míng* 名 and *shí* 實 should not be understood as an opposition between language or words on the one hand and reality or objects on the other, but instead within a polarity of aural and visual categories; see Jane Geaney, "Grounding 'Language' in the Senses: What the Eyes and Ears Reveal about *Ming* 名 (Names) in Early Chinese Texts," *Philosophy East and West* 60.2 (2010): 251-293. Geaney further argues that both categories are "embodied" in that their perception relates to different functions of the bodily self (*shēn* 身) and that their expression emanates ultimately through the heart-mind (*xīn* 心); for this argument, see Jane Geaney, *Language as Bodily Practice in Early China: A Chinese Grammatology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018): 113-139.

[58] See Carine Defoort, "Confucius and the 'Rectification of Names': Hu Shi and the Modern Discourse on *Zhengming*." *Dao* 20 (2021): 613–633.

[59] *Ibid.*, 631

'Rectification of Names' and a more universal concept of language to the early Chinese context. In this regard, Moeller elaborates on the key differences between our own understanding of language and an early Chinese description of linguistic phenomena as follows:

> Problems of linguistic meaning are *not* primarily dealt with as problems of 'representation' of a properly actual 'presence' by means of a realm of signs with imitate or 'take its likeness.' … names do not merely picture or image forms, they are not only 'signs' or simply symbols of reality, but are themselves, as much as are the forms and things, real elements in a present world. Speech, as well, like thought and action, is not only a communication 'about' something real, but is itself an utterly real activity in the actual world. Linguistic 'signs,' for instance names and speech, are as equally real as whatever they signify.[60]

While the main concern of Moeller here is to disentangle the implications of Western philosophy from early Chinese discourses, hence dismissing the interest in the themes of presence, representation, and imitation, his point on the equal "reality" of words and of forms carries weight in that early Chinese linguistic phenomena – including phonological patterns – are best understood as significant and not mere embellishments. The issue of names and rhymes is therefore one of establishing connections, not just symbolically, but of underlying "real" recurrences in resonating sounds.

### 0.3.4 Paronomasia

Perhaps nowhere is this possibility of establishing connections more pronounced in early China than in the issue of paronomasia, which is best understood as an underlying aural connection between two "words that sound alike but differ in meaning."[61] The usage of the term paronomasia further warrants a few words of caution on the following two issues: first, 'paronomasia' in its

[60] Moeller, "Chinese Language Philosophy and Correlativism," 106-107.

[61] "Paronomasia," *Silva Rhetoricae*, accessed February 3, 2002, http://rhetoric.byu.edu/Figures/P/paronomasia.htm. The adoption of the term in sinological literature stems from Bodman's study of the *Shì míng* 釋名; see Nicholas Cleaveland Bodman, *A Linguistic Study of the 'Shih Ming': Initials and Consonant Clusters* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

meaning from Western rhetoric typically functions as a mere allusion. The alluded term hence ought to be inferred by the audience or the reader based on the alluding term provided. This is not the case in what we commonly refer to as paronomasia in early China, where both terms are juxtaposed to one another. Secondly, as the term paronomasia stems from the Western rhetorical tradition, it should be noted that is rather unclear to what extent rhetorical terminology and its underlying assumptions may be fitting for the early Chinese case.[62] Despite these limitations of the term paronomasia, I employ it in this dissertation due to its established usage in Sinological literature and its conceptual proximity to the occurrences in early Chinese texts.

Instances of paronomasia further highlight the early Chinese connection between sound and meaning. As these devices occur most prominently in Eastern Hàn texts such as the *Shì míng* 釋名 or the *Bóhǔ tōng* 白虎通, paronomastic glosses have come to be associated primarily with texts from that era. However, the study of early Chinese paronomasia forms yet another scholarly discourse with its own concerns and issues.

**a) Early Chinese Paronomasia and Etymology?**

The greatest challenge to the study of early Chinese paronomasia and the paronomastic gloss is their possibly contentious relationship to etymology, inextricably tied to the question of which terms are employed in the study of these phenomena. As such, a considerable portion of previous approaches to these devices evaluate their usefulness for the study of Chinese etymology, an ongoing, but often rather insufficient field due to manifold difficulties involved.[63]

[62] For the latter issue, compare especially Lisa Indraccolo, "What Is 'Rhetoric' anyway? Briared in Words in Early China," *Asiatische Studien* 68.1 (2014): 331–341.

[63] Most notably, the first etymological dictionary of Old Chinese stems from no earlier than 2007; for this work, see Axel Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). The most notable hindrance to research on the etymology of Chinese lexemes is the severe restrictions imposed by the

However, it is rather frequently not the case that paronomasia offers indications of etymological relations, and research from the 1980s and earlier routinely dismissed early Chinese paronomasia on this basis. Lóng Yǔchún, in a 1971 article on the topic, evaluates such glosses in regard to their value for phonological reconstruction, but concluded that their value may be limited due to diverging usages across texts, and dialectal influences.[64] Similarly, Zhāng Yǐrén denies any actual value for possible etymological inquiry, but rather points to paronomasia as carrying underlying assumptions regarding language use, especially concerning the development of the notion of the 'Rectification of Names' (*zhèng míng*), commonly described as a central concern of Confucius himself.[65] Similarly, Wáng Lì concludes that their linguistic value is limited, and instead points to the "idealistic" (*wéixīn zhǔyì de* 唯心主義的) tendencies of instances of paronomasia, in that "still many of them promote feudal ethics and should hence be rejected."[66] He specifies this as follows:

> Sound glosses from people of the Hàn dynasty still did not break away from the intention of Confucius in [his exclamation that] "'government' is 'to rectify.'" They still used sound glosses as a means to propagate Confucian political thought. … Sound glosses, as a scholastic system, must certainly be criticized because the natural connection between sound and meaning does not actually exist.
>
> 漢代人的聲訓仍然沒有脫離孔子 "政者正也" 的用意，仍然是以聲訓爲手段，宣傳儒家的政治思想。… 聲訓作爲一個學術體系，是必須批判的，因爲聲音和意義的自然聯係事實上是不存在的。[67]

writing system, manifest in the difficulties in discussing etymology beyond the boundaries of the individual Chinese character (*zì* 字), which formed the focus of the Chinese lexicographical tradition.

[64] See Lóng Yǔchún 龍宇純, "Lùn shēng xùn 論聲訓," in *Sīzhú xuān xiǎoxué lùnjí* 絲竹軒小學論集 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 346-357, especially 355.

[65] See Zhāng Yǐrén 張以仁, "Shèngxùn de fāzhǎn yǔ rújiā de guānxì 聲訓的發展與儒家的關係," in *Jiǎnggōng shìshì zhōunián jìniàn lùnwénjí* 蔣公逝世周年紀念論文集, ed. Zhōngyāng yánjiùyuàn 中央研究院 (Taibei: Zhōngyāng yánjiùyuàn, 1976): 1202-1221, especially 1219.

[66] Wáng Lì 王力, *Tóng yuán zìdiǎn* 同源字典 (Beijing: Shāngwù yìn shūguǎn 商務印書館, 1982), 10.

[67] Wáng Lì 王力, *Zhōngguó yǔyán xuéshǐ* 中國語言學史 (Taiyuan: Shānxī rénmín chūbǎnshè 山西人民出版社, 1981), 48-51. For a similar subsumption of the practice under purely ideological markers, compare Roger T. Ames,

Wáng's analysis is clearly reflective of the Saussurian *arbitraire du signe*, according to which the relationship between a word's sound and its meaning is an inherently arbitrary one. This conclusion may technically be correct, but nonetheless, this description of Wáng highlights the underlying epistemic assumptions in the usage of paronomasia, especially in regard to the importance of the narrative of the 'Rectification of Names.'

The relationship between early Chinese paronomasia and etymology is hence complicated, and in this narrative, paronomasia is an inherently deficient practice that blurs the lines between actual etymology and ideological word associations. It is against this background that Harbsmeier's positions the *Shì míng* as an "etymological glossography," just as he assigns it to the realm of folk etymology.[68]

In subsequent research, especially since the 1990s, later Hàn paronomastic glosses experienced renewed appreciation specifically for the underlying assumptions they employ in their exegetical usage, manifest, for example, in Lú Lièhóng's analysis of paronomastic glosses from the *Bóhǔ tōng*,[69] or in the monograph of Liú Yòuxīn and Lǐ Màokāng on exegetical usages of the device.[70] William Boltz similarly discusses paronomasia under the heading "Etymology," but is careful to not equate the early Chinese practice with etymological reasoning.[71] Boltz further specifies the importance of this phenomenon:

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"Paronomasia: A Confucian Way of Making Meaning," in *Confucius Now: Contemporary Encounters with the Analects*, ed. David Jones (Chicago and La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 2008), 37-48.

[68] Compare Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 7, Part 1: Language and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 74-75.

[69] See Lú Lièhóng 盧烈紅, "'Bóhǔ tōng' duì xùngǔxué de gòngxiàn*"* 《白虎通》對訓詁學的貢獻, *Wǔhàn dàxué xuébào* 武漢大學學報 5 (1992): 99–105.

[70] See Liú Yòuxīn 劉又辛, and Lǐ Màokāng 李茂康, *Xùngǔxué xīnlùn* 訓詁學新論 (Chengdu: Bāshǔ shūshè 巴蜀書社, 1989).

[71] William G. Boltz, "Etymology," in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. Rynt Sybesma et al. (Leiden, Brill, 2017), Vol. II, 194-205.

> From the Hàn period on, if not earlier, the practice of glossing one word with another on the basis not only of meaning, but also of sound similarity constituted an important part of the analytical approach to lexical meaning … The implication of this kind of gloss, where not only is there a semantic congruity between the glossing word and the word glossed, but a sound similarity as well, is that the two words are in some sense related, though in the Chinese lexical tradition the nature of that relation is never explicated. … Whether or not any such gloss reflects a genuine etymological relation is an open question. The importance of the phenomenon lies in what it reveals about the traditional understanding of words and their relations within the language as a whole in the eyes of the early exegetes.[72]

Boltz, in this description, is careful to separate on the one hand etymology and its implications from modern linguistics, and on the other paronomasia and the underlying concerns important to ancient users of the language. By clearly demarcating these two fields, Boltz shifts the focus away from the question of whether early Chinese paronomasia is etymological in character. This may be the case in individual instances, but the overarching question becomes rather inadequate to address early Chinese textual phenomena.

**b) Paronomasia and Towards the Non-Arbitrariness of Language Use**

Similarly, in a forthcoming article on keywords in classical Chinese philosophy, Paul R. Goldin claims that "etymology may help us understand *the language* of classical Chinese philosophers, but not necessarily *their conception of their language*," further highlighting how this overfocus on etymology may actually be misleading for a deeper understanding of early Chinese discourses.[73] Goldin thus points to the difficulties in translating passages focused on such paronomastic connections, and furthermore also illustrates how they have shaped – in the blurry lines between actual etymological and pseudo-etymological connections – our understanding of

[72] *Ibid.*, 195-196.

[73] Paul R. Goldin, "The Linguistics of Chinese Philosophical Keywords," forthcoming (one of the big Routledge books), preprint p. 5.

involved terms. Expressed differently, paronomasia primarily attests to linguistic connections that speakers of the language themselves saw as ontologically valid.[74]

Paronomasia may thus actually help to highlight how and why ancient language users connected terms and sounds. This device forms, in other words – and echoing Goldin's words once again – those "fundamental linguistic connections that would have been second nature" to speakers of the underlying language.[75] As Goldin emphasizes, these "*conceptual* links" feature in some of the most memorable passages of early Chinese literature, such as the famous argument in the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 on the intertwined nature of music (*yuè* 樂 *[ŋ]ˁrawk) and joy (*lè* 樂 *[r]ˁawk),[76] and the equally famous passage from the *Zhōng yōng* 中庸 (*Doctrine of the Mean*), according to which "to be *humane* means to be *human*" (*rén zhě rén yě* 仁者人也). For the latter, "the conceptual association" between the two terms "became all but inevitable: 'humanity' is how 'human beings' ought to behave."[77] By moving away from the term 'etymology' and its implications from modern linguistics, we can instead analyze early Chinese associations on their own terms, and thereby gain a better understanding for why certain connections appear so central to texts and arguments.

[74] Compare esp. Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 37-43; Zhiming Bao, "Language and World View in Ancient China," *Philosophy East and West* 40.2 (1990): 195-219; Paul R. Goldin, *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 14-18; and Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," 15-33. Further compare Goldin, "The Linguistics of Chinese Philosophical Keywords," 6, which points to this distinction as follows: "Paronomastic associations represent not linguistic assertions so much as ontological ones, and hence it can be misleading even to characterize them as false etymologies."

[75] Goldin, *After Confucius*, 17.

[76] For the passage from the *Xúnzǐ*, see Wáng Xiānqiān 王先謙 (ed.), *Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1988), 20.379; compare, especially, Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy*, 179-181; and more generally, for the conceptualization of music in early China, DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, 19-27, and other works cited in footnote 50.

[77] Goldin, "The Linguistics of Chinese Philosophical Keywords," preprint p. 6-7; for the passage from the *Zhōng yōng*, see Ruǎn Yuán 阮元 (ed.), *Shísān jīng zhùshū* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 52.3535.

### c) Paronomasia and Correlative Theories

However, such a history of paronomasia appears incompatible with the most prominent approach in previous scholarship to account for the development of paronomasia. As the above viewpoints of Zhāng Yǐrén and Wáng Lì already highlighted, that approach focuses on the explanation of an odd overlap between the narrative of the 'Rectification of Names' (*zhèng míng*) and "correlative cosmology" to make sense of the phenomenon of paronomasia in Hàn texts. In other words, correlative cosmology, allegedly becoming the dominant current in intellectual exchanges after the 3rd century BCE, was applied to words, through which the order of things could be explained.[78] W. South Coblin summarizes this point of view as follows: "The Han penchant for relating different words in quasi-etymological puns or paranomastic [*sic.*] glosses was clearly a direct outgrowth of this view of language."[79] In a similar vein, John Makeham argues that such glosses – and the underlying conceptual connection between sound and meaning – emerged through "correlative theories of naming" in the late third century BCE and became "the mainstay of Han philosophy of language."[80] This line of interpretation not only fails to account for usages predating the relevant theories for this line of explanation (and hence most occurrences of

[78] For a general overview of the alleged development of correlative cosmology, compare John B. Henderson, *The Development & Decline of Chinese Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). For a critical review thereof, compare also Willard J. Peterson, "'The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology', by John B. Henderson (Book Review)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46.2 (1986): 657. For a general critique of the term 'correlative cosmoslogy,' compare also, more recently, Michael Nylan, "Yin-yang, Five Phases, and *qi*" in *China's Early Empires: A Re-Appraisal*, ed. Michael Loewe and Michael Nylan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 398-414.

[79] W. South Coblin, *A Handbook of Eastern Han Sound Glosses* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983), 9. Other proponents of this view include also Liú Qīngsōng 劉青松, *'Bóhǔ tōng' yìlǐ shēng xùn yánjiū*《白虎通》義理聲訊研究 (Beijing: Shāngwù yìnshūguǎn 商務印書館, 2018), esp. 69-82; and Lóng Yǔchún, "Lùn shēng xùn 論聲訓." Compare also Unger, *Rhetorik des klassischen Chinesisch*, 70-71.

[80] Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 93; compare, more broadly, Makeham's argument for these "correlative" naming practices on pp. 85-95.

paronomasia from the 3rd century BCE), but also necessarily relies on the nebulous notion of 'correlative' theories, a notion that has become contested in recent secondary scholarship.[81]

Behr moderates these earlier interpretations focused on correlative theories of naming by arguing that earlier uses of paronomasia – specifically, ones that predate the 3rd century BCE, and hence date to a time before the development of the so-called correlative theories of the Late Warring States and Hàn periods – differ from later ones through "the rise of correlative schemes under an 'essentialist' outlook on the language/reality nexus."[82] In this sense, Behr does not deny the potential impact of those theories, but complicates the general narrative through pointing out the prior usage of such devices. This reasoning offers the advantage of not fully dismissing the line of argument of Makeham and others – as a general quantitative increase of paronomasia during the Hàn dynasty is evident in the source material – but the function of those theories as the primary impetus for paronomasia is negated by relegating it to a later stage within a broader development. Again, this approach offers the advantage of interpreting individual instantiations of paronomasia as historically situated developments, offering a better connection to other forms of language use.[83]

**d) Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the Inapplicability of Etymology**

Such a shift away from an understanding of etymology from our own day and age is not unique to the study of early Chinese paronomasia, but also occurs in recent scholarship on etymological

[81] See, again, footnote 75.

[82] Wolfgang Behr, "Rhymes and Reason, Puns n' Proses, Winsome Words: Notes on the Craft of Eloquence in *Hanfeizi*," paper presented at the 22nd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies, Glasgow, August 30, 2018.

[83] Compare, for example, the argument of Edward L. Shaughnessy, who observes that some of the poems in the *Shījīng* 詩經 and some line statements of the *Yìjīng* 易經 first invoke a phenomenon of the natural world, only to respond in the next line of the same couplet with a corresponding imagery from the human world, which marks for Shaughnessy the beginning of "correlative thinking" in early China; see Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Beginnings of Civilization to 221 BC*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 336-342.

reasoning in Western antiquity.[84] Ineke Sluiter notes important differences between etymology in the ancient Mediterranean world and modern academic practices of etymology: while the latter, originating in comparative linguistic theories formulated in the 19th century by the *Junggrammatiker*, is based on a comparison of different languages and primarily interested in the systematic change of languages, ancient 'etymologies' are primarily invested in finding the meaning of a term, as well as its origins and motivations.[85]

This has further implications on the functions of ancient etymology, which should similarly not be assumed to overlap with modern notions. Based on her observations on the ancient Greek tradition of 'etymological' reasoning, Sluiter points to the following functions for Ancient Greek etymological glosses: etymology forms what we may call a "*Denkform* and a 'discursive practice', a particular mode of thinking and speaking." Such glosses ultimately build on language itself, and hence form the "*common ground* of speakers and addresses in any communicative situation." Through this reference to the linguistic properties of specific phrases "as a *topic* of joint reflection and a *source* of arguments," ancient Greek etymological practice "becomes a 'tool for thinking' …

[84] Compare similar developments in the ancient Mediterranean world and its successors; see especially James J. O'Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2017), a work that points to the connection between ancient etymology and "aetiology," thereby "help[ing] to explain the world of today by tracing its roots in the past …" (p. 103); and Arnaud Zucker and Claire Le Feuvre (eds.), *Ancient and Medieval Greek Etymology: Theory and Practice I* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), a work that argues that "[e]tymology opens up words like oysters, exposing their semantic flesh, because words somehow hide their meanings within their folds" (p. 6), even though "the relationship it establishes between the words is not always *genetically* correct even if always *culturally* relevant, since it is essentially based on intuition – reflective intuition" (p. 3). For more on historic forms of etymology in the West, compare also Roswitha Klinck, *Die Lateinische Etymologie des Mittelalters* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1970); and Davide Del Bello, *Forgotten Paths: Etymology and the Allegorical Mindset* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

[85] See Ineke Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology: A Tool for Thinking," in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. Franco Montanari, Stefanos Matthaios, Antonios Rengakos, and Antonios Rengakos (Leiden: Brill, 2015), Vol. 1, 897-899. Sluiter succinctly puts it as follows: "Modern etymology is about phonology, ancient etymology is almost entirely about semantics" (p. 899).

as a shared *object of thought* and a common focus of attention: the words we use become 'intuition pumps' for how the world they represent functions."[86]

James O'Hara's study of Vergilian uses of etymology suggests similar functions of such devices beyond the purely ludic and aesthetic. Like Sluiter, O'Hara argues that "etymological wordplay helps create a tone, style, and allegiance to a tradition," and further that it "marks the text as other than ordinary nonfictional discourse."[87] In this sense, a discourse that engages with such uses of language marks that discourse as referential to the preceding tradition. In other words, poets (and other expert users of their language) announce their text within the tradition they see themselves belonging to or partaking in.

This gradual shift in how to describe these phenomena – from etymology and ancient etymological reasoning to etymological wordplay – further allows for a broadening in our understanding of what is involved in their employment. Just like early Chinese paronomasia, these phenomena may offer different angles of interpretation. Wordplay is yet another term in this discussion that may be misleading in its common contemporary usage, as Antonio Loprieno's comparison of the functions of ancient Egyptian wordplays to modern Western puns highlights:

> In our tradition the pun, like the metaphor or the simile, belongs to the realm of rhetoric devices, and therefore primarily to the domain of aesthetics in general and of literature in particular. In ancient Egypt, on the contrary, word plays belong primarily to the sphere of encyclopedia, or scholarly knowledge.[88]

Just like ancient Greek etymological reasoning, the main interest of wordplay in ancient Egyptian is *not* focused on what its modern equivalent is invested in. In other words, ancient

[86] Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology: A Tool for Thinking," 899.

[87] O'Hara, *True Names*, 103.

[88] Antonio Loprieno, "Puns and Word Play in Ancient Egypt," in *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2000), 8.

Egyptian "wordplays" are not primarily ludic, aesthetic, or rhetorical in nature, but are a device of scholasticism, to establish conceptual connections. In many ways, early Chinese paronomasia could be described in similar terms, as later parts of this dissertation will highlight.

### 0.3.5 Summary

Altogether, then, the advantages of a historically situated understanding of phonological patterning in early Chinese texts – through rhyme or through paronomasia and its precursors, or through related phenomena – appear evident, as the alternatives all fail to account for a host of different instances and usages thereof. Explanations that rely primarily on notions of rhetoric, on a sharp dichotomy of logic versus poeticity,[89] or on the narrative of the 'Rectification of Names' or 'correlative' modes of thinking altogether do not account for the various usages of sound-based devices in early Chinese texts, especially as these devices underwent changes and transformations across the longer period from the Warring States to the Eastern Hàn dynasty. Texts from each period generally follow larger patterns, rules, and habits concerning how a recurrence of phonology is permissible, especially in regard to paronomasia.

Cross-cultural comparisons further enrich this narrative. They illustrate that the difficulties of previous scholarship grappling with these phenomena are not unique to the early Chinese case, but rather arise from competing epistemological considerations, especially resulting from the dominance of a modern linguistic understanding of etymology.

In sum, rhyme and paronomasia appear to rely primarily on the *perceived* connections they establish between the terms drawn into such a network of aural recurrence. Less important is

[89] I use the term 'poeticity' to refer what Roman Jakobson has also termed the 'poetic function of language,' which for him is the focus of an utterance towards the wording of the utterance itself; this includes phonology and poetic meter. For Jakobson's usage of the term, see Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. by Thomas Sebeok (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964): 356

whether or not these connections are reasonable to a modern reader, as instances of rhyming, paronomasia, and other forms of aural recurrence can provide us with a rather rare insight into how ancient users of the language thought about the words they used.

### 0.4 Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation will thus highlight how sound recurrences in early Chinese texts occur both as a structuring element for longer arguments – whereby sound coordinates distinct parts of an argument – and as a means to express conceptual and ontological connections valid for ancient language users. In order to approach these meaning-making connections of sound in early China, the rest of this dissertation will be structured as follows:

Chapter 1, "Towards a Computational Analysis of Early Chinese Poeticity: Methodological Reflections and the Later Mohists Beyond Logic," contains a description of the methodology underlying this study. Specifically, as part of this dissertation I turn to a full computational analysis of Old Chinese phonological features of early Chinese texts. Chapter 1 hence includes a circumscription of the historical phonological reconstruction utilized and its limitations; an introduction to the grapheme-to-phoneme transduction (G2P) pipeline for Old Chinese developed in the coding language Python for this dissertation; how early Chinese rhyme scheme detections can be rendered as Regular Expression (regex) searches; and, lastly, how Monte Carlo simulations are utilized in this study to verify results. The digitization of both early Chinese texts and of the subsequent analysis nonetheless requires a thorough interpretive approach, which I highlight through the case study of the later layers of the text *Mòzǐ*, which represents the thought of the Later Mohists, encountered numerous times above in their alleged focus on analytic thought. However, in this chapter, I reveal a concern of the later Mohists beyond logic, focusing instead of what we

could call poeticity, and this concern is applicable more broadly to early Chinese textuality in general.

Chapter 2, "Shadow-Play/Echo-Play: Textual Reuse and its Resonances," focuses on the ways phonological devices were employed to connect textual material in early Chinese texts. Focusing on the juxtaposition of the imagery of 'shadow' (*yǐng* 影, OC *qraŋʔ) and 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響, OC *q$^{h}$aŋʔ) throughout early texts, this chapter highlights the multivalency of that imagery and how different parallels could be activated to connect such an imagery to different textual units. Most notably, 'shadow' and 'echo' are phonologically close, and their employment within early Chinese texts played predominantly on that poetic potential. Both the poetic employment of the juxtaposition of shadow and echo and the way textual material recurs across the corpus suggests a fundamentally dialogic approach to textual engagement. To highlight the stakes of this sort of dialogicality, this chapter analyzses its implications through the example of a notorious case of textual reuse: the overlap between the "Owl Rhapsody" (*fú niǎo fù* 鵩鳥賦), attributed to Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 (c. 201 – 169 BCE), and sections of "Generational Warfare" (*shì bīng* 世兵), chapter 12 of the enigmatic text *Héguānzǐ* 鶡冠子.

Chapter 3 explores the development of the elusive and rarely described phenomenon of "countertomic paronomasia" in the 4$^{th}$ and 3$^{rd}$ century BCE, in which sounds of a given term were rearranged and reshuffled to create an effect reminiscent of the later *fǎnqiè* 反切 system of sound glosses. This chapter highlights the fault lines and tensions of a changing manuscript culture, with a gradual shift from self-referential and performative wordplays towards glossing practices typical of textual exegesis. Most importantly, however, this chapter highlights how sections of texts such

as the *Zhuāngzǐ* or the *Hánfēizǐ* were deeply performative, and that the usage of the device of "countertomic paronomasia" highlighted the mastery over language of speakers or textual figures.

Chapter 4 and 5 re-examine the topic of early Chinese paronomasia. Chapter 4, "Stratifying Paronomasia from Pre-imperial and Western Hàn Texts," traces the changes and functions of paronomasia as a sound-based device from approximately the 3rd century BCE to the Western Hàn dynasty. Broadly, this chapter traces the changes of glossing practices (of similar-sounding terms) from largely poetic engagements to processes of textual exegesis, and thus proposes a way to stratify different usages of paronomasia in the source material according to its functions. It focuses in particular on both transmitted "Masters' literature" and the textual material excavated at Guōdiàn 郭店 (approx. 300 BCE), before turning to distinctly exegetical texts largely stemming from the Western Hàn dynasty (202 BCE - 9 CE).

Chapter 5 highlights the influences of musical theory on practices of paronomasia during the Western Hàn dynasty, and discourses focused on paronomasia and issues therein during the last decades of the Western Hàn, both of which led to the wide-spread usage of the practice during the Eastern Hàn dynasty (25-220 CE). By doing so, this chapter traces underlying epistemological concerns regarding the connection of sound and meaning during the Western Hàn dynasty and highlights the ways this nexus was conceptualized.

The concluding coda, "From Sound to Shape," points again to the Eastern Hàn dynasty, and touches upon a key discourse that led to the relegation and decline of paronomasia through the rise of the visual aspects of the writing system. This coda further returns to a cross-cultural comparison to embed these developments, specifically through highlighting a similar process in Ptolemaic Egypt: wordplays similarly changed under the gradual elevation of the writing system

# Chapter 1. Towards a Computational Analysis of Early Chinese Poeticity: Methodological Reflections and the Later Mohists Beyond Logic

## 1.1 Introduction

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 察次 | *s-n̥ij-s | A | [The Master] examines sequences |
| （山）〔由〕比 | *C.pijʔ | A | by means of [their] juxtaposition; |
| 因至 | *tits | a | relying on this, he reaches |
| 優指 | *mə.kijʔ | A | a superior signifying. |
| 復次 | *s-n̥ij-s | A | Retracing the sequence |
| 察聲 | *l̥eŋ | B | and examining sounds, |
| 端名 | *C.meŋ | B | [he] takes names as a starting point; |
| 因（請）〔情〕 | *dzeŋ | B | ensuing from this, dispositions |
| 復正。 | *teŋ-s | B | are again rectified.[90] |

[90] Sūn Yíràng 孫詒讓, and Sūn Qǐzhì 孫啓治 (eds.), *Mòzǐ jiángǔ* 墨子閒詁 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2001), 44.410; compare also Angus Charles Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), 478-481. Further note that Graham's addition of *yīn lì* 音利 "[when] tunes are unobstructed" in the text cited above, extrapolated from Canon A94: this addition would fit the rhyme scheme proposed (and moreover would further improve the overall statement in favor of my argument, as *lì* 利 is reconstructed in OCNR as *C.rit-s). The last glyph *zhèng* 正 is sometimes assumed to form part of the following sentence in 11/1.17; given the rhyme scheme here, it appears prudent to include it in the section quoted above.

Note that for the "Canons" (*jīng* 經) and "Explanations" (*shuō* 説), individual entries will be cited according Graham's numbering system. All reconstructions of Old Chinese in this chapter are provided in the Baxter-Sagart reconstruction from 2014; for their underlying approach, see William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

For a detailed account of the textual problems of the chapter "Greater Selection" and its context, see Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 101-110. Additionally, Graham uses the entirety of the related chapter "Smaller Selection" (*xiǎo qǔ* 小取) and parts of the "Greater Selection" to reconstruct a text he labels "Names and Objects." More generally speaking, the two chapters are seen as related, with the "Smaller Selection" being more readily accessible for interpretation, whereas the "Greater Selection" poses considerable textual difficulties; compare also Dan Robins, "The Later Mohists and Logic," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 31.3 (2010): 247-285, where Robins argues that the "Smaller Selection" should be read as a consecutive treatise.

This short, tightly rhymed section, occurring in the "Greater Selection" (*dà qǔ* 大取) of the text *Mòzǐ* 墨子, epitomizes an issue thus far overlooked in the textual material of the so-called Later Mohists.[91] Specifically, it goes beyond the usual concern of what we have come to associate with this intellectual community; in A. C. Graham's description, the Later Mohists developed "the most highly rationalized system that ancient China ever achieved."[92] However, this aurally patterned passage goes beyond logic, in that it justifies what we may call poeticity, including its own poetical features – centered on rhymes on *-ij-s/*-ijʔ/*-its (marked above) and *-eŋ) that a Mohist Master figure (*zǐ* 子) ought to recognize, especially regarding their role in the process of signification (or more literally, "pointing out").[93] Besides the issue of Mohist rhyming and poeticity, the passage above further illustrates an issue within the study of early Chinese textual material more broadly, consisting specifically of the sheer amount of undetected textual passages that are similarly "poetic."[94]

In order to address this issue, this chapter revolves around two focal points. Firstly, sections 1.2 and 1.3 describe a novel, computational approach that I developed as part of this dissertation

[91] The Later Mohists were active in the 4th and 3rd century BCE, but appear to have been obliterated as an organized movement around the time of the founding of the Qín 秦 empire (221 BCE). According to Angus Charles Graham, "the Mohists … were forced by the metaphysical crisis [of the 4th century] to rethink their doctrines from the foundations" (Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 22); for an overview of the intellectual crisis of the 4th century, compare, for example, Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 15-22. The Later Mohist effort to organize and refine the core of their doctrine on disputation resulted in a compact corpus of texts; for an overview of this corpus, see Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 23-24.

[92] Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 4. Graham further notes that the Later Mohist textual material does not emphasize the religious aspects of earlier Mohism, leading to his conclusion that the Mohists were "at once the most religious and the most logical of the ancient thinkers" (*ibid*).

[93] Note the uses of *zhǐ* 指 (literally 'finger,' 'to point out,' 'what is pointed out') in the "Canons" and "Explanations;" compare esp. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 286; 405-407; and 422, and Graham's explanation on the meanings of the term on pp. 457-460. Notably, the term is used in contrast to *jǔ* 舉, 'to refer.'

[94] Note that I use both the terms 'poeticity' and 'poetic' in a broad sense, without any genre connotations. I use these terms to describe a quality of discourse, marked through its focus on the way an utterance is expressed, especially through a pattern of syllables and recurrence of phonological material, for example through rhyme. Compare also footnote 87 for a more technical definition, and section 1.5.2 of this chapter for the underlying theoretical work.

in order to detect and analyze passages such as the one above, developed as part of this dissertation. This computational approach hence renders explicit certain implicit assumptions about early Chinese rhyming patterns and Old Chinese phonology. This section also discusses how this computational approach then treats supposedly rhyming sections as any other form of data: it can test their statistical significance in order to avoid the pitfalls of circular reasoning.

Secondly, sections 1.4 and 1.5 will take the issue of Later Mohist poeticity as a case study to highlight how insights gained from this computational approach can be interpreted, and how these insights relate to previous assumptions about the Later Mohists. This chapter also highlights the potential of revisiting seemingly hidden poetic features within transmitted early Chinese texts through the example of the textual material of the Later Mohists.[95]

### 1.2 Detecting Rhyme Patterns

The task of identifying rhymes and other poetic features of early Chinese texts is made difficult by two complications: the nature of the Chinese writing system and the lack of early Chinese material that clearly provides glyph pronunciations.[96] These two complications make the process of identifying poetic structures an ongoing process, which additionally requires insights of the related process of reconstructing Old Chinese (OC) phonology, the oldest attested stage of the Sinitic languages.

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[95] I emphasize "transmitted" here as the wealth of recently excavated (and otherwise surfaced) material offers a host of different methodological concerns that go beyond the limitations both of this paper and of the computational approach it proposes. Further work in the computational processing of such manuscripts and epigraphical may, however, allow for their future inclusion in such approaches; for a comparative perspective on the possibilities thereof, compare, as an example, Tobias Dencker, Pablo Klinkisch, Stefan M. Maul, and Björn Ommer, "Deep Learning of Cuneiform Sign Detection with Weak Supervision Using Transliteration Alignment," *PLOS ONE* 15.12 (2020): e243039. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0243039.

[96] For Middle Chinese, on the other hand, extant rhyme dictionaries (*yùnshū* 韻書) make this process of identification considerably easier. Specifically, rhyme dictionaries collate glyphs by tone and rime, and the most important rhyme dictionaries for Middle Chinese include the *Qièyùn* 切韻 (from 601 CE) and its later redaction, the *Guǎngyùn* 廣韻 (1008 CE).

Essentially, the process of identifying poetic features of a given text requires a re-application of historical phonological hypotheses onto said text. Any computational approach towards automating this search for poetic devices hence requires that both text and historical phonological hypotheses can be rendered as data.[97] The following section highlights the backgrounds of this datafication of early Chinese transmitted texts and of Old Chinese phonology in order to then exemplify the automation itself.

### 1.2.1 Background

Despite the promises of increased efficiency and of large-scale investigations,[98] a computational approach to textual analysis is only as good as the assumptions and hypotheses behind it. As such, a computational identification of rhymes and other recurrences of phonological material depends in large parts on what we associate with the used writing system.

In general, writing is best understood as a method to visually represent verbal communication, and this is also true for the case of early Chinese textual material. However, the early Chinese case contains the caveat of rather drastic changes, with the writing system transforming only over the

[97] I understand data broadly as a collection of values that convey information. More simply put, data represents something. A single datum hence does not have to be factual or correct. A datum can, however, be used as a variable in a subsequent process, for example a computational one.

[98] For an example in increased efficiency in regard to the textual analysis of early Chinese texts, compare Jeffrey R. Tharsen, "Chinese Euphonics: Phonetic Patterns, Phonorhetoric and Literary Artistry in Early Chinese Narrative Texts" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2015); for an exploration of large-scale investigations, compare Donald Sturgeon, "Unsupervised Identification of Text Reuse in Early Chinese Literature," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* (2017): 670–684. It should be noted that Tharsen demonstrates the utility of his *Digital Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, a website that reproduces reconstructions and rhyme categories of the most common systems in use. His work belongs to what we might call digital lexicography, utilizing database systems in order to offer assistance to actual philological analysis. Tharsen's *Digital EDOC* is retrievable at Jeffrey Tharsen, *Digital Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, accessed July 4, 2020, http://edoc.uchicago.edu. See Tharsen, "Chinese Euphonics," 93-96 for a description of his usage thereof. Tharsen's database does not, however, undertake the step towards a more comprehensive automatization of what we might call identification. Further compare Clement et al. 2013 for the potential of such computational approaches for aural patterns in modern English literature, further compare Tanya Clement, David Tcheng, Loretta Auvil, Boris Capitanu, and Megan Monroe, "Sounding for Meaning: Using Theories of Knowledge Representation to Analyze Aural Patterns in Texts," *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 7.1 (2013).

course of the Hàn dynasty into the standardized, relatively stable system as we know it to this day, shifting away from a comparatively frequent phonetic usage of characters.[99] In this sense, transmitted pre-imperial Chinese texts should be seen as the product of a later imposition of standards onto earlier modes of writing – excavated texts from the pre-imperial period hence provide challenges that are beyond the scope of this chapter.

Still, by considering writing to be a representation of verbal communication, the focus turns to the sonic modality encapsulated in writing.[100] The Chinese writing system captures this aspect only vaguely, which is why reconstructions of Old Chinese phonology are indispensable to approach the topic of poeticity in early Chinese texts. Despite certain limitations – undoubtedly, early texts contain traces of later editorial processes and textual interventions,[101] and actual historical pronunciation practices may have greatly diverged – reapplying the hypotheses of historical phonology onto the corpus of early textual material at scale is both useful and continues an established practice in Chinese philological endeavors.

**a) Previous Approaches**

The re-discovery of such patterns has been pioneered by proponents of "evidential learning" (*kǎozhèngxué* 考證學) from the Qīng 清 dynasty (1636–1912), including Duàn Yùcái 段玉裁

[99] For a general overview over the changes the Chinese writing system underwent around the late Warring States era, with a trend first towards desemanticization and increased phonetic usage, and the later gradual standardization during the Qin and Han dynasties, compare Imre Galambos, "The Chinese Writing System," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature (1000 BCE – 900 CE)*, ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), esp. 36.

[100] While a written text always represents an utterance that is to be read, either to an audience or to one's inner ear, I understand it as containing two separate semiotic modalities: the first stems from the underlying utterance that can be rendered into spoken language, and which I refer to as the sonic modality of writing: writing hence contains a distinct sequence of sounds, even if this sequence is accessible only in fragmentary form; the second of these is purely graphic, and particularly prominent in, say, calligraphy.

[101] Even the *Shījīng* 詩經 may not just reflects pre-imperial Old Chinese, but it appears that editorial work phonology of the imperial era has left its traces even in the rhyme data of this text, as argued by Baxter; see William Hubbard Baxter, "Zhou and Han Phonology in the *Shijing*," in *Studies in the Historical Phonology of Asian Languages*, ed. William G. Boltz and Michael C. Shapiro (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1991), 1-34.

(1735‑1815), Wáng Niànsūn 王念孫 (1744-1832), and in particular Jiāng Yǒugào 江有誥 (d. 1851). The basis for their approach was, in essence, similar to applying Old Chinese phonology to early texts, as it was based on assumptions regarding rhyme qualities deduced from other data, including rhyme dictionaries for Middle Chinese, rhyming practices in the *Shījīng*, and the phonophoric determinatives of Chinese characters, in particular regarding characters belonging to the same *xiéshēng* 諧聲 series. In his meticulous rhyme tables, written between 1814 and 1831, Jiāng Yǒugào noted rhymes not only present in decidedly "poetic" texts (such as the *Shījīng* 詩經 and the *Chǔcí* 楚辭), but also in texts traditionally classified as classics (*jīng* 經) and Master texts (*zǐ* 子).[102]

Building on the work of these Qīng scholars, rhyming patterns in "prose" texts were further observed by Bernhard Karlgren, writing especially about the *Dàodéjīng* 道德經 or *Lǎozǐ* 老子.[103] Such detection work on rhymes continues to the present day, in scholarship both in Chinese and in other languages.[104] All of these attempts rely extensively on the manual identification of recurring phonological features, thus drastically limiting the scope of each approach.

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[102] His annotations were posthumously incorporated into his *Jiāngshì yīnxué shíshū* 江氏音學十書 in 11 *juàn*. For a sketch of Jiāng's life and work, see William Hubbard Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), 169-171.

[103] Compare Bernhard Karlgren, *The Poetical Parts in Lao-tsï* (Göteborg: Elanders boktryckeri aktiebolag, 1932). Note that Karlgren was also the first to propose historical linguistic reconstructions of Middle Chinese and Old Chinese phonology.

[104] The best study to date is Lóng Yǔchún 龍宇純, "Xiān Qín sǎnwén zhōng de yùnwén" 先秦散文中的韻文. *Chóngjī xuébào* 崇基學報 2.2 (1962): 137-169, and 3.1 (1963): 55-87; compare also Tán Jiājiàn 譚家建, "Xiān Qín yùnwén chūtàn" 先秦韻文初探, *Wénxué yíchǎn* 文學遺產 1 (1995): 12–19. As examples, for a study of rhyme in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋, compare also Hé Kēgēn 何科根, *'Lǚ shì chūnqiū' yùnyǔ yánjiū*《呂氏春秋》韻語研究 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1996); for rhyme in the text *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, compare David McCraw, *Stratifying Zhuangzi: Rhyme and Other Quantitative Evidence* (Taipei: Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica, 2010); for the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳, compare also David Schaberg, "Command and the Content of Tradition," in *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture*, ed. Christopher Lupke, 23-48 (Honolulu: University of Hawaiì Press, 2005); and Tharsen "Chinese Euphonics;" for the *Zhànguócè* 戰國策, with links to *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子, compare Hans Stumpfeldt, "Von der Poesie des Geschichtsunterrichts: Über eine Form

In other words, a fully computational approach to detecting rhymes and other phonological patterns in early Chinese texts, based on hypotheses concerning Old Chinese, has not yet been implemented. Jeffrey Tharsen's "phonorhetorical" approach, which describes the continuity inherent in aural patterning from Western Zhou bronzes to transmitted literature such as chapters of the *Shàngshū* 尚書 and speeches in *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳, digitizes historical phonological data.[105] However, Tharsen's analysis remains grounded in a manual identification of recurring phonological material, and his computational approach belongs to the domain of digital lexicography. Importantly, the step towards a full automation of the process of *identifying recurrence* has not been undertaken thus far.

**b) On Old Chinese Phonology**

An automation of the process of identifying poetical features in early Chinese texts requires a grapheme-to-phoneme transduction pipeline for Old Chinese that provides historical phonological data for Chinese glyphs.[106] Such a pipeline therefore requires a system for indicating historical phonological data, and could hence either rest on the insights of Qīng scholars, who based their system of annotations on that of the medieval rhyme dictionaries,[107] or on those of their successors who utilized Western principles of historical linguistics, and who used alphabetic notations for indicating points of articulation.

altchinesischer Spruchdichtung," *Oriens Extremus* 47 (2008): 81-96; for the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子, D.C. Lau 劉殿爵, *"Huáinánzǐ" yùndú jí jiàokān*《淮南子》韻讀及校勘 (Hong Kong: Zhōngwén dàxué chūbǎnshè 中文大學出版社, 2013).

[105] See Tharsen, "Chinese Euphonics."

[106] Indexing glyphs by historical phonological data is inherently similar to phonetic algorithms in, say, the English language, such as Soundex and Metaphone (or subsequent generations of the latter algorithm).

[107] In other words, it would technically be feasible to recreate the assumptions of Qīng scholars in their own notational system; it would, however, be a rather cumbersome way to automate this. Additionally, given the better understanding of rhyming patterns in early texts we have now, such an automation would not be particularly useful.

The approach proposed here is based on the system of William Baxter and Laurent Sagart, and a dataset they produced of some 5,000 reconstructions of individual glyphs shared in open access.[108] This system, proposed in 2014, represents the latest hypotheses regarding Old Chinese phonology and syllable structure and is derived from a variety of sources, including Middle Chinese textual material, modern dialect data, early texts themselves, and borrowings from and by neighboring languages.[109] Compared to earlier approaches, the crucial advantage of the reconstruction of Baxter and Sagart consists in its usage of a model of derivational morphology of Old Chinese,[110] and therefore in consistent differentiation of distinct parts of the Old Chinese syllable structure, dominated by the root and optional affixational material (compare figure 1).

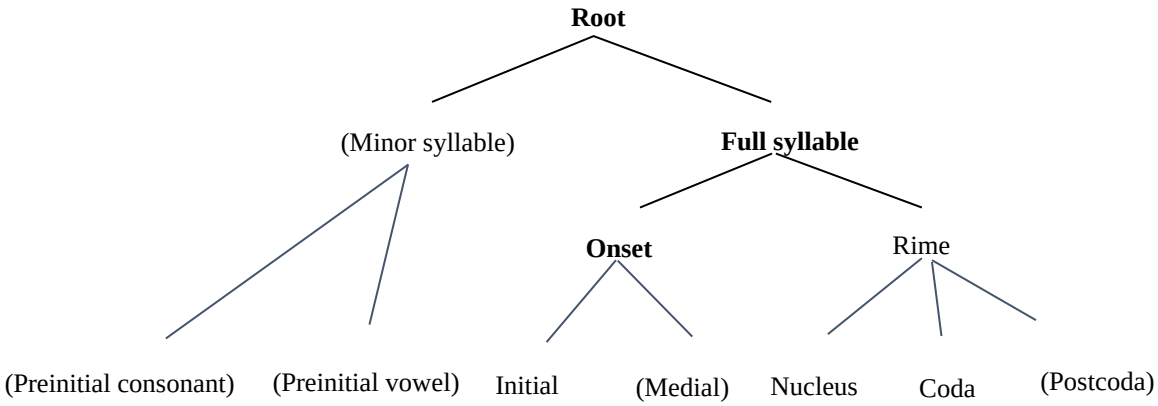



FIGURE 1 *Structure of OC roots according to Baxter and Sagart 2014: 53. Optional material provided in parentheses.*

Baxter and Sagart hence provide a highly consistent rendering of phonological data, in which the syllable structure of the reconstructed syllable is evident. To provide an example of the consistent separation of syllable segments of Old Chinese, compare how the syllables of the term

[108] The data used in the following stems from William Hubbard Baxter and Laurent Sagart, "Baxter-Sagart Old Chinese reconstruction, version 1.1 (20 September 2014); order: by Mandarin and Middle Chinese," *College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, University of Michigan*, modified September 20, 2014; last accessed July 03, 2023, https://ocbaxtersagart.lsait.lsa.umich.edu/BaxterSagartOCbyMandarinMC2014-09-20.pdf. The underlying reasons of the reconstructions, compare, in general, Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese*.

[109] For more information, compare Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese*, 9-41.

[110] For the underlying reasoning, see Laurent Sagart, *The Roots of Old Chinese* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999).

'to point' (*zhǐ* 指 OC *mə.kijʔ), occurring in the passage at the beginning of this chapter, is structured in the Baxter-Sagart system (compare figure 2):

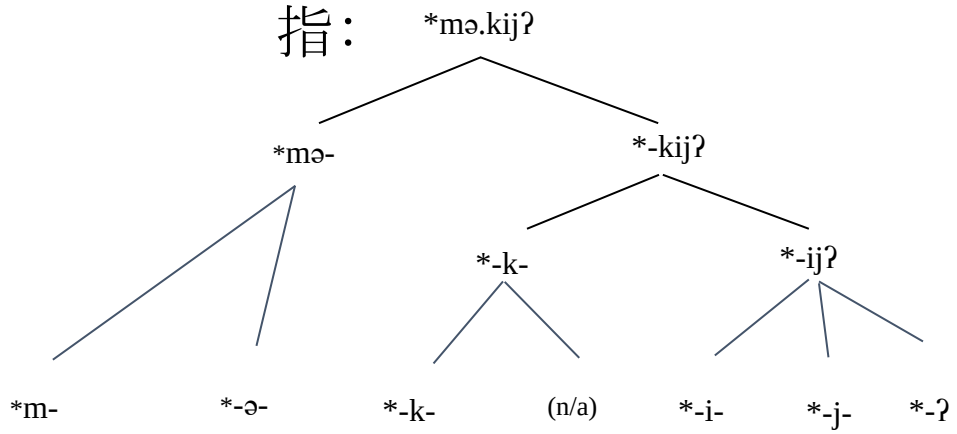



FIGURE 2 *Syllable structure of the term 'to point'* (*zhǐ* 指 *mə.kijʔ) *according to the system of Baxter and Sagart.*

Importantly, this structure of the Baxter-Sagart system of Old Chinese allows for a fully machine-readable rendering of the reconstructed phonological material of root and affixes. This separation of phonological material (in particular of pre-initial and initial material) allows for meaningfully testing for possible instances of alliteration, beyond the more obvious candidates of patterning of rhyming and consonance, which build on the positions of rime and the main vowel (nucleus).[111] It should furthermore be noted that the Baxter-Sagart system proposes hypotheses that ought to be tested against data: the computational, iterative process described below can provide exactly this sort of test.

### 1.2.2 Towards an Automated Retrieval of Early Chinese Rhyme Patterns

The following section consists of a technical documentation of the proposed computational workflow utilized in this dissertation to process early Chinese texts in conjunction with Old

[111] Note that throughout this dissertation, I will distinguish between "rime" as the syllable segment consisting of nucleus and coda, and "rhyme" as the repetition of similar phonological material in the final stressed syllables. I employ this convention to highlight the different semantics of the terms in context.

Chinese phonological data, in order to retrieve rhyme patterns from early texts.[112] Essentially a form of text mining, this automated retrieval of patterns can be structured in five distinct algorithmic pipelines:

*a)* a conversion of Old Chinese phonological reconstructions into machine-readable data;

*b)* a grapheme-to-phoneme transduction of early Chinese text based on step *a)*;

*c)* definitions of rhyme groups, according to which early Chinese texts are expected to rhyme;

*d)* a generalization of rhyming as a Regular Expression, in which certain phonemes recur;

*e)* and of scaling up, through combining steps *b), c), d)* in iterative processes.

The following documentation serves as both an overview of the decisions undertaken to produce such a workflow, and as a general introduction to the resulting algorithmic tool implemented for this dissertation.

**a) Converting OCNR into Machine-Readable Data**

For these heuristic purposes, the Baxter-Sagart data described above can be rendered into a dataset that is machine-readable, which allows for subsequent usage in algorithms. For the purposes of this dissertation and related algorithms, I have structured this data in a common open standard file format:[113] it contains the glyphs listed in the dataset mentioned above and additional reconstructions of frequent glyphs in early Chinese texts that I undertook according to the system of Baxter and Sagart, followed by their segmented phonological material.[114]

[112] The proposed workflow could also be adapted to other time periods of the Sinitic language family, for as long as the underlying writing system is Chinese. Such a switch to different time periods or dialect material would accentuate certain issues highlighted below, however.

[113] Specifically, the dataset is structured in the JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) file format.

[114] The respective file ("sound_table_v2.json") is available in the following GitHub repository: Gian Duri Rominger, Nick Budak, and John O'Leary, "dphon," *GitHub repository*, last modified January 26, 2021, https://github.com/direct-phonology/dphon/tree/main/dphon/data. This file contains an additional 440 reconstructions not contained in the dataset of Baxter and Sagart. Note that I created this file as part of a concurrent

Compare the reconstructions of the terms ‘to examine’ (*chá* 察, OC *[tsʰ]ˁret), ‘names’ (*míng* 名, OC *C.meŋ), and ‘to point’ (*zhǐ* 指 OC *mə.kijʔ) to their corresponding segmented data in this format:


```
"察": [["", "", "", "tsʰ", "ˁ", "r", "e", "t", "", "", "",
"B&SOC2015-10-13", ""]]

"名": [["C", "", "", "m", "", "", "e", "ŋ", "", "", "", "B&SOC2015-
10-13", ""]]

"指": [["mə", "", "", "k", "", "", "i", "j", "ʔ", "", "",
"B&SOC2015-10-13", ""]]
```


Crucially, this format separates most segments of Old Chinese syllables largely according to the reconstruction of Baxter and Sagart.[115] This separation of syllable segments is useful for subsequent workflows in particular as the increased complexity of the reconstruction may otherwise pose a hindrance to automation. To elaborate on the structure of this dataset, it essentially forms a dictionary, in which a given glyph forms the key to the dictionary, and the value is a list of lists. This is necessary because a given glyph may have more than one reading, such as the glyph *zhì* 質, which can stand for either ‘hostage; gift’ (*[t]<r>ip-s > MC trijH) or ‘substance’ (*t-lit > MC tsyit), highlighted by the following entry:

larger project entitled *DIRECT (Digital Intertextual Resonance in Early Chinese)* to detect instances of text reuse within early Chinese texts: in order to do so, this project similarly performs a grapheme-to-phoneme conversion, but subsequently measures similarity of the phonological material utilized in separate strings of text. For this project, see Martin Kern, Gian Duri Rominger, John O’Leary, and Nicholas Budak, “Reading Words, Not Graphs in Ancient Chinese Texts: New Perspectives from Digital Humanities,” paper presented at the Workshop on Classical Chinese Philosophical Texts (Philadelphia, October 5), 2019. Lastly, note the collaborative nature of *DIRECT*: Nick Budak has hence helped me in structuring this dataset. Nonetheless, I bear sole responsibility for the content of this dataset, as well as for any potential errors and mistakes it may contain.

[115] One point of divergence is, however, that this file does not separate preinitial vowel from preinitial consonants, instead treating these features as a single syllable segment; see the following footnote. Additionally, this format neglects certain markers in the system of Baxter and Sagart, especially square brackets (“[]”), which indicate in their system that there was an element present in this or these position(s), but that the available evidence is not sufficient to determine what kind of element it precisely was. Similarly, markers for medials (“<>” and “( )”) are also not included. This allows the file to be read by a machine, but it is *not* a correct representation of the reconstruction.

```
"質": [["", "", "", "t", "", "r", "i", "p", "", "s", "",
"B&SOC2015-10-13", ""], ["t", "", "", "l", "", "", "i", "t", "",
"", "", "B&SOC2015-10-13", ""]]
```

In this entry, the glyph *zhì* 質 – as a string – forms the key that has a value consisting of a list of two readings: each reading consists of a list of the syllable segments of that reading.[116]

By viewing glyphs as iterable objects, such machine-readable entries such (somewhat simplified) Old Chinese phonological reconstructions allow for a joint processing within common programming languages.[117] In particular, the dictionary format used in this dataset simplifies both a transformation of glyph to phonological data and a subsequent alignment of syllable segments across different glyphs. Such an alignment makes a comparison of specific elements of Old Chinese syllables straightforward, thus allowing, for example, an effortless comparison of rimes (consisting of nucleus, coda, and postcoda) of different glyphs.

**b) Old Chinese Grapheme-to-Phoneme Transduction**

The file described above that contains such segmented readings is subsequently used in a process reminiscent of grapheme-to-phoneme (G2P) transductions, which allows for a string of glyphs to be either fully substituted or to be supplemented by the Old Chinese reconstruction.[118]

---

[116] Each syllable segment is also encoded as a string. The syllable segments in the mentioned lists are, specifically: 1) preinitial consonant (and vowel); 2) if available, a second preinitial consonant; 3) marks where Baxter and Sagart reconstruct voiceless resonants in the following initial position (*m̥-; *n̥-; *l̥-; * r̥-) (these characters are not supported in the chosen format; compare their *Old* Chinese, 111-116); 4) initial; 5) pharyngealization (A/B-type distinction); 6) medial (*-r-); 7) nucleus; 8) coda; 9) postcoda *-ʔ; 10) postcoda *-s; 11) an empty entry, to demarcate the actual entry from the following; 12) source (either the dataset by Baxter-Sagart, marked as "B&SOC2015-10-13", or annotations by myself).

[117] For the purposes of this chapter, I relied on Python 3.8.3; for documentation thereof, compare Python Software Foundation, *Python Language Reference*, version 3.8.3, available at http://www.python.org. Note, again, that the segmented notation system used is a simplification and cannot be considered a proper reconstruction by itself, as elaborated on in footnote 115. Again, it is used here as a mere heuristic device to provide insights into aural text-structuring in the texts under investigation, and to test hypotheses on large-scale corpora of text.

[118] As a sidenote, I am currently developing the code for this within a local Jupyter Notebook; the code will be shared publicly at a later stage on GitHub. For the purposes of this chapter, I would provide readers and examiners on request with a file containing all code discussed here.

Such a conversion renders a given input text as a linear string that includes phonological material. In the following, glyphs are supplemented by phonological material in order to facilitate both human- and machine-readability. As an example output, compare the introductory passage from the "Greater Selection" from the text *Mòzǐ*:

| | |
|---|---|
| 察 Zet00 次 nij0s | [The Master] examines sequences |
| 由 lu000 比 pij?0 | by means of [their] juxtaposition; |
| 因?in00 至 tit0s | relying on this, he reaches |
| 優?u000 指 kij?0 | a superior signifying. |
| 復 puk0s 次 nij0s | Retracing the sequence |
| 察 Zet00 聲 leŋ00 | and examining sounds, |
| 端 tor00 名 meŋ00 | [he] takes names as a starting point; |
| 因?in00 請 Zeŋ00 | ensuing from this, dispositions |
| 復 puk0s 正 teŋ00 | are again rectified. |

It should be noted that this is neither a transcription nor a reconstruction per se, but rather a machine-readable rendering of specific syllable segments. Such a rendering can serve, in subsequent algorithmic steps, as a heuristic to test hypotheses and generate insights. As such, the input text, consisting only of 18 glyphs, is supplemented by phonological material representing initial, nucleus, coda, and postcoda (as two positions).[119] All glyphs have been stripped of prefixes, infixes, and distinctions between A- and B-type syllables. 'Empty' syllable segments – optional material that syllables may or may not contain – are further indicated through a "0." Most importantly, such a rendering results in a consistent amount of code points per glyph: each glyph

[119] See page 48, footnote 116 on the dataset using a separation of postcoda *-ʔ from postcoda *-s.

is followed by 5 letters or zeroes representing either the presence of a given phoneme, or a complete absence altogether.

More complex elements in the reconstruction of Baxter and Sagart have been simplified to allow for segments to be expressed as single code points, for example initial *[tsʰ]-, occurring in 'to examine' (*chá* 察, OC *[tsʰ]ˁret), here expressed through a mere "Z." This, again, keeps the amount of code points per glyph consistent.[120]

There are currently certain caveats in this process of transforming text, which represent editorial decisions to facilitate a working prototype.[121] The most important caveat in the current state of the tool is that it does *not* take polyphone glyphs properly into account. In other words, Chinese glyphs with more than one reconstruction provided in the dataset described above – for example the glyph *zhì* 質 – will not be represented properly, as the current state of the grapheme-to-phoneme transduction pipeline does not disambiguate between multiple readings. Instead, the first reading will be selected and subsequently represented. This is, of course, faulty, but there is currently no easy technical solution for this. However, unlike Middle Chinese and modern varieties of Chinese, a large portion of phonological differences for a glyph with multiple readings are found

[120] To be clear, this simplification is a mere heuristic to facilitate machine-readability of the reconstruction of Baxter and Sagart. The specific selection of simplified symbols represents an attempt to allow additionally for human-readability, but it is important to note that this selection is rather arbitrary. The full transformation key used to simplify these more complex phonemes is as follows:

Initials:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "pʰ": "P" | "ʔʷ": "ɔ" | "ŋʷ": "ŋ" |
| "bʰ": "B" | "qʰ": "Q" | "kʰ": "K" |
| "dz": "c" | "qʷ": "ℚ" | "kʷ": "ɣ" |
| "ts": "z" | "qʷʰ": "ɋ" | "kʷʰ": "𝓚" |
| "tsʰ": "Z" | "gʷ": "G" | |
| "tʰ": "T" | "ɢʷ": "Q" | |

Codas:

"wk": "ƙ"

[121] Additionally, it should be noted that the workflow described in the following represents a work-in-progress report, with elements inevitably changing in later revisions. I will note where I expect the most significant changes to occur.

in affixational material, especially in Old Chinese reconstructions in the system of Baxter and Sagart. Those differences hence do not amount to considerable differences for the approach proposed here. Others do, however, and future work is required to solve these shortcomings.[122]

Within the coding language Python,[123] the specific algorithm to produce such an output requires a few steps in preparation. Most importantly, the input text (`InText`) and the dataset of syllable segments per glyph (`SoundTable`) need to be defined.

```
InText = "CHANT_texts/CHANT_Mòzǐ.txt"
SoundTable = "data/sound_table_v2.json"
```

By defining these two files – the input text here representing the version of the text *Mòzǐ* from the Chinese University of Hong Kong's CHANT database[124] – they can subsequently be called upon in the algorithm described in more detail below. Given the different file formats of `InText` and `SoundTable`, these files need to be opened as follows, and their contents (`contents` and `reconstruction`) defined as follows:

```
with open(SoundTable, 'r') as file:
    reconstruction = json.loads(file.read())
with open(InText) as text_file:
```

[122] Compare readings where differences are found in the main syllable, for example for the glyph *zhì* 質(*[t]<r>ip-s vs. *t-lit). Those differences remain significant. Additionally, the inclusion of postcodas *-ʔ and *-s in the grapheme-to-phoneme transduction described above similarly requires a disambiguation pipeline.

In order to overcome these shortcomings, I am currently working with Nick Budak from Stanford University to create a Language Model for Old Chinese phonology, using Natural Language Processing (NLP) methods, to disambiguate glyphs with multiple historical readings. The first generation of our model had an F-score – the mean between precision and recall score – of approximately 0.6, which means that it was correct in 60% of cases. Subsequent iterations and improvements pushed the F-score to as high as 0.84. Further work aims at producing acceptable rates for the underlying statistical prediction.

[123] See page 11, footnote 24 for specific documentation.

[124] See Research Center for Chinese Ancient Texts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, "CHANT," accessed July 4, 2023, http://www.chant.org. This material is retrieved from the Site which was developed by the D. C. Lau Research Centre for Chinese Ancient Texts, the Institute of Chinese Studies, a division of The Chinese University of Hong Kong ("CUHK") in whom all proprietary rights reside. The Site is protected by copyright laws and international copyright treaties, as well as other intellectual property laws and treaties. No part of the Site shall be reproduced or adapted without prior written permission approved by CUHK.

```
contents = text_file.read()
```

However, such input text files usually contain, punctuation marks and other glyphs that do not represent Chinese characters. For this reason, such a file requires further processing, which in turn necessitates a definition of what glyphs represent punctuation marks:

```
punctuation = ", ","。","？","：","；","！"
speech_marker = "「","」","『","』","、", "《", "》"
```

Specifically, these two expression lists distinguish two categories of glyphs (`punctuation` and `speech_marker`). This distinction will be used in the subsequent step, which converts the content of the input text (`contents`) into an output file (`new_text`), which juxtaposes phonological material with individual glyphs, like in the example from the "Greater Selection."

```
OutText = []

for glyph in contents:
    if glyph in reconstruction:
        try:
            OutText.append("".join([glyph,
            glyph[character][0][3],     glyph[character][0][6],
            glyph[character][0][7]           or           "0",
            glyph[character][0][8]           or           "0",
            glyph[character][0][9] or "0"]))
        except IndexError:
            print(glyph, reconstruction[character][0])
    elif glyph in punctuation:
        OutText.append("\n")
    elif glyph in speech_marker:
        pass
    else:
        OutText.append(glyph)

new_text = " ".join(OutText)

with open('Output_transcription.txt', 'w') as f:
    f.write(OutText)[125]
```

[125] This algorithm was written with the help of Nicholas Budak on August 31, 2021. Nonetheless, I bear sole responsibility for any flaws in the underlying logic.

The algorithm above performs the described process akin to grapheme-to-phoneme transductions: it provides phonological material for each glyph in the entire input file, as long as the glyph is listed in the phonological dataset introduced in the previous section.[126] Each glyph belonging to the category of punctuation marks (`punctuation`) leads to a new line.[127] The algorithm then saves the resulting pseudo-transcription (`OutText`). In the example above, the algorithm would provide such a string for the *entire* text of the *Mòzǐ*, which can then be used in subsequent pipelines.

**c) Defining Rhyme Groups**

Before proceeding with the section of the algorithm that actually performs the rhyme detection itself, it is necessary to define the parameters of rhyming, to account for common cross- and half-rhymes. The literal strings produced above, based on the reconstructions of Baxter and Sagart, at times may be too stringent, as they are narrower than the traditional *Shījīng* rhyme categories.[128] Early Chinese rhyming practices used at times much looser groupings, including half-rhymes and cross-rhymes, and it is hence necessary to encode these different understandings of rhyming.

As an example, Baxter and Sagart distinguish between rhyme categories *-in and *-iŋ. However, in the vast majority of transmitted early Chinese texts, these two rhyme categories ought to be grouped together, as represented by the traditional rhyme category *zhēn* 真: the two categories

[126] If the glyph is listed in that dataset, the glyph is supplemented by phonological material representing initial, nucleus, and either a coda or a literal "0," as well as either a postcoda *-ʔ or a literal "0", and either a postcoda *-s or a literal "0." If the glyph is not in the dataset, only the glyph will be provided.

[127] Specifically, punctuation is here used as a way to structure text. Note that this has implications for how to handle rhyme detection: given that extant punctuation in a text such as the *Mòzǐ* may represent a much later imposition (akin to editorial interventions) to the actual textual material, the subsequent algorithm is tied to the underlying interpretive framework. This step could easily be omitted, and the subsequent algorithm could go by stricter metrical considerations (in order to, say, detect tetrasyllabic rhyming patterns).

The second category, including markers of direct speech (`speech_marker`), will be dropped.

[128] For the rhyme categories according to Baxter and Sagart, see Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese*, 49.

likely merged before large early Chinese textual corpora emerged. In order to utilize the literal strings from the previous step for later rhyming practices, it is hence necessary to define this merged rhyme category, first by defining each individual rhyme category:

```
rimes_iŋ = "iŋ"
rimes_in = "in"
```

Such cross-rhyming can then be encoded through the following function:

```
def is_rhgroup(rhgroup_list):
    rhyminglist = ""
    index = 0
    while(index < len(rhgroup_list)-1):
        rhyminglist += rhgroup_list[index] + "|"
        index = index + 1
    else:
        rhyminglist += rhgroup_list[index]
    return rhyminglist
```

This function can be used by providing a list of the cross-rhymes of elements that are similar. This structure also allows the two elements to be kept separate in subsequent steps. This is important for instances of cross-rhyming, e.g. for a cross-rhyme between rhyme categories *yáng* 陽 (*-aŋ) *dōng* 東 (*-oŋ), as some early Chinese texts retain the distinction.[129] For the example of the rhyme category *zhēn* 真, the function above can be used as follows:

```
rhgroup_真 = is_rhgroup([rime_in, rime_iŋ])
```

The rhyme group in question (rhgroup_真) can, in subsequent pipelines, be used to check for *either* string in the pseudo-transcription. Such groupings enable searches according to rules of traditional rhyme categories, of cross-rhyming, or even of conflations between rhymes *-ik and *-it(-s) (traditional rhyme category *zhì* 質) *and* rhymes *-iʔ and *-ijʔ (traditional rhyme category *zhī*

[129] The cross-rhyme between rhyme categories *yáng* and *dōng* is generally interpreted temporally and partially regionally, as the cross-rhyme occurs in texts allegedly dating from the middle of the 3rd century BCE and later, especially ones associated with the region of Chǔ 楚. For an application of this specific cross rhyme, compare William H. Baxter, "Situating the Language of the *Lao-tzu*: The Probable Date of the *Tao-te-ching*," in *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, ed. Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998): 247-248.

脂, but departing tone) *and* *-ij-s (traditional rhyme category *zhī* 脂, but rising tone). This latter grouping can also be seen in the passage from the "Greater Selection" of the *Mòzǐ*.

**d) Rhymes as Regular Expressions**

The simplified rendering from section b) above, in combination with the definition of rhyme groups from section c) above, allows for an automated detection of rhyme patterns, by expressing rhyming patterns as Regular Expressions. A regular expression (regex) is a sequence of glyphs that specifies a match pattern in a string. Expressed differently, Regular Expressions searches rely on patterns to match a given glyph combination within a string.

To provide an example, we could conduct a search for recurrences of various characters featuring the Old Chinese rhyme *-eŋ, expressing the traditional rhyme group *gēng* 耕, with a distance of two Chinese characters. Such a search would yield the latter half of the example from the "Greater Selection," and other instances where this pattern occurs, simply due to the regularity by which certain phonological material recurs (compare figure 3).

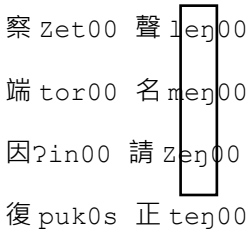



FIGURE 3 *Recurrence of *-eŋ rhymes in selected passage*

By expressing a rhyming pattern as a Regular Expression, it can become part of an algorithm. A single recurrence in the above example could be expressed as follows:

```
example_regex = r".*eŋ..\s\n?.{6}\s..eŋ.*"
```

The Regular Expression above (`example_regex`) is here defined as a string of glyphs marked by "`eŋ`" (representing the OC rhyme *-eŋ of the *gēng* rhyme group), followed by any two characters, an empty space, one or zero new lines, any six characters, another empty space, any two characters, and finally another "`eŋ`". This syntax could be extended to include more complicated patterns, while also explicitly excluding specific characters. Lengths between a recurrence can additionally be defined as variable, to allow, for example, to match any end rhyme occurring within the next few lines.

**e) Looping through Lists of Rhymes**

Lastly, by defining lists of rhyme categories, we can further iterate over the whole sequence of these lists, allowing the same line of code to be executed repeatedly, simply with a changing variable. We could hence exchange the "`eŋ`" string in the Regular Expression listed above through a variable "`rime`" and we could subsequently find *all* instances of rhyming according to this pattern, as long as we defined a list "`rime`" adequately as consisting of a list of strings (but then again, the above example would yield *any* recurrence of rimes with the defined distance of code points that equals two Chinese characters with their pseudo-transcription). By viewing the underlying basic elements of language as bits of data, a text becomes analyzable at a completely different scale for the phenomenon of recurrences of sound.

It is through this flexibility that Regular Expression searches can be most fruitfully applied to early Chinese texts. Through the inherently iterative process of an algorithm, we can thus easily test out how certain patterns recur throughout large corpora of texts. For example, we could iterate over texts with the following function that defines *a)* that the rhyme scheme should occur either at

the *end* of a line, or before certain Chinese characters occurring at the end of a line;[130] *b)* that rhyming patterns for certain frequent Chinese characters should be ignored; *c)* that the rhyme scheme should occur in the next or the following line; and *d)* that the overall recurrence should occur one to six times.

```
def find_endrhyme(rhyme_scheme, text):
    s  =  re.compile("((.*([^也矣者哉乎焉之曰而不以於其是必非為故雖如
    兮]).")
    + "(" + rhyme_scheme + ")"
    +  "(\s(也 laj?0)|(矣 qə0?0)|(者 ta0?0)|(哉 zə000)|(哉 zə000\s 乎
    ɢa000)|(乎 ɢa000)|(焉?an00)|(者 ta0?0\s 也 laj?0)|(者 ta0?0\s 哉
    zə000)|(之 tə000\s 者 ta0?0)|(之 tə000\s 者 ta0?0\s 也 laj?0)|(之
    tə000)|(曰 Qat00)|(兮 ge000)?)\s\n)(((.*\s\n){0,1})(.*([^也矣
    者哉乎焉之曰而不以於其是必非為故雖如兮]).")
    + "(" + rhyme_scheme + ")"
    +  "(\s(也 laj?0)|(矣 qə0?0)|(者 ta0?0)|(哉 zə000)|(哉 zə000\s 乎
    ɢa000)|(乎 ɢa000)|(焉?an00)|(者 ta0?0\s 也 laj?0)|(者 ta0?0\s 哉
    zə000)|(之 tə000\s 者 ta0?0)|(之 tə000\s 者 ta0?0\s 也 laj?0)|(之
    tə000)|(曰 Qat00)|(兮 ge000)?)\s\n){1,5}){1,5}")
    matches = s.findall(text)
return matches
```

Such a general and loose definition of early Chinese end-of-line rhyming practices can help in overcoming certain overdetermined notions of rhyming. For example, definition *a)* above allows for particles to occur in a line *after* supposed rhyming glyphs, and targets rhyme in supposed prose texts, which often feature such particles. At the same time, this rule – which does not define lengths of lines – will result in high numbers of false positives.

Nonetheless, the above example highlights how such Regular Expressions can express highly complicated patterns with changing variables, as long as a given pattern can be expressed explicitly. For early Chinese texts, the above pattern performs well, but it should be noted that it hinges upon the assumption that new lines (which are based on punctuation marks) are correct. The explicit

[130] Note that this algorithm does not define the length of the lines in question. I am still experimenting with ways to define rhyming lines to form contain either the same or a similar number of glyphs, which would further refine this algorithm (potentially by calling the length of a backreference).

nature of such Regular Expressions furthermore allows for questioning assumptions like these, as every decision in an automated rhyme search *must* be encoded, and hence made explicit.

By questioning assumptions like the validity of punctuation marks, we can not only search for patterns beyond traditionally set punctuation marks, but such an inquiry also allows us to search beyond the typical end-of-line position within clearly identifiable verse of a defined meter. Such assumptions may, in the end, not be applicable to the textual material under investigation.[131]

### 1.3 Analyzing Data

The process described above of an automated retrieval of potential rhyme patterns in early Chinese texts inherently contains interpretive elements. These elements in turn inevitably influence the outcome of the retrieval process. Nonetheless, the generated data are invaluable in testing and analyzing both previous hypotheses regarding presence and absence of poetic structures, and in testing these interpretive elements in the retrieval process itself.

Moving from retrieval to analysis, it is hence important to reflect on the process of turning information into knowledge through different forms of analysis. Analysis here is best understood broadly, and approached in the following by means of comparison and quantification, verification, and interpretive description, revolving around the following key questions:

*1) How can we quantify the results of this computational approach, and does it perform compared to previous approaches?*

*3) How can we verify the data of this approach? What counts as evidence?*

*4) How can we interpret verifiable data, and describe larger processes in early Chinese texts?*

[131] Most existing approaches are limited to this assumption of phrase-final verse; one major exception to this trend is Behr's study on sound-based text-structuring devices, in Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices."

### 1.3.1 Quantifying and Comparing Data

Quantifying the results of a computational search for end rhyme – in the following defined in the function from 1.2.2 *e)* above (`find_endrhyme`), with variable line length – can help to understand the implications of the overall approach. Given that the automated retrieval was inherently rooted in a comparison to previous manual identifications of rhyme patterns, any initial evaluation of the process should first return to these previous approaches.

In short, this computational search for end rhyme yields numbers that exceed those of previous attempts significantly. In this regard, table 1 highlights this difference, as the computationally detected numbers of sections featuring end rhyme in five textual collections from the late Warring States period are juxtaposed to the total number detected by Lóng Yǔchún,[132]

| Text | Approx. length (in *zì* 字) | Rhyming sections (Lóng 1962-3) | Computationally detected rhyming sections |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Mòzǐ* 墨子 | 97,000 | 44 | 1,707 |
| *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 | 83,000 | 216 | 1,750 |
| *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 | 94,000 | 149 | 1,826 |
| *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子 | 130,000 | 120 | 2,509 |
| *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 | 120,000 | 239 | 2,498 |

TABLE 1 *Comparison between manual & computational end rhyme detection in five textual collections.*

[132] See Lóng, "Xiān Qín sǎnwén zhōng de yùnwén;" compare, however, also Tán, "Xiān Qín yùnwén chūtàn," and furthermore Hé, *'Lǚ shì chūnqiū' yùnyǔ yánjiū*, for a study of rhyme in *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* (detecting 351 rhyming segments), and McCraw, *Stratifying Zhuangzi*, 59-85 on rhymes in *Zhuāngzǐ* (identifying 605).

A direct comparison between these numbers is, however, misleading. Most importantly, the generalized (and rather vague) definition of rhyming in the automated detection process proposed above yields relatively high numbers of false positives, while at the same time decreasing the number of false negatives.[133] Generally, however, approximately 30-45% of these computationally detected matches are false positives, and such "rhyme data" hence need to be cleaned.[134] Thus, while these numbers and the underlying textual passages still require careful manual examination and depend largely on our understanding of end rhyme,[135] the automated detection process described above nonetheless represents the most comprehensive way to extract pertinent passages. In other words, the numbers above are brought up here only to emphasize the *potential* of this approach.[136]

This comparison also emphasizes the rather fluid boundary between what we might call different genres, with "poetry" on one side, and early argumentative "prose" on the other. If the above numbers indicate anything, it is that "prose" also contains large swaths of end rhyme, even if occurring at a lower frequency than we would expect for works of poetry. Then again, the focus undertaken here on direct verse may in turn again be influenced by this very dichotomy of prose

[133] Note, additionally, that the rhyming passages detected by Lóng Yǔchún at times are longer and can include multiple pairings of different rhymes.

[134] A hindrance in doing so consists, however, in the need to find a consistent, adequate measure for identifying rhyme, in order to avoid an arbitrary verification of this sort of data. Before starting to clean this data, it would be best to revise the initial algorithm, and include the logic mentioned in footnote 130.

[135] The mechanical listing of every instance of the same sequence of phonological material at the end of lines according to the four simple rules set forth in 1.2.2 *e)* may thus not represent the most ideal way of detecting such devices.

[136] Nonetheless, these numbers also highlight the applicability of the automated approach: even in a worst-case scenario, in which we assume that 50% of computationally detected matches are false positives, and Lóng's numbers each capture sections featuring rhyming according to three different rhyme groups (which would be listed separately in the computationally detected numbers), the automated detection tool detects by average approx. 301% as many sections as Lóng, meaning that it detects about 3 times as many rhyming sections that ought to be classified as true positives (by individual text, the numbers are as follows: *Mòzǐ*: 646%; *Zhuāngzǐ*: 135%, *Xúnzǐ*: 204%; *Hánfēizǐ*: 348%; *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*: 174%).

and poetry, and a broader detection of aurally effective passages may well render a different result, wherein certain poetic devices occur only in specific textual collections and not others.[137]

Nonetheless, it is safe to say that texts like the *Dàodéjīng, Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, and parts of *Xúnzǐ* 荀子, *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子¸ and *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋, all generally regarded as expository prose, appear to be full of poetic features.[138] Still, the Chinese literary tradition and scholarship more broadly over the last two thousand years remains largely silent about many of these recurrences of sounds, which leads to general questions about how to verify that the results of the computational pipelines described above are not arbitrary and random occurrences.

### 1.3.2 Verifying Data in an Iterative Process

The above section on quantifying and comparing data already featured a discussion about the difficulties of verifying data, specifically in acknowledging that computationally detected "rhymes" inevitably contain a certain number of false positives in a binary classification of whether a match truly constitutes rhyme or not. The presence of the condition of rhyming is, however, considerably more difficult to establish than defining a general Regular Expression that may extract potentially

[137] For a general critique of the impositions of genre labels such as "poetry" and "prose," as well as of the assumed connection between such genres and distinct fields of study, namely literature and philosophy, compare Joachim Gentz, and Dirk Meyer, *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1-18, where the authors eloquently and concisely discuss underlying reasons for the dominant dichotomy in academic discourse between poetic expression and philosophical prose writing.

[138] For similar arguments, compare esp. Günther Debon, "Der Reimspruch im philosophischen Schrifttum Chinas," in *So der Westen wie der Osten: Dichtung, Kunst und Philosophie in Deutschland und China* (Heidelberg: Brigitte Guderjahn, 1996), 36–42; and Günther Debon, "Verborgene Spruchdichtung im *Hsün-tzu*," in *Und folge nun dem, was mein Herz begehrt: Festschrift für Ulrich Unger zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Reinhard Emmerich and Hans Stumpfeldt, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Hamburger Sinologie Gesellschaft, 2002), 21–30; and further also Angus Charles Graham, "Two Notes on the Translation of Taoist Classics," in *Interpreting Culture Through Translation: A Festschrift for D.C. Lau*, ed. Roger T. Ames, Chan Sin-wai, and Mausang Ng (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991), 119–44, esp. pp. 130-143; Lisa A Raphals, "Poetry and Argument in the *Zhuangzi*," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 22 (1994): 103–16; David McCraw, "Pursuing Zhuangzi as Rhymester: A Snark-hunt in Eight Fits," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 67 (1995): 1–38; and Martin Kern, "Creating a Book and Performing It: The 'Yao lüe' Chapter of the *Huainanzi* as a Western Han Fu," in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, ed. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 124-150.

pertinent sections of text. Specifically, a clear definition of rhyming is subject to a related interpretative process that aims to establish what constitutes rhyme.

Does this mean that the automated rhyme detection process described above simply forms an instance of circular reasoning? And is circular reasoning additionally present in the re-application of Old Chinese phonological data back to early Chinese texts, given that that phonological data was in part based on rhyming patterns inherent in those texts? While these are certainly valid questions, they miss the point of the process that both the algorithm above and Old Chinese reconstructions in general are best used in.

It might be best to start with the latter question, whether the re-application of Old Chinese phonology is inherently circular reasoning. Again, it is paramount to note that the Baxter-Sagart system proposes hypotheses that ought to be tested against data. Hence, rather than seeing the reconstruction that this system provides as a correct conclusion (as a fact, or as a true datum), the reconstruction itself is part of an ongoing process, an approximation of sorts. Essentially, a proposed Old Chinese reconstruction should thus be seen as a model: this model may perform better than others (or worse), and it may perform better on a given dataset or corpus of texts than on others. The fault lines of where the model performs worse provide invaluable indications of where the model ought to be improved. Therefore, this sort of approach is inherently iterative in that it strives to gradually improve these approximations.

In the same way, the automated identification of rhyme data can contribute to fine-tuning such models, just as much as it can approach a definition of rhyming practices in early China iteratively.[139] Expressed differently, the occurrences detected through the proposed algorithm will

[139] As such, the proposed approach is certainly not a new procedure for historical linguists approaching their material through the comparative method.

certainly *not* cover every single significant instance of rhyme or other phonological recurrence; they cannot, as the question of what constitutes significance itself is part of an interpretive step. However, such algorithms can contribute to improved understandings of early Chinese poeticity, better Old Chinese reconstructions, and more fine-tuned algorithms: these would then lead to better results, which again can be taken to refine the overall iterative process.

**a) Towards Probability: Disproving Randomness for Extracted Data**

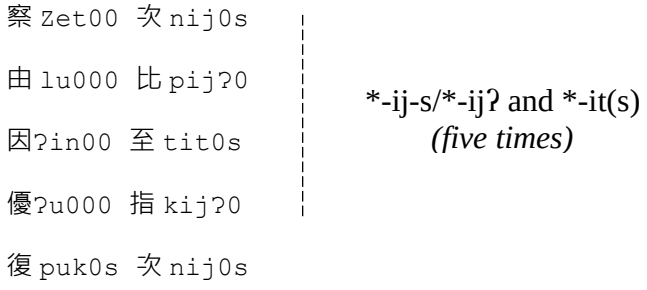
Nonetheless, there are certain ways to ascertain whether individual rhyming sections may genuinely be significant, at least statistically speaking. Such statistical significance may contribute to determining the overall significance of passages. As an example, take the passage listed at the very beginning of this chapter, stemming from the "Greater Selections" in the Later Mohist textual material. It is tempting to dismiss such a passage, given its unusual meter and its placement within textual material associated not with poeticity, but with modes of argumentation, disputation, and logic. It is equally tempting to dismiss the recurrence of Old Chinese phonological material in such a passage because of the uncertainties involved in historical reconstructions in general, or in particular because of disagreements regarding the validity of certain hypotheses in the Baxter-Sagart system of reconstruction. However, statistics form the most adequate way to show that such a passage and its phonological structuring is meaningful, especially by first trying to disprove such a hypothesis of randomness. This section will highlight that the example passage is statistically significant, and how statistical significance can be proven for such overlooked material.

Also, note that in the process above, it is unclear how many false negatives are present; and false positives may have found their way into the dataset I was working with, despite manual supervision thereof. This is hence an approximation, one that performs better than previously existing frameworks.

In that sense, the fullest consequence of the datafication of early Chinese texts and Old Chinese phonology consists in a combination of interpretive approaches with statistical ones. This allows us to view text as a mere string of individual data points: the occurrence of certain patterns can hence be described in terms of statistics.

To approach statistical significance for such textual material, it is necessary to employ a null hypothesis, and to assume that the observed pattern is due to chance alone. The supposedly rhyming example passage from the "Greater Selection" would hence be random, observed by mere chance alone; accordingly, we would not have to interpret the recurrence of rhyming glyphs therein. Alternatively, should the null hypothesis be incorrect, we have to interpret this recurrence, as the rhyming pattern therein is *not* a random occurrence.

In order to prove or disprove this null hypothesis, I will, in the following, perform a Monte Carlo simulation, a computational technique used to model and analyze the uncertainty and variability of complex processes. Such a simulation uses repeated random sampling to generate a range of possible outcomes, and therefore provides a probabilistic assessment of how likely the null hypothesis is. The null hypothesis would state, specifically, that the occurrence of such a pattern observable in the example passage (consisting, specifically, of five times a cross-rhyme between material *-ij-s/*-ijʔ and *-its, followed by four rhymes on *-eŋ, each in turn separated by a single graph; compare figure 4) occurs randomly over a string as long as the text *Mòzǐ*.



| | |
|---|---|
| 察 Zet00 聲 leŋ00<br>端 tor00 名 meŋ00<br>因 ʔin00 請 Zeŋ00<br>復 puk0s 正 teŋ00 | *-eŋ<br>*(four times)* |

FIGURE 4 *Observed pattern that will be tested.*

It is, of course, possible that such a pattern occurs randomly. Crucial for our purposes is, however, to establish *how likely* such a pattern emerges. In order to do so, it is necessary to determine how frequently the individual variables – in our case, rimes (consisting of nucleus and coda, and in the case of rime *-ij also the postcodas *-s and *-ʔ) – occur throughout the overall corpus of the *Mòzǐ* according to the pseudo-transcriptions introduced in 1.2.2 *b)*. Overall, the text *Mòzǐ* (at least the version used above) contains 76,528 glyphs, and the vast majority of these can be transcribed using the transcription data described above in 1.2.2 *a)*.[140] Of these glyphs, 1,859 will be rendered to end in rime *-eŋ (accounting for 2.43% of the overall text), while 2934 glyphs would qualify for the first pattern (383 glyphs will be rendered to end in *-ijʔ (0.5%); 510 in *-ij-s (0.67%); and 2041 glyphs (2.67%) in *-it).

Now, imagine a corpus of, say, 1,000 texts of the length of the overall *Mòzǐ*, but each with the phonological material according to the Baxter-Sagart system occurring at the same frequency,[141] but distributed randomly. The Monte Carlo simulation I ran did exactly this: it first distributed phonological material at the rates described above over a length equaling 76,528 Chinese characters.[142]

[140] Overall, 337 glyphs cannot be rendered into pseudo-transcription, since they are not accounted for; this amounts to 0.44% of the overall text.

[141] Additionally, I counted the 337 glyphs from the previous footnote – the glyphs without reconstruction as part of *both* groupings here.

[142] Compare the Python code for this simulation:

```
# Importing Packages
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

```
import random
import math

# Inputs
num_simulations = 1000
overall_phones = 76528
multiplier = 1

# rime 1 (includes unknown)
phone_1_occurrence = 383 + 510 + 2041 + 337
probability_phone1 = phone_1_occurrence / overall_phones

# rime 2 (includes unknown)
phone_2_occurrence = 1859 + 337
probability_phone2 = phone_2_occurrence / overall_phones


# Creating Randomize Phone Function
def random_phone():
    random_phone_1 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone1))
    random_phone_2 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone1))
    random_phone_3 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone1))
    random_phone_4 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone1))
    random_phone_5 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone1))
    random_phone_6 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone2))
    random_phone_7 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone2))
    random_phone_8 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone2))
    random_phone_9 = random.randint(1, math.floor(1/probability_phone2))
    random_phones_list = [random_phone_1, random_phone_2,
                      random_phone_3, random_phone_4,
                      random_phone_5, random_phone_6,
                      random_phone_7, random_phone_8,
                      random_phone_9]
    # Determining if the dice are the same number
    if all(i <= 1 for i in random_phones_list):
        same_phone = True
    else:
        same_phone = False
return same_phone

# Simulate how many times there will be a recurrence
## use lines for end rhyme; characters for other features
for i in range(num_simulations):
    overall_recurrence = [0]
    line_counter = [0]
    recurrence_counter = 0
    # change below whether lines or phones
    while line_counter[-1] < (overall_phones * multiplier):
        same = random_phone()
        # Result if phones are the same
        if same:
            overall_recurrence.append(overall_recurrence[-1] + 1)
            recurrence_counter +=1
        # Result if phones are different
        else:
            overall_recurrence.append(overall_recurrence[-1])
        line_counter.append(line_counter[-1] + 1)
    # Store variables and add to figure
    plt.plot(line_counter, overall_recurrence)
    end_recurrences.append(overall_recurrence[-1])
    recurrence_probability.append(recurrence_counter/line_counter[-1])
# Showing the plot after the simulations are finished
plt.show()

# Averaging win probability and end balance
overall_recurrence_probability = sum(recurrence_probability)/len(recurrence_probability)
overall_end_recurrences = sum(end_recurrences)/len(end_recurrences)
# Displaying the averages
```

Overall, in the 1,000 hypothetical texts of the length of the *Mòzǐ*, the detected pattern occurred not a single time. What this means is that the probability value (p-value) is diminishingly small (smaller than 0.001), which means that the observed phenomenon is highly unlikely to be random.

In other words, by running this Monte Carlo simulation, a computational algorithm that assumes a random distribution, we can state – with some confidence – that the identification of a rhyming pattern in the introductory passage, found in the "Greater Selection" in the text *Mòzǐ*, is not random: the null hypothesis for this passage is incorrect. The rhyme pattern in this passage is hence significant, and accordingly needs to be interpreted.

### 1.4 Interpreting the Later Mohists beyond Logic

Perhaps the biggest challenge in interpreting such a passage stems from established readings and interpretations of the Later Mohists, which primarily focus on issues of disputation, argumentation, and logic.[143] This discourse forms, in such accounts, a counter point to "poetry" through its focus on analytic thinking.

```
print("Average recurrence probability after " + str(num_simulations) + " runs: " +
    str(overall_recurrence_probability))
print("Average recurrence after " + str(num_simulations) + " runs: " +
    str(overall_end_recurrences))
```

[143] It should be noted that the *Mòzǐ* only captured the interest of Chinese intellectuals again in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in their attempts to rediscover evidence of scientific reasoning and logic in their own textual heritage and was thus read with an emphasis on those aspects of the text; compare Joachim Kurtz, *The Discovery of Chinese Logic* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 287ff.

Recent approaches to the Later Mohist textual material have, however, also accounted for the distinctly religious elements inherent in the material. Compare, in this context, also Erica F. Brindley, "Capturing the World in Words: Later Mohist Hermeneutic Theories on Language and Disputation," *Early China* 43 (2020): 93-121. Brindley summarizes that "[b]y attempting to point to correct levels of comparison of scope and kind, the Later Mohists reveal a belief that language use can and should reveal objective understandings of reality. At the same time, their efforts to set definitions and proper ways of organizing and understanding names show that they were aware of how language might be used to make false, arbitrary, or misleading connections with reality" (119), and further that "it would seem that the Later Mohist approach to disputation is congruent with the Early Mohist assumption that the truths of Heaven and its normative Will can be ascertained by assiduous study and clarification of the proper methods for deciphering the outside world. For the Later Mohists, linguistic analysis could help us capture the world accurately in words, much in the same way that the Early Mohists thought a com- pass could capture a circle" (121).

However, by reading the passage identified at the beginning of this chapter within the larger textual material associated with the Later Mohists, a pattern regarding the importance of sound not just as a mnemonic or text-structuring device emerges. Instead, sound appears to fulfil a semiotic function. It is hence worth restating the passage in question:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 察次 | *s-n̥ij-s | A | [The Master] examines sequences |
| （山）〔由〕比 | *C.pijʔ | A | by means of [their] juxtaposition; |
| 因至 | *tits | a | relying on this, he reaches |
| 優指 | *mə.kijʔ | A | a superior signifying. |
| 復次 | *s-n̥ij-s | A | Retracing the sequence |
| 察聲 | *l̥eŋ | B | and examining sounds, |
| 端名 | *C.meŋ | B | [he] takes names as a starting point; |
| 因（請）〔情〕 | *dzeŋ | B | ensuing from this, dispositions |
| 復正。 | *teŋ-s | B | are again rectified. |

Again, this passage appears to utilize the underlying rhyme pattern parallel to its semantic content: it postulates the need to examine strings through what is juxtaposed, like the rhymes it uses, which in turn contributes to the 'pointing out' (*zhǐ* 指) of meaning. The second half of the passage emphasizes that this process is done through reviewing sounds in 'names' (*míng* 名), which leads to a rectification of 'dispositions' (*qíng* 情). Therefore, this passage emphasizes that sound in language use is meaningful and performs functions of iconicity – it 'points' directly to the 'dispositions' of things.

### 1.4.1 Poeticity in the Later Mohists' Textual Material

Admittedly, any interpretation of such a passage may appear as a tentative suggestion, given its brevity. The embedding of the passage may also not provide much of a context, as it is only preceded by a terse, cryptic introduction through a Master persona (*zǐ* 子):

> The Master deemed deep what was profound, deemed shallow what was superficial;
> He deemed beneficial what was advantageous, and deemed detrimental what was disadvantageous.
> 子深其深，淺其淺，益其益，尊其尊。[144]

These statements and the subsequent short exposition at first appear equally enigmatic. However, when read as an introduction and reading guide to that following exposition, and when the latter is recognized as thoroughly rhyming, both parts appear to build both implicitly and explicitly on categories identified in other passages of the Later Mohist textual material.

As such, the aurality of linguistic phenomena is explicitly acknowledged in other sections of the Later Mohist material, especially regarding the aurality of names (*míng* 名) as the basic component of utterances. Compare the following statements in the "Canon" (*jīng* 經) A 78 and its subsequent "Explanation:"

> C. *Names:* Comprehensive; category; private.
>
> E. (*Of Names*:) 'Phenomenon' is [a] comprehensive [name]. Any object necessarily abides by this name. Naming something 'horse' is due to a category. "Like the phenomenon" by necessity uses this name. Naming it "Zang" is private. This name stays in this phenomenon. All the sounds that issue from the mouth have names (like clan names and style-names).
>
> A 78 名、達、類、私。

[144] *Mòzǐ jiàngǔ* 44.410.

名。「物」，達也。有實必待之（多）〔名〕也。命之「馬」，類也。「若實」也者，必以是名也。命之「臧」，私也。是名也，止於是實也。聲出口，俱有名，若姓（宇）〔字〕。[145]

Central to this passage is a differentiation of names into different groups, and how these are applicable.[146] Names can thus function either 'comprehensively' (*dá* 達), as 'categories' (*lèi* 類), or as unique designations used in 'private' (*sī* 私). All of these groups of names are, however, described as sound-based and explicitly "issuing from the mouth." Even in this description, then, names are primarily aural. It does not, however, clarify the role of sound in the association between names and phenomenon, and whether or not the association itself is arbitrary. Judging by the "Explanation" to A 80, aural names form objects of knowing that ought to be considered just as valid as visible phenomena; the more important difference is between hearsay and personal experience.[147] Expressed differently, the Later Mohist enterprise consisted in distinguishing "articulate discrimination" resulting from painstaking analysis from the "traditional notion" of hearsay.[148]

Such a theory of naming and distinguishing does not preclude the possibility that aural resonances can form meaningful connections between distinct names. A Mòzǐ persona that is keen-eared and perceives underlying sound patterns to gain insights – a view the introductory example appears to express – is therefore not an aberration of this understanding of linguistic occurrences. Instead, the process of distinguishing that marks the Later Mohist epistemological enterprise is

[145] *Mòzǐ jiàngǔ* 40.314; *Mòzǐ jiàngǔ* 42.348-349. Note that I largely follow the reading in Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 325-6.

[146] For more detailed readings of this passage, compare Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 325; John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 52.

[147] See *Mòzǐ jiàngǔ* 42.349; compare Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 327-329.

[148] Christoph Harbsmeier, "Language and Logic in Traditional China," in *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham, vol. 7.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 330.

still at work, but it is geared towards the directly experienced sounds of 'names' as an object of knowing.

Other passages in the *Mòzǐ*, especially from the "Bigger Selection" and a related chapter entitled "Smaller Selection" (*xiǎo qǔ* 小取), provide more context for such a Later Mohist approach to aural connections. Despite notorious textual problems associated with these chapters,[149] it is fairly evident that they deal largely with issues of naming, argumentation, and the art of disputation. Unlike the "Bigger Selection," which appears as a seemingly random selection of fragmentary passages, the "Smaller Selection" can be read as a consecutive elaboration of an overarching argument.[150] Especially this "Smaller Selection" ought to be considered important for our purposes here in that it functions under the new assumption "that the *tz'ǔ* [*cí*] 辭 'sentence/proposition' is something more than a string of names."[151] Still, both chapters – the "Smaller Selection" and the "Bigger Selection" – appear to be, true to their names, composite texts, drawing from different sources in order to advance their own messages.[152]

[149] For a detailed account of the textual problems around these textual passages and their context, see Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 101-110. Graham uses the entirety of the "Smaller Selection" and parts of the "Bigger Selection" in order to reconstruct a text he labels "Names and Objects." Compare also Dan Robins, "The Later Mohists and Logic," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 31.3 (2010): 247-285, where Robins argues that the "Smaller Selection" should be read as a consecutive treatise.

[150] This is expressed well in Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 101: "The *Hsiao-ch'ü* is a consecutive treatise on the art of description, the most easily intelligible of all the later Mohist documents." Compare also Robins, "The Later Mohists and Logic," 260: "Certainly the 'Lesser Selection' reads much more like a single extended text than does anything else that survives from the Later Mohists' writings."

[151] Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 469.

[152] This has been proposed in Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 460 and more recently reiterated in Robins 2010: 256-260. Note that composite texts were not unusual in early China, a fact that has become increasingly clear in scholarship due to newly excavated manuscripts, where the sequence of textual units can differ considerably from transmitted counterparts; for the seminal article on this, 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, 2005): 50-78.

Rhymes and puns employed in certain passages of these two chapters highlight the context for these aural connectives within Later Mohist disputation.[153] Within those passages, such sound-based devices appear, overall, to specify the passages' respective points by connecting referents with similar sounds. Compare the following passage from the beginning of the "Greater Selection":

| | |
|---|---|
| 〔夫辭〕以故生 (*sreŋ) | Generally, phrases develop from reasons; |
| 以理長 (*traŋʔ) | they are extended through inherent structures; |
| 以類行 (*Cə.gʿraŋ) 者也。 | and are advanced according to categories. |
| 立辭而不明(*mraŋ) | If phrases are set up without being clear |
| 於其所生 (*sreŋ), | about what brings them forth, |
| 忘(*maŋ)也。 | they are lost! |
| … | |
| 夫辭以類行者也, | So generally, for advancing phrases according to categories: |
| 立辭而不明於其類, | if phrases are set up without being clear about their category, |
| 則必困矣。 | they surely are in want.[154] |

These three claims appear to discuss the importance of different stages of constructing 'phrases' or 'propositions' (*cí* 辭). The first statement in particular elaborates that these longer strings arise through 'reasons' (*gù* 故), are developed through 'inherent structures' (*lǐ* 理), and advanced

[153] To be clear here, I am uncertain why these sections specifically employ such sound-based devices, as opposed to other passages within these two chapters. These might potentially stem from similar underlying material of the "Selections," yet at the same time, it must be assumed that later editorial interventions left considerable traces on these passages. Overall, any argument about relations between these passages must remain conjectural. Such an argument is in the end not the goal here – rather, my aim is to illustrate the importance of sound-based devices for certain sections of these two chapters.

[154] *Mòzǐ jiángǔ* 44.413; compare Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 478-481. For an alternative translation, compare also Ian Johnston, *The Mòzǐ: A Complete Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 612-613. I am here not including the statement "今人非道無所行，唯有強股肱，而不明於道，其困也，可立而待也" (located between second and third statement, marked with …) which I read as different layer within this section, i.e., a potential commentary.

through ‘categories’ (*lèi* 類). The other two statements outline flaws in the process of establishing such phrases – either through failing to take the cause of the proposition fully into account, or by not considering categories. As such, they outline failures of the first and third line of the initial statement.

Overall, the three statements consist of a rather narrow vocabulary, and the first two of the three statements build heavily on rhymes, both internally and between each other. The *-eŋ and *-aŋ rhymes may not directly accord to traditional rhyme schemes (specifically, they would be considered cross rhymes between the rhyme categories *yáng* 陽 and *gēng* 耕), but the overall layout and distribution of these elements suggests their importance here. The third statement, by comparison, does not feature any direct rhyme. This divergence is significant, as this third, rhyme-less statement is explicitly concerned with failures of advancing phrases through categories.

In other words, the first statement on explicit norms of constructing phrases is formulated in an aurally effective and aesthetic form, as is the second statement on neglecting the cause of a phrase. These statements thus uphold a norm that they promulgate, namely to advance phrases according to categories (*lèi* 類) – only that these categories are here presented as recurrences of sound in the form of rhymes. It is for this reason (*gù* 故) that the third statement does not follow this rhyme scheme, as it is explicitly concerned with breaking this norm. This is therefore a playful engagement both explicitly and implicitly with sound in language use, and thus appears to allow for deeper reflection on the theme.

Aural recurrences are hence utilized to their fullest, as they engender a complete re-evaluation of the passage. Such a recognition of the expediency of rhymes occurs also in a passage at the very beginning of the “Smaller Selection”:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 夫辯 (*brenʔ) 者 | A | In general, disputation |
| 將以明是非之分 (*pən) | a | will, by making clear the distinction of right and wrong, |
| 審治亂之紀 (*krəʔ) | B | examine principles of order and disorder; |
| 明同異之處 (*t.qʰaʔ-s) | C | by clarifying places of sameness and difference |
| 察名實之理 (*mə.rəʔ) | B | discern delineations of names and objects; |
| 處利害 (*m-kˁat-s) | C | and by placing benefit and harm |
| 決嫌疑(*ŋrə)焉(*ʔan) | D | resolve mistrust and doubts towards it. |
| | | |
| 摹略萬物之然 (*nan) | D | [Thus to] outline and trace how the myriad things are so, |
| 論求群言之比 (*pijʔ) | E | discuss and explore the comparing of grouped utterances. |
| 以名舉實 (*mə.lit) | E | Raise actualities through names; |
| 以辭抒意 (*ʔrək-s) | B/c? | express intentions through propositions; |
| 以說出故(*kˁaʔ-s) | C | and bring out reasons through explanations. |
| 以類取 (*tsʰˁoʔ) | c | Pick by means of categories, |
| 以類予 (*C.ɢaʔ) | C | and join according to categories.[155] |

While this passage begins with a concise, rhyming description of what disputation and the Later Mohist logic as a whole attempts to achieve, it turns in the second half into a list of components of utterances that ought to be 'compared' or 'juxtaposed' (*bǐ* 比), not unlike the list encountered in the passage from the "Greater Selection" listed at the beginning of this chapter. In this list, however, there is a gradual transition from 'actualities' through 'intentions' to 'explanations,' and in the end, the ultimate factor to advance phrases or propositions are here again 'categories' (*lèi*), determining what can be 'picked' (*qǔ* 取) and 'joined' (*yǔ* 予).

To be clear, A.C. Graham reads this passage differently, and to him, the only rhyme scheme here consists of 'principles' (*jì* 紀 *krəʔ), 'delineations' (*lǐ* 理 *mə.rəʔ), and 'doubts' (*yí* 疑 *ŋrə),

[155] *Mòzǐ jiángǔ* 45.415l; for alternative translations, compare Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 473-5; 482-485; Harbsmeier, "Language and Logic in Traditional China," 335; Johnston, *The Mòzǐ*, 620-621. Note that all of them place and interpret *yān* 焉 differently, namely as a conjunction and hence at the beginning of the next sentence.

marking off the three pairs of phrases in the first half of this passage.[156] Accordingly, he restructures the last five lines, moving them further back in his proposed text labeled "Names and Objects." While this interpretation may appear appealing, it overlooks the presence of the rhyme scheme, albeit an uneven one, throughout the rest of the passage as marked above.[157] As such, rhymes here do not appear to coordinate these three pairs of phrases directly, but rather appear to be picked to join distinct sections of this passage. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that this passage begins with a word play, functioning both aurally and semantically, between 'disputation' or 'differentiating' (*biàn* 辯 *brenʔ) and 'separation' or 'distinction' (*fēn* 分 *pən), with only the nucleus (*-e- vs. *-ə-) differing significantly.

As such, the Later Mohist endeavor of argumentation does not appear directly opposed to the poeticity of language, but instead, this function, in the form of rhymes and puns, appears readily exploited as a sort of heuristic. After this last section quoted above, however, the extant "Smaller Selection" departs from employing rhyming schemes and instead turns to the main theme of argumentation. More specifically, the rest of this chapter discusses different argumentative strategies, in particular 'comparing' (*pì* 辟), 'equating' (*móu* 侔), 'pulling' (*yuán* 援), and 'pushing' (*tuī* 推), and how such arguments can lead to error.[158] These strategies deal with similarities other than phonological recurrence, even if they involve linguistic parallelisms. For these instances, however, the Later Mohist interest appears to have turned toward semantics, rather than a structural

[156] See Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, 474, footnote 606.

[157] Also note that the rhyme scheme in Graham's interpretation would require ignoring the different tone category of *yí* 疑 when compared to *jí* 紀 and *lǐ* 理 (i.e., open coda vs. postcoda *-ʔ), whereas other apparent rhymes, such as 'places' (*chù* 處 *t.qʰaʔ-s) and 'harm' (*hài* 害 *m-kˤats), directly build on the affinity between final *-k and post-final *-ʔ.

[158] See *Mòzǐ jiángǔ* 45.416-417; compare Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science,* 3-4; Robins, "The Later Mohists and Logic," 250-256; compare also Robins' close analysis of *móu* 侔 on pp. 269-284.

analysis of language.[159] And yet, perhaps we are again better advised to properly heed the words of the Later Mohists themselves:

> Hence, as speech has many methods, and different categories differ in their reasons, one cannot consider it only partially.
>
> 故言多方，殊類異故，則不可偏觀也。[160]

To be clear, explicit discussions within extant Mohist chapters focus predominantly on argumentative structures, but certain passages on the efficacy of aural connections do survive as a narrow substratum in the chapters entitled "Smaller Selection" and "Greater Selection." When considered in combination with the implicit occurrences noted above, it must be noted that there is no sense of collision between logic and poetic expression within these passages. Even the Later Mohist argumentative process appears to allow for the employment of poetic structures in language use, which is in turn based on categories of sounds.

Given that the main issues in early Chinese discourses on names (*míng* 名) are *not*, as in other philosophies of language, connected to issues of representation, presence and so on, this should not have caused any major issue for the more pragmatically minded Later Mohists.[161] Within the Later Mohist discourse on argumentation, names (*míng*) are, in the end, just as real as the actualities (*shí* 實) they have come to denote.

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[159] Compare esp. Robins, "The Later Mohists and Logic," 282-283.

[160] *Mòzǐ jiàngǔ* 45.417. Note here the possible assonance on *-a-, both in the first four graphs (*gù yán duō fāng* 故言多方 *kˤaʔ-s ŋan t-lˤaj paŋ) and the graphs finishing the following lines (…*gù* 故 *kˤaʔ-s; … *guān* 觀 *C.qʷˤar).

[161] On an argument that the theory of language underlying the Later Mohist project was inherently pragmatic, see Chad Hansen, "Chinese language, Chinese philosophy, and 'truth'," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44 (1985): 491–519; and Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 242-244.

Connecting names through their categories of sound is therefore, in this specific layer of Later Mohist discourse, expedient to constructing effective phrases. As such, just like the text *Xúnzǐ*, for which Paul R. Goldin noted that "[l]anguage corresponds to reality; words that belong together consequently ought to denote concepts that belong together,"[162] the Later Mohists appear to have gone beyond the theory of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, in part due to a fundamentally different approach to linguistic phenomena.

### 1.5 Contextualizing the Later Mohists' Poeticity

The above process – of first detecting rhyme patterns computationally in early Chinese texts, followed by analyzing these patterns and then interpreting them through closely reading pertinent passages in relation to one another – unveiled a concern of Later Mohist texts heretofore neglected – that is, a specific concern with what could be called poeticity. While this example of Later Mohist poeticity highlights the potential to apply such automated detection schemes to early Chinese textual material, it also elucidates an inherent epistemological concern with issues of sight and hearing in this passage of the *Mòzǐ*, a concern that occurs also more widely in early Chinese texts.[163]

Admittedly, this concern for a sort of knowing through *hearing* may only be available to us in fragmentary form. However, to further explore the implications of the Later Mohist usage of poeticity, it is necessary to go beyond the Later Mohist textual material, and approach questions such as the following: did this concern in the Later Mohists' material at all have an impact in early Chinese thought? If so, what kind of impact? And how does it relate to broader theories of language

[162] Paul R. Goldin, *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 15.

[163] For further arguments on this dichotomy of ways of knowing, compare Jane Geaney, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

processing? While these questions may not be fully answerable, exploring them further will allow us to gain a better sense of the role of sound in creating meaning in early China. This section hence attempts to contextualize the Later Mohists' approach to linguistic phenomena both within early Chinese intellectual and textual history and within broader theories of language processing more broadly.

### 1.5.1 The Later Mohists and Poetry

Crucially, rhymes and understandings of sound in language use within the Later Mohist textual material contribute both to a general broadening of the category of poetry in early China, and to highlight how a clear dichotomy between poetic expression and argumentation is nonexistent in early China.

This, in turn, connects to observations made in other, ostensibly later material – compare, in this regard, Martin Kern's observation that the "rhythmic and euphonic sections" in the first chapter of the text *Xúnzǐ* highlight the 'categories' (*lèi* 類) "of natural dispositions" of things, according to "the principles of sympathetic resonance in the natural world."[164] This adherence of rhyming to underlying semantic claims connects to passages highlighted above from the Later Mohists' "Smaller Selection" and "Bigger Selection," especially through an overlap between rhyming and a focus on categories (*lèi*). The *Xúnzǐ* is conventionally dated to the period after the texts of the Later Mohists, as the *Xúnzǐ* appears to reappropriate some of the Mohist terminology

[164] Martin Kern, "Style and Poetic Diction in the *Xunzi*," in *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Xunzi*, ed. Eric L. Hutton (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016), 14.

and logic.[165] If that chronology is correct, then even the points of the Later Mohists that went beyond logic found their way into the *Xúnzǐ*.[166]

Later texts appear to have further expanded on this intellectual basis that may have originated in Later Mohist thought. In the "modular order" of the final chapter of the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 (139 BCE), the "Overview of Essentials" (*yào lüè* 要略), in which, again according to Kern's description, "each word is assigned its proper place exactly as each phenomenon of the natural and social spheres has its place both in the universe and in the text," literary artistry again functions as a mimetic representation of the underlying semantic claim.[167] In the *Huáinánzǐ*, this effect is used to create "a verbal replica of that universe,"[168] and these mimetic capacities further link this text to the *fù* 賦, the dominant poetic form of expression of the Western Hàn dynasty. Kern, again, emphasizes the mimetic capacities of sound patterns in this genre, through which linguistic properties both perform and represent a text's topic.[169]

It may appear odd to suggest a connection, however loose, between the Later Mohists and the Western Hàn *fù*, given that the respective texts are traditionally associated with different genres, with the former associated with the 'Masters' (*zǐ* 子) literature, the latter with the genre of poetry. However, by systematically searching the Later Mohists' textual material for poetic patterns (here with the help of algorithms), and then analyzing and interpreting relevant passages, it appears that

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[165] Specifically, the Later Mohist textual material is conventionally dated to the first half of the 3rd century BCE, while the *Xúnzǐ* is assigned to the middle or second half of the 3rd century.

[166] Compare, in this regard, Paul R. Goldin's observation that the parts of the *Xúnzǐ* reach a similar conclusion regarding the non-arbitrariness of the linguistic sign; compare his *Rituals of the Way: The Philosophy of Xunzi* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 144, footnote 35.

[167] Martin Kern, "Creating a Book and Performing It: The 'Yao lüe' Chapter of the *Huainanzi* as a Western Han *Fu*." In *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, ed. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 145.

[168] *Ibid.*

[169] See Martin Kern, "Western Han Aesthetics and the Genesis of the 'Fu'," *HJAS* 63.2 (2003): 383-437, esp. pp. 411-24.

such a connection is feasible, even if it goes beyond what we thought we already knew.[170] Such a broadening of the definition of early Chinese poeticity inevitably stands at odds with traditional genre distinctions, distinctions that may obscure, rather than elucidate, many aspects of early Chinese intellectual exchange, an argument also made by Michael Hunter in his investigation of the place of the *Shī* 詩 poetry in regard to the so-called 'Masters' (*zǐ* 子) literature.[171]

Identifying poeticity in the Later Mohist textual material also does not diminish their value to the study of early Chinese intellectual history. Paul R. Goldin summarized the impact of integrating insights regarding the complicated textual history of early Chinese text for the study of their philosophical content as follows: "Far from denigrating Chinese philosophy, liberating it from these mythic suppositions only improves our understanding and appreciation of it."[172] Similarly, reading the Later Mohist textual material not for their focus on logic but for their inclusion of poeticity highlights new connections in the intellectual exchange in early China.

There are also other faint hints that this substratum on the poeticity in the Later Mohist thinking did not go unnoticed within the broader textual world of early China. As such, the term 'comparing' (*pì* 辟 or 譬) is also used in various passages in the *Xúnzǐ*, where poeticity is at play for the key terms involved. [173]

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[170] Then again, typical descriptions of poeticity within early Chinese texts tend to emphasize end-rhyme and metric form, focused on the number of characters within a given line, such as the tetrasyllabic line typical of the *Classic of Poetry*; as an example, compare Martin Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginning through Western Han," in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature: Volume 1, To 1375*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5. By integrating these descriptions into an algorithm, one of the consequences consists in eliminating a certain kind of research bias that stems from traditional genre distinctions.

It should be noted that such genre distinctions are later ideological impositions from the late Western Hàn dynasty onto earlier textual material that was more eclectic and less clear-cut than these genres would imply; for a general overview of this process, compare Kern 2011: 60-61.

[171] See Michael Hunter, *The Poetics of Early Chinese Thought: How the 'Shijing' Shaped the Chinese Philosophical Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

[172] Paul R. Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy: Eight Classical Texts and How to Read Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 3.

[173] Compare the following three occurrences, all of which employ rather regular rhyme schemes:

As such, the interplay between these poeticity and argumentative structures as developments of the later 3rd century BCE, as postulated by a common standard account, is incorrect, as the Later Mohists already did it. Equally wrong is the notion that rhymes and puns function only as ornamentation and aides of memorization before the dominance of "correlative" theories. This standard account builds, in the end, on a clear-cut dichotomy between analytic thinking and poetry, which in turn builds on concepts from within our own *episteme* of the functions and limitations of language,[174] including in regard to the properties of poetic expression.

### 1.5.2 Theoretical Embedding

Instead, it may be better to turn to broader theoretical frameworks, and in this context, Roman Jakobson's description of the "poetic function" of language is useful as a theoretical

不道禮憲，以詩書為(*ɢʷraj)之，　Not being led by regulations to ritual, but carrying it out through Odes and Records,
譬之猶以指測河 (*C.gˤaj) 也　Compare it to measuring the depth of the Yellow River with a finger;
以戈舂黍(*s-tʰaʔ)也　to grinding glutinous millet with a dagger-axe;
以錐飡壺(*gʷˤa) 也　or to eat out of a pot with an awl –
不可以得之矣。　by these means you cannot get to it!
(Wáng Xiānqiān 王先謙 (ed.), *Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1988), 20; compare Eric L. Hutton (trans.), *Xunzi: The Complete Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 1.16-17);

譬之越人安越（*ɢʷat）　Compare it to the people of Yue firmly in place in Yue;
楚人安楚（*s.ɾaʔ）　the people of Chu being firmly in place in Chu;
君子安雅。(*N-ɢˤraʔ)　and the lordling being firmly in place in the refined.
(*Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 4.62; compare Hutton, *Xunzi*, 27);

不是師法，而好自用(*m.loŋ-s)，　If you do not affirm your teacher or a model, but instead like to put yourself to use,
譬之是猶以盲(*mˤaŋ)辨色，　compare that to relying on a blind person to distinguish colors,
以聾(*C.rˤoŋ)辨聲也，　or to relying on a deaf person to distinguish sounds.
舍亂(*rˤon-s)妄(*maŋ-s)無為也。　You will accomplish nothing other than disorder and recklessness.
(*Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 2.34; compare Hutton, *Xunzi*, 14).

[174] Compare Foucault's claim: "In any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice," in Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 168.

background.[175] According to Jakobson, rhymes form "only a particular, condensed case of a much more general, we may even say the fundamental problem" of poetic expression, which is the recurrence of parallel structures on different levels of language.[176]

To elaborate on the link to Jakobson's notion of poeticity further, the important aspect of the poetic function rests in the reoccurrence of basic elements of language, and such reprises can occur in the sequence of any semantic unit, not just in the occurrences of rhymes and the emphasis on certain phonemes, but also encompassing meter and syntactic parallelisms. As such, the exploitation of the poetic function of language offers a marked difference from regular use of language, ultimately allowing for the aesthetic appreciation of artistic linguistic expression. However, literary artistry, persuasion, and ornamentation are not the only effects achieved through this function of language according to Jakobson: "Poeticalness is not a supplementation of discourse with rhetorical adornment but a total re-evaluation of the discourse and of all its components whatsoever."[177] A fitting example for the implications of Jakobson's claim can be found in the wide-spread usage of parallel statements within early Chinese texts, whereby the contrast of two terms in an otherwise parallel statement leads to an *argumentative* effect.[178]

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[175] See Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. by Thomas Sebeok (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964): 350-449.

[176] Jakobson, "Closing Statement," 368.

[177] Jakobson, "Closing Statement," 377.

[178] See especially Rudolf G. Wagner, "Interlocking Parallel Style: Laozi and Wang Bi," *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 34.1 (1980): 18-58; and Joachim Gentz, "Zum Parallelismus in der chinesischen Literatur," in *Parallelismus Membrorum*, ed. Andreas Wagner (Göttingen: Academic Press, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 241-269. Additionally, compare also Wolfgang Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 29 (2005): 15-33, for the usage of sound to structure and enhance rhetorical features of texts.

To push his claim further, Jakobson even remarked that "[w]ords similar in sound are drawn together in meaning" (Jakobson, "Closing Statement," 371), pointing, in part, to the device of paronomasia. This sort of associating through symbolic sound connections does, however, not necessarily imply a synesthetic sound iconicity, wherein the emotional content and meaning of an utterance is also expressed on a different level of communication, namely through universal acoustic characteristics across languages, an idea that would render human communication somewhat more alike to animal communication. The implications of such a view on the overlap between sound and

At the same time, the prominence of these features in the early Chinese case is certainly not an exceptional occurrence,[179] and it should be noted that Jakobson's hypothesis has found recent support in empirical research, further showing that an aesthetic perception of language use, hence encompassing the phenomenon of poetic language use, occurs spontaneously, and is in all likelihood a universal dimension of language processing.[180]

meaning would, in the end, utterly upend the hypothesis of the Saussurian *arbitraire du signe* in traditional linguistics, according to which the relation between the signifier and the signified is inherently arbitrary.

In my opinion, the evidence from early Chinese texts at this point does not necessitate an adoption of this view; compare, in this regard, Jonathan Smith, "Sound Symbolism in the Reduplicative Vocabulary of the *Shijing*," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 2.2 (2015): 258-285. Instead, it should be summarized that conventionalized and localized sound symbolic associations are widespread across different cultures, including the early Chinese case. These associations are at times discussed in texts such as the Socratic dialogue *Cratylus* or the Upanishads; for the occurrence in *Cratylus*, compare Plato and Harold North Fowler (trans.), *Cratylus. Parmenides. Greater Hippias. Lesser Hippias*, Loeb Classical Library 167 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926): esp. 435C; note the discussion of sound symbolism is here limited to a rather quick dismissal, ending with an emphasis on the futility of the study of language in general; for that in the Upanishads, compare Friedrich Max Müller, *The Upanishads*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: The Clarendon press, 1879): Āranyaka Adhyāya III.2.5.2; *p. 263.*

For general overviews of current discussions in regard to sound iconicity, see Gwilym Lockwood, and Mark Dingemanse, "Iconicity in the Lab: a Review of Behavioral, Developmental, and Neuroimaging Research into Sound-Symbolism," *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (2015): 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01246; Blake Myers-Schulz, Maia Pujara, Richard C. Wolf, and Michael Koenigs, "Inherent Emotional Quality of Human Speech Sounds," *Cognition and Emotion* 27.6 (2013): 1105-1113, 10.1080/02699931.2012.754739; and Pamela Perniss, Robin L. Thompson, and Gabriella Vigliocco, "Iconicity as a General Property of Language: Evidence from Spoken and Signed Languages," *Frontiers in Psychology* 1 (2010): 10.3389/fpsyg.2010.00227. Compare also Jan Auracher, Mathias Scharinger, and Winfried Menninghaus, "Contiguity-based Sound Iconicity: The Meaning of Words Resonates with Phonetic Properties of their Immediate Verbal Contexts," *PLOS One* 14.5 (2019), 10.1371/journal.pone.0216930; compare, however, Maria Kraxenberger and Winfried Menninghaus, "Mimological Reveries? Disconfirming the Hypothesis of Phono-Emotional Iconicity in Poetry," *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (2016): 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01779. for the importance of and need for replication studies.

Perhaps better is a more *dialogic* understanding of this overlap between sound and meaning, in the sense that the seemingly spontaneous association of sound and meaning appears rather to refer back to previous discourse and builds in an interactional way on such parallelisms to reproduce and continue them selectively; for the underlying model of dialogic syntax, compare John W. Du Bois, "Towards a Dialogic Syntax," *Cognitive Linguistics* 25.3 (2014): 359-410.

[179] For empirical evidence that utterances that take the poetic function of language fully into account prove to be more persuasive, compare esp. Winfried Menninghaus et al., "Rhetorical features facilitate prosodic processing while handicapping ease of semantic comprehension," *Cognition* 143 (2015): 48-60, which shows that greater persuasive force is attributed to statements that exhibit a combination of different rhetorical features, even though they are less understandable than base versions of the same sentences.

[180] For an overview of such empirical research of literature from recent years, see Winfried Menninghaus, "Empirische Ästhetik der Sprache und Literatur: Was kann sie besser als die herkömmliche Literaturwissenschaft – und was nicht?," in *Bilder als Denkformen: Bildwissenschaftliche Dialoge zwischen Japan und Deutschland*, ed. Yasuhiro Sakamoto, Felix Jäger, and Jun Tanaka (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 195-213, esp. 202-205.

### 1.5.3 The Later Mohists beyond End Rhyme

It is therefore not surprising that even chapters of the text *Mòzǐ* feature devices that play on this poetic function of language.[181] The complete re-evaluation of discourse resulting from rhymes is of a more universal nature, best interpreted through Jakobson's explanation of the poetic function of language, and his theory of the non-arbitrariness of the linguistic sign.

[181]Indeed, the skilled exploitation of the poetic function of language may very likely predate the Later Mohists; compare, in this context, Paul R. Goldin description of onomatopoetic reduplicatives, traceable to bronze inscriptions (particularly to inscriptions on bronze bells), as representing "both an appropriate sound and an appropriate meaning" within respective texts; see Paul R. Goldin, "The Legacy of Bronzes and Bronze Inscriptions in Early Chinese Literature," in *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions*, ed. Constance A. Cook and Paul R. Goldin (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2016), *lxiii*. For a discussion on the connection between musical quality and onomatopoeic expressions, see also Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime-bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 101-02.

There may even be a linguistic inclination involved, as Axel Schuessler observes that "certain meanings are associated with certain sounds" in Old Chinese; see Axel Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017): 27. Schuessler mentions this in the context of Old Chinese phonesthemes, wherein words with a certain meaning are associated with certain sounds, for example words signifying movement with a sudden stop being associated with coda *-k.

Also highly meaningful is Haun Saussy's claim that rhyme within the *Shījīng* forms "a semantic glue," which connects "things which under other circumstances tend to fly apart"; see Haun Saussy, "Repetition, Rhyme, and Exchange in the Book of Odes," *HJAS* 57.2 (1997): 532. Compare also his claim that "[t]he repeated invocation of these rhyme-groups and others like them suggest a further dimension to *Shi jing* rhyming – a dimension that takes us beyond the single poem and confronts us with the tradition as a whole. These rhyme-families invite the speculation that the ability to invoke thematically appropriate rhyme-series would have been part of the equipment of any competent *Shi jing* composer. Once the set had become familiar as a phonetic and thematic unit, their very presence in a poem became consecrating: a poem about sagely kingship that did not include some members of the set would be found wanting. Merely by referring to the right rhymes, the poem participates in an almost magical field of meaning: as a consequence, the structures of parallelism and antithesis are no longer so crucial to a poem's effect" (Saussy, "Repetition, Rhyme, and Exchange," 541).

It would we worth exploring in more detail if this aspect of language usage is present at all in the dialectical chapters of the *Mòzǐ*. Jakobson describes, however, a "diametrical opposition" between poetic expression and "metalanguage" (Jakobson, "Closing Statement," 358). For Jakobson, the poetic expression is marked by a sequence of recurring features considered equal or similar, while metalanguage focuses on equations in and of themselves. Or, to put it in Jakobson's words again, "in metalanguage, the sequence is used to build an equation; in poetry, the equation is used to build a sequence" (*ibid*.).

It would be wrong, however, to equate metalanguage directly with logic or reason, just as the poetic function of language cannot be reduced to the genre of poetry itself. Expressed differently, logic and the poetic function of language does not by necessity exclude each other. This difference between metalanguage and poetic language is rather to be located where similarities are found, which distinguishes the respective production of meaning in utterances. In other words, the equations of metalanguage point to meaning in an analytic way, just as the similarity between syllables, single phonemes, or syntactic elements in poetic expression draws attention to those elements not just as recurrences of sound, but also in highlighting their meaning.

However, the focus on end rhyme employed throughout this chapter is a clear limitation, which again stems from traditional assumptions. Going beyond end rhyme can, however, unveil even more pertinent passages. Perhaps even more intricate in its awareness of the intersection between sound and meaning, the following passage from the *Mòzǐ* focuses on the imagery of shadow and echo; the utilized device of phonological recurrence is here not an end rhyme, but one that is even more difficult to detect:

> The Cultured Prince of Lǔyáng said to our Master Mò: "Suppose someone told me of a loyal subject who, when ordered to lower his head, lowered his head; and when ordered to look up, he looked up. Someone who, when staying there, was quiet, but when called responded – could he be called a loyal subject?"
>
> Our Master Mò responded: "To lower his head when ordered to do so; and to look up when ordered to do so – that resembles a shadow. When staying there, he was quiet, but when called, he responded – that resembles an echo. What could you, my lord, get from a shadow and an echo?"
>
> 魯陽文君謂子墨子曰：「有語我以忠臣者，令之俯則俯，令之仰則仰，處則靜，呼則應，可謂忠臣乎？」子墨子曰：「令之俯則俯，令之仰則仰，是似景也。處則靜，呼則應，是似響也。君將何得於景與響哉？…」[182]

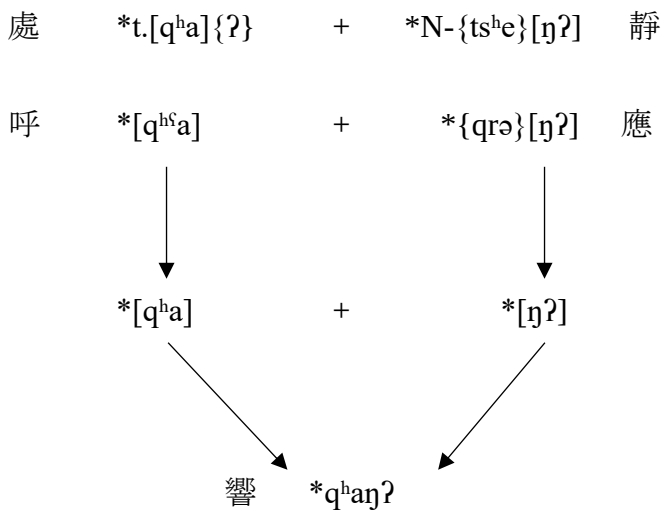
Negating the question of whether or not such a subservient subject ought to be considered loyal, Mòzǐ's response greatly mirrors the question, featuring many of its elements, i.e., the specific behavior ascribed to the supposed subject. It is these acts of moving and resonating when prompted that allow Mòzǐ to bring up the imagery of shadow and echo.

More important for our purposes here is a phonological device centered around the echo imagery, as it highlights the aural and rhetorically intricate dimension of this short passage, found in the section translated as "When staying there he was quiet, but when called he responded – that resembles an echo." What we find here is a specific form of paronomasia, for which the key words

[182] *Mòzǐ jiàngǔ* 14.470-471; for an alternative translation, compare Johnston, *The Mòzǐ*, 707.

can be found in ‘to stay’ (*chǔ* 處 *t.qʰaʔ) and ‘to be quiet’ (*jìng* 靜 *N-tsʰeŋʔ), as well as ‘to call out’ (*hù* 呼 *qʰˤa) and ‘to respond’ (*yīng* 應 *qrəŋʔ) on the one hand, and ‘echo’ (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ) on the other. Specifically, on an aural level, ‘echo’ (*qʰaŋʔ) is hinted at twice through the preceding pairs of key words, as the initial and nucleus of ‘to stay’ (*t.qʰaʔ) and ‘to call out’ (*qʰˤa) can be paired with the coda and post-coda of ‘to be quiet’ (*N-tsʰeŋʔ) and ‘to respond’ (*qrəŋʔ).

This is perhaps better illustrated in the following scheme:




This is a rare form of ‘countertomic paronomasia’ (*qièyǔ shēngxùn* 切語聲訓), predating the lexicographic *fǎnqiè* 反切 system of providing a reading gloss.[183] The individual phonological

[183] For this sort of paronomasia, compare Fù Dìngmiǎo 傅定淼, *Fǎnqiè qǐyuán kǎo* 反切起源考 (Shanghai: Shànghǎi gǔjí chūbǎnshè 上海古籍出版社, 2003); Wolfgang Behr, “Rhymes and Reason, Puns n’ Proses, Winsome Words: Notes on the Craft of Eloquence in *Hanfeizi*,” Paper presented at the 22nd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies (Glasgow, August 30), 2018. Note, however, that the nucleus of the indicated syllable of this paronomastic device stems from the first grapheme, which is unlike *fanqie* glosses where the second grapheme provides the nucleus as part of the rime – hence, for this device (leaving aside the post-coda *-ʔ):

*C1V1{C2}+*{C3V2}C4 --> *C1V1C4

Whereas for *fanqie*: *C1{V1C2}+*{C3}V2C4 --> *C1V2C4

Also note that the conditional or consecutive conjunction *zé* 則 *tsˤək (“(if…/as…), then…”) that occurs between those elements functions syntactically, yet may also assist in the coordination of the aural dimension (“as *C1V1{C2}, then *{C3V2}C4 – that resembles C1V1C4.”).

elements of the preceding pairs of graphemes recreate the sound of the resulting "echo," and notably, this construction occurs not once but twice. This recurrence is noteworthy, particularly as it occurs fittingly only in the context of the imagery of the echo, thereby performing the function of the echo itself. The imagery of the shadow, on the other hand, does not feature this device, and is instead deduced by the Mòzǐ persona through descriptions of shadow-like imitation of movement.

The Mòzǐ persona of this passage, in other words, detects both the imageries of shadow and of echo through an extension of what was already said before in the dialogue. In the case of the echo imagery, Mòzǐ picks up elements from the prompt, including its phonological elements, in order to point out an underlying pattern. This rearrangement of these elements is thus not inventive (in the sense that it does not draw from new components), but rather focuses on what was already said before. The result of this is that the text presents Mòzǐ as "discovering" the underlying resonance to the echo imagery, both semantically and phonologically.[184]

[184] I should emphasize here that I "discovered" this passage through an adaption of the algorithm described above, when I tailored it to detecting paronomasia and variants thereof; the process of detecting such 'countertomic paronomasia' is essentially the same as the one for rhymes, only that the algorithm operates with two variables (one for the initial, and one for the rime; alternatively, for countertomic paronomasia, one for initial + nucleus, and one for the coda), which are then embedded in nested loops (the runtime of the algorithm is hence rather long). Additionally, I have also (preliminarily) checked how likely such a pattern emerges randomly, again through a Monte Carlo simulation: again, out of 1,000 simulations, this pattern did not emerge a single time, meaning that it is highly unlikely to be random.

## Chapter 2. Shadow-Play/Echo-Play: Textual Reuse and its Resonances

### 2.1 Introduction

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 故神明錮結其紘, | *-ŋ | Thus, as the spiritual entities firmly bind their vast cords, |
| 類類生成, | *deŋ | different kinds come into being. |
| 用一不窮, | *-ŋ | [These] use the One without exhausting [it], |
| 影則隨形, | *ɢˤeŋ | as shadows, they follow shapes; |
| 嚮則應聲。 | *l̥eŋ | as echoes, they respond to sound. |
| 故形聲者, | | Thus, shape and sound |
| 天地之師也。 | | are Heaven and Earth's masters: |
| 四時之功, | *-ŋ | and the achievements of the four seasons – |
| 陰陽不能獨為也。 | | *yīn* and *yáng* alone cannot bring [those] about.[185] |

In its use of the imagery of 'shadow' (*yǐng* 影 *qraŋʔ) and 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ), this passage from the elusive text *Héguānzǐ* 鶡冠子 (*Pheasant Cap Master*) simultaneously shares important features with and differs considerably from the passage from the *Mòzǐ* encountered at the end of the last chapter. Like that previous passage, the imagery of shadow and echo is in this instance from the *Héguānzǐ* embedded within a framework that plays on the poetic function of language, to borrow Jakobson's term again,[186] specifically by placing key terms in a longer rhyme structure: 'to become' (*chéng* 成 *deŋ), 'shapes' (*xíng* 形 *ɢˤeŋ), and 'sounds' (*shēng* 聲 *l̥eŋ) are connected through rhyme, specifically in tetrasyllabic lines.[187]

However, in this case, unlike in the *Mòzǐ*, shadow and echo are used to describe how 'kinds' or 'categories' (*lèi* 類) – which appear to include the opposite aspects of *yīn* and *yáng* – behave and act, namely by following shapes and sounds. This points to a multivalency of the shadow- and

[185] Huáng Huáixìn 黃懷信 (ed.), *Héguānzǐ jiàozhù* 鶡冠子校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2014), 11.254.

[186] See Jakobson, "Closing Statement."

[187] Additionally, note the consonance of other terms ending on *-ŋ: 'vast cords' (*hóng* 紘), 'to exhaust' (*qióng* 窮), and 'achievements' (*gōng* 功). These terms belong, however, to different rhyme categories.

echo-imagery, as such an imagery could be used to describe things as different as the actions of a person at court, as well as highly abstract concepts. Compare, again, the key section of the *Mòzǐ* passage:

| | |
|---|---|
| 子墨子曰： | Our Master Mò responded: |
| 「令之俯則俯, | "To lower his head when ordered to do so; |
| 令之仰則仰, *C.ŋaŋʔ | and to look up when ordered to do so: |
| 是似景也。 *qraŋʔ | that resembles a shadow. |
| 處則靜, *qʰˤa- *-ŋʔ | When staying there, he was quiet, |
| 呼則應, *qʰˤa- *-ŋʔ | but when called, he responded: |
| 是似響也。 *qʰaŋʔ | that resembles an echo. |
| 君將何得於景與響哉？…」 | What could you, my lord, get from a shadow and an echo?"[188] |

Most importantly, both passages contain the core imagery of shadow and echo, but they embed and utilize this imagery in markedly different ways and for very different ends. Building on the words that were said before in a dialogue, the Mòzǐ persona encountered at the end of the last chapter "discovered" a pattern in those words, which led him to the conclusion that hypothetical subjects who do whatever they are told are like a shadow and like an echo, i.e. they have no independent agency. The Mòzǐ figure thus induces this imagery of shadow and echo not just by means of the semantic content of the words, but crucially also based on the *sound* of those words. This dialogue thus provides a crucial cue in terms of what the wording of shadow and echo achieves, as a phonologically enacted echo supports the argumentative structure of Mòzǐ's reply. In other words, Mòzǐ's reply is more persuasive because it is rooted in a seemingly intuitive kind of linguistic observation. While such a rearrangement and connection of sounds directly fulfills

[188] *Mòzǐ jiángǔ* 14.470-471.

functions of rhetorical appeal, it additionally marks the observer of such underlying patterns, in this case Mòzǐ, as demonstrating insight worthy of a Sage.[189]

As this chapter will show, such reuse and reordering of the shadow- and echo-imagery can be found throughout early Chinese texts. It was amply reused and embedded in a plethora of different arguments, for different purposes, and in different structures. Yet recurrences of this imagery form more than just a loose set of instantiations of a shared idea: they frequently share identical phrasings, and often, textual material engages the imagery in accordance with markers of poeticity, such as rhyme, alliteration, or other forms of wordplay. Usages of the shadow- and echo-imagery are therefore at the same time both too stable and too variable to point to a stock saying common at the time. Instead of focusing solely on what the shadow- and echo-imagery comes to denote, this chapter illustrates what the usage and employment of this imagery can tell us about connecting arguments in early Chinese, and how this shared usage of the shadow- and echo-imagery can be described in terms of textual reuse in early China.

### 2.1.1 Background: Textual Reuse in Early China

As to the recurrence of the shadow- and echo-imagery in the *Mòzǐ* and the *Héguānzǐ*, there is no direct evidence suggesting that these passages influenced one another. Additionally, neither text cites a point of origin for this particular imagery. Instead, the recurrence of the imagery points to a common problem of early Chinese textuality.

Such recurrences of the shadow- and echo-imagery are situated within the larger context of textual reuse. Such reuse forms a common feature of many early Chinese texts, and in particular, it marks many alleged pre-imperial and early Western Hàn texts, offering connections between

[189] Compare the fuller discussion of this passage at the end of the last chapter.

different texts. In her investigation of the role of the authorship attributions in stabilizing early texts, Heng Du shows the limits of intertextuality in early Chinese texts, instead emphasizing the concept of "open texts," which "can involve ample reuse of existing materials, but no one text is marked as 'preexistent' vis-à-vis another."[190] According to her, the closure of texts "correlates with the *prohibition* of unaccredited repetition, which now becomes 'plagiarism'."[191]

Du's line of argumentation is in line with insights drawn from the abundance of recently excavated and otherwise surfaced manuscripts, as scholars have drawn attention to the divergences in how textual units are utilized in excavated texts, and how freely they flow between different identifiable texts. This observation casts doubt not only on the prevalence of longer texts, but also on the role of authors, best expressed in William G. Boltz' seminal article arguing that what once was perceived as one text by one author – such as the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 of Xún Kuàng 荀況 (3rd century BCE), or the *Dàodéjīng* by Lǎozǐ, the Old Master – should rather be viewed as a composite of approximately paragraph-length textual units that previously circulated rather freely and independently.[192] Such independence of textual units within compilations was also described long before the emergence of these recently unearthed texts, most prominently by Yú Jiāxī 余嘉錫 (1884-1955).[193]

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[190] Heng Du, *The Author's Two Bodies: Paratext in Early Chinese Textual Culture* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2018), 439.

[191] *Ibid*., 12. Du further proposes the term of a "pre-ception" of texts, in which the textual material was circulating more freely, before it later sedimented into clearly identifiable texts, with titles, alleged authors, and a (more or less) coherent structure. This term of a textual "pre-ception" was coined by Joshua T. Katz in his investigation of the prehistory of ancient Greek epis; for Katz' initial usage, see Joshua T. Katz, "Etymological 'Alterity': Depths and Heights," in *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception*, ed. Shane Butler (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 112.

[192] 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, 2005): 50-78.

[193] Yú Jiāxī, *Gǔshū tōnglì* 古書通例 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1985): 1-49; 93-109. Note that other scholars have interpreted the parallels and partial parallels to transmitted texts as direct evidence for both the received texts' authenticity and the validity of the bibliographical categories expressed in the "Yìwénzhì" 藝文志 ("Treatise on Literature") of the *Hàn shū* 漢書, signifying a radical departure from the earlier "Doubting Antiquity movement;

In the instance of the shadow- and echo-imagery, concepts of quotation, plagiarism, or even textual allusion are indeed inapplicable: neither the *Héguānzǐ* nor the *Mòzǐ* (or any other text, for that matter) attribute the imagery to any particular source. This is true for any early Chinese text that utilizes the shadow- and echo-imagery, regardless of the degree to which the imagery reappears across different texts verbatim. Despite its reoccurrence throughout textual material surveyed below, the shadow- and echo-imagery remained a floating signifier, but unlike the textual units described by Boltz, its usage remained limited to much shorter bits of information.

For that reason, intertextuality appears inapplicable for the phenomenon under discussion, as the reuse of the shadow- and echo-imagery is not dependent on the reference to any one text, at least during the period of time that the imagery was most actively used.

### 2.1.2 Negotiating Reuse through Compositional Techniques

In this sense, both the passage above from the *Mòzǐ* and the one from the *Héguānzǐ* participated in a wider discourse, in which the specific associations of the imagery and the allowable compositional techniques were continuously negotiated. In this way, as a potent rhetorical device conveying complex ideas, the imagery became culturally significant, serving as a shared symbol or reference point within a specific literary tradition. As the following survey highlights, the imagery of shadow and echo in the textual material at hand that likely stems from the pre-imperial and early Western Hàn periods is marked by specific compositional techniques that are still identifiable, despite the overall multivalency of the imagery. Those techniques changed, however, during the transition to the late Western Hàn period.

this viewpoint is epitomized by Lǐ Xuéqín 李學勤, "Zǒuchū yígǔ shídài" 走出疑古時代, *Zhongguo wenhua* 7 (1992), 1-7.

This chapter thus further highlights how aural connections such as rhyme had the potential to link both textual material and the underlying arguments, and more importantly, why rhyming is significant in texts from the Warring States and early Hàn period. I will show this through a closer analysis of other passages that feature the shadow- and echo-imagery, and by embedding these passages within the overall arc of structural changes that compositional techniques underwent during the late Warring States and early Western Hàn periods. By tying these words and sounds together to highlight meaning, these passages feature a connectivity typical of early Chinese texts, particularly texts dating to the pre-imperial and early Western Hàn periods: recurring sounds provide a stable framework to structure and coordinate textual material, or, to borrow Haun Saussy's description, these recurring sounds provide a sort of "a semantic glue" that connects "things which under other circumstances tend to fly apart."[194]

## 2.2 More Shadows, More Echoes: Parallelisms on Three Planes

Before delving into the specific compositional techniques used to embed the imagery of shadow and echo, it is worth exploring the reasons for why the two key terms involved in the imagery are frequently juxtaposed throughout the extant, transmitted early Chinese textual material. As the introductory examples from the *Mòzǐ* and the *Héguānzǐ* highlight, these reasons include:

*1)* a semantic parallel: shadow is to form what echo is to sound;

*2)* a syntactic parallel, inherent in the previous statement;

*3)* an overlap of phonological material used for the key terms.

[194] Haun Saussy, "Repetition, Rhyme, and Exchange in the *Book of Odes*," *HJAS* 57.2 (1997), 532.

Specifically in Old Chinese, ‘shadow’ (*yǐng* 影 *qraŋʔ) sounded largely like ‘echo’ (*xiǎng* 響 *q$^{h}$aŋʔ). This collocation thus builds on an inherent triple parallel, a kind of transposition of a phonological recurrence first onto a syntactic, and lastly onto a semantic plane. Such transposition proved deeply fruitful to a continued reappropriation of the imagery throughout early discourses. Roman Jakobson accounts for what might otherwise just be considered a coincidence: he remarks that “[w]ords similar in sound are drawn together in meaning.”[195] Such an approach provides a good indication of why shadow and echo are juxtaposed in the following passages and why such an aural recurrence is highly meaningful to early Chinese discourse: sound-based similarity aids in establishing semantic connection.

A typical minimal usage of the shadow/echo-juxtaposition appears in the following lines in a chapter of the text *Xúnzǐ* 荀子:

| | |
|---|---|
| 夫下之和 上,<br>*daŋʔ-s | In general, how subordinates harmonize to superiors |
| 譬之猶 響 之 應 聲,<br>*q$^{h}$aŋʔ *qrəŋ. *l̥eŋ | can be compared to how the echo responds to a sound, |
| 影 之 像 形 也。<br>*qraŋʔ *s-daŋʔ *g$^{ʕ}$eŋ | or how the shadow resembles a form. |
| 故<br>為人上者，不可不順也。<br>*daŋʔ-s | Hence:<br>Those who act as superiors to others must be amenable.[196] |

[195] Jakobson, “Closing Statement,” 371. Jakobson here also points to paronomasia. Further note that this goes beyond the theory of the arbitrariness of linguistic signs, at least in the eyes (or ears) of language users; in this context, also compare Behr, “Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose,” 29; and Goldin, *After Confucius*, 17. Also compare Behr’s comment to this more fully: “But it also continues up to the most language-conscious modern philosophers and writers as a very powerful ornament violating the *arbitraire du signe* in a deeply meaningful way, namely by associating two different extralinguistic referents with two identical forms” (29).

[196] Wáng Xiānqiān 王先謙 (ed.), *Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1988), 16.305; compare Eric L. Hutton (trans.), *Xunzi: The Complete Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 173. While it is technically possible to interpret the last line as referring to the need of others to be amenable, such an interpretation is highly unlikely given the explicitness though which the subject of this statement is identified, namely “those who act as superiors to others.” In other words, I do not see any indication for why a change of subject should be assumed here. Compare also the commentary by Yáng Jìng 楊倞 (fl. 818 CE), which specifies that “[they] must be amenable to propriety” (*bú kě bù shùn yì* 不可不順義; *Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 16.305).

The above passage, found amongst a list of arguments in defense of the importance of propriety (*yì* 義), contains a 'comparison' (*pì* 譬), which, in turn, features not only the shadow- and echo-imagery, but also the same end rhymes, consisting of 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *l̥eŋ) and 'form' (*xíng* 形 *ɢˤeŋ). The lines of the 'comparison' are additionally construed as a parallelism, which gives these statements the appearance of a quasi-proverb, wherein the imagery of shadow and echo provides an echo-like reprise within statements that play with this imagery. Notably, the reuse of the shadow- and echo-imagery in the passage above – with its inclusion of 'sound' and 'form' or 'shape' – is markedly similar to that in the introductory passage from the *Héguānzǐ*.

While this employment of rhymes and of near-homophones could be explained to function purely ornamentally and mnemonically, the comparison of the hierarchy between superiors and subordinates to the relationship between echo and sound, as well as shadow and form, works particularly well *because* these latter relationships are phonologically closely interwoven and thus euphonic. In this sense, the parallel structure – occurring on a syntactical plane, a phonological plane, and a semantic plane – achieves more than ornamentation or ease of memorization: this particular parallelism of the shadow- and echo-imagery was potent not because it was easy to remember,[197] but because it offers an odd overlap between sound and meaning. That the other key terms in this matrix – 'sound' and 'form' – additionally rhyme further contributes to the impression that the parallel between aural, syntactic, and semantic recurrences are deeply meaningful.

In the specific usage in this passage from the *Xúnzǐ*, the employment of these lines additionally appears to hinge upon the fact that 'superiors' (*shàng* 上 *daŋʔ-s), occurring both before and after the lines of the 'comparison,' offers yet another connection in that this term agrees with the rime

[197] Undoubtedly, however, that may have played a role in the frequency of the overall collocation.

from ‘shadow’ and ‘echo’ (both *-aŋʔ). Additionally, and perhaps more significantly, it offers a play on ‘resembling’ (*xiàng* 像 *s-daŋʔ), the only difference being the position of the affix *-s-. This last observation appears to have implications regarding the subsequent conclusion of the passage, which may appear odd at first: according to this conclusion “superiors ... must be compliant” or simply “go along” (*shùn* 順). Read without concern for the phonological properties of the terms involved, this conclusion appears to invert the meaning of the preceding relationships, from which we would expect subordinates to behave like a shadow or an echo, and thus to go along with their superiors.

However, taking into account the phonological properties inherent in the play of ‘superiors’ (*shàng*上 *daŋʔs) and ‘resembling’ (*xiàng* 像 *s-daŋʔ), in combination with the overlap of their rimes to ‘shadow’ and ‘echo,’ might explain this inversion as a subtle comment through which superiors – and not the subordinates! – are credited with a need to go along or be compliant (*shùn* 順). Without recourse to the underlying play on phonological recurrences, the conclusion in this *Xúnzǐ* passage may seem counterintuitive, but by paying attention to the phonological recurrence, arguably just as important here as the semantic one between shadow and echo, and form and sound, this conclusion appears not just feasible, but rather necessary: ‘superiors’ are not like the ‘sounds’ and ‘forms’ the comparison discusses, but instead, they ‘resemble’ ‘shadows’ and ‘echoes,’ as they are inherently dependent on people they are superior to. The point of the passage is, after all, to demonstrate the preeminence of ‘propriety’ (*yì* 義),[198] and hence to subject superiors into a similar dependence on this virtue, just as shadow is dependent on form and echo on sound.

[198] This interpretation is in line with the commentary of Yáng Jìng 楊倞 (fl. 818 CE); see *Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 16.305.

Such an interpretation is supported by a broader comparison to parallel occurrences of the shadow- and echo-imagery, in which the relationship between cause and effect, between overlap and recurrence, and between overlap and difference in this collocation is further problematized. While the juxtaposition of the relationship between echo to sound to that of shadow to form occurs fairly frequently, the implications of many of these passages differ profoundly. As such, the employment of this imagery in this passage in the *Xúnzǐ*, just like the ones in the *Mòzǐ* or the *Héguānzǐ* quoted at the beginning, ought to be read as just one instantiation among others on a wide-spread theme.

### 2.3 Giving Form to Shadow and Echo

Given the parallels inherent in the imagery of shadow and echo, the imagery had the potential to highlight similar recurrences between other phenomena. To do so, early Chinese texts used certain compositional techniques that directed attention onto the specific embedding of the shadow- and echo-imagery in larger structures of recurrence, for example rhyme or syntactical parallelism. In the two examples discussed above, different techniques were used for different purposes: in the passage from the *Mòzǐ*, for example, a rare form of wordplay draws attention to the act of unveiling previously hidden messages in a type of metacommentary that allows the text to unveil itself. In the passage from the *Xúnzǐ*, the juxtaposition of the shadow- and echo-imagery with a seemingly contradictory statement, as shown above, draws attention to the preeminence of propriety itself.

The poetic function of language hence features in both the introductory example from the *Mòzǐ* and the above example from the *Xúnzǐ*: in the case of the former, the play on *both* initial and rime was crucial for a Mòzǐ persona to unveil connections, and in the case of the latter, rhymes were used to coordinate semantic subtleties.

### 2.3.1 Of Shouts and Echoes: Alliteration

Generally, the most common compositional technique in early Chinese texts that makes use of the poetic function of language are embeddings through rhyme, while alliterations – plays on recurring initials – are rather rare.[199] However, the terms that the Mòzǐ persona above used to unveil the phonological material of the echo recurs also in other passages in collocation with the echo-imagery. Consider, for example, the following passage from the text *Zhuāngzǐ*:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 大人之教, | | The teaching of Great Men |
| | 若形之於影 | *qraŋʔ | is like shadow to form, |
| | 聲之於嚮。 | *qʰaŋʔ | and like echo to sound. |
| | 有問而應之, | | When questioned, answer to it, |
| | 盡其所懷, | *gˁruj | and then pour out all your thoughts, |
| | 為天下配。 | *bˁəj | becoming the counterpart to the world. |
| *t.qʰaʔ | 處乎无響, | *qʰaŋʔ | Dwell in the echoless, |
| | 行乎无方。 | *paŋ | move in the directionless.[200] |

Generally, mysticism dominates this passage, and the shadow- and echo-imagery is applied here in reference to the 'teaching of Great Mean' (*dà rén zhī jiào* 大人之教). While this passage is overall dominated by recurring rhymes (*-aŋ and *-uj/-əj), it additionally also features an alliteration in the line "dwell in the echoless," as both 'to dwell' (*chǔ* 處 *t.qʰaʔ) and 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ) feature the same initial (*qʰ-). This is used in the second instance where the 'echo' is mentioned, specifically in the expression of the mystical 'echoless' (*wú xiǎng* 无響). The following passage similarly features the 'echoless,' but the alliteration is formed by a different term:

[199] An additional difficulty consists in overall difficulties in reconstructing Old Chinese initials; this, in conjunction with a general preference towards rhyme connections (which is, however, again due to established traditional rhyme categories), led to alliterations generally being ignored in the study of early Chinese poeticity.

[200] Guō Qìngfān 郭慶藩 and Wáng Xiàoyú 王孝魚 (eds.), *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2012), 11.395.

To the South of the White People, beneath an Established Tree, at noon there is no shadow, and if you shout there is no echo; it is likely the center of Heaven and Earth.

白民之南，建木之下，日中無影，呼而無響，蓋天地之中也。[201]

The key imagery is here featured in a mythical account of a far-flung place. The alliteration occurs here between 'echo,' and 'to shout' (*hù* 呼 *q$^{hʕ}$a-s). This is the *other* term that the Mòzǐ persona in the introductory passage used, besides 'to dwell.' The conventionalized association of these terms is not surprising, given that the inventory of terms in Old Chinese with a uvular initial (*q-/*q$^{h}$-/*ɢ-) is rather small, especially of terms that are in some way applicable to the imagery itself. Hence, rhymes appear to have been employed more fruitfully in connection with the shadow- and echo-imagery, with rimes *-aŋ forming one of the most common rhyme groups (rhyme group *yáng* 陽).

### 2.3.2 Series of Rhymes

The embedding of the shadow- and echo-imagery in broader rhyming structures hence proved much more common than alliteration or the very rare reshuffling of phonological material in the introductory *Mòzǐ* passage. The following passage, from the chapter "Reliance on Norms" (*rèn fǎ* 任法) of the *Guǎnzǐ*, employs the key terms in a way and to a very similar effect as the example from the *Xúnzǐ*:

| | |
|---|---|
| 然故下之事上也， | This is so because inferiors serving their superiors |
| 如響之應聲也； | are like the echo responding to a sound; |
| 臣之事主也， | and ministers serving their ruler |
| 如影之從形也。 | are like the shadow following a form. |

[201] Lǚ Bùwéi 呂不韋 and Xǔ Wéiyù 許維遹 (eds.), *Lǚshì chūnqiū jíshì* 呂氏春秋集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 13/1.283. Compare also the parallel in "眾帝所自上下，日中無景，呼而無嚮，蓋天地之中也" from Liú Ān 劉安, *Huáinánzǐ jíshì* 淮南子集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1998), 4.329. A loosely related passage occurs also in the phrases "壽麻正立無景，疾呼無嚮" from Zhōu Míng 周明 (ed.), *Shān hǎi jīng jíshì* 山海經集釋 (Chengdu: Bāshǔ shūshè 巴蜀書社, 2019), 16.509.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 故上令 | *riŋs | Thus, when the superiors command |
| 而下應 | *qrəŋʔ | and inferiors respond, |
| 主行 | *gˁraŋ | and when rulers act |
| 而臣從， | *dzoŋ | and ministers follow, |
| 此治之道也。 | | this is the way of governing.[202] |

Like in the above passage from the *Xúnzǐ*, this example establishes the relationship between inferiors and superiors as comparable to the relationship between echo and sound. Similarly, the relationship between shadow and form is likened to that of ministers and rulers; these latter terms here function as quasi-synonyms to inferiors and superiors. Particularly noteworthy in this example is the further embedding of 'responding' (*yīng* 應 *qrəŋʔ) and 'following' (*cóng* 從 *dzoŋ), occurring first in the comparisons of echo and shadow, respectively, and secondly in the lines directly following (highlighted above). Through this restatement of terms, the passage lays out in a rather didactic manner that inferiors ought to respond to the commands of their superiors, and that ministers ought to follow their ruler's actions. This is achieved through even more aural patterning, namely through a rhyme of 'act' (*xíng* 行 *-aŋ) and 'follow' (*cóng* 從 *-oŋ),[203] and a rhyme of 'command' (*líng* 令 *-iŋ) and 'respond' (*yīng* 應 *-əŋʔ).[204]

A very similar passage presents itself in the chapter "Explanations on Making the Norms Clear" (*míng fǎ jiě* 明法解) of the *Guǎnzǐ*.[205] As in the above passage, the restatement of other key terms allows for both an embedding of the shadow- and echo-imagery in a broader rhyming section and

[202] Lí Xiángfèng 黎翔鳳 Liáng Yùnhuá 梁運華 (eds.), *Guǎnzǐ jiàozhù* 管子校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2004), 45.913; for an alternative translation, compare Allyn W. Rickett, *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China*, Volume Two (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 150-151.

[203] Specifically, this is a well-documented cross-rhyme of categories *yáng* 陽 and *dōng* 東.

[204] Cross-rhymes between *-iŋ and *-əŋ (rhyme groups *zhēn* 真 and *zhēng* 蒸) are admittedly comparatively rare, but if *-i- and *-ə- are considered front vowels, this would work well. Note also the clear contrast difference to the rhymes described in the previous footnote, which form back vowels.

[205] "如此，則下之從上也，如響之應聲；臣之法主也，如景之隨形," in *Guǎnzǐ jiàozhù* 67.1221; for a translation, compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 168-169.

a subsequent unpacking of these other terms involved, terms that are again focused on the relationship between superiors and subordinates.

Embedding the key imagery in a broader series of rhymes could also contribute to placing the emphasis on different aspects. Compare, in this regard, the following example from the *Xúnzǐ*, containing a description of the best kind of subject within a longer list of four different kinds:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 上則能尊君, | | Above he can honor his lord, |
| 下則能愛民, | | and below he can feel affection for the people. |
| 政令教化, | | His government orders and the influence of his teachings |
| 刑下如影, | *qraŋʔ | form his subordinates like shadows; |
| 應卒遇變, | | He responds to the sudden and meets change |
| 齊給如響, | *qʰaŋʔ | as quickly like an echo. |
| 推類接譽, | | He extends categories and connects renown |
| 以待無方, | *paŋ | in order to make provisions without precedent. |
| 曲成制象, | *s.[d]aŋʔ | Thoroughly he brings about figures of regulation. |
| 是聖臣者也。 | | Such is a sage subject.[206] |

Unsurprisingly, the longer passage in the *Xúnzǐ* extols the described sagacious subject that brings order to the court. Overall, this passage is marked by an embedding of the shadow- and echo-imagery in an overarching rhyme *-aŋ, which connects the key terms to the broader passage. Essentially, the rhyme occurs here in alternating tetrasyllabic lines, the typical meter of early Chinese poetry. Due to the focus on the wise subject, the imagery appears only partially fitting, and the shadow-imagery simply applies to the subordinates of this subject. Unlike the shadow, the echo-imagery is used to describe the swiftness by which the sage subject responds.

[206] *Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 13.248; for an alternative translation, compare also Hutton, *Xunzi*, 133.

## 2.4 Making Meaning out of Shadow and Echo

Throughout these passages, a clear divide is noteworthy between audible features on the one hand, such as sound, echo, commanding and responding, and visible features on the other, such as form, shadow, action and following. To be sure, some passages – such as the ones from the *Guǎnzǐ* or the *Mòzǐ* – place greater emphasis on this divide than others, but this divide is valid in all of the passages surveyed and analyzed above. This dichotomy between audible and visual features is also particularly evident in the following example, found in the *Xīnshū* 新書,[207] which includes a sort of introductory statement:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 故為人君者， | | | Thus, the one who acts as lord to others – |
| 其出令也 | *riŋ > *reŋ | A | when he issues a command, |
| 其如聲， | *l̥eŋ | A | it is like a sound; |
| 士民學之， | | | when the retainers and people imitate it, |
| 其如響， | *qʰaŋʔ | B | they are like [his] echo. |
| 曲折而從君， | | | Bending and bowing, they follow their lord, |
| 其如景〔影〕矣。 | *qraŋʔ | B | and they are like [his] shadow! |
| | | | |
| 嗚呼！戒之哉！戒之哉！ | | | Sigh, beware of this! Beware of this! |
| | | | |
| 君鄉善於此， | | (B) | When a lord tends towards aptness in this, |
| 則（失）〔逸逸〕然協， | | | then with order and ease [the subjects] accord; |
| 民皆鄉善於彼矣， | | (B) | when the subjects all tend towards aptness in that, |
| 猶景之象形也。 | *kˁeŋ | (B)A | then that is just like the shadow resembling the form. |
| | | | |
| 君為惡於此， | | | When a lord becomes bad in this, |
| 則啍啍然協， | | (BB) | then, jumbled and jangled, [the subjects] accord; |
| 民皆為惡於彼矣， | | | when the people all become bad in that, |

[207] The *Xīnshū* is traditionally attributed to Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 (201-169 BCE), but this attribution is questionable at best. Nevertheless, an early Western Hàn date appears likely; for a general overview, compare Michael Nylan, "Hsin Shu," in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), 161-170.

猶響之應聲也。 *l̥eŋ (B)A then that is just like the echo responding to a sound.[208]

The introductory section, with two clearly identifiable main components focused on superiors and subordinates, respectively, delineates this hierarchical relationship by means of the primacy of sound over echo, and, in the same vein, by means of the primacy of form over shadow. Subordinates are even literally – and bodily – likened to a shadow (quite like in the passages above from the *Xúnzǐ*), imitating their superior through 'bending' (*qū* 曲), 'bowing' (*zhé* 折), and 'following' (*cóng* 從) as if they were a shadow of his.

Unlike the imagery of shadow that relies on this pun of shadow-like movements, the imagery of echo here appears to rely primarily on a sound-based pun occurring in the second half of the passage. Besides the near homophone 'shadow' (*yǐng* 景 or 影 *qraŋʔ), this section also features other homophones of 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ), namely the prominent recurrence of *xiǎng xiǎng* 嚮嚮 (*qʰaŋ qʰaŋ) as 'jumbled and jangled,' and the unexpected occurrence of verbal *xiāng* 鄉 (*qʰaŋs) as 'tend towards.' The generally even distribution of the reprise of this array of homophones and near-homophones – focused on the shared syllable components of initial, nucleus, and coda (~*qaŋ) – across the passage adds to the impression that this recurrence is used to render the imagery of the echo more prominent (highlighted above).

These puns, based on verbs of movement for the shadow imagery on the one hand, and on the other created by the recurrence of sound for the echo imagery, fit well within the overall structure of the *Xīnshū* passage. They are further supported and enhanced by a transposition of the clear divide between superior and inferior onto a rhyme scheme: while the attributes associated with the

[208] Yán Zhènyì 閻振益, and Zhōng Xià 鍾夏 (eds.), *Xīnshū jiàozhù* 新書校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2000), 9.341.

superior feature an end rhyme *-eŋ (‘command’ *lìng* 令 *riŋ > *reŋ,[209] ‘sound’ *shēng* 聲 *l̥eŋ, and ‘form’ *xíng* 形 *ɢˤeŋ), those associated with the inferior rhyme on *-aŋ (marked as “A” and “B” above).

In this way, the passage complicates the duplication inherent in the shadow- and echo-imagery by bringing up the echo twice, first in its description of subjects responding to their superior’s command, and secondly by presenting a ‘jumbled and jangled’ response by a mass of people. This *Xīnshū* passage thus alerts its readers – beware, beware! – to not assume a flawless process of reduplication. Thus, the passage uses a longer rhyme series to embed the shadow- and echo-imagery, which is used in this instance to point out flaws in the reiterative process itself, as the transmission process may result in a change, just how an echo does not equate to the original sound.

In this way, reading the shadow- and echo-imagery across textual passages highlights the imagery’s multivalent potential. Overall, these passages from the Warring States period and the early Western Hàn dynasty engage the imagery in its different aspects, and thus employ the elements of shadow and echo, as well as inherent rhyming patterns, to convey the significance of other phenomena. In other words, using the shadow- and echo-imagery induces meaning, which, depending on the broader textual framework, leads to different implications. Compare the following example from the *Shuì yuàn* 說苑:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 百行之本, | | At the root of a hundred actions |
| 一言也。 | | is one utterance. |
| 一言而適, | *tek | A single utterance that is fitting |
| 可以卻敵； | *[d]ˤek | can hold off an opponent. |
| 一言而得, | *tˤək | A single utterance that wins |

[209] Assuming a mid- to late-Western Han date of this passage, the nucleus is definitely closer to *-e- than to *-i-; compare OCM *reŋ; LHan lieŋ; and MC ljeng.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 可以保國。 | *[C.q]$^{wʕ}$ək | can protect a state. |
| 響不能獨為聲, | | [Just like] an echo alone cannot cause a sound, |
| 影不能倍曲為直, | *N-trək | a shadow cannot cause the crooked to become straight. |
| 物必以其類及, | *[m-k-]rəp | Phenomena must attach because of their category |
| 故君子慎言出己。 | *k(r)əʔ | thus a gentleman is careful of the words he utters.[210] |

In short, this passage highlights what words can achieve: they are the basis for getting things done, they are useful to convince people, and utterances that hit the mark can even protect a country. Words are thus presented as the cause of significant effect: in this context, the passage brings up the shadow- and echo-imagery in order to emphasize that these effects come about not by themselves, but through words. Expressed differently, actions here do not speak louder than words. On the contrary, this passage conveys that actions come to fruition only through utterances.

The last two lines of this passage even suggests that there is a connection between utterances and 'categories' (*lèi* 類) of phenomena, or rather – read through the implications of the shadow- and echo- imagery in the preceding lines – that utterances involve 'categories,' just how a shadow is dependent on form.[211] Fittingly, this imagery is embedded in a series of rhymes (*-ək/-əp/-əʔ), which mirror the semantic interconnectedness of this passage: utterances create similitude within a category, and it is for this reason that the passage urges caution when emitting such utterances.

Thus, the specific placement of shadow and echo, just like phonological patterns, can induce meaning into these rather terse statements. While the overall association of the imagery with cause and effect remains largely stable, different uses of the imagery can thus lead to completely different

[210] Liú Xiàng 劉向 and Liú Wéndiǎn 劉文典 (eds.), *Shuì yuàn jiàobǔ* 說苑斠補 (Kunming: Yúnnán rénmín chūbǎn shè 雲南人民出版社, 1959), 16.345; for an alternative translation, compare also Eric Henry, *Garden of Eloquence / Shuoyuan* 說苑 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021), 951.

[211] Note here the proximity in thought to the Later Mohists, especially in the parallel usage of 'categories' (*lèi* 類); for a discussion of this concept in the Later Mohist material, compare section 1.4.1 of this dissertation.

semantic outcomes. In this context, consider another passage from a different chapter in the *Shuì yuàn*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 曾子曰： | | Zēngzǐ said: |
| 「響不辭聲, | *[l̥]eŋ | "An echo does not express [its corresponding] sound, |
| 鑑不辭形, | *[ɢ]ˤeŋ | just like a mirror does not verbalize the shapes [it reflects]. |
| 君子正一而萬物皆成。 | *[d]eŋ | A gentleman is upright and single-minded, and thus the myriad phenomena are all realized. |
| 夫（行）〔形〕非為影也, | *qraŋʔ | Now, a shape is not due to its shadow, |
| 而影隨之； | *sə.loj | but the shadow follow it; |
| 呼非為響也, | *qʰaŋʔ | just like a shout is not due to its echo, |
| 而響和之。 | *[ɢ]ˤoj-s | but the echo attunes to it. |
| 故君子功先成而名隨之。」[212] | | Thus a gentleman's achievement is first realized, and only afterwards fame follows it. |

Here, a Zēngzǐ 曾子 (5th century BCE) figure is credited with using the shadow- and echo-imagery to make a point. The Zēngzǐ figure uses the imagery not just once, but twice: first, by pointing out that an echo or a mirror image never accurately reflects (literally, 'verbalizes' *cí* 辭) the original sound or shape, two statements that lead to the synthesis that a person being "upright and single-minded" is the cause for phenomena to adjust. This first section is connected through rhymes on *-eŋ.

The second usage of the imagery occurs afterwards, and in a rather didactic way, the Zēngzǐ figure explains that shape and sound are not due to shadow and echo; rather, these follow and attune to what they reflect.[213] In certain ways, this passage appears to point out a flaw in the previous passage's statement: actions here do not speak louder than words, at least when it comes

[212] *Shuì yuàn jiàobǔ* 17.365, compare also Henry, *Garden of Eloguence*, 1002.

[213] Note here also the alliteration between 'to shout' (*hù* 呼 *qʰˤa-s) and 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ).

to fame. This passage hence engages the imagery to complicate a simplistic application thereof: fame is an effect of a previous action, and it is hence likened to an echo.

### 2.5 Combining Textual Units

This kind of aural embedding of the shadow- and echo-imagery into a longer textual unit hence allows for the development of a longer argument within the mentioned texts that employ this imagery. While still primarily utilizing the semantic parallel of duplicating offered by the imagery itself, the broader embedding can play on the multivalent potential of the imagery, and thus direct the focus of what the imagery comes to stand for. Consider, in this regard, the passage below, found in the "Almanacs" (*jì* 紀) from the compendium *Lǚshì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 (*The Annals of Mr. Lü*), compiled around 239 BCE under the sponsorship of Lǚ Bùwéi 呂不韋 (? – 235 BCE):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 昔者先聖王, | | In the past, the former sage kings |
| 成其身而天下成, | *deŋ | completed their bodily self, and then All-under-Heaven was completed; |
| 治其身而天下治。 | | regulated their bodily self, and then All-under-Heaven was regulated. |
| 故 | | Thus, |
| 善響者不於響於聲, | *l̥eŋ | those who are good with echoes do not turn towards the echo but toward the sound [that is the source of the echo]; |
| 善影者不於影於形, | *ɢˤeŋ | those who are good with shadows do not turn towards the shadow but toward form [that is the source of the shadow]; |
| 為天下者不於天下於身。 | *n̥iŋ | those acting on behalf of All-under-Heaven do not turn towards All-under-Heaven, but towards their own bodily self [which is the source of regulating All-under-Heaven]. |
| 《詩》曰： | | An Ode says: |
| 「淑人君子, | *-əʔ | *"Refined person, gentleman,* |
| 其儀不忒。 | *-ək | *His demeanor unmodified,* |
| 其儀不忒, | *-ək | *His demeanor unmodified,* |
| 正是四國」, | *-ək | *Rectified for the polities in all four directions."* |

言正諸身也。[214] *ŋiŋ This is rectifying it within one's bodily self.

While the shadow- and echo-imagery is contained in the middle of this passage, its actual focus remains on the need for a ruler to engage in self-cultivation and on how such self-cultivation would result in positive results for the state at large: the imagery is thus used to highlight the cause-and-effect relationship between the ruler's self-cultivation and the effects across the polity.

Instead of presenting this message as an unadorned declarative statement, the passage relies on a plethora of devices to highlight this need, including a comparison to the shadow- and echo-imagery, an embedded *Shī* 詩 poem, and an overarching cross rhyme typical of the period, between rhyme groups *gēng* 耕 *-eŋ and *zhēn* 真 (*-iŋ). Additionally, this passage features what Wolfgang Behr has called a "paronomastic cadence," in that specific words that occur regularly in later paronomastic glosses are tied together in this instance through a network of shared phonological material.[215] These terms include 'bodily self' (*shēn* 身 *ŋiŋ) and 'Heaven' (*tiān* 天 *l̥ˤin), which are, through the overarching rhyme noted above, further tied to the 'Sages' (*shèng* 聖 *l̥eŋ-s) and 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *l̥eŋ). Such an expanded, deep embedding of phonological material is further tied to the theme of 'completing' (*chéng* 成 *deŋ) and 'rectifying' (*zhèng* 正 *teŋ-s). Overall, these sound-based connectives thus ensure, in Behr's words, "[the association of] the motives of rectification via self-cultivation with the concepts of 'sageliness', 'acuity' and 'sonorance'."[216]

[214] *Lǚshì chūnqiū jíshì* 3/3.70; for alternative translations, compare John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel (trans.), *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 102-103; and Wolfgang Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," *BJOAS* 29 (2005): 26. For a better visualization of the text-structuring devices, see p. 27.

[215] Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," 26-28.

[216] *Ibid.*, 28.

Thus, the above passage weaves the main claim, according to which a ruler should engage in self-cultivation, in with the shadow- and echo-imagery and a *Shī* 詩 poem. This has the effect of lending this claim further credibility: particularly the *Shī* quotation illustrates this well, as it invokes the authority of tradition. Overall, however, the shadow- and echo-imagery is necessary to establish the relationship between ruler and state as analogous to the cause and effect between sound and echo, and between shape and shadow.

In addition to these layers of meaning embedded in the shadow- and echo-imagery, aural devices are crucial to connect and coordinate different textual units, which otherwise are held together only by a loose thread of argumentation. Another passage in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*'s "Almanacs" section ties the shadow- and echo-imagery together with other loosely connected material:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 由其道, | | When you follow the Way, |
| 功名之不可得逃, | | merit and fame cannot be evaded, |
| 猶表之與影, | *qraŋʔ | just like the gnomon and its shadow, |
| 若呼之與響。 | *qʰaŋʔ | or the shout and its echo. |
| 善釣者出魚乎十仞之下, | | A skilled angler can get up a fish from ten fathoms |
| 餌香也； | *qʰaŋ | only if his bait is fragrant; |
| 善弋者下鳥乎百仞之上, | | A skilled marksman can down a bird from a height of a hundred fathoms |
| 弓良也。 | *-aŋ | only if his bow is good.[217] |

Extolling the need to follow the Way, this passage features aural devices already in the first line: the two terms 'to follow' (*yóu* 由 *l[u]) and 'the Way' (*dào* 道 *[kə.l]ˤuʔ) share a significant

[217] *Lǚshì chūnqiū jíshì* 2/5.53-54.

portion of phonological material. The passage then goes on to recount what can be gained through acceptance of the Way, namely achievements and fame: these would follow as naturally as shadow and echo. The last two statements, describing the limitations of skill alone for a fisherman and a marksman, are aimed at highlighting the applicability of the Way – it is a tool that even a skilled ruler should value.

The rest of the passage is connected through a rhyme on *-aŋ, tying specifically the terms 'shadow' (*yǐng* 影 *qraŋʔ), 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *q$^{h}$aŋʔ), 'fragrant' (*xiāng* 香 *q$^{h}$aŋʔ), and 'good' (*liáng* 良 *[r]aŋ) together. Crucially, the first three of these terms are all near-homophonous, thus expanding the shadow- and echo-pun further to also include 'fragrant.' The order of the last two statements – on the fisherman and the marksman – is likely due to this additional alliteration. Sound connects, after all.

Lastly, this passage again features the alliteration between 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *q$^{h}$aŋʔ) and 'to shout' (*hù* 呼 *q$^{hʕ}$a-s), highlighting how a single passage focused on this imagery can use *all* of the aural devices surveyed here. Overall, the shadow- and echo-imagery is thus frequently embedded in a veritable exuberance of poetic expression. The overall strategy to combine different textual units through rhyme or other pertinent markers is well attested for early Chinese texts,[218] and allows for an extension of an argument or a discussion by connecting to other seemingly related textual material.

[218] Compare Christian Schwermann, "Collage-Technik als Kompositionsprinzip klassischer chinesischer Prosa: Der Aufbau des Kapitels 'Tang wen' (Die Fragen des Tang) im *Liezi*," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 29 (2005): 125-157.

## 2.6 Standardizing Shadow- and Echo-Play

Overall, then, the shadow- and echo-imagery is employed across passages, with likely Warring States and early Western Hàn material connecting the key terms of 'shadow' (*yǐng* 景 or 影 *qraŋʔ) and 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ) further and embedding them within longer poetic structures. Material that likely stems from later, from the mid- to late Western Hàn dynasty and afterwards, does not do this, instead relying on a more conventionalized and standard phrasing.

This results in parallel usages that employ the main rhymes and puns in a remarkably stable way. This standard phrasing, which we encountered above in a 'comparison' in a *Xúnzǐ* passage, is focused on the rhyme between 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *l̥eŋ) and 'form' (*xíng* 形 *ɢˤeŋ), and the collocation of echo and shadow as near-homophones, thus reiterating the semantic dimension of the utterance also on an aural level. Whereas the *Xúnzǐ* passage used this formula to make a point about 'superiors' (*shàng* 上 *daŋʔ-s), and thus played on the recurring *-aŋ rhyme, Hàn dynasty examples mostly do not aurally embed this standard phrasing any further. Consider the following passage from the "Treatise on Music" (*yuè shū* 樂書) in the *Shǐ jì* 史記:

| | |
|---|---|
| 凡音由於人心, | In general, tunes come from the human heart-mind; |
| 天之與人有以相通, | Heaven and humanity are in communication with one another; |
| 如（景）〔影〕之象形, | like the shadow resembling a form, |
| 響之應聲。 | or like the echo responding to a sound.[219] |

[219] Zhōnghuá shūjú biānjí bù 中華書局編輯部(eds.), *Shǐ jì* 史記 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1982), 24.1235. Compare Hans van Ess, "Some Preliminary Notes on the Authenticity of the Treatise on Music in '*Shiji*' 24," *Oriens Extremus* 45 (2005): 48-67, for a general discussion on the authenticity of this chapter; note, however, that the conclusions that van Ess draws only address some of the questions regarding the authenticity of the chapter, with the most lingering ones left unaddressed. These remaining questions mostly pertain to the authorship attribution to Sīmǎ Qiān 司馬遷 (c. 145 – c. 86 BCE), an attribution that remains doubtful; the chapter may, perhaps, more adequately fit squarely into the intellectual context of the first century BCE.

The shadow- and echo-formula is used here in a similar way to the example from the *Xúnzǐ*, but in this particular example the shadow- and echo-imagery is used to directly establish a connection between the heavenly and the human realm, rather than defending the importance of propriety (*yì* 義) as in the *Xúnzǐ*. No rhyme or aural recurrence connects the key passage to its surrounding; the only additional phonological recurrence is offered in the terms involved in the connection between heaven and humans, phrased as a 'mutual communication' or 'permeation' (*xiāng tōng* 相通 *saŋ l̥ˤoŋ): 'Heaven' (*tiān* 天 *l̥ˤin) shares much of the same sounds with the term 'humans' (*rén* 人 *niŋ; both *zhēn* 真 rhyme group). In a sense, then, while this connection replicates inherent phonological connections within the comparison to the shadow- and echo-imagery, these two statements are only semantically interwoven, not aurally.

The near-verbatim restatement of the main expression – of echo and shadow in relation to sound and form – occurs in a plethora of texts such as the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 (around 139 BCE);[220] in a passage in the *Lièzǐ* 列子, where the imagery is part of a quotation of another book;[221] the *Shuì yuàn*;[222] the *Yán tiě lùn* 鹽鐵論 (81 BCE);[223] or the *Hàn shū* 漢書 (completed in 111 CE).[224] Again, these passages utilize much of the same material as in the *Xúnzǐ*: the key passage (that form is to

[220] "天下從之，如響之應聲，景之像形，其所修者本也," in *Huáinánzǐ jíshì* 9.614; for a translation thereof, compare John Major et al. (trans.), *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 299.

[221] "形動不生形而生影，聲動不生聲而生響," in Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻 (ed.), *Lièzǐ jíshì* 列子集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1979) 1.18.

[222] "故天之應人，如影之隨形，響之效聲者也," in *Shuì yuàn jiàobǔ* 1.17.

[223] "上所言則苟聽，上所行則曲從，若影之隨形，響之於聲，終無所是非," in Huán Kuān 桓寬 and Wáng Lìqì 王利器 (eds.), *Yán tiě lùn jiàozhù* 鹽鐵論校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1992), 26.318.

[224] "猶景之象形，鄉之應聲" in Bān Gù 班固, and Yán Shīgǔ 顏師古 (ed.), *Hàn shū* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1962), 26.1273. Note here the OC reconstruction of the glyph *xiàng* 鄉 as *qʰaŋ-s. Yán Shīgǔ's commentary states that this should be read as 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ), *ibid.*, 1274, f5.

shadow what sound is to echo) occurs verbatim or near-verbatim, but they do so primarily in a rather limited capacity, at least from a perspective focused on aural connections.[225]

Given the occurrence of this standardized formula in the *Xúnzǐ* and these other texts, most of which can be clearly associated with the Hàn dynasty, it appears that this conventionalization of the shadow- and echo-imagery occurred during the early- to mid-Western Hàn dynasty, specifically under the influence of the *Xúnzǐ* material.[226]

A further development of this standardization of the shadow- and echo-imagery during the imperial period consisted in increasingly concise expressions, through which the play on the parallel between shadow and echo was transposed unto other phenomena and situations. This resulted, in the end, in short, concise allusions, devoid of any poetical embedding. Hence, in this last stage of the shadow- and echo-imagery, these pithy sayings do not invoke the phonological recurrence of the terms involved, and instead, the parallel of shadow and echo is used as if it were common knowledge, and thus seemingly in reference to a multitude of previous usages.

Such a usage of the shadow- and echo-imagery occurs, for example, in biographies and descriptions of Chén Shè 陳涉 (d. 208 BCE), who led an uprising against the Qín dynasty;[227] or in instances linked to *fù* 賦 poetry, as, for example, in the postscript of the *Hàn shū*.[228] Despite the

[225] While the *Shuì yuan* may contain large swaths of Warring States material, its format goes back to the imperial librarian Liú Xiàng 劉向 (77-6 BCE), who collated this text from a plethora of sources. It may thus also include relatively late Hàn material. As to the other texts mentioned above that contain verbatim or near-verbatim restatements of this imagery – from the *Huáinánzǐ*, the *Yán tiě lùn*, the *Shǐ jì*, and the *Hàn shū* – these are all texts distinctly from the Hàn dynasty, even if they may contain earlier material. Lastly, I am unsure how the usage above in the *Xúnzǐ* relates to these Hàn uses of the shadow- and echo-imagery.

[226] For the influence of the *Xúnzǐ* during the Western Hàn dynasty, compare Paul R. Goldin, "Xunzi and Early Han Philosophy," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 67.1 (2007), 135–166.

[227] "天下雲集響應，贏糧而景從," in *Shǐ jì* 6.281-282 and 48.1964; "天下雲合嚮應，贏糧而景從," in *Hàn shū* 31.1824; "天下雲合嚮應，贏糧而景從," in *Xīnshū jiàozhù* 1.2-3.

[228] "使見之者景駭，聞之者嚮震," in *Hàn shū* 70a.4226. Note that this occurrence and the ones from the previous footnote feature *shēng* 聲 or *xíng* 形.

laconic usage of the imagery in these cases, its implications on the play on parallelism remain largely intact. These instances are, moreover, marked through a language that can be loosely described as poetic, which indicates that the invocation of the imagery itself came to signify an association with poeticity and verbal exuberance, presumably through its established link to these modes.

At the same time, other texts appear to feature the imagery in fully de-poeticized passages. These passages employ the imagery solely, apparently, for its juxtaposition of shadow and echo and thus for its potential to highlight semantic parallels. Such instances include a passage in the *Yuè jué shū* 越絕書, where the imagery is used as an analogy for the workings of *yīn* and *yang*;[229] and a passage in the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 that offers ridicule of the figure Huì Shī 惠施 (4th century BCE), by likening his efforts to the acts of "exhausting an echo through sound, or when shape and shadow race one another."[230] While the former passage very likely stems from the imperial period (given the Eastern Hàn editorial process of this text), the latter is less clear and may potentially predate the Hàn dynasty. It is thus unclear when full de-poeticization occurred, but it is feasible that it was a further development of the process of turning a highly productive Warring States poetic passage into an established pithy saying.

Overall, then, the limitation of ways in which this imagery is employed to embed the shadow- and echo-imagery, its usage in pithy sayings, and the full de-poeticization appear to be late developments, occurring likely at some point during the mid- to late-Western Hàn dynasty. What contributed to the shadow- and echo-imagery's decreasing productivity for poetic purposes was a

[229] "譬猶形影、聲響相聞、豈得不復哉！," in Yuán Kāng 袁康 and Lǐ Bùjiā 李步嘉 (eds.), *Yuè jué shū jiàoshì* 越絶書校釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2013), 13.341.

[230] *Shì qióng xiǎng yǐ shēng, xíng yǔ yǐng jìng zǒu yě* 是窮響以聲，形與影競走也 (*Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 33.1112).

phonological change occurring during the Western Hàn dynasty, in which the terms 'shadow' (*qraŋʔ) and 'echo' (*qʰaŋʔ) were more and more differentiated. Specifically, uvular initials appear to have been gradually lost over the course of the Western Hàn dynasty, being first assimilated into velars. By the Eastern Hàn dynasty, the initials of the two terms of shadow and echo hence differed considerably: compare the Later Hàn reconstruction for 'shadow' (*yǐng* 影, LHan *ʔiaŋᴮ⁾; and for 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響, LHan *hiaŋᴮ).[231] While this phonological change may have lessened the sonic recurrence between the terms, the semantic parallel persisted, which had been established through earlier textual engagement of the shadow- and echo-imagery.

As such, these developments, from plays on the poetic function of language towards short textual allusions, highlight not just phonological changes at work, but also a different engagement with text: such pithy sayings are de-poeticized references, and effective only due to frequent prior usage of the echo- and shadow-imagery.

### 2.7 The Shadows and Echoes of Early Chinese Building Blocks

Throughout these passages, the shadow- and echo-imagery is hence reconstituted within different poetic structures and employed to express entirely different contents. As noted above, both the multivalency of the imagery and its repeated parallelism – operating on a semantical, aural, and frequently also syntactical plane – played a role in allowing for the frequent reuse of the imagery across early Chinese texts. But for longer units of text that recur in completely different contexts, consider the two examples below:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 魯石公劍, | | In his swordsmanship, Shígōng of Lǔ |
| 迫則能應, | *-ŋ | was able to respond when pressed; |
| 感則能動, | *[Cə-m-]tˁoŋʔ | was able to move when stimulated. |

[231] Compare further Schuessler's OCM for 'shadow,' OCM *ʔraŋʔ; and 'echo,' OCM *haŋ.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| （眇）〔沕〕穆無窮， | *-ŋ | Slight and subtle, inexhaustible; |
| 變無形像， | *s.[d]aŋʔ | altering without form or image. |
| 復柔委從， | *[dz]oŋ | Pliant again, twisting and following, |
| 如影與響， | *qʰaŋʔ | like the shadow and the echo. |
| 如龍之守戶， | *m-qˤaʔ | like a dragon guarding a door; |
| 如輪之逐馬， | *mˤraʔ | like a wheel spinning behind a horse. |
| 響之應聲， | *[l̥]eŋ | [he was like] the echo responding to sound, |
| 影之像形也， | *[ɢ]ˤeŋ | like shadow resembling shapes.[232] |

This first passage, from the *Shuì yuàn*, uses this material to describe how a certain Shígōng was skilled in wielding a sword. Consisting largely of tetrasyllabic lines, the passage embeds the imagery of shadow and echo within a longer sequence of rhymes, first ending on *-aŋ/oŋ, then on *-aʔ, and lastly on *-eŋ. The imagery occurs twice: firstly, following the statement of "pliant again, twisting and following," and secondly, following the analogies of a guarding dragon and a chariot's spinning wheel. In the second instance, the imagery occurs in the same standardized form as observed above in section 2.6. Now consider the second example below, found in the *Huáinánzǐ*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 大道坦坦， | *[tʰ]ˤa[n]ʔ | The Great Way is open and smooth; |
| 去身不遠， | *C.gʷanʔ | it is never far from yourself. |
| 求之近者， | | If you seek it in what is close, |
| 往而複反。 | *Cə.panʔ | you'll get to it and return [with it]. |
| 迫則能應， | *-ŋ | When pressed, you'll be able to respond; |
| 感則能動， | *[Cə-m-]tˤoŋʔ | when stimulated, you'll be able to move. |
| （物）〔沕〕穆無窮， | *-ŋ | Slight and subtle, inexhaustible, |
| 變無形像， | *s.[d]aŋʔ | altering without form or image. |
| 優遊委縱， | *[ts]oŋ-s | Freely roaming, fully released, |
| 如響之與景。 | *qraŋʔ | Like the echo to the shadow. |
| 登高臨下， | | Climb up high and gaze down, |

[232] *Shuì yuàn jiàobǔ* 15.322, compare also Henry, *Garden of Eloquence*, 881.

無失所秉。 *praŋʔ never losing what you're grasping.[233]

Composed similarly of largely tetrasyllabic lines, this passage contains the shadow- and echo-imagery only once. It does, however, similarly embed it within a longer sequence of rhyme, first ending on *-anʔ, then on *-aŋ/oŋ. Here, however, the imagery is applied to the Way itself and its consequences on an individual following it.

Both passages share textual material (highlighted) consisting of six lines, which equals 24 glyphs: this is one of the formats that William G. Boltz identifies as a basic "building block" of early Chinese texts, and that corresponds to the length and amount of glyphs on a standard Hàn dynasty bamboo slip.[234] Despite minor variations in wording, these two passages thus contain a distinct parallel that likely was based on the underlying material carrier of early Chinese texts. The different placement of this individual slip had considerable diverging semantic implications: where the *Shuì yuàn* used it to describe the elegance of someone's swordplay, the *Huáinánzǐ* applied it to a follower of the Way.

### 2.8 Shadow- and Echo-Play and Modes of Reuse

This mode of reuse differs markedly from the previously observed modes, and the reasons for this difference are clear: the stability of shared textual material between the passages in the *Shuì yuàn* and the *Huáinánzǐ*, forming a reappropriation of a longer unit of texts into separate contexts, stem from the physical medium upon which these passages were likely inscribed. A shared bamboo slip thus caused a longer parallel between these texts. In other words, such longer parallels are dependent on the process of copying text.

[233] *Huáinánzǐ jíshì* 1.64-65; compare Major et al., *The Huainanzi*, 68, for an alternative translation.
[234] See Boltz, "The Composite Nature," 62-70.

The majority of reuse cases of the shadow- and echo-imagery surveyed above are not *per se* dependent on this process of written textual reproduction: the shared material is markedly shorter. This includes the case of standardized usages, in which the usages of the imagery approach those of pithy sayings (see section 2.6). Nonetheless, given how many verbatim or near-verbatim utterances occur throughout these passages, it is possible that direct reference was made to a stable text previously stated or composed. These uses may thus broadly be summarized under the category of allusion.

Passages likely predating the mid-Western Hàn period employ the shadow- and echo-imagery completely differently. Embedded in predominantly poetic sections, and thus dependent on rhyme, alliteration, or other forms of wordplay, these passages employ a mode of textual reuse that can be reconstructed as dependent on aurality: as such, the primary medium that lent stability to these passages was the human voice itself (regardless of whether such a voice was actually heard or merely thought of in one's inner ear).[235] At least to the inner ears of a pre-imperial or early Western Hàn reading audience, the shadow- and echo-imagery was fundamentally poetic and performative.[236]

[235] Although we do not have evidence for of how or in what format such performative functions occurred, the available evidence indicates that such texts had performative functions.

[236] In this sense, broadening the understanding of "poetry" offers more flexibility in its application to early Chinese textual phenomena, which allows for a deeper understanding of the continuities and ruptures inherent in the textual culture of the late pre-imperial to early Western Hàn China. Most importantly, compare here Kern's statement that "[a] somewhat looser understanding of poetry as intensified, rhythmic speech … also allows us to better appreciate the continuity of such speech across the different 'genres' of ritual hymns, bronze inscriptions, and the royal pronouncements of the *Classic of Documents*" in Martin Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 17. For another highly performative text during the reign of Hàn Wǔdì 漢武帝 (141-87 BCE), compare Martin Kern, "Creating a Book and Performing It: The 'Yao lüe' Chapter of the *Huainanzi* as a Western Han *Fu*," in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, ed. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 124-150.

All this appears to have changed gradually during the reign of Emperor Wǔ of the Western Hàn dynasty (Hàn Wǔdì 漢武帝, 141-87 BCE). Beyond the underlying phonological change that led to a changed appreciation of the shadow- and echo-imagery – in which uvular initials disappeared, and the parallels between 'shadow' (*yǐng* 影 *qraŋʔ > LHan *ʔiaŋ$^{B}$) and 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響 *q$^{h}$aŋʔ > LHan *hiaŋ$^{B}$) thus lessened – changes in how to engage with textual material led to the decline of this poetic mode of textual reuse. This affected also the compositional techniques, through which this imagery could be embedded in longer passages. Hence, the above survey of early Chinese usages of the shadow- and echo-imagery points to the significant changes that occurred in the transitions from the pre-imperial and early Western Hàn periods to subsequent eras.[237]

[237] Later impositions on earlier poetic practices have had a considerably impact on the transmitted textual heritage from early China itself, including the very language of the classic *Shījīng* 詩經 itself (see William H. Baxter, "Zhou and Han Phonology in the *Shijing*," in *Studies in the Historical Phonology of Asian Languages*, ed. William G. Boltz and Michael C. Shapiro (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1991), 1-31.). Similar concerns of later impositions have led Owen to "solve" the problem of an anachronistic account of a poetic "grand tradition" by emphasizing the later editorial work that early Chinese writings underwent, based also on the rich manuscript culture of early medieval China; see Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asia Center, 2006), 24-27.

A critical reexamination of transmitted early sources further reveals that the Hàn imperial court may not only have been sorting and passing early Chinese cultural and textual practices along to later ages, but instead has in many ways rewritten the pre-imperial period in its own image. Compare Martin Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginning through Western Han," in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature: Volume 1, To 1375*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 56-66; for more detail see, as examples, Michael Nylan, "Manuscript Culture in Late Western Han, and the Implications for Authors and Authority," *JCLC* 1 (2014): 155-85; and Martin Kern, "The 'Masters' in the '*Shiji*,'" *T'oung Pao* 101.4/5 (2015): 335–62. Compare also Heng Du, "The Author's Two Bodies: Paratext in Early Chinese Textual Culture," Ph.D. diss, Harvard University, 2018, for a proposed process of the production of supposed Warring States literature during the Han dynasty. A series of articles that analyzes the notion of "schools" as a Han construct underscores the importance of this approach; see, most importantly, Jens Østergård Petersen, "Which Books Did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn? On the Meaning of Pai Chia in Early Chinese Sources," *Monumenta serica* 43 (1995): 1-52; Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions through Exemplary Figures in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 89.1 (2003): 59-99; Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and the Invention of Daoism, 'Legalism,' 'et cetera'," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62 (2003): 129-56; and Paul Goldin, "Persistent Misconceptions About Chinese 'Legalism'," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38.1 (2011): 88–104. Compare also Martin Kern, "Style and Poetic Diction in the *Xunzi*," In *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Xunzi*, ed. Eric L. Hutton (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016), 1-33.

### 2.8.1 Textual Reuse and Poeticity

This leads us back to the overarching problem of textual reuse in early China, but unlike other passages or textual units that came to be ascribed to a specific text during the stabilization of early Chinese texts – or before texts were "closed," to borrow Du Heng's terminology – the shadow- and echo-imagery never ended up being ascribed to a single core text. It continued to be reused across texts and fit into different contexts, perhaps *because* it was so common in the pre-imperial and early Western Hàn periods.

Other scholars have described these compositional techniques from the pre-imperial and early Western Hàn periods also primarily in terms of poeticity. For Martin Kern, textual reuse constitutes "a constant multiplicity of different textual realizations derived from a circumscribed body of poetic material and expressions."[238] In other words, in their various iterations, textual units are reconstituted in different forms, according to different concerns, and tend to behave according to rules of poeticity. The examples above surrounding the shadow- and echo-imagery attest to these techniques: the imagery was embedded in poetic structures, either of rhyme or alliterations – or both. Throughout this textual material, this imagery and its poetic potential recurs, highlighting not just how sound connects, but also how aural connections were used to both connect to previous discourses and diverge from them.

As such, the engagement with textual material – especially short units of text, or even just a shared theme or idea, such as the shadow- and echo-imagery – follows specific compositional techniques and rules. As the above survey highlighted, many early passages engaged with the imagery of shadow and echo in highly creative ways, thus exploring both the semantic and the poetic potential of the inherent parallelism between echo and shadow. Extant written texts from

[238] Kern, "Xi Shuai," 56.

early China thus follow rules known from spoken discourse: recurrence of elements from previous discourse is common in any form of language use, both spoken and written.[239] This is in line with insights from medieval China: as Stephen Owen has pointed out in his study of medieval Chinese poetry, in a tradition of open texts, poetic expression follows the same kind of rules as in language acquisition itself.[240] The employment and expansion of a particular utterance thus follows specific compositional techniques, which can be seen as an unspoken set of rules, habits and possibilities, commonly or simply referred to as competence. As such, early Chinese textual material behaves similarly to the medieval poetic traditions of both China and Europe.[241]

### 2.8.2 Early Texts and Dialogic Syntax

Therefore, based on the proximity between compositional techniques in the pre-imperial to early Western Hàn textual material and larger communicative acts, insights from linguistic literature can hence further improve our understanding of the processes that early texts in their current state underwent. Certain approaches in linguistics have focused on a dynamic and joint construction of utterances, dependent on a participation of multiple contributors, instead of seeing an utterance as a static product by one speaker, or – in the case of written artifacts – one writer. These approaches include the joint-action theory of language use,[242] and dialogism.[243] In these understandings of language, every communicative act is context-shaped and context-renewing.

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[239] Compare P. J. Hopper and S. A. Thompson, "Projectability and Clause Combining in Interaction," in *Crosslinguistic Studies of Clause Combining*, ed. Ritva Laury (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008): 119, where the authors describe written discourse as "normativized and extended versions" of spoken communicative acts.

[240] Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006): 14-16.

[241] Compare especially Kern, "Xi Shuai," and the references Kern makes to the manuscript cultures of medieval China and Europe.

[242] See Herbert H. Clark, *Using Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[243] See V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973); Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas, 1981); Per Linell, *Approaching Dialogue: Talk, Interaction and Contexts in Dialogical Perspectives* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998).

Particularly pertinent for our purposes is here the concept of dialogic syntax and dialogic resonance. In his study of American English conversation, Du Bois observes how speakers often pick up certain elements from previous utterances in order to achieve some pragmatic goal, and he defines his concept of dialogic resonance as the process of "activating affinities across utterances."[244] Du Bois additionally remarks that "essential to dialogicality is not dialogue in the narrow sense, but engagement with prior words and structures."[245] Thus, resonance is not just repetition, but a process by which a speaker or writer picks up previous elements of discourse (including lexical repetition, syntactic construction, intonation pattern etc.) in order to achieve a pragmatic effect.

This concept of dialogicality helps to align the passages analyzed throughout this chapter that reuse the shadow- and echo-imagery with current evidence of Chinese textuality, and additionally explains why these passages engage seemingly creatively with the imagery and its key terms: phonological patterns such as rhyme and alliteration are one of the elements of discourse that can be activated as resonances. Additionally, these patterns can be easily reassembled in order to combine different textual units (as in the example from the *Lǔshì chūnqiū* in section 2.6). Ultimately, following Du Bois' theory, the pragmatic, rhetorical, and argumentative effect of these forms of reshuffling textual material in early China stems from the dialogic engagement of different utterances.

In sum, this imagery of shadow and echo, almost ubiquitous in early texts and a play on near homophones, allows for a better understanding of different modes of textual reuse throughout the transitions from the pre-imperial period to the late Western and Eastern Hàn dynasties. While the

[244] John W. Du Bois, "Towards a Dialogic Syntax," *Cognitive Linguistics* 25 (2014): 360.
[245] *Ibid*., 372.

endurance of this word play across a plethora of texts from different centuries suggests its overall stability, the coinciding of phonological changes and a modified engagement with textual material fundamentally altered what compositional techniques were permissible to embed the shadow- and echo-imagery across ever more contexts.

## 2.9 The Stakes of Resonances

By understanding how these compositional techniques changed in early China, it becomes possible to describe such textual resonances in pre-imperial and early Western Hàn texts more adequately beyond claims of allusion, plagiarism, or quotation, all of which would again point to the frame of reference of stable, quotable texts. This allows us to revisit previous assumptions of seemingly copied texts, and instead describe their employment of shared textual material in structural terms.

These more nuanced differentiations of how early texts embed recurring textual material (including things that may appear to only connect loosely, such as the shadow- and echo-imagery) can hence be reapplied to early texts. While the overview above is limited by its focus on single recurring imagery and thus may not fully suffice to explain how prior structures are re-engaged in early texts, it nevertheless provides a starting point that can be refined through subsequent investigations. In the following, I will underline how these concepts relate to early Chinese texts in a case study, and examine what could be gained through employing them more broadly.

### 2.9.1 Of Owls and War

One set of texts that is marked by parallel occurrences, the "Owl Rhapsody" (*fú niǎo fù* 鵩鳥賦), attributed to Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 (c. 201 – 169 BCE), and a section of "Generational Warfare" (*shì bīng* 世兵), chapter 12 of the text *Héguānzǐ*, has often been discussed together due to their close

affinities. Both texts contain such a high number of parallels to each other that the *Héguānzǐ* has, since the latter half of the Táng 唐 dynasty (618-907 CE) and particularly regarding chapter 12, faced continuous accusations of plagiarism or forgery.[246]

It was not until the discoveries of the Mǎwángduī 馬王 manuscripts in 1973 that the overall text of the *Héguānzǐ* was redeemed from the predominant allegation that it represents a later medley of plagiarized material, as the Mǎwángduī material offered another point of comparison which again featured many overlapping passages.[247] However, parts of chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ* are still often seen as a lesser derivative of the "Owl Rhapsody," particularly because of their close affinities and multiple parallels.[248]

Yet in spite of the similarity in phrasing, a closer look at the compositional techniques of the two texts, especially concerning reused textual material, reveals important differences. Consider, first, the following passage from the "Owl Rhapsody," which is, like chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ*, dominated by tetrasyllabic couplets:[249]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 服乃太息 | *-ək | The owl gave a great sigh, |
| 舉首奮翼, | *-ək | it raised its head and flapped its wings. |
| 口不能言, | *-an | But since it could not speak, |
| 請對以意。 | *-ək | let me reply what it might have thought: |
| 萬物變化, | | "The myriad things change and transform; |

[246] It was in particular the criticism mounted by Liǔ Zōngyuán 柳宗元 (773-819 CE) that resulted in a wholesale rejection of the text *Héguānzǐ* as a forgery. For a discussion of the relationship between the "Owl Rhapsody" and chapter 12 of *Héguānzǐ*, see Carine Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master (He guan zi): A Rhetorical Reading* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 60-70.

[247] Shared phrases and positions between these corpora are noted by Lǐ Xuéqín 李學勤, "Mǎwángduī bóshū yǔ *Héguānzǐ*" 馬王堆帛書與鶡冠子, *Jiānghàn kǎogǔ* 江漢考古 2 (1983): 51-56. For the first redemption of the text in Western scholarship and tentative dating of the text to the years around 200 BCE, see Angus Charles Graham, "A Neglected Pre-Han Philosophical Text: '*Ho-kuan-tzu*,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 52.3 (1989): 497-532. For the most comprehensive overview over the text in any Western language, including textual history and its use of language, see Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master*.

[248] Defoort concludes that chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ* contains a later interpolation, which she considers the most likely reason for the close similarities between said chapter and the "Owl Rhapsody;" see Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master*, 60-70.

[249] In the following, I am only providing short extracts from both texts for the sake of concision.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 固亡休息。 | *-ək | steadfast, with no pause or break. | |
| | 斡流而遷, | *-ar | Whirling, drifting, and diverting; | |
| | 或推而還。 | *-en | others pressing forward and returning. | |
| | 形氣轉續, | | Form and aether revolve and connect; | |
| | 變化而嬗。 | *-anʔ | changing, transforming and evolving. | |
| | 沕穆亡間, | | Secretly dignified, unending; | |
| Q | 胡可勝言！ | *-an | how could words capture it fully! | |
| | 禍兮福所倚, | | Disaster is what fortune leans on; | DDJ |
| | 福兮禍所伏； | *-ək-s | fortune is where disaster lurks. | |
| | 憂喜聚門, | | Grief and joy gather at the same gate; | |
| | 吉凶同域。 | *-ək | good and bad luck share the same realm. | |
| A | 彼吳彊大, | *-at-s | While that [state of] Wú was powerful and great, | |
| | 夫差以敗； | *-at-s | Fūchāi lost with it! | |
| | 粵棲會稽, | | While Yuè was beleaguered at Kuàijī, | |
| | 句踐伯世。 | *-ap-s | Gòujiàn dominated a generation. | |
| | 夫禍之與福, | *-ək | So disaster is to fortune | |
| | 何異糾纆！ | *-an | in what way different from strands to a single rope! | |
| | 命不可說, | | The mandate is beyond explanation; | |
| Q | 孰知其極？ | *-ək | who'd know its limits? | DDJ |
| | 水激則旱, | *-arʔ | With water under pressure, there's a drought; | |
| | 矢激則遠。 | *-anʔ | an arrow under pressure, and it flies far. | |
| | 萬物回薄, | | All things revert and weaken; | |
| | 震蕩相轉。 | *-onʔ | jolting and shaking, turning one around the other. | |
| | 雲烝雨降, | | Like clouds rising and rain falling; | |
| | 糾錯相紛。 | *-ən | interlaced and entwined. | |
| | 大鈞播物, | | All things fling off the Great Potter's Wheel; | |
| | 坱圠無垠。 | *-ər | far and wide dispersed, without limit. | |
| | 天不可與慮, | | Heaven cannot be predicted; | |
| | 道不可與謀。 | *-ə | the Way cannot be planned. | |
| | 遲速有命, | | Yet slow and quick are mandated; | |
| Q | 烏識其時？ | *-ə | how could one recognize their time?[250] | |

Note that direct parallels between this textual selection and the following one are highlighted in grey; likewise, parallels to the broader chapter are highlighted in yellow. Compare the following passage from chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ:*

[250] *Hàn shū* 48.2227. This poem is also found, with some variation, in both the *Shǐ jì* and the *Wénxuǎn* 文選. For a full translation, compare James R. Hightower, "Chia Yi's 'Owl Fu'," *Asia Major* 7 (1959), 125-30.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 遲速有命, | | | Slow and quick are mandated; | |
| | 必中三五 | *-aʔ | | by necessity in accordance with the three and five.[251] | |
| | 合散消息, | | *-ək | Combining, scattering, waning and swelling; | |
| Q | 孰識其時 | | *-əʔ | who'd recognize their seasons? | |
| | 至人遺物, | | | The Perfected leave matters behind; | |
| | 獨與道俱 | *-o | | accompanied only by the Way. | |
| | 縱驅委命, | | | Unleashed, entrusting to the mandate; | |
| | 與時往來。 | | *-ək | coming and going with the seasons. | |
| | 盛衰死生, | | | Fullness and decay, death and life; | |
| Q | 孰識其期？ | *-ə | | who'd recognize their terms? | |
| | 儼然至湛, | | | Solemnly and most profoundly, | |
| Q | 孰知其尤？ | *-ə | | who'd know its shortcomings? | |
| | 禍乎福之所倚, | | | Disaster is what fortune leans on; | |
| | 福乎禍之所伏, | | *-ək-s | fortune is where disaster hides. | DDJ |
| | 禍與福如糾纏。 | | | Disaster and fortune are like strands of a single rope.[252] | |
| | 渾沌錯紛, | | | In a turbid tumble interlaced and entangled; | |
| | 其狀若一； | | | their appearances as one. | |
| | 交解形狀, | | | Criss-crossing and untying forms and appearances; | |
| Q | 孰知其則？ | | *-ək | who'd know its rule? | |
| | 芴芒無貌, | | | Murky and muddled, without semblance, | |
| | 唯聖人而後決其意。 | *-ək-s | | only Sages unravel its meaning. | |
| | 斡流遷徙, | | | Whirling, drifting, diverting and shifting | |
| | 固無休息。 | | *-ək | steadfast, without pause or break. | |
| | 終則有始, | | *-əʔ | When coming to an end, there is a beginning; | |
| Q | 孰知其極？ | | *-ək | who'd know its limits?[253] | DDJ |

While this passage from the *Héguānzǐ* contains a clear sequence of rhymes (marked above, focused in particular on *-ək), it is distinct in its circularity, as it lacks any clear progression, both concerning narrative and argument. More specifically, the passage focuses on the unfathomable nature of the Way and the underlying order of things, and its progression from couplet to couplet, even from line to line, appears somewhat arbitrary, and most couplets appear interchangeable with one another. The sequence of these lines thus appears to be sparked not by an underlying narrative structure, nor any argumentative strategy, but rather by certain key terms that provide an impetus

[251] The "three" may refer to Heaven, Earth, and mankind; the "five" presumably stands for the Five Phases.

[252] This line reads to me like an interlinear commentary that made its way into the main text.

[253] *Héguānzǐ jiàozhù* 12.280-283.

for a specific couplet: for example, the couplet "Criss-crossing and untying forms and appearances; who'd know its rule?" appears to depend on the prior usage of 'appearances' (*zhuàng* 狀) in the previous couplet.

The "Owl Rhapsody" deploys a more narrative style at the very beginning by describing a back and forth between the implied protagonist of the poem and the imagined voice of the owl; this back and forth was partially omitted above. However, once the owl begins its long monologue, it describes the vagaries of the Way in quite the same diction and phrases recurring in the *Héguānzǐ* text. Thus, despite a certain attention to narrative progression in the overall poem, the twists and turns of the Way are still described in a rather repetitive, exchangeable manner, without a clear progression inherent in the majority of couplets. Despite this clear-cut division between narrative and description of the Way, the rhyme scheme does not adhere to this split, and instead, rhymes on *-ək, *-an/-en/-ən/-on, and *-ə are applied throughout the passage.

Both texts are hence dominated by a certain circularity, and the repetitiveness of recurring rhetorical questions further adds to this tendency (highlighted as "Q"). The textual selection from chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ* may even carry this to extremes, given the recurring elements and syntactic monotony of these rhetorical questions.

This circularity of the two passages allows for a distinct modularity of lines, couplets, and longer sections, akin to the modular composition described by Martin Kern for recently discovered *Shī* 詩 material.[254] Compare the six continuous lines in the "Owl Rhapsody" to the description of the fall and rise of the states of Wú 吳 and Yuè 越 (highlighted in yellow, labelled "A"). These lines consist of 24 glyphs, which could again be interpreted to mean that a single bamboo slip was

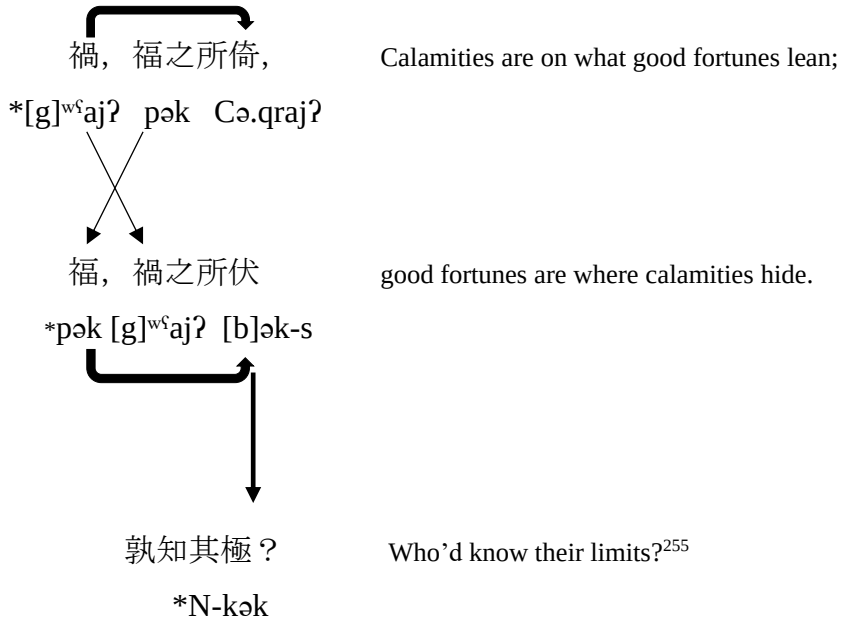
[254] See Kern, "Xi Shuai," 63-69.

the underlying source to these lines. While these lines recur almost verbatim in chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ*, they do not appear there in a continuous way: the text inserts another couplet. This can only mean that there was *not* a direct line of textual reuse between these building blocks of the texts – at least one other source must have stood in between.

Similarly, none of the shared textual material can be easily traced to either one of these to texts as an "original" source – that would be a rather misguided endeavor. Instead, both texts embed recurring textual material according to the rules and constraints of early Western Hàn poeticity: they do so primarily according to concerns for end rhyme and thematic connections. Overall, then, this perspective does not lend support to the hypothesis that "Generational Warfare" contains plagiarized or copied sections from the "Owl Rhapsody." Instead, both texts engage with textual material that appears more broadly reused, and both do so in general accordance with the poetic function of language in embedding these recurring utterances.

### 2.9.2 Reuse of Lǎozǐ material

There is another text that both of the selections above share textual material with: the *Dàodéjīng* 道德經 (*Classic of Way and Virtue*) or *Lǎozǐ* 老子, specifically section (*zhāng* 章) 58 of the received text (the parallels are highlighted above and labelled "DDJ"). These reuses of lines that occur in *Lǎozǐ* 58 further support the repetitiveness, as they first root the repetitive rhetorical questions from both the chapter 12 of the *Lǎozǐ* and the "Owl Rhapsody" in that textual tradition, and secondly describe the vagaries of the Way from yet another point of view. Furthermore, compare the internal structure of the lines from *Lǎozǐ* 58:




Calamities are on what good fortunes lean;

good fortunes are where calamities hide.

Who'd know their limits?[255]

Like the shadow- and echo-imagery surveyed above, especially in the common, quasi-standardized form that includes the rhyme on shape and sound, this passage from *Lǎozǐ* 58 transposes its semantic content – specifically that 'fortunes' (*fú* 福 *pək) and 'misfortunes' (*huò* 禍 *[g]ʷˁajʔ) are intertwined – onto a syntactic and phonological plane, first through the parallelism of the first two statements, and secondly through the utterance-final terms 'to lean' (*yǐ* 倚 * Cə.qrajʔ) and 'to hide' (*fú* 伏 *[b]ək-s). To cap these aurally and rhetorically effective lines, the third line provides a rhyme to this last term through a rhetorical question ending in 'limits' (*jí* 極 *N-kək).

Neither the "Owl Rhapsody" nor chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ* provide any evidence that these lines are embedded in the overall sequence of text *in reference* to the *Lǎozǐ.* Instead, both texts separate the two lines centered around the core imagery of fortune and misfortune (lines 1 and 2) from the rhetorical question (line 3), and embed these lines in rather detached sections of their

[255] Zhū Qiānzhī 朱謙之 (ed.), *Lǎozǐ jiàoshì* 老子校釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2000), 58.235.

exposition. Rather than quoting, alluding to, or referencing *Lǎozǐ* 58, these texts hence appear to employ this shared material in a general style that is reminiscent of the mystery of the Way associated with the overall textual tradition of the *Lǎozǐ* more broadly.[256]

These resonances to *Lǎozǐ* 58 inherent in both the "Owl Rhapsody" and chapter 12 of the *Héguānzǐ* are hence best interpreted through Du Bois' theory of dialogic syntax, as their engagement with utterances recurring in *Lǎozǐ* 58 is about playing on those affinities for a certain pragmatic effect, which here is best understood as a general positioning within and embracing of a textual tradition. The same is true, however, for those other lines, couplets, and phrases that recur in the two texts, most evidently through a recurrence between the two, but quite possibly also beyond. Like the shadow- and echo-imagery, the actual message of the texts occurs in relation to their overall frame of reference: by repositioning certain utterances – such as *Héguānzǐ* 12 embedding the rhetorical question from *Lǎozǐ* 58 in a repetitive list of similar questions – a text renews and renegotiates those utterances for their own purposes.

### 2.9.3 Resonance and the Lǎozǐ

Yet this framework of dialogicality can also inform readings of the *Lǎozǐ*, especially in regard to its status during the late Warring States period and the early years of the Western Hàn dynasty. The origin of that enigmatic text and its status in early China is one of the most fiercely held debates about ancient history in Chinese scholarship of the twentieth century, and the discoveries of the Guōdiàn 郭店 manuscripts, unearthed in 1993 and published in 1998, gave new vigor to this old debate: part of the 804 inscribed bamboo slips, dating to about 300 BCE, were grouped by the

[256] Compare, in this regard, David Schaberg, "On the Range and Performance of *Laozi*-Style Tetrasyllables," in *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China*, ed. Joachim Gentz and Dirk Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 112-157. Note that Schaberg is concerned more with tetrasyllables in the style *of* the *Lǎozǐ* (such as certain lines in the text *Guǎnzǐ* or the *Zhuāngzǐ*), not actual utterances that also occur within the text itself.

excavators and editors into three discrete texts that are made up of passages that appear almost identically in the received text of the *Lǎozǐ*.[257]

What this framework cannot help solve is with attempts to prove or disprove the dating of the *Lǎozǐ*, and to me, such an attempt appears quite ill-fated, as it depends on a rather ahistorical understanding of "text" during the third and early second century BCE.[258] Instead, the inherent

[257] For an overview of this debate, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The Guodian Manuscripts and Their Place in Twentieth-Century Historiography on the *Laozi*," *HJAS* 65.2 (2005): 417-57. Shaughnessy maps the origins of the modern debate to Liáng Qǐchāo 梁啓超 (1873-1929) and Hú Shì 胡適 (1891-1962) as part of the *Gǔshǐ biàn* 古史辨 debate. As an example, Gù Jiégāng 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) argued already in 1932 that the *Lǎozǐ* did not exist at the time of the compilation of the *Lǚshì chūnqiū*, and came into being only shortly before the compilation of the *Huáinánzǐ* (approx. 139 BCE). Gù based his claim on the lack of clear *Lǎozǐ* -quotations in the *Lǚshì chūnqiū*, while quotations abound in the *Huáinánzǐ*, and from this, Gù drew a further conclusion, namely that the composition of the *Lǎozǐ* itself must have involved considerable compilatory efforts of already existing, older textual units; see Gù Jiégāng 顧頡剛, "Cóng *Lǚshì chūnqiū* tuīcè *Lǎozǐ* zhī chéng shū niándài" 從呂氏春秋推測老子之成書年代, *Yànjīng dàxué shǐxué xuébào* 燕京大學史學學報 4 (1932); rpt., *Gǔshǐ biàn*, 4:462-520.

The traditional view suggests that the *Dàodéjīng* or *Lǎozǐ* was written by Old Dan (Lǎo Dān 老聃) in the sixth or early fifth century BCE, but modern scholarship has largely rejected such a view; note that I use the two titles interchangeably, without suggesting any such authorship. For example, Chad Hansen describes the "dominant current textual theory" of the *Lǎozǐ* as one which "treats the text as an edited accumulation of fragments and bits drawn from a wide variety of sources […]," in Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 201. To some extent, one can also consider the early history of the *Lǎozǐ* as that of a text in search of an author: as A. C. Graham suggests, the text could have been ascribed to Lao Dan around 250 BCE in order to promote the text by means of that figure's reputation; compare Angus Charles Graham, *The Origins of the Legend of Lao Tan* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 119.

Based on the poetic and linguistic structure of the text, William H. Baxter concludes that the *Lǎozǐ* ought to be located somewhere between the *Shījīng* and the *Chǔcí* 楚辭 (*Songs of the South*), which might suggest a dating of the early to mid-fourth century BCE; see William H. Baxter, "Situating the Language of the *Lao-tzu*: The Probable Date of the *Tao-te-ching*," in *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, ed. Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 231–253. I am a little skeptical of the feasibility of such a dating process, as it depends in large parts on the dating of other texts.

Note that the material contained in *Lǎozǐ* 58 does not occur in the Guōdiàn material. For the formal publication of the Guōdiàn manuscripts, see Jīngzhōu shì bówùguǎn 荊州市博物館 (ed.), *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998). Compare also Sarah Allan and Crispin Williams (eds.), *The Guodian* Laozi*: Proceedings of the International Conference, Dartmouth College, May 1998* (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2000).

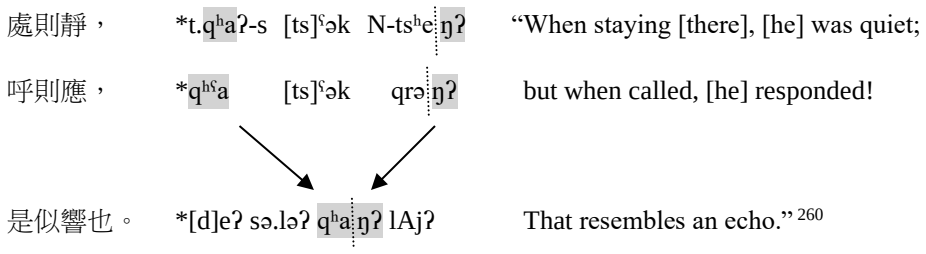
For studies of the *Lǎozǐ*-related material from Guōdiàn in the West, see, for example, William G. Boltz, "The Fourth-Century B.C. Guodiann Manuscripts from Chuu and the Composition of the *Laotzyy*," *JAOS* 119.4 (1999): 590-608; Robert G. Henricks, *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching: A Translation of the Startling New Documents Found at Guodian* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); and Liu Xiaogan, "From Bamboo Strips to Received Versions: Common Features in the Transformation of the *Laozi*," *HJAS* 63.2 (2003): 337-82. For a recent summary of existing scholarship on this question, see Sarah Allan, *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-Slip Manuscripts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 25-37.

[258] Harold Roth raises the question of "precisely what constitutes a text" in regard to the *Lǎozǐ*-related material from Guōdiàn; see Harold D. Roth, "Some Methodological Issues in the Study of the Guodian *Laozi* Parallels," *The*

resonances in the "Owl Rhapsody" and *Héguānzǐ* 12 with *Lǎozǐ* 58 speak to the applicability of a dialogic understanding of the latter material: passages from the *Lǎozǐ* (but also in the general style of the *Lǎozǐ*) could, as a shared cultural repertoire, be engaged more broadly in text in order to create something new. Verbatim or identical recurrences of material occurring in the *Lǎozǐ* in the passages above are hence nothing more than shadows and echoes of much larger discourses that are largely lost to us.[259]

*Guodian 'Laozi:' Proceedings of the International Conference, Dartmouth College, May 1998*, ed. Sarah Allan and Crispin Williams (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2000), 77; Christopher Nugent similarly raises this question in the recent handbook on the study of classical Chinese literature, in addressing the apparent textual fluidity in early manuscript witnesses of the *Shījīng;* see Christopher M. B. Nugent, "Manuscript Cultures," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature*, ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li and Xiaofei Tian (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[259] This certainly does not preclude other forms of textual engagement with this material during a similar time frame, as chapters 20 and 21 of *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子 ("Jiě Lǎo" 解老 and "Yù Lǎo" 喻老) by contrast appear to not only quote a specific, sequential text (that was likely a proto-form of the *Lǎozǐ*), but they do so in an expository, quasi-commentarial way. For a translation and analysis of these chapters of *Hánfēizǐ*, see Sarah A. Queen, "*Han Feizi* and the Old Master: A Comparative Analysis and Translation of *Han Feizi* Chapter 20, 'Jie Lao,' and Chapter 21, 'Yu Lao'," in *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Han Fei*, ed. Paul R. Goldin (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013): 197-256.




As noted in the previous two chapters, this passage, embedded in the reply of Master Mò to a preceding statement, functions not only on a semantic plane but also hints at the term ‘echo’ (*xiǎng* 響 *qʰaŋʔ) through preceding sounds. Specifically, pairs of characters – and their underlying phonological properties – together form the sonic value of ‘echo,’ in a form that may be called “countertomic paronomasia.”[261] Building on a reuse and rearrangement of phonological material, this device is quite reminiscent of the later *fǎnqiè* 反切 principle of providing sound glosses to explain the reading of a specific character, only that here a further *semantic* parallel is claimed.

Additionally, unlike in *fǎnqiè* glosses, the specific segments of syllables evoked by the characters differ: The above example from the *Mòzǐ*, the first characters, meaning ‘staying’ (*chù* 處 *t.qʰaʔ-s) and ‘calling’ (*hū* 呼 *qʰˤa), respectively, provide initial consonant and nucleus (in both instances reconstructed as OC *qʰa-), while the second characters, ‘to be quiet’ (*jìng* 靜 *N-tsʰeŋʔ) and ‘to respond’ (*yīng* 應 *qrəŋʔ), merely provide final consonant and tone category (*-ŋʔ). As these segments come together in the central term ‘echo’ (as *qʰa- + *- ŋʔ == *qʰaŋʔ), the figure of Master Mò in this passage is able to highlight the analytical abilities he and his teachings are credited with. However, rather than simply claiming these skills directly, this performance in

[260] Sūn Yíràng 孫詒讓, and Sūn Qǐzhì 孫啓治 (eds.), *Mòzǐ jiángǔ* 墨子閒詁 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2001), 471.

[261] These occurrences are highlighted in grey in the text above. Definitions of the term of “countertomic paronomasia,” and paronomasia more generally, are located in the introduction of this dissertation.

the realm of verbal artistry – or wordplay more specifically – appears to be more effective. But how so and to what end?

To approach this question, this chapter is concerned with restating phonological material in this form in texts that largely may date to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. I will further illustrate how countertomic paronomasia appears to arise largely within this stratum of text.[262] Instances of countertomic paronomasia provide us with an insight into the linguistic and literary practices of those eras and allow us to trace changes. Additionally, as these wordplays survive within texts engaging in intellectual debates, they can also aid us in drawing connections in those debates. The guiding questions of this chapter are hence: What different approaches to countertomic paronomasia can be identified within transmitted texts from this period? How did these puns function? What do wordplays reveal about ancient language use and reflections thereof? What changes are observable and traceable, and what do they reflect?

Before delving into wordplays fully, it should be noted that the vagueness in textual dating throughout this chapter is deliberate: most texts roughly stemming from this period fall into a category of text that is hard, if not impossible, to assign a specific date to or even an author. Early Chinese texts are thus often the product of later editorial processes. Yet in the "primordial soup of independently circulating textual units," to borrow Du Heng's term here for how she describes the

[262] Secondary scholarship on these issues is sparse. Specifically, three are important as a background: an article by Wolfgang Behr from 2005 illustrates the importance of rhyme nets and *figura etymologica* in early discourse, and the development of what he calls the "paronomastic cadence" as a new stylistic element in texts from the 4th century; compare Wolfgang Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," *BJOAS* 29 (2005): 15-33. Behr, in a paper presented in the year 2018, further argues that early Chinese "paronomasia emerges from poetic *figura etymologica* via recycling of lexical material," first in particular for "auto-commentarial," secondly for "narrative," and lastly for "allo-commentarial and other functions;" compare Wolfgang Behr, "Rhymes and reason, puns n' proses, winsome words: notes on the craft of eloquence in Hanfeizi." Paper presented at *The 22nd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS)*, Glasgow, August 2018. Lastly, Fù Dìngmiǎo's study of the origins of *fǎnqiè* glosses is noteworthy in that it presents a more complete overview over the phenomenon, but in my opinion includes many passages that may not genuinely form part of it (as Fù may include too many false positives); compare Fù Dìngmiǎo 傅定淼, *Fǎnqiè qǐyuán kǎo* 反切起源考 (Shanghai: Shànghǎi gǔjí chūbǎn shè 上海古籍出版社, 2003).

"open texts" typical of this era,[263] it appears that wordplay can coordinate whole passages, forming what we might call "a semantic glue" that connects "things which under other circumstances tend to fly apart."[264]

### 3.1 On Confusion and the Yellow Emperor's Musical Piece

To illustrate both this "glue" and the use of countertomic paronomasia in this period, compare the following passage, preserved in chapter 14 of the text *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, wherein the mythical figure of the Yellow Emperor (*huáng dì* 黃帝) describes how he perfected the tunes of a musical piece, entitled "all-encompassing pool" (*xián chí* 咸池):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 吾又奏之以無怠之聲， | *[l̥]eŋ | "I then played [the music] again through unswerving sounds, |
| 調之以自然之命， | *mreŋ | and attuned it with the decrees that are so of themselves. |
| 故若混逐叢生， | *sreŋ | Thus it was like a murky pursuit of thickets of creating; |
| 林樂而無形； | *[ɢ]ˤeŋ | A rejoicing in groves but lacking all form; |

[263] Du Heng, *The Author's Two Bodies*, 4. For more details on the model of "open texts," compare her dissertation more broadly; this work builds on previous observations how received texts ought to be viewed as a composite of paragraph-length textual units that circulated rather freely and independently in the earlier period; compare 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, 2005): 50-78, but also Yú Jiāxī 余嘉錫, *Gǔshū tōnglì* 古書通例 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1985): 1-49; 93-109. In a similar vein, recent studies of textual reuse and citation patterns also show that the received pre-imperial texts do not behave like the products of a textual culture dominated by revered authors and books; compare, for example, Esther Klein, "Were There 'Inner Chapters' in the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence About the Zhuangzi," *T'oung Pao* 96 (2010); Michael Hunter, *Confucius Beyond the Analects* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). Finally, a critical reexamination of transmitted early sources further reveals that the active role the Han imperial court played in the reshaping of earlier material; compare Martin Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han," in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature: Volume 1, To 1375*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 57. For more detail see, as examples, Michael Nylan, "Manuscript Culture in Late Western Han, and the Implications for Authors and Authority," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 1.1-2 (2014): 155-185; Martin Kern, "Kongzi as Author in the Han," in *Confucius and the Analects Revisited: New Perspectives on Dating, Composition, and Authorship*, ed. Michael Hunter and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 268-308. The series of articles that analyzes the notion of "schools" as a Han construct underscores the importance of this approach; compare, for example Jens Østergård Petersen, "Which Books Did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn? On the Meaning of Pai Chia in Early Chinese Sources," *Monumenta serica* (1995): 1-52; Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions through Exemplary Figures in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 89.1 (2003): 59-99; Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and the Invention of Daoism, 'Legalism,' 'et cetera'," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62 (2003): 129-156; and Paul Goldin, "Persistent Misconceptions About Chinese 'Legalism'," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38.1 (2011): 88-104.

[264] Haun Saussy, "Repetition, Rhyme, and Exchange in the Book of Odes," *HJAS* 57.2 (1997): 532.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 布揮而不曳， | | | A scattered plucking of strings, not resonating; |
| 幽昏而無聲。 | | *sreŋ | A dark muddle and lacking all sound. |
| 動於無方， | | | It moved in that which lacks all direction, |
| 居於窈冥； | | *meŋ | and dwelled in seductive darkness. |
| 或謂之死， | *sijʔ | | Some refer to it as death, |
| 或謂之生； | | *sreŋ | Some refer to it as life; |
| 或謂之實， | *mə.l i[t] | | Some refer to it as ***fruition***, |
| 或謂之榮； | | *[N-q$^{w}$]r eŋ | Some refer to it as ***flourishing***. |
| 行流散徙， | (*[s]ajʔ) | | Moving and flowing, scattering and going; |
| 不主常聲。 | *[l̥]eŋ | | and not presiding over a persistent ***sound***. |
| 世疑之, | | | Generations are uncertain about it, |
| 稽於聖人。 | *l̥eŋ-s | | and deliberate with the ***Sages***. |
| 聖也者, | | | For what a ***Sage*** is |
| 達於情 | *[l]$^{ʕ}$at ... | [dz]eŋ | is to ***get through*** to the ***dispositions*** |
| 而遂於命也。 | *sə-l u[t]-s... | mr eŋ | and to ***follow through*** in ***commanding***.”[265] |

In a back and forth between life and death, between coming together and scattering, this passage employs a host of devices we certainly ought to call wordplay. The employment of these devices is inherently ludic in nature, and the figure of the Yellow Emperor himself describes the process as follows: “…this may be called Heavenly music/joy: without an utterance, the mind is delighted.”[266] The double meaning of ‘music’ or ‘joy’ (*yuè/lè*, both written 樂) appears to be fully deliberate in this case, as the text not only describes the supposed musical piece, but also explicitly points to the ‘delight’ (*yuè* 説) experienced.[267]

[265] Liú Wéndiǎn 劉文典, Zhào Fēng 趙鋒, and Zhū Wěiqí 諸偉奇 (eds.), *Zhuāngzǐ bǔzhèng* 莊子補正 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2015), 14.409-410.

[266] *Cǐ zhī wèi tiān yuè/lè: wú yán ér xīn yuè* 此之謂天樂，無言而心説 (*Zhuāngzǐ bǔzhèng*, 14.410).

[267] Note that ‘music’ (*yuè* 樂 *[ŋ]$^{ʕ}$rawk) is not only written with a completely different graph than ‘delight’(*yuè* 説 or 悦 *lot), but is also reconstructed very differently in Old Chinese.

My reading of the playfulness in these lines finds further support in the aural structuring of the passage, realized most prominently in a long rhyme net (on *-eŋ), and additionally an interspersed rhyme on *-it/iʔ. More importantly, however, and as in the introductory example, where the figure of Master Mò does not appear to directly *gloss* the term 'echo,' but rather deduces 'echo' from a given prompt through countertomic paronomasia, we encounter a similar reuse and recurrence of phonological material in the second half of the passage, centered on the key terms 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ) and 'Sage' (*shèng* 聖 *l̥eŋ-s).

These terms form part of a cadence that goes even a step further than directly linking them, as a Sage *ought to* pay attention to what he hears: the terms 'sound' (*[l̥]eŋ), 'hearing' (*tīng* 聽 *l̥ˁeŋ-s), and 'Sage' (*l̥eŋ-s) are, in the end, very likely etymologically related.[268] In instances of countertomic paronomasia above, the phonological material of the *lexical root* of the key words (*l̥eŋ) occurs through splitting and rearranging not just once in prominent positions, but *thrice*: first in the preceding pair of 'fruition' (*shí* 實 *mə.li[t]) and 'flourishing' (*róng* 榮 *[N-qʷ]reŋ), both occurring at the end of their lines; secondly, in the pair of 'to get through' (*dá* 達 *[l]ˁat) and 'predispositions' (*qíng* 情 *[dz]eŋ), separated only by a preposition (*yú* 於 *[ʔ]a); and thirdly, 'to follow through' (*suì* 遂 *sə-lu[t]-s) and 'to decree/command' (*mìng* 命 *mreŋ), constructed in parallel to the preceding pair. In all three pairings, the first of the terms provides the initial *l-, and the second the rime *-eŋ, which, if put together, resemble the root of the mentioned key terms 'sound' and 'Sage.'

The text even contains two lines that appear to comment on these devices, as this sort of rearrangement of phonological material indeed appears "moving and flowing, scattering and going; and not presiding over a persistent sound." In this sense, the text comments in a dazzling manner

[268] Compare Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," 29-30; compare also Axel Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 460-461.

on its own ludic nature on both a poetic and on a metalinguistic level; it *glosses*, in a way, key phrases through recurrent phonological patterns, and makes this reshuffling its focus, in a self-referential fashion.[269] In twists and turns that may appear murky and muddled, the text spins its terms to produce an effect that must have left its audience either in awe or utterly confused, just as the figure of the Yellow Emperor of that passage further emphasizes:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 故有焱氏為之頌曰： | | "Thus the Lord of Yàn ("blazing") eulogized it thus: |
| 『聽之不聞其聲, | *[l̥]eŋ | 'When you listen to it but do not hear its sound; |
| 視之不見其形, | *[ɢ]ˁeŋ | when you look at it but do not see its shape, |
| 充滿天地, | | it fills Heaven and Earth, |
| 苞裹六極。』 | *[g](r)ək | and enwraps all six directions.' |
| 汝欲聽之 | *l̥ˁeŋ | You wanted to hear it, |
| 而無接焉, | | but have nothing to connect it to – |
| 而故惑也。 | *[ɢ]ʷˁək | that is why you are puzzled!"[270] |

Through this embedded quotation, the figure of the Yellow Emperor highlights the need to connect in yet another connected way – again through rimes (*-eŋ and *-ək), and the text furthermore includes also a play between 'sound' and 'to listen' (*tīng* 聽 *l̥ˁeŋ), both sharing, again, the same lexical root already highlighted above – and points out that without connecting the hints sprinkled throughout his performative speech, one can only be 'confused' (*huò* 惑 *[ɢ]ʷˁək) by these passages. It is in these ways that the text in its description of the "Heavenly music/joy" performs its claim over mastery of language in the most playful of ways, highlighting the advantages of being able to navigate the presented, seemingly murky rhetorical twists and thickets of wordplay. The way the figure of the Yellow Emperor ends his description of the grandiose piece

[269] Martin Kern notices a similar self-referential form of mapping meaning on sound patterns at work in parts of the *Zhànguó cè* 戰國策, the *Lǐjì* 禮記 and in the Western Hàn *Fù* 賦 genre of poetry; see Martin Kern, "Western Han Aesthetics and the Genesis of the 'Fu,'" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63.2 (2003): 383–437.

[270] *Zhuāngzǐ bǔzhèng,* 14.410-411. The *shū* 疏 commentary identifies *Yàn shì* 焱氏 as Shénnóng 神農, which may be a doubtful attribution.

of music, performed through his verbal exuberance, points to the purposes of this display of wordplays:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 卒之於惑, | | "I ended it with confusion, |
| 惑故愚； | *ŋ(r)o | and from it comes witlessness; |
| 愚故道, | | and from that comes [me] showing the way. |
| 道可載而與之俱也。」 | *[g](r)o | [This] Way is a tool that can be picked up and passed on!"[271] |

Fittingly ending on a pun between the double-meaning of *dǎo/dào* 道 as first 'showing the way' or 'lead,' and secondly as the unfathomable 'Way' itself (which may, according to the Yellow Emperor's speech, not be so unfathomable), these final words highlight the purpose of the numerous puns presented: aural artistry serves to *stun* and *stupefy* the audience, which in turn allows for the speaker to gain the upper hand in an exchange of words.[272] Mastering language, including dazzling wordplays, is thus a skill that can be acquired and even serves, according to this passage, as a way to perform the Dào, 'Way,' itself, and thus *is* nothing else than *dǎo*, 'showing the way.' This mastery of language is marked by a self-referential performance of language, which was ought to be "heard" – either through one's own internal auditory senses while reading or in an actual recitation.[273]

These functions appear not only in this passage from chapter 14 of the *Zhuāngzǐ,* described as belonging to the "Huang-Lao" sections of the text and thus perhaps a product of the late 3rd- to

[271] *Zhuāngzǐ bǔzhèng,* 14.411. Note that the first 道, read here as *dǎo*, needs to be read as a predicate, hence suggesting that reading; the second 道 as *dào,* as it ought to be read nominally.

[272] Compare also Martin Kern's argument on a passage in the *Zhànguó cè* 戰國策, where the figure of Sū Qín 蘇秦 marvels at the confusion created by the effects of verbal artistry that expresses that very confusion, in Kern, "Western Han Aesthetics," 417-419; and Kern's argument that chapter 21 of the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 performed similar functions; see Kern 2003 and Martin Kern, "Creating a Book and Performing It: The 'Yao lüe' Chapter of the *Huainanzi* as a Western Han *Fu*," in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, ed. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 124-150.

[273] While the texts surveyed here provide no indication as to how these texts were performed, we can nonetheless acknowledge their inherent demand for performance.

early 2nd century,[274] but are also at play in the introductory example featuring Master Mò. In the Mohist example, a Mòzǐ figure commented on the choice of words, performatively revealing an underlying term ('echo'). There, too, a certain ludic effect appeared to be at work, and in its performative use of wordplay, it highlighted its claimed mastery over language, present also in the aural exuberance in the speech of the Yellow Emperor in chapter 14 of *Zhuāngzǐ*.

As I noted above, this mastery over aural language is almost by definition a defining trait of a 'Sage' (*shèng* 聖 *l̥eŋ-s) in early China, as the act of a Sage's 'listening' (*tīng* 聽 *l̥ˁeŋ-s) to 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ) plays not just on a recurrence of sound, but on likely etymological relations. Listening, classifying, deducing, and understanding hints sprinkled throughout the sounds in sections of verbal exuberance are thus part of what a Sage ought to do.

However, more important than whether or not the connections between these pairings are, linguistically speaking, genuinely derivational – and the pairings themselves thus proper cognates – is the *perceived* connection between the terms drawn into such a network of aural recurrence. Such instances of paronomasia as a form of wordplay provide us with a rather rare insight into how ancient users of the language thought about the words they used; but, as the examples of this chapter illustrate, these connections go beyond clear paronomasia.[275]

### 3.2 Background: Paronomastic Cadences

The immediate background for the apparent emergence in the 3rd century of countertomic paronomasia can be located in what may be called "paronomastic cadence," which, according to

[274] Compare, for example, Xiaogan Liu and Yama Wong, "Three Groups of the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters," in *Dao Companion to Daoist Philosophy*, ed. Xiaogan Liu (Dordrecht: Springer 2015), 232-235. These stratifications are in my opinion rather dubious and build on assumptions that may not hold up.

[275] These apparent associations arise from the early Chinese belief of a significant correlation between sound and meaning; compare, for this conviction in early China, in addition to Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," also Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Zhiming Bao, "Language and World View in Ancient China," *Philosophy East and West* 40.2 (1990): 195-219; and Paul R. Goldin, *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 14-18.

Behr, should be regarded as a "decidedly new stylistic element of the 4th century B.C., … by and large absent in earlier prose texts."[276] In such a cadence, certain terms are highlighted in that they share phonological material with surrounding terms through paronomasia, and further embedded by rhyme nets and other aural devices. This feature can also be observed in the passage cited previously from chapter 14 of the text *Zhuāngzǐ*.

The device of the paronomastic cadence is exhibited by the following passage from the text *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子, specifically from its chapter "Way of the Ruler" (*zhǔ dào* 主道). It illustrates these elements through its play on the terms 'tiger' (*hǔ* 虎 *qʰˁraʔ; highlighted in blue) and 'robber' (*zéi* 賊 *k.dzˁək; highlighted in green), terms first encountered in lines 3 and 6, respectively, both in phrase-initial position, and is structured in a highly bifurcated way, with half of the text focusing on the former, and the other half on the latter term:[277]

[276] Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," 26-27.

[277] Note that while sections III and IV feature material phonologically close to both terms, each of these sections features only 'tiger'- or 'robber'-related material in phrase-final position; material related to the *other* term then occur only in phrase-initial position.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *pə kə[r]ʔ | 不謹其閉, | | Not guarding his doorway; | I |
| 2 | *pə kˤa(ʔ)-s | 不固其門, | *mˤə[n] | not securing his gate, | |
| 3 | *qʰˤraʔ | 虎乃將存。 | *[dz]ˤə[n] | thus tigers will be there! | |
| 4 | | 不慎其事, | *m-s-rəʔ-s | Not cautious in his dealings; | II |
| 5 | | 不掩其情, | *[dz]eŋ | not hiding his disposition, | |
| 6 | *k.dzˤək | 賊乃將生。 | *sreŋ | thus *robbers* will arise! | |
| 7 | *l̥ək-s | 弒其主, | *toʔ | *Murdering* their lord, | III |
| 8 | *lˤək-s | 代其所, | *s-qʰraʔ | *usurping* his place, | |
| 9 | | 人莫不與 | *ɢ(r)aʔ-s | and all the others will join; | |
| 10 | | 故謂之虎。 | *qʰˤraʔ | hence I refer to them as tigers. | |
| 11 | *t.qʰaʔ | 處其主之側, | *toʔ tə [ts]rək | Placed by their lord's *side*, | IV |
| 12 | | 為姦臣, | | acting as treacherous subjects, | |
| 13 | | 聞其主之忒, | *toʔ tə l̥ˤək | listening to their lord's *erring*; | |
| 14 | | 故謂之賊。 | *k.dzˤək | hence I refer to them as *robbers*. | |
| 15 | | 散其黨, | *tˤaŋʔ | Dispersing their cliques | V |
| 16 | | 收其餘 , | *la | and capturing their remnants; | |
| 17 | | 閉其門, | | shutting the gates | |
| 18 | | 奪其輔, | *[b](r)aʔ | and seizing their sustenance – | |
| 19 | | 國乃無虎。 | *qʰˤraʔ | and thus the state is without tigers! | |
| 20 | | 大不可量, | *[r]aŋ | Immeasurably great! | VI |
| 21 | | 深不可測, | *[tsʰ]rək | un*fathom*ably deep! | |
| 22 | | 同合刑名, | | Matching punishments and titles; | |
| 23 | | 審驗法式, | *l̥ək | examining regulations and *standards*; | |
| 24 | | 擅為者誅, | | and those who act on their own slain – | |
| 25 | | 國乃無賊。 | *k.dzˤək | and thus the state is without *robbers*![278] | |

[278] Wáng Xiānshèn 王先慎, and Zhōng Zhé 鍾哲 (eds.), *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě* 韓非子集解 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1998), 28-29.

What anchors this passage and holds it together are the word plays on 'tiger' (*hǔ* 虎 *qʰˁraʔ) and 'robber' (*zéi* 賊 *k.dzˁək). Forming a contrast between tigers and robbers, including terms related to the respective imagery, this passage features most prominently a clear split of the passage between material related to one or the other of the terms, with the theme of the tiger covering uneven sections (marked above as I, with a length of three lines; III, with a length of four lines; and V, spanning five lines), and the theme of robbers covering even sections (above as II, three lines; IV, four lines; and VI, six lines).[279] This is further framed through different, unrelated rhymes (lines 2 & 3 on *-ən; 5 & 6 on *-eŋ; lines 15 & 20 on *-aŋ) and alliterations (lines 1 & 2 on *pə k-).

The main aural device keeping this passage together are, to reiterate, the host of connections – either paronomastically or through rhyme – to the key terms of tiger and robber: while 'place' (*suǒ* 所 *s-qʰraʔ), 'to join' (*yù* 與 *ɢ(r)aʔ-s), and 'to place' (*chǔ* 處 *t.qʰaʔ) may function as paronomasia, and more loosely as a rhyme connection 'remainder' (*yú* 餘 *la) and 'sustenance' (*fǔ* 輔 *[b](r)aʔ),[280] to the former, the latter is connected to a rather heterodox group of terms such as 'to fathom' (*cè* 測 *[tsʰ]rək), 'side' (*cè* 側 *[ts]rək), 'to murder' (*shì* 弒 *l̥ək-s), 'to usurp' (*dài* 代 *lˁək-s), 'erring' (tè 忒 *l̥ˁək), and 'standards' (*shì* 式 *l̥ək). These connections produce a measured, continuous reiteration of the main themes of the passage, a reiteration that is certainly effective on a rhetorical level. Beyond rhetoric, however, these devices, especially in their parallel deployment in the contrast between tigers and robbers, appear to coordinate the textual material, and more importantly, further appear to suggest *who* specifically is denounced through the imagery of robbers and tigers, namely treacherous advisors.

[279] This contrast appears, however, interlinked in lines 7 & 8, and line 11.

[280] It appears that "lord" (*zhǔ* 主 *toʔ) may potentially also be drawn into this list.

This suggestive use of aural connections also highlights the dazzling effect and performative element of such a passage. Through the use of this imagery, which functions comparably to the conceptual metaphor described by Lakoff and Johnson, a conceptual "blending" occurs:[281] the alluded advisors *are* robbers and tigers. This process occurs here through an equation on the level of the poetic function of language, to use Jakobson's term.[282]

### 3.3 Towards Countertomic Paronomasia during the Late Warring States Period

Countertomic paronomasia, as occurring in the introductory examples from the *Mòzǐ* and the *Zhuāngzǐ*, appears to build on this sort of paronomastic cadence as a stylistic device. However, whereas a cadence transposes a conceptual equation through shared sounds, the device of countertomic paronomasia appears more "analytic" in nature, in that it splits and rearranges the utilized phonological material to highlight conceptual components and aspects.

A different origin of the device of countertomic paronomasia is suggested by Fù Dìngmiǎo, who argues that similar occurrences can be traced even to the *Classic of Odes* (*Shī jīng* 詩經).[283] More specifically, Fù identifies such occurrences in 132 poems, thus in approximately 43% of the overall compilation.[284] However, there are vast differences between the examples from that early

[281] For conceptual metaphor, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003); compare, however, Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, 3-43, for reasons why "metaphor" may be a misnomer for early Chinese examples, and why "imagery" constitutes a better alternative.

[282] See Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. by Thomas Sebeok (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964): 350-449. Note here that at the same time, moments of marked reference within the passage quoted above, specifically occurring in lines 10 and 14 (both lines contain the phrase "hence I refer to" *gù wèi* 故謂), directly engage not only the referential function of language, but in its combination with the poetic also a reflexive function – language itself in its conventionalized use is hence called into question.

[283] See Fù, *Fǎnqiè qǐyuán kǎo*, 44-52.

[284] See Fù, *Fǎnqiè qǐyuán kǎo*, 65. For a full list of the sections identified by Fù, compare Fù's appendix on pp. 160-193. Given that Fù bases his analysis on Li Fang-kuei's revisions of Karlgren's system, such numbers may not reflect what a similar analysis would yield using the reconstruction of Old Chinese used here. Specifically, the proposed consonant clusters in the Baxter-Sagart system offer a more refined perspective on initials and would complicate the identification of the initials – and hence reduce the instances of countertomic paronomasia observed – throughout the texts studied by Fù. Alternatively, such instances that Fù identifies as both featuring both alliteration and rhyme but do not function in this way under the perspective of the Baxter-Sagart reconstruction of Old Chinese may reflect a different stage in the development of Chinese phonology. After all, even the *Shī jīng*

text and those from the 3rd to 2nd century: all examples in the *Shī jīng* listed by Fù combine alliteration and rhyme of terms located at the terminal position of three separate lines, but none features a clear reflective moment in how the poetic function of language is used to *refer* to distinct entities.[285] Such moments of reference appear critical in the examples from the 3rd to 2nd century BCE I have encountered, but are all but absent in the earlier examples listed by Fù. It is for this reason that I consider countertomic paronomasia more a product of the 3rd century BCE, and as I will illustrate below, the device is best understood in this context.

### 3.3.1 Unseen, Unheard, Ungrasped: The Muddled and Murky in the *Lǎozǐ*

Furthermore, in the extant corpus of "open texts" of that period, perhaps no other wandering building blocks of text may be as important to a fuller understanding of such wordplays as those contained in the *Dàodéjīng* 道德經, attributed to the elusive figure of the 'Old Master' (Lǎozǐ 老子), described in the Hàn dynasty as a contemporary of Kǒngzǐ. The nature of these building blocks is, at the same time, highly contested, but it is safe to say that they are governed by the poetic features of rhyme and meter. Section (*zhāng* 章) 14 of the received text contains a particularly impressive network of wordplay of sorts. These are wordplays that bring specifically issues of reference into question, and the following section may offer certain links to the above example from chapter 14 of the *Zhuāngzǐ:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 視之不見，名曰夷； | *ləj | When you look at it but do not see, call it **ləj*; |
| A | 聽之不聞，名曰希； | *$q^{h}$əj | When you listen to it but do not hear, call it **$q^{h}$əj*; |
| A | 搏之不得，名曰微。 | *məj | When you feel for it but do not grasp, call it **məj*; |

reflects not just pre-imperial Old Chinese, but through editorial work phonology of the imperial era has left its traces as well, as argued by Baxter; see William H. Baxter, "Zhou and Han Phonology in the *Shijing*," in Studies in the Historical Phonology of Asian Languages, ed. Boltz, William G. and Shapiro, Michael C. (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1991).

[285] In this, Fù's examples are comparable to one observed in the introductory example from the *Zhuāngzǐ*, specifically where "fruition" (*shí* 實 *mə.li[t]) and "flourishing" (*róng* 榮*[N-$q^{w}$]reŋ) feature first an alliteration (*l-), and secondly a rhyme (*-eŋ) to "sound" (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| BB | 此三者不可致詰, | *tri[t]-s [kʰ]i[t] | These three cannot be apprehended – |
| B | 故混而為一。 | *ʔit | and thus they are murky and act as one. |
| | 其上不皦, | | Its upper part not glowing, |
| C | 其下不昧。 | *mˁ[u][t]-s | its lower part not bedimmed; |
| | 繩繩不可名, | | Unbounded, it cannot be named, |
| C | 復歸於无物。 | *C.mut | returning again to what has no material property. |
| D | 是謂无狀之狀, | *ma [dz]raŋ-s tə [dz]raŋ | This is referred to as the shape that has no shape, |
| D | 无物之象, | *ma C.mut tə s-[d]aŋʔ | and the figure that has no material property. |
| CD | 是謂忽恍。 | *m̥ˁut kʷˁaŋ | This is referred to as muddled and murky. |
| C | 迎之不見其首, | *l̥uʔ | Turn to it and you won't see its head, |
| | 隨之不見其後。 | | follow it and you won't see its rear. |
| C | 執古之道, | *[kə.l]ˁuʔ | Hold fast to the ancient Way |
| C | 以御今之有。 | *[ɢ]ʷəʔ | to manage with it today's possessions; |
| c | 以知古始, | *kˁaʔ l̥əʔ | By knowing the beginning of antiquity, |
| c | 是謂道已（紀）。 | *k(r)əʔ | this is referred to as the cord of the Way.[286] |

Thus reads the received text of what we have come to call section 14 of the *Dàodéjīng*, which is dominated by the mystical, seemingly inaccessible language that characterizes much of that text, perhaps used to circumscribe an equally mystical and inaccessible truth about the Way itself. To be certain, this text poses difficulties in understanding, and its meaning may even be completely inaccessible;[287] but this might, in the end, form part of the appeal of such a passage. This effect of mystical inaccessibility appears to be produced in two ways: firstly, an intricate and masterful

[286] Zhū Qiānzhī 朱謙之 (ed.), *Lǎozǐ jiàoshì* 老子校釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2000), 52-58. For ease of reference, I have broken up the text into 18 lines, primarily according to the underlying rhyme scheme.

[287] Compare Dirk Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo: Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Meyer argues that the meaning of the texts excavated at Guōdiàn, which bear striking similarities to the *Dàodéjīng* (such that they have been at times called "the Guōdiàn *Lǎozǐ*"), remains inaccessible to us due to the texts' dependency on a context that is irretrievably lost, opposed to other texts that are based on argumentative structure; also compare Wagner's in-depth study of the commentary of Wang Bi, which illustrates how the structure of the *Dàodéjīng* allowed a thinker in the 3rd century C.E. to generate new insights; in Rudolf G. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000).

employment of rhymes and paronomastic devices; and secondly, through frequent moments in which something is referred to. It should be noted that these go hand in hand with one another, as reference and poeticity are here time and again brought together and complicated.

Compare the opening lines of this text, which all end in a suggested name for a seemingly paradoxical statement about the absence of successful sensory experiences of looking, listening, and touching, with each of the suggested designations rhyming in reconstructions of Old Chinese (*yí* 夷 *ləj; *xī* 希 *qʰəj; *wēi* 微 *məj). The following two lines clarify that these experiences "cannot be apprehended," which is why they function as "one," presented again through the device of rhyme (on OC *-it). A look at the parallel texts excavated at Mǎwángduī 馬王堆 (a site dating to 168 BCE) shows that the designations for absence of sensory experiences, rhyming in *-əj, are there *interchanged*.[288] This may indicate their arbitrary assignment (beyond their shared rime), showing that these terms truly function as an interchangeable "one," and that they may not have been meaningful in and of themselves around the 3rd and early 2nd century BCE.[289]

In these two sets of rhymes, then, sound and meaning are brought together, first as murky designations of the absences of sensory experience, and secondly as "one" through this unity of absence. Expressed differently, the text here in a way comments on its own rhyming practice by directly stating that the distinctions between what the absence of sight, hearing, and touch constitute function the same way, and are hence equal. Importantly, this similarity is transposed onto a phonological level due to the overlap of the rhymes of the three suggested names.[290]

[288] See Gāo Míng 高明 (ed.), *Bóshū Lǎozǐ jiàozhù* 帛書老子校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1996), 282.

[289] Martin Kern made a similar observation regarding a passage in the **Mín zhī fù mǔ* 民之父母 manuscript; for this, see Martin Kern, "Quotation and the Confucian Canon in Early Chinese Manuscripts: The Case of 'Zi Yi' (Black Robes)," *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005): 293-332.

[290] Secondly, also note how the Mǎwángduī text and the receptus differ in which of the terms is applied to which of the absences of sensory experience; this interchangeability further hints at the arbitrariness of the terms used and the preeminence of their function of *equalization* on a phonic level.

The second part of this text, in lines 6 to 9, establishes a further wordplay, paronomasia specifically, between 'bedimmed' (*mèi* 昧 *mˁ[u][t]-s) and 'material property' (*wù* 物 *C.mut). This pun occurs in a moment that again self-referentially highlights the inability to name (*bù kě míng* 不可名), and it is through these elements that the passage holds together.

The third part, despite the mentioned inability to establish proper terms, is again marked by moments of successive reference, becoming a veritable game in which meaning itself appears to slip away further and further. Specifically, the "shape that has no shape" and the "figure that has no material property" are jointly referred to as the 'muddled and murky' (*hū huǎng* 惚恍 *m̥ˁut kʷˁaŋ).[291] The first of these terms, the 'muddled,' offers yet another paronomastic link to the previous section (to 'bedimmed' and 'material property'), while the second of these terms, the 'murky,' offers a continuation of a rhyme established through 'shape' (*zhuàng* 狀 *[dz]raŋ) and 'figure' (*xiàng* 象 *s-[d]aŋʔ). Both terms are further picked up in the preceding 'shapeless' (*wú zhuàng* 無狀 *ma [dz]raŋ-s) and 'to not have material property' (*wú wù* 無物 *ma C.mut).

The last six lines of the chapter feature a rhyme on *-uʔ/*-ʷəʔ (which in turn picks up the rhymes from lines 6 to 9 again) and a rhyme on *-əʔ in the very last two lines. These may perhaps interrhyme, but the more important feature at play here is a sort of paronomasia in the last two lines, reminiscent of the ones encountered in the introductory example above: a similar reshuffling of phonological material occurs here in the key terms 'beginning of antiquity' (*gǔ shǐ* 古始 *kˁaʔ l̥əʔ), which may be interpreted as a countertomic paronomastic expression for 'leading thread' (*jǐ* 紀 *k(r)əʔ).[292]

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[291] The Mǎwángduī versions appear preferable here, as they both list *wàng* 望, OC *maŋ-s, instead of *huǎng* 恍; this phonological material is potentially picked up in a countertomic paronomasia for *wú zhuàng* 无狀 *m{a+[dz]r}aŋ-s (which may be reminiscent of lento forms); for the Mǎwángduī versions, see *Bóshū Lǎozǐ jiàozhù*, 287.

[292] Expressed more formulaically: 古*k{ˁaʔ} + 始 *{l̥}əʔ → *k- + *-əʔ → *紀 *k(r)əʔ. At the same time, the wider expression within which that thread is embedded, the "cord of the Way" (*dào jì* 道紀 *[kə.l]ˁuʔ k(r)əʔ), features much of the same aural material, simply repeating it in a different way.

It is in these ways that the rhymes and reshuffling of phonological material in *Dàodéjīng* 14 may shed further light on the performativity of these devices: they form a playful rendering of the Way and of self-referentiality. Both of these aspects appeared already in the example of *Zhuāngzǐ*, chapter 14, and while they feature here too, they are presented here through the inability to express properly through language (or 'names' more specifically). The successive cycles of reference, starting with the inability to hear, see, and touch, appear here to circumscribe the unfathomable nature of the Dào, but end in a rather ludic splitting, scattering, and repasting of the aural material used.

The recurrence of such puns, but also the partial textual parallel to *Zhuāngzǐ*, chapter 14 (where an elusive figure called lord of Yàn uttered very similar phrases of "listening but not hearing," and "of looking but not seeing"), may furthermore be complicated by the issue of textuality. The *Dàodéjīng*, undoubtedly old by all counts, may perhaps best be seen as a repository of poetic material in this early period, rather than an "authored" text containing philosophical insights. With the difference in manuscripts excavated at Guōdiàn 郭店 (from around 300 BCE) and Mǎwángduī 馬王堆 (a site dating to 168 BCE and containing two largely identical texts to the received version), there are certainly more pieces of evidence for the popularity of this textual material in the ancient state of Chǔ 楚 and the subsequent southern principality of Chǎngshā 長沙 in the Han dynasty, but the specific textual nature of the former remains unclear and a source of contention in contemporary scholarship.[293]

[293] Harold Roth raises the question of "precisely what constitutes a text" in regard to the Guōdiàn *"Laozi;"* see Harold D. Roth, "Some Methodological Issues in the Study of the Guodian *Laozi* Parallels," *The Guodian* Laozi*: Proceedings of the International Conference, Dartmouth College, May 1998,* ed. Sarah Allan and Crispin Williams (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2000), 77; Christopher Nugent also raises this question in the recent handbook on the study of classical Chinese literature, in addressing the apparent textual fluidity in early manuscript witnesses of the *Book of Odes*; see Christopher M. B. Nugent, "Manuscript Cultures," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature*, ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li and Xiaofei Tian (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 61-75.

Long before the excavation of these manuscripts, Gù Jiégāng 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) argued already in 1932 that the *Dàodéjīng* as an identifiable "text" did not exist at the time of the compilation of the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 (around 239 BCE), coming into being only shortly before the compilation of the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 (approx. 139 BCE). Gù based his claim on the lack of clear quotations in *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*, while quotations abound in the *Huáinánzǐ*. From this, Gù drew a further conclusion, namely that the composition of the *Dàodéjīng* itself must have involved considerable compilatory efforts of already existing, older textual units.[294] The find from Mǎwángduī makes such a late compilation date unfeasible, but what is important in Gù's argument may be the specific *way* to engage with what would later be identified as the *Dàodéjīng*.[295]

The introductory example from chapter 14 of the *Zhuāngzǐ* and section 14 of the transmitted *Dàodéjīng* may thus stand in a relation to one another that is perhaps best not described through the model of the "authored" text, but rather through what these texts imply themselves. The continued engagement with language in this way should not be considered a direct citational act from one stable textual unit to another. Rather, through a careful manipulation of the basic units of language through rhyming and wordplay, a textual passage can take part in this mastery over language. The aim of textual production turns to performance itself.

[294] Gù Jiégāng 顧頡剛, "Cóng 'Lǚ shì chūnqiū' tuīcè 'Lǎozǐ' zhī chéngshū niándài" 從呂氏春秋推測老子之成書年代, *Yànjīng dàxué shǐxué xuébào* 燕京大學史學學報 4 (1932); rpt., *Gǔshǐbiàn* 古史辨, 4:462-520. Along this line, compare also Chad Hansen description of the "dominant current textual theory" of the *Dàodéjīng* as one which "treats the text as an edited accumulation of fragments and bits drawn from a wide variety of sources […]," in Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 201. The author attribution may also be indicating a general mid- to late third-century compilation date, as A. C. Graham suggests that the text could have been ascribed to Lao Dan around 250 BCE in order to promote the text by means of that figure's reputation; see Angus Charles Graham, *The Origins of the Legend of Lao Tan* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 119.

[295] For a different sort of engagement with text, compare also Schaberg, "On the Range and Performance of *Laozi*-Style Tetrasyllables." Note that Schaberg's focus lies on tetrasyllables in the style *of* the *Dàodéjīng*, rather than wordplays.

### 3.3.2 From Murky Darkness to the Beginnings of Maladies

This different kind of textuality, more fluid and open, may thus provide a framework for conceptualizing the ludic self-referentiality of the wordplays observed thus far. Through their engagement with the poetic function of language, their operative function turns to poeticity itself. Even in the face of the unfathomable Dào, such wordplays appear to form a certain claim of mastery over language, and in this, the claim goes beyond pure rhetoric. They rather signal either analytic mastery, as in the introductory example featuring Master Mò, or a way to approximate or even master the Dào itself, as the figure of the Yellow Emperor claimed in the introductory example.[296] Rhymes and paronomasia appear performative of the unfathomable in that they structure that which cannot be structured; they further appear analytic in that they allow to break that unfathomable into digestible bits and pieces that can then be manipulated, thus closing the circle to the Mohist example of countertomic paronomasia.

Compare in this regard also the very end of *Zhuāngzǐ* 12.12, an anecdote where the figure Zhūn Huǎng 諄芒 (OC *tur m̥ˤaŋʔ, meaning literally 'Earnestly Confused') responds to a question about 'divine persons' (*shén rén* 神人) in the following way:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 上神乘光, | *kʷˤaŋ | "Raising their spirits, they mount the *light*, |
| 與形滅亡, | *maŋ | Giving their form, they vanish and are *gone*; |
| 此謂照曠。 | *[k]ʷʰˤaŋ-s | This is called radiant *expanse*. |
| 致命盡情， | | Living out their life and exhausting their disposition; |
| 天地樂而萬事銷亡, | *maŋ | while Heaven and Earth rejoice, the myriad affairs melt *away*. |
| 萬物復情, | *[dz]eŋ | The myriad things return to their *disposition*, |
| 此之謂混冥。 | *mˤeŋ | This is referred to as murky *darkness*."[297] |

[296] In its ultimate, radical assertion, this claimed mastery of language suggests a sort of mastery of the fundamental principles governing the universe itself.

[297] *Zhuāngzǐ bǔzhèng,* 12.359.

The wordplays are here located in the last position of the line, with a series of rhymes on *-aŋ first presenting a connection. Additionally, in the first three lines, paronomasia occurs between ‘light’ (*guāng* 光 *kʷˁaŋ) and ‘expanse’ (*kuàng* 曠 *[k]ʷʰˁaŋ-s). The last four lines, on the other hand, feature the sort of reshuffling of sounds already seen in the previous examples: the initial *m- of ‘disappear’ (*wáng* 亡 *maŋ) forms, in combination with the rime *-eŋ of ‘disposition’ (*qíng* 情 *[dz]eŋ), the final ‘darkness’ (*míng* 冥 *mˁeŋ). This passage may function under an ambiguity similar to that involving the term ‘music/joy’ (*yuè/lè* 樂) in chapter 14 of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. Like that passage, this one describes the process of disintegration quite literally. More importantly, however, this passage again appears to use wordplay to circumscribe a rather unfathomable situation and to perform its mysteriousness, thus highlighting the speaker’s mastery over language.

However, the performativity of this example goes even one step further: the final conclusion, ‘murky darkness’ (*hún míng* 混冥 *[g]ˁurʔ mˁeŋ) is reminiscent of the name of the speaker, Zhūn Huǎng 諄芒 (OC *tur mˠˁaŋʔ), himself. The passage may thus present the speaker as an embodiment of the process described.

A similar process can be observed in chapter 9 of *Zhuāngzǐ*, “Horses’ Hoofs” (*mǎ tí* 馬蹄), in the description of the people from a simpler time long ago, presented as a sort of nostalgia for a golden age:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 彼民有常性, | | Those people had a persistent predisposition; |
| 織而衣, | *tək… | They clothed themselves through <u>weaving</u>; |
| 耕而食, | …*mə-ləkˁ | and through tilling they <u>ate</u>. |
| 是謂同德； | … *tˁəkˁ | This was referred to as their shared <u>potency</u>. |
| 一而㊀黨, | *pˠə tˁaŋʔ | They were one and did *not form cliques*, |
| 命曰天放。 | *l̥ˁi[n] *paŋʔ | and their charge was Heavenly *imitation*. |
| 故至德之世, | | Thus the generations of highest potency |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 其行填填, | *tri[n]-s tri[n]-s | walked in a dignified manner, |
| 其視顛顛。 | *tʶi[n] tʶi[n] | and looked steadily ahead.[298] |

This passage presents those people as worthy of emulation, and uses aural effects to perform this further. In this very positive description, these people are in a first step credited with being utterly self-reliant, here described as their shared 'potency' (*dé* 德 *tʶək), a term that both rhymes with the preceding 'to eat' (*shí* 食 *mə-lək) and also offers through paronomasia a connection to 'weaving' (*zhī* 織 *tək). Secondly, this passage describes their mandate as that of an 'imitation' (*fǎng* 放 *paŋʔ). Here we find the countertomic paronomasia, as the preceding 'to not form cliques' (*bù dǎng* 不黨 *pə tʶaŋʔ) presents the relevant initial (*p-) and rime (*-aŋʔ).

This passage further elaborates on what those people from that simpler time imitated – Heaven (*tiān* 天 *l̥ʶi[n]) itself, and the passage performs their embodiment of the aural pattern of Heaven quite superbly by listing the way they walked – namely, in a very dignified manner (redupl. *zhèn* 填 *tri[n]-s) – and the way they looked – namely steadily ahead (redupl. *diān* 顛 *tʶi[n]). As the reconstructions for those terms largely overlap with that of the term Heaven, the passage does not just mention their imitation of Heaven – it rather performs it, showing how specifically the people worthy of emulation *embodied* it.

Wordplays of this era can be seen, in other words, as a claimed embodiment of a pattern (*wén* 文), here admittedly occurring through the recurrence of sound. In this they may be reminiscent of what David Schaberg has termed "the rhetoric of good order."[299] Yet the patterned pun pushes the claim further than such a measured rhetoric, as the manipulation of verbal expression serves both to embody order and serves as proof of actual mastery. This function of the pun as embodied

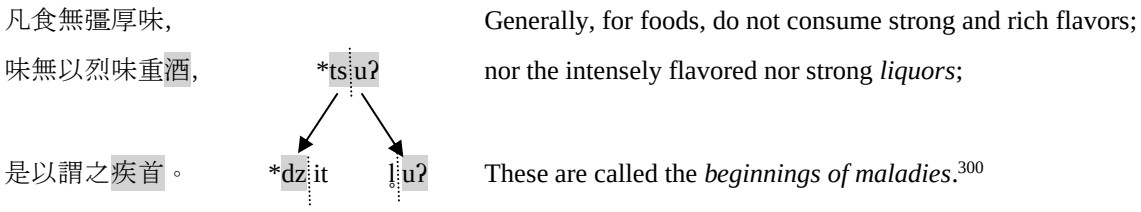
[298] *Zhuāngzǐ bǔzhèng,* 9.272-273. Compare Fù, *Fǎnqiè qǐyuán*, 109.

[299] See David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 21-56. Compare especially the following statement of his about good speakers in the *Zuozhuan*: "They are in fact the heroes of historiography in the sense that they make possible the continual explanation of historical events in the light of received knowledge, of historical precedents, and, most important, of inherited texts. They are masters of *wen*; they know their texts. But they also perform *wen* in the more general sense of bringing their learning to bear in every one of their speeches" (56).

pattern, and of countertomic paronomasia as highlighting the components thereof, appears most pressing within "open texts," wherein referentiality, as the target of the claimed mastery over language, is directed more towards the linguistic properties used in a presented or performed passage, rather than as a gloss to an external textual unit.

Wordplays, specifically paronomasia and its countertomic variant that moves phonological material around to seemingly "analyze," may thus have functioned as an epistemic tool, playing on the audience's linguistic intuition to draw connections. Through the incorporation of metalinguistic moments to "gloss" or comment on the language used in a set passage, the audience's attention is further directed towards those moments in order to highlight the poetic elements at play.

The same appears to be true for the following example from *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 3/2:




Here again, we can see the repetition and reshuffling of phonological material along the lines of countertomic paronomasia, only with the "gloss" consisting of the separated terms, here 'malady' (*jí* 疾 *dzit) and 'head; beginning' (*shǒu* 首 *l̥u?). These comment on the text's previous wording, semantically encompassing all the previously listed elements ("the strong and the rich; the intensely flavored and strong liquors"), but aurally specifically the element of 'liquor' (jiǔ 酒 *tsu?).[301] Countertomic paronomasia appears to function here to analyze the most prominent

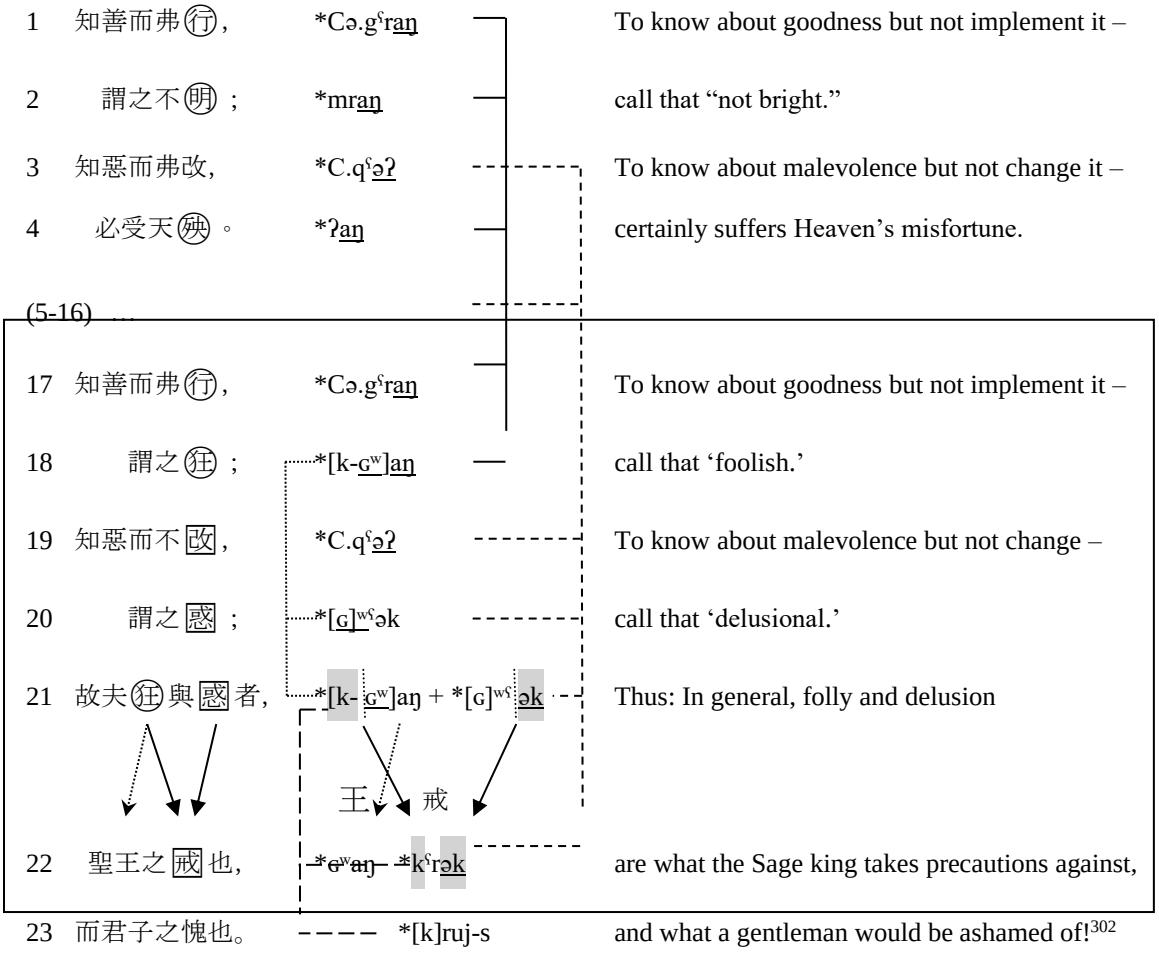
[300] Xǔ Wéiyù 許維遹, and Liáng Yùnhuá 梁運華 (eds.), *Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 吕氏春秋集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 3/2.68. Note that the following text further plays with paronomastic cadence (食能以時，身必無災。凡食之道，無飢無飽，是之謂五藏之葆)!

[301] Note that initial *dz- is voiced *ts-.

singular item within a list to highlight the underlying causal effect of the overall list, in this way marking the text as "fluent" in the implications of the domain of poetic language. This wordplay is further embedded in a cadence of other poetic devices, most importantly regular paronomasia, as the text calls this the 'way' (*dào* 道 *[kə.l]ˤuʔ) of food, which consists, in part, in not 'overeating' (*bǎo* 飽 *pˤruʔ), which is likened to the 'protection' (*bǎo* 葆 *pˤuʔ) of the five viscera. The insight derived from wordplay in the late 3rd century BCE, then, can be not just rhetorical, performative, or consisting in a claim of mastery over language, but also "analytic" in that puns can elucidate the underlying patterns of things.

### 3.3.3 Of Folly and Delusion

As mentioned above, the beginning of the early empire may not have functioned as a clear watershed moment in the history of wordplays, nor in the history of early texts. Rather, texts stemming from the early decades of the Western Han dynasty continue to play with the reshuffling of sounds. One example can be found in the *Xīnshū* 新書, traditionally attributed to Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 (201-169 BCE):




In a rather winding way we encounter this series of seeming glosses in *Xīnshū* 9.1/2, focusing on the recognition of the difference between good and bad yet failing to adjust one’s conduct. The first of these glosses describes the nominalized phrase “to know about goodness but not implement it” (line 1) as ‘not bright’ (*bù míng* 不明 *pə mraŋ; line 2), which implies that the nominalization refers to people. This would be rather unremarkable were it not for the rhyme connection established by both phrase and gloss (both ending in *-aŋ). That rhyme connection is continued in the next utterance (line 4), and picked up further below in the text through a reprise of the phrase “to know goodness but not implement it” (line 17). In that second instance, the phrase is glossed

[302] Yán Zhènyì 閻振益, and Zhōng Xià 鍾夏 (eds.), *Xīnshū jiàozhù* 新書校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2000), 339.

as ‘foolish’ (*kuáng* 狂 *[k-ɢʷ]aŋ; line 18), thus providing a different gloss that nonetheless uses the same rhyme.

It is in this second half of the passage that the opposite statement from the phrase described above, translated here as “to know about malevolence but not change” (line 19), is similarly glossed through a recurring rhyme: ‘delusional’ (*huò* 惑 *[ɢ]ʷˁək; line 20) rhymes with “change” (gǎi 改 *C.qˁəʔ). Also note that line 3 ends on an *-əʔ rhyme, which offers further connections to lines not shown here, specifically to what would be line 5, ending on *fú* 福 OC *pək; line 6, on *dé* 德 *tˁək; line 7, on *zī* 菑 *[ts]rə; line 8, on *shí* 時 *[d]əʔ; and line 11, on *qī* 欺 *kʰ(r)ə. That rhyme on *-əʔ/k/∅ connects further to the second-to-last line (line 22). This second half appears at the same time to be dominated by a net of alliterations on *ɢʷ-, which connects ‘delusional’ (*huò* 惑 *[ɢ]ʷˁək) to ‘foolish’ (*kuáng* 狂 *[k-ɢʷ]aŋ).

Line 22 functions structurally as a sort of culmination to this tight net of different references, and not by surprise it contains a statement about what a Sage king is to make out of all of this. Specifically, he is to ‘take precautions against’ (*jiè* 戒 *kˁrək) the two key conditions of ‘folly’ and ‘delusion.’ Importantly, the word ‘take precautions against’ is composed of phonological material *already present* in these words of ‘folly’ and ‘delusion,’ with ‘folly’ providing its prefix *k- and ‘delusion’ the rhyme *-ək. Quite like the other examples of countertomic paronomasia encountered above, the composite nature of this reference aims at an underlying, seemingly inherent structure of these terms. Quite fittingly, the person described to perceive this is not just described as a *Sage* (*shèng* 聖 *l̥eŋ-s), finely attuned to the realm of sounds (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ) and listening (*tīng* 聽 *l̥ˁeŋ), but also – and perhaps more importantly – as a *king* (*wáng* 王 *ɢʷaŋ), a term where the *remainder* of the phonological material of ‘folly’ or ‘foolish’ (*kuáng* 狂 *[k-ɢʷ]aŋ) recurs. Apparently, this culmination of the passage hence plays on two aspects at the same time: first, the

notion that stripping 'folly' of its *k- prefix reveals the possible underlying kingly root;[303] this secondly allows, through a sagely sense of hearing, to recognize the connection to the rhyme of 'delusional' (preceded, as noted previously, by the alliteration *ɢʷ-) and the resulting countertomic paronomasia in the form of 'take precautions against' (*jiè* 戒 *kˁrək).

As if this were not enough to emphasize the aural patterning of the passage, the next line (23), which discusses the approach of a "mere" gentleman (*jūn zǐ* 君子), picks up the stripped initial *k- and continues the alliteration in the form of 'to be ashamed of' (*kuì* 愧 *[k]ruj-s). Altogether, then, we encounter here a tight net of aural referencing, not just through rhymes and alliterations, but foremost through diverse glossing practices that resonate heavily with specific aspects, such as the Sage's aural awareness, deeply ingrained in early epistemes through audible connections inherent in the terms 'Sage' (*shèng* 聖 *l̥eŋ-s), 'to hear' (*tīng* 聽 *l̥ˁeŋ-s), and 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ).

This same passage – or a variant thereof – recurs in another text, namely as one of the twelve chapters (*piān* 篇) of the *Yùzǐ* 鬻子.[304] Consisting almost exclusively of what has been listed above as lines 17 to 22 (but preceded by an embedding), this short chapter of the *Yùzǐ* retains the culmination (and perhaps the core) of the poetic material described above, including the paronomastic glosses on 'folly' and 'delusion,' and the device of countertomic paronomasia building upon the underlying phonological material. This recurrence is remarkable, as it shows the recognition and usage of these poetic devices beyond the *Xīnshū*, in a way that avoids the almost superfluous additional alliteration on 'to be ashamed of' (*kuì* 愧 *[k]ruj-s) in line 23. Overall, this reuse of textual material may perhaps best be tied to the model of "open texts."[305]

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[303] Whether this constitutes an actual etymological connection or not is, again, of lesser importance to the pun. For a potential etymological connection, however, compare Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, 507-508.

[304] See Zhōng Zhàopéng 鍾肇鵬 (ed.), *Yùzǐ jiàolǐ* 鬻子校理 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2010), 58-59.

[305] Compare the discussion of the relationship between these two texts in Rune Svarverud, *Methods of the Way: Early Chinese Ethical Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 62-65. Svarverud deduces that the *Yùzǐ* fragments must be older than the employment of the parallel passages in the *Xīnshū*; given the analysis above of the *Xīnshū* passage's poetic

### 3.4 Towards Exegesis

This self-referentiality of poetic language, transposed onto the metalinguistic level to analyze and repurpose what was just stated (to claim authority, mastery, or even the Dào itself), is thus best interpreted to occur during the gradual stabilization of text, with text now containing referenceable blocks. These early proto-glosses, commenting on passages presented within the text itself and *not* attributed to a distinct other textual entity, illustrate not only a stage in the development of early Chinese wordplays and paronomasia, but also issues of textuality negotiated within these texts themselves. At the same time, as we can trace specific texts to further stabilize and be more clearly identifiable as complete units, the function of wordplay and glossing appears similarly to have shifted to exegetically derive meaning from those "external" texts. This process occurred, as mentioned above, gradually and not necessarily in a linear way; rather, these two forms of textuality – poetic engagement and exegesis – appear at times to compete against one another.

This process towards exegesis is Particularly clear in a chapter of the text *Hánfēizǐ* that is entitled *Jiě Lǎo* 解老 (lit. "Explaining the Old [Master]") and functions as a sort of commentary to passages that occur in the *Dàodéjīng*. This chapter may also date to the late 3rd century BCE,[306] and is, according to Sarah Queen, marked by an effort "to harmonize practices and ideas that later became associated with the 'Daoist' and 'Confucian' traditions," while lacking a clear "Legalist"

language, such a conclusion appears possible, but it is not necessary to posit a direct relationship of textual borrowing between these two texts through the model of "open texts." Compare also recent arguments on *mouvance*; see esp. Martin Kern, "'Xi Shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') and its Consequences: Issues in Early Chinese Poetry and Textual Studies," *Early China* 42 (2019): 39-74, esp. 56-62; compare also Dirk Meyer, *Documentation and Argument in Early China: The* Shangshu *(Venerated Documents) and the* Shu *Traditions* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 17-19.

[306] For a discussion of the chapter's dating, compare Hagop Sarkissian, "*Laozi*: Revisiting Two Early Commentaries in the *Hanfeizi*" (M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 2001) 59-61; Sarkissian reaches the conclusion that the chapter dates to the early 3rd century BCE, but the arguments he lists for that specific dating do not conclusively allow to accept such a dating. Compare also Sarah A. Queen, "*Han Feizi* and the Old Master: A Comparative Analysis and Translation of *Han Feizi* Chapter 20, 'Jie Lao,' and Chapter 21, 'Yu Lao'," in *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Han Fei*, ed. Paul R. Goldin (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013): 208; Queen argues that the chapter stems from the decades prior to the Qín conquest in 221 BCE.

influence.[307] As such, the chapter emphasizes virtues such as humaneness, righteousness and propriety as important values for a Sage, and appears in particular to promulgate the importance of the inner self.[308] The exegetical strategy of the chapter is distinctly argumentative, in particular when compared to the chapter *Yù Lǎo* 喻老 (lit. "Elucidating the Old [Master]") of the *Hánfēizǐ*, which contains yet another sort of commentary on passages preserved in the *Dàodéjīng* but appears to not feature countertomic paronomasia.[309] Besides different exegetical strategies, these chapters appear to engage with textual material different from both one another and the transmitted *Dàodéjīng*, highlighting the possibility that both chapters may have drawn from different textual collections, perhaps comparable to the collections found in the Guōdiàn corpus.[310]

Wordplay, and especially countertomic paronomasia, occurs fairly regularly within the exegetical exercise of the *Jiě Lǎo*, specifically. In this, the metalinguistic function to describe language itself turns to analyzing and unpacking an identifiable external unit of text, brought up in the *Jiě Lǎo* as a citation marked by the phrase "thus [it] says" (*gù yuē* 故曰). Paradoxically, however, the device of countertomic paronomasia only in part participates in this process, and

[307] Queen, "*Han Feizi* and the Old Master," 212. Note, however, that such ideas are not per se incompatible with what we would call "Legalism," as argued in Paul R. Goldin, "Persistent Misconceptions About Chinese 'Legalism,'" *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38.1 (2011): 88–104.

[308] This is a similar position to that associated with the text *Mèngzǐ* 孟子; for more on this connection, compare Sarkissian, "*Laozi*: Revisiting Two Early Commentaries in the *Hanfeizi*," 13; 61; and esp. 66-69. Sarah Queen notes in this regard that "humaneness, as in the *Mengzi*, is identified with the inner heart's irrepressible urge to love others, which people by nature possess. Ritual, as in the *Mengzi*, is defined as 'what gives expression to the emotions' and is 'rooted in the self.' In short, all roads in '*Jie Lao*' lead to the inner self." Queen, "*Han Feizi* and the Old Master," 213-213. Compare also *Jiě Lǎo* 9 on 'compassion' (*cí* 慈).

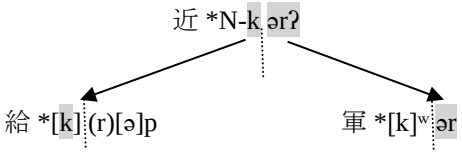
[309] This difference in approach between the two chapters is summarized by Sarah Queen as follows: "whereas the interpretive power of 'Jie Lao' lies in the philosophical reasoning brought to bear on the passages at hand, that of 'Yu Lao' rests with the links established between a particular anecdote of a given historical or semi-historical figure and the saying it is represented as embodying. The exegetical strategies of 'Jie Lao' and 'Yu Lao,' philosophical reasoning and illustrative example, clearly represent two distinct styles of exegesis." Queen, "*Han Feizi* and the Old Master," 200. Compare also Sarkissian, "*Laozi*: Revisiting Two Early Commentaries in the *Hanfeizi*," 20-26, esp. 22-23.

[310] Compare Queen, "*Han Feizi* and the Old Master," 202-205.

partially still occupies the same function as in the examples above, that is, "to create intratextual glosses."[311] Compare the following example on a passage contained in section 46 of the *Dàodéjīng*:

> …[The term] 'surroundings' speaks of that which *is close*. Now, the arrangements with which to *supply the troops* consists in bringing horses and in *keeping close* the subjects. Thus [it] says: "When there is no Way under Heaven, war-horses breed in the surroundings."
>
> 郊者，言其近也。今所以給軍之具於將馬近臣，故曰：「天下無道，戎馬生於郊矣。」[312]

The cited section of this passage is concerned in particular with the semantics of the term 'surroundings' (*jiāo* 郊), glossed here through 'to be close' (*jìn* 近 *N-kərʔ). In this instance, the wordplay, however, actually does not occur in this first step of glossing. Rather, the paronomastic device remains "intratextual" in that it occurs in the second step, as 'that which supplies troops' (*suǒ yǐ jǐ jūn* 所以給軍), or 'to supply troops' (*jǐ jūn* 給軍 *[k](r)[ə]p [k]ʷər) more specifically, contains the aural reshuffling typical of countertomic paronomasia:




This secondary mode of glossing certainly differs from later paronomastic glosses, where an intrinsic relationship between glossed and gloss is claimed through sound alone. Yet the presence of this secondary mode in the *Jiě Lǎo* may speak to the gradual transformation of wordplays into exegetical devices, given that its underlying material likely reflects the state of *Dàodéjīng*-material in the 3rd century BCE.

Another passage undergoing such a mode of exegesis is contained in the transmitted section 14 of the *Dàodéjīng* and features, as explicated above, several aural patterns and apparent

[311] Compare esp. Behr, "Rhymes and Reason, Puns n' Proses, Winsome Words."
[312] *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě*, 145.

wordplays. It is specifically the rather mysterious phrases of "the shapeless shape, and the figure without substance" that are explicated upon the following section:

> Rarely do people see a living elephant, but they get hold of the bones of a dead elephant. They rely on their *array* to *think of* it alive. Hence all the things that people imagine in their thoughts are called 'elephants/figures' (*xiàng* 象). Now, though the Way can't be heard nor seen, the Sage grasps the visible deeds to place and see its shape. Thus it says, "the shapeless shape, the figure without material properties."
>
> 人希見生象也，而得死象之骨，案其圖以想其生也，故諸人之所以意想者皆謂之象也。今道雖不可得聞見，聖人執其見功以處見其形。故曰：「無狀之狀，無物之象。」[313]

It is only towards the end of the passage that the link to the cited passage becomes evident, both in phrasing and content, as the role of the figure of the Sage is explicated here in regard to navigating that which cannot be heard nor seen (thus possibly hinting at what is preserved in the first two lines of *Dàodéjīng* section 14). The first half of the passage, on the other hand, deals with the apparent imagery of the elephant, and it should be noted that central to this passage is a pun on the ambiguity of the character *xiàng* 象, meaning both 'elephant' and 'figure.'

The passage thus construes a vague link to the quoted "substanceless figure" through the alternative meaning of the character – a disembodied elephant, reconstructed only through the layout of its bones. The passage may hence include a further pun on the shared *written representation* of the terms.[314] More important for our purposes here is, however, the countertomic paronomasia contained in the sentence explaining the link of the bones of a dead elephant to the term 'elephant/figure.' As this passage explains, this term is used because people *rely on the layout of the bones of a dead elephant to imagine when it was alive* – a reasoning that may leave us puzzled, were it not for the aural features of the terms used:

Relying on the 'array' (*tú* 圖 *[d]ˤ a) to "think of" (*xiǎng* 想 *[s] aŋʔ) results in the central imagery of the 'elephant/figure' (*xiàng* 象 *s.[d] aŋʔ), not just in semantics, but also in sound,

[313] *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě*, 148. Compare also the translation of Queen, "*Han Feizi* and the Old Master," 240-241.

[314] More specifically, this may perhaps constitute a pun on the graphic representation of the character *xiàng* 象.

through the typical reshuffling of phonological material described thus far.[315] Countertomic paronomasia thus again is subtly inserted, and while the key term is glossed, this pun is understandable only as a secondary step of exegesis, and would not function without the imagery of the dead elephant, introduced earlier.

Similar puns are contained within the *Jiě Lǎo* passage on textual material from *Dàodéjīng* 58, but these are closer to wordplays fulfilling the actual function of glossing in the sense that they comment not in a secondary step, but rather directly. Compare the following example:

> What is here referred to as "pointed" is to take the decree of life and death as certain, and to put little weight on property and wealth.
>
> 所謂廉者，必生死之命也，輕恬資財也。[316]

In this instance, the term 'sharp,' or 'pointed' (*lián* 廉 *k-[r]em), occurring in *Dàodéjīng* 58, is glossed through two utterances, both suggesting a specific interpretation that appear to infuse the term with new semantic content – first with the clear recognition of the mandated nature of life and death, and secondly with putting no emphasis on acquiring material riches. Countertomic paronomasia occurs in a specific phrase used in this second utterance, 'to put little weight on' (or literally 'to consider light and sweet' *qīng tián* 輕恬 *[kʰ]eŋ *[l̥]ʿem), through the typical reshuffling of sounds. A very similar wordplay-gloss occurs in the following example, which expounds another term from *Dàodéjīng* 58:

[315] Noteworthy is in this instance furthermore the full overlap of phonological material, with shared *-a- nuclei; and the initial *s- of *xiǎng* 想 occurring as a closely attached prefix in *xiàng* 象 (*s.[d]aŋʔ).

[316] *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě,* 137.

> What is here referred to as "lustrous" is honor and nobility in office and rank, and in clothes and outer garments sturdiness and magnificence.
>
> 所謂光者，官爵尊貴，衣裘壯麗也。[317]

In a process parallel to the preceding example, the gloss on the term 'shining' or 'lustrous' (*guāng* 光 *k$^{w\varsigma}$aŋ) contains two explanatory sentences, one emphasizing status, the other the appealing appearance of clothing. Again, it is in the second phrase that contains the countertomic wordplay, realized through 'outer garments' (*qiú* 裘 *[g]$^{w}$ə) being 'sturdy' (*zhuàng* 壯 *[ts]raŋ-s). This specific phrasing may not illustrate the semantics of the glossed term, but rather infuses it with a seemingly intuitive connection purely based on sound.

The presence of both secondary and direct sound glosses within the *Jiě Lǎo* may perhaps best be interpreted as the result of a gradual process of the transformation of wordplays and their referentiality. The self-referentiality observed in passages from those other texts shifts in the *Jiě Lǎo* to a commenting about *other* textual material. Referentiality, as the target of the claimed mastery over language observed above, turns in this process from the linguistic properties used in a passage of the text itself towards an identifiable external textual unit. Wordplays are thus turned into a glossing device.

Additionally, and this brings us back to the previous discussion of the specific functions of this device, the frequent usage of countertomic paronomasia within the *Jiě Lǎo* not only highlights the language of these wordplays – used both intratextually and as glosses in reference to external terms – as "marked." Rather, it further draws on assumptions shared across texts of how and when to employ this device, including the claim of mastering language itself, a claim which certainly would imbue a largely exegetical text such as the *Jiě Lǎo* with additional authority, as was also the case

[317] *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě*, 137.

in Master Mò's aural analysis of the echo. Yet here we must also contend with a claim over a shared episteme; as the device of countertomic paronomasia appears to have become a staple of the 3rd and 2nd centuries, its utilization further *evokes* all of its other functions, including the function of both showing and performing the Dào, claimed within the whirlwinds of wordplays observed in specific chapters of the *Zhuāngzǐ* and a section of the *Dàodéjīng*.

Certainly, in the *Jiě Lǎo* chapter, countertomic paronomasia is but one of many ways to construe a connection between sound and meaning. The chapter also features paronomastic glosses, such as the following example that comments on material contained in section 38 of the *Dàodéjīng*:

> *Propriety* refers to its being *appropriate*. By considering it *appropriate*, we enact it, and thus it says: "[Those] with highest propriety enact it, and they have a motive to enact it."
>
> 義者，謂其宜也，宜而為之，故曰：「上義為之而有以為也。」[318]

This passage explains 'propriety' (*yì* 義 *ŋ(r)aj-s) through 'to be appropriate' (*yí* 宜 *ŋ(r)aj), thus drawing on the overlapping lexical root between the terms (both *ŋ(r)aj). In this sense, the explanation can be considered a genuine *figura etymologica*, building on the intuitive, etymological relation between the two terms involved. And yet, the specific way this explanation is posed still illustrates a need to embed the terms – the relationship between gloss and glossed is not formed intrinsically, but rather achieved through the semantic unpacking of the terms in their respective contexts.

A similar careful distinction between gloss and glossed occurs also at the very beginning of the *Jiě Lǎo* chapter:

[318] *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě*, 131.

*Potency* is internal; *to obtain* is external. … *Potency* is *to obtain* the bodily self.

德者，內也。得者，外也。… 德者，得身也。[319]

The two terms ‘potency’ (*dé* 德 *tˁək) and ‘to obtain’ (*dé* 得 *tˁək) are identical in sound and very likely etymologically closely related.[320] The distinction presented here is that the first term refers to something “internal,” the latter to something “external,” and these then are tied together in the final statement that “potency is to obtain the bodily self.” In this sense, the function of paronomastic glosses is rather limited within the *Jiě Lǎo*: instead of providing a complete overlap in meaning, such glosses may merely play with an aural connection, instead of basing their explanatory approach upon sound itself.

It is rather again through the device of the paronomastic cadence that greater coordination of meaning is achieved. Compare the following passage from the *Jiě Lǎo* chapter on section 59 of the *Dàodéjīng*, explaining the term *zǎo fú* 蚤服 (here tentatively translated as ‘early submitting’):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 眾人之用神也躁, | | How the masses use their spirit is rash, |
| 躁則多費, | | and due to their rashness, they expend more. |
| 多費之謂侈。 | | Expending more we refer to as excessive., |
| 聖人之用神也靜, | | How Sages use their spirit is calm, |
| 靜則少費, | | and due to their calmness, they expend less. |
| 少費之謂嗇。 | *s.rək | Expending less we refer to as *moderation*. |
| 嗇之謂術也 | *Cə-lut | *Moderation* refers to a *technique* |
| 生於道理。 | *[kə.l]ˁuʔ m(ə).rəʔ | that arises from the *inherent patterns of the Dào*. |
| … | | |
| 聖人雖未見禍患之形, | | Though a Sage may not yet have seen the shape of disaster, |

[319] *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě*, 130.

[320] Compare Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese*, 208.

虛無服從於道理， *[kə.l]ˁuʔ m(ə).rəʔ being empty, he *submits* and follows the *patterns of the Dào*

以稱蚤服。[321] *tsˁuʔ [b]ək and thus is designated as '*early submitting*.'

As a way of glossing these terms, this passage certainly does not provide a good explanation for their semantics, nor does it shed much light at all on what is actually meant by the phrase 'early' – or perhaps meaning even 'flea' (*zǎo* 蚤 *tsˁuʔ). This term is rather embedded purely through sound, rather than through a semantic explanation. More specifically, this term, as well as the other key term 'to submit' (*fú* 服 *[b]ək) is largely "derived" *aurally*, through a lengthy build-up of rhymes and puns. In this cadence, the first marker is found in 'moderation' (*sè* 嗇 *s.rək), referring roughly to the Sages' non-action. 'Moderation' is in turn referred to as a 'technique' (*shù* 術 *Cə-lut), and the passage traces that term to the 'inherent patterns of the Dào' (*dào lǐ* 道理 *[kə.l]ˁuʔ m(ə).rəʔ). That 'pattern of the Dào' contains, in fact, the aural material from both 'technique' *and* 'moderation' (through shared initials and rhymes: *lut rəʔ/k), and in a second step overlaps more loosely with the glossed key terms 'early submitting' (*zǎo fú* 蚤服 *tsˁuʔ [b]ək).[322] The mode of exegesis here is therefore one of pointing out connections through the imitation of aural patterns, parallel to the claim of the Sages' imitation of the 'inherent pattern of the Dào' through their stillness and moderation.[323]

In this paronomastic cadence, there is one further pun at play, contained in the phrase "how Sages use their spirit is calm" (*shèng rén zhī yòng shén yě, jìng* 聖人之用神也靜), which pushes

[321] *Hánfēizǐ jíjiě* 139.

[322] These key terms may not share the initials of the other terms but do share the rimes of the preceding terms. It is possible, though, that we also encounter *countertomic* paronomasia, with the initials of the *preceding* terms 'to submit' (*fú* 服 *[b]ək) and 'follow' (*cóng* 從*[dz]oŋ) being hinted at in reverse order. This flip of the order occurs also in the sequence of the terms 'moderation' and 'technique,' described above.

[323] Additionally, this passage establishes a stark dichotomy between *-aj and *-ək/ʔ rhymes, especially in the contrasting descriptions between the approach of the masses, marked by 'more' (*duō* 多 *[t.l]ˁaj), 'excess' (*chǐ* 侈 *t-l̥ajʔ) and 'calamity' (*huò* 禍 *[g]ʷˁajʔ), and that of the Sages, marked by terms such as 'to submit' (*fú* 服 *[b]ək) and 'pattern' (*lǐ* 理 *m(ə).rəʔ). This is reminiscent of section 58 of the *Dàodéjīng*, commented on earlier in the *Jiě Lǎo*, where a clear dichotomy between those rhymes is established through the contrast of 'calamity' and 'good fortune' (*fú* 福 *pək); compare section 2.9.2 of this dissertation.

this claim of aural embodiment even further. 'Sagacity' (*shèng* 聖 *ɬeŋ-s) contains both an alliteration to 'using' (*yòng* 用 *loŋ-s) and 'spirit' (*shén* 神 *Cə.li[n]) in the recurrence of the initial *l-, and additionally forms a rhyme with the element of 'calmness' (*jìng* 靜 *[N-]tseŋʔ). Countertomic paronomasia appears again at work to point out the embodying and connecting features of the terms involved.

### 3.5 Summary

As I have argued in this chapter, countertomic paronomasia as a form of wordplay occurs largely in texts from the 3rd to 2nd century BCE, centered around moments of referentiality. Within the stratum of text surveyed, a gradual transformation of this device could be observed, in which its focus shifted from a self-referential mode to a clearly exegetical endeavor. This process largely overlaps with a shifting understanding of textuality that occurred at the same time. The transformation of these wordplays, from self-referential and quasi-"analytical" devices to highlight a speaker's mastery over language or the Dào itself towards more commentarial device to imbue the linking of two terms with an apparent intuitive connection, hence ought to be understood within these competing modes of textuality. This shift reflects, it appears, the move from "open" to "closed texts."

It certainly would be a mistake to tie these developments to distinct historical moments, as the beginning of the imperial era may not have functioned as a clear watershed moment. Rather, the transformation of wordplay during this era was a gradual and slow process occurring in different semantic fields at different paces. It is hence in this gradually stabilizing textual material that we can identify distinct blocks of texts (of a certain slant) that show evidence of paronomasia resembling the typical *glossing* practices of later centuries.

Wordplays surveyed in this chapter were turned into a tool for exegetical practices, as before the stabilization of "text," such wordplays could not have functioned in this way. In other words, before this long process of textual stabilization, wordplays fulfilled different functions, namely in a self-referential way. Wordplays of certain 3rd- and 2nd-century texts, stemming from the muddled and murky early "open" phase of textual material, are hence "commenting" more on their own performative elements through devices that may appear complex, yet highlight these texts' mastery over language, patterning (*wén*), and more. The use of countertomic paronomasia within this stratum of texts further reveals an understanding of language that is not only highly ludic in nature, but also cognizant of the power of sounds, as time and again meaning is derived through an alignment of the aural features of terms.

It is against this background that wordplays start to turn into what would become exegetical glosses. As I will show in the next chapter, the effect of this change went beyond an evolving understanding of textuality, as shifting perceptions of the writing system itself further contributed to the consolidation of the "paronomastic gloss" towards the end of the Western Hàn dynasty.

## Chapter 4. Stratifying Paronomasia from Pre-imperial and Western Hàn Texts

### 4.1 Introduction

> "To govern is to rectify. If you lead through rectifying, who would dare to not be upright?"
> 「政者，正也。子帥以正，孰敢不正？」[324]

This response of Confucius – or, rather, of this passage's Kǒngzǐ 孔子 figure – to the question of how to govern may appear laconic to a modern, English-speaking reader, yet its popularity and effectiveness is highlighted by the occurrence of this and other related passages not only in the *Analects* (*Lúnyǔ* 論語, traditionally attributed to the disciples of Confucius), but also beyond.[325] At work in this passage is, however, a specific device that remains hidden from a reader without knowledge of Chinese: contained within it – and central to its construction of meaning – is a device that builds on a fundamental aural overlap between the involved keywords: 'governing' (*zhèng* 政 *teŋ-s) is both 'rectifying' and 'upright' (both *zhèng* 正 *teŋ-s) because these terms *sound* the same. This overlap is true not only in their modern pronunciations, but also according to historical phonological reconstructions. In other words, these terms are here rendered as *inherently* belonging together through what would have been an intuitive, clear reprise of sounds for any

[324] Chéng Shùdé 程樹德, ed., *Lúnyǔ jíshì* 論語集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1990), 25.864.

[325] Specifically, the phrase "to govern is to rectify" (*zhèng zhě, zhèng yě* 政者，正也) recurs, but with a different follow-up sentence, in utterances attributed to a Kǒngzǐ figure also in the texts *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ* 孔子家語 (*Family Sayings of Confucius*), the *Lǐjì* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) chapter "Āigōng wèn" 哀公問 ("Questions of Duke Āi"), the *Dà Dài Lǐjì* 大戴禮記 (*Ritual Records of Dài the Elder*), and in recently surfaced material. For the relevant *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ* passage, see Chén Shìkē 陳士珂 and Cuī Tāo 崔濤 (eds.), *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ shūzhèng* 孔子家語疏證 (Nanjing: Fènghuáng chūbǎnshè 鳳凰出版社, 2017), 20; for the "Āigōng wèn" passage, see Guō Yí 郭沂 (ed.), *Kǒngzǐ jíyǔ jiàozhù* 孔子集語校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2017), 1081; for the *Dà Dài Lǐjì*, *ibid.*, 112; and for a passage found in the "Zhòng Gōng" 仲弓 manuscript from the recently surfaced Shanghai Museum corpus, *ibid.*, 938. For the multiplicity of Kǒngzǐ figures in the early Chinese textual tradition, compare Michael Hunter's claim of the "'Kongzi' phenomenon ... as a [shared] metadiscursive voice of elite cultural mastery, a resource through which authors interpreted and memorialized texts, traditions, legendary figures, and various other cultural artifacts"; see his *Confucius beyond the Analects* (Brill, Leiden: 2017), 314.

speaker of the underlying language, along the lines of Jakobson's assertion of the non-arbitrary nature of language within a community of speakers.[326]

This device – which may, more often, go undetected in the modern pronunciation, which is why historical phonological reconstructions of Old Chinese are indispensable to understanding and examining this and other texts – is generally referred to as a paronomastic gloss, following Bodman's study of the *Shì míng* 釋名 (*Explanation of Names*), an Eastern Hàn text that relies on a great number thereof.[327] Despite the general association of the paronomastic gloss with the Hàn dynasty, especially its exegetical literature – in particular from the late Western Hàn (first century BCE) to the Eastern Hàn (25–220 CE) – the passage above and comparable ones in earlier material provide clear evidence for the existence of this device in earlier texts.[328] Without a doubt, then, there is a plethora of precursors to these glosses to be found in the preceding era, and given that the societal and cultural transformations from the Warring States to the end of the Western Hàn period are significant (in particular regarding how to engage with written artifacts, but also concerning intellectual discourse), it would be overly simplistic to read paronomasia as if it always occurred in the same context.

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[326] See Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas Sebeok (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964): 350-449, esp. 370-377.

[327] For Bodman's study of this text, see Nicholas Cleaveland Bodman, *A Linguistic Study of the 'Shih Ming': Initials and Consonant Clusters* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

[328] This is expressed already in Wáng Xiānqiān 王先謙, *Shì míng shū zhèngbǔ* 釋名疏證補 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2008), 2, where the author emphasizes the role of Hàn exegetical literature in adopting this device. See furthermore, e.g., W. South Coblin, *A Handbook of Eastern Han Sound Glosses* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983), 9, where we find the argument that "[t]he Han penchant for relating different words in quasi-etymological puns or paranomastic [sic.] glosses was clearly a direct outgrowth of this [correlative] view of language." Other proponents of the same view that the underlying reason for paronomasia can be found in the widespread adoption of "correlative cosmology" include also Zhāng Yǐrén 張以仁, "Shèngxùn de fāzhǎn yǔ rújiā de guānxì 聲訓的發展與儒家的關係," in *Jiǎnggōng shìshì zhōunián jìniàn lùnwénjí* 蔣公逝世周年紀念論文集, ed. Zhōngyāng yánjiùyuàn 中央研究院 (Taibei: Zhōngyāng yánjiùyuàn, 1976): 1202-1221; and Lóng Yǔchún 龍宇純, "Lùn shēng xùn 論聲訓," in *Sīzhú xuān xiǎoxué lùnjí* 絲竹軒小學論集 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 346-357.

Therefore, a study of early Chinese paronomasia does not necessitate superimposing an Eastern Hàn understanding of the paronomastic gloss onto passages such as the one above – rather, this chapter argues against an ahistorical understanding of paronomasia, and instead highlights the epistemologically situated characteristics of the device. In other words, as paronomasia enables intrinsic connections between different terms, specific examples always encapsulate the conditions of possibility that ground the discursive conventions for their usage. By analyzing these conventions of recurring sounds, this chapter will illustrate how the underlying assumptions of language shifted. In short, this chapter investigates changes in how the device of paronomasia is employed and what it achieves across different strata of texts in order to highlight a changing understanding of what language is and does.

As such, this chapter will follow the following guiding questions: *How did paronomasia and its discursive functions change from the Late Warring States period to the mid-Western Hàn?*[329] *What does this change reveal about the underlying epistemological assumptions?* Hence, this chapter will first circumscribe latent issues in the study of early Chinese paronomasia, before describing the development of paronomasia from the Late Warring States period over the course of the Western Hàn period, covering roughly the span from 300 – 100 BCE, a lens that is adopted in order to trace influences and differences across the centuries, primarily by close reading how paronomasia is embedded in different textual passages. This second step is undertaken by an initial focus on paronomasia in excavated material, specifically the textual material unearthed at Guōdiàn 郭店, and a subsequent comparison of its occurrences in transmitted texts up to the mid-Western Hàn dynasty. Thirdly, and undertaken simultaneously with the second step, this chapter will show

[329] The changes occurring from the mid- to late-Western Hàn to the Eastern Hàn are beyond the scope of this chapter and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

how such a historically situated understanding of paronomasia can in turn aid in stratifying textual material of unclear dating.

This chapter therefore follows the cultural and historical embedding of paronomasia from the Late Warring States period through the early Western Hàn dynasty, and by doing so, will illustrate how poetical practices of engaging recurring sounds gave way to modes of glossing and interactions with external textual material. Phrased differently, from a philological point of view, the main impetus for using paronomasia changed from composition to interpretation. From the point of view of intellectual history, this focus on paronomasia – described perhaps best, in analogy to a recent characterization of ancient Greek 'etymology,' as both a discursive practice and a shared *object of thought* among speakers of the same language – allows for a reflection on *how* thinkers engaged with specific aspects of that language.[330] As understandings of language may change – despite its continued presence – this allows us, furthermore, to trace those changes according to their historical contexts. In sum, the contextual usages of paronomasia as discursive practices affect the information they convey. The flipside of all of this is, from a philological point of view, that it allows us to include diverging uses of paronomasia as one factor in reevaluating alleged dates of texts, an issue compounded by the uncertainty involved regarding much of the textual material discussed in the following chapter.

In sum, this chapter outlines the evolution of paronomastic glosses and their precursors; it investigates their effects and the frameworks in how they were employed, tracing in which periods they were effective and in what specific way. The practice of highlighting hidden semantic connections through explicit recurrence of sound in such seemingly inconspicuous pairs of terms

[330] For the mentioned recent characterization of ancient Greek etymology, see Ineke Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology: A Tool for Thinking," in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. Franco Montanari, Stephanos Matthaios, and Antonios Rengakos (Leiden: Brill, 2015), esp. 899-900.

or characters may appear stable, but by highlighting the objectives and contexts of their employment, this chapter will shed light on how this practice was gradually transformed, and how the underlying epistemic assumptions of the power of sound connections shifted.

### 4.2 Towards a Stratification of Early Chinese Paronomasia

Proposing a history for early Chinese paronomasia, Wolfgang Behr argues that it "emerges from poetic *figura etymologica* via recycling of lexical material."[331] In Behr's narrative, "paronomastic cadence" forms the next stylistic element, found in texts from the 4th century BCE,[332] predating the usage of paronomasia for "auto-commentarial," secondly for "narrative," and lastly for "allo-commentarial and other functions."[333] Behr thus provides a possible framework for how to stratify different forms of paronomasia.

Some of the terms used in this account require a fuller description: firstly, *figura etymologica* highlights both the etymological roots and rhetorical functions of collocations of terms, specifically by employing a derivational relation between the terms involved, with only affixal material differing.[334] Secondly, the "auto-commentarial" and "allo-commentarial" functions of paronomasia refer to the directionality of a gloss: the former glosses a term occurring *within* a given text, the latter a term occurring in an external entity. In other words, the shift from auto- to allo-commentarial usage of paronomasia constitutes the move towards textual exegesis. This account therefore functions within a larger process from textual composition to interpretation.

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[331] Wolfgang Behr. "Rhymes and Reason, Puns n' Proses, Winsome Words: Notes on the Craft of Eloquence in Hanfeizi.," paper presented at the 22nd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies, Glasgow, August 30, 2018.

[332] Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," 15-33.

[333] Behr, "Rhymes and reason, puns n' proses, winsome words."

[334] See Wolfgang Behr, "Three sound-correlated text structuring devices in pre-Qin philosophical prose," *BJOAS* 29 (2005): 28-30.

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Especially the described shift from auto-commentarial to allo-commentarial function of paronomasia is significant in the analysis below of Late Warring States to Western Hàn material. This analysis will also highlight how other functions occur in this shift. Specifically, certain textual examples feature a sort of *motivatory* function of paronomasia: by presenting a pair of similar-sounding terms in a specific constellation, passages explain the motivations for why a term is appropriate. Related to this motivatory function is a quasi- or pseudo-*etymologizing* role of paronomasia, which occurs only rarely in this material: passages can present an unclear or outdated term and induce its meaning by presenting a near-homophonous one, thus pointing to a supposedly inherent connection.

### 4.3 Excavated Chǔ manuscripts

To approach this long arc of the history of the paronomastic gloss, excavated material dating to the Warring States period provide perhaps the best entry point. Such manuscripts offer the advantage of a clearer *terminus ante quem*, in the sense that editorial processes and textual interventions must have ceased by the time this material entered the site from which it was later excavated. The structure and content of such material often differs considerably from that of foundational transmitted texts, suggesting that the latter may have undergone further compilatory and editorial efforts. Paronomasia in such excavated material may hence be assumed to represent more genuine forms of language use of a given period, allowing for a clearer sense of the development of paronomasia. The clearest evidence for the existence of paronomasia in pre-imperial times stems from excavated – and otherwise surfaced – manuscripts dating to the Late Warring States period.[335]

[335] For issues regarding the trend in the last few decades of accepting looted manuscripts in the study of early Chinese history and paleography, see Paul R. Goldin, "*Heng Xian* and the Problems of Studying Looted Artifacts," *Dao* 12 (2013), 153-160. Specifically, Goldin recognizes that the academic study of such artifacts further legitimizes future

### 4.3.1 Guōdiàn (c. 300 BCE)

#### a) Overview of the Corpus

Particularly noteworthy in this context – and the focus of this section – is the Guōdiàn 郭店 corpus, unearthed in 1993 from a 3rd-century BCE tomb in modern-day Jīngmén 荊門, Húběi province 湖北省. This cache stems from an elite tomb located not far from Yǐng 郢, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Chǔ 楚 before 278 BCE, the year of its conquest and sacking by the rival state of Qín 秦. In combination with the generally highly sophisticated content of the excavated manuscripts, this provenience suggests a mid-Warring States elite context, in which this textual material was recorded, used, and finally buried.

The bamboo slips in this cache pose significant epigraphic difficulties due to the difference to the script that was later standardized over the course of the Qín and Hàn periods.[336] The array of textual content found here (and in other, comparable corpora), ranging from material with clear connections to the *Lǎozǐ* 老子 and an edition of "Black Robes" (*Zī yī* 緇衣), a text that happened to be transmitted through the ages in the *Book of Rites* (*Lǐ jì* 禮記), to previously unknown texts, is often placed in relation to the transmitted material.[337] However, for the purposes of studying mid-Warring States usages of paronomasia in excavated texts, the specific relation between this excavated to transmitted textual material is less relevant due to the laconic nature of many instances of paronomasia.

acquisitions of comparable material, which in turn creates a vicious cycle of looting, instead of allowing archaeological excavation to take place. I believe this line of argumentation is sound, which is why I will discuss cases from corpora stemming from problematic provenience here only in the footnotes.

[336] For an overview of these issues, compare Wen Xing, "The Guodian Chu Slips: The Paleographical Issues and Their Significances," *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 32.1 (2000): 7-17.

[337] Compare, for example, Paul R. Goldin, "*Xunzi* in the Light of the Guodian Manuscripts," in *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017), 36-57.

**b) Paronomasia in the Guōdiàn material**

Most fundamentally, the Guōdiàn material clearly to attests the existence of paronomasia during this period. At the same time, the Guōdiàn material shows no evidence of 'correlative' theories, which should not be surprising, given that it likely predates Zōu Yǎn 鄒衍 (early to mid 3rd century BCE), the alleged founder of this school of thought.

For a typical form of paronomasia, known also in later texts, compare the following example, which occurs in a text that the editors of the 1998 publication have entitled "Bundled Sayings 3" (*Yǔcóng sān* 語叢三), containing short, aphoristic statements:[338]



> *Propriety* is [regard to] the *appropriate*.
>
> [35] … 悶（義），宜也。…[339]

[338] For a description of the physical characteristics and scribal features of this manuscript, compare Scott Bradley Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A Study and Complete Translation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2021) [2 vols.], 865-873.

[339] Jingmen City Museum (Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 荊門市博物館), *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wénwù chūbǎn shè 文物出版社, 1998), 211; image of the bamboo strip from p. 99. For an alternative translation, compare also Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 883.

This pairing is noteworthy primarily for how clearly it associates two terms: 'propriety' (*yì* 義 *ŋ(r)aj-s) and 'to be appropriate' (*yí* 宜 *ŋ(r)aj). This association is well-established and found frequently among later paronomastic glosses. This apparent gloss occurs here in a longer chain of definitions for terms, but the context of its usage is rather laconic.



The same text also includes the following gloss:

> *Music* is where those equipped with virtue *rejoice*.
>
> [54] 樂，備 (德)者之所樂也。[340]

This pairing, known in the transmitted literature in particular through *Xúnzǐ*, chapter 20, may not offer derivational connections, but the connection between 'music' (*yuè* 樂 *[ŋ]ˁrawk) and 'joy' (*lè* 樂 *[r]ˁawk) is one of paronomasia nonetheless. Despite this lack of genuine etymological connection, this utterance connects the two terms in a way that is invested in finding the reasons for *why* the term *yuè* 樂 is used to express 'music.' Noteworthy is that these usages of paronomasia are motivated to clarify an utterance-internal term, in the sense that there is no reference to any outside text. They are, in Behr's words, "auto-commentarial."[341]

[340] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 212. Image from strip from p. 101. For an alternative translation, compare also Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 883.

[341] Compare Behr, "Rhymes and Reason, Puns n' Proses, Winsome Words."

A similar use of paronomasia can be found in the text now known as "Bundled Sayings 1" (*Yǔ cóng yī* 語叢一), wherein the pointillistic aphorisms may be interpreted as a sophisticated example of analytic philosophy.[342] Paronomasia occurs here at the very beginning of two parallel statements:



[22] 息（仁）生於人　　[Just as] *human-heartedness* is born from (within) a *person*,

我（義）生於道。　　propriety stems (from outside,) from the Way.

[23] 或生於內,　　One arises from within,

或生於外。　　the other from without.[343]

This passage thus highlights how the origin of some values can be located outside of the individual, whereas others stem from within. Juxtaposed here are 'human-heartedness' (*rén* 息/仁 *niŋ) and 'propriety,' the former of which is described to be born within a 'person' (*rén* 人 *niŋ). This initial proposition appears commonplace, building on the aural recurrence between 'human-heartedness' and 'person,' only to rhetorically point to the second statement that is less readily accessible.[344] It follows, from this

[342] For such readings of this textual material, see Christoph Harbsmeier, "A Reading of the Guōdiàn 郭店 Manuscript *Yǔcóng* 語叢 1 as a Masterpiece of Early Chinese Analytic Philosophy and Conceptual Analysis," *Studies in Logic* 4.3 (2011): 3-56; and Christoph Harbsmeier, "The Philosophy of the Analytic *Aperçu*," in *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China*, ed. Joachim Gentz and Dirk Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 158-174.

[343] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 194; images of the bamboo strips from p. 78. For an alternative translation, compare also Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 825; Harbsmeier, "A Reading of the Guōdiàn 郭店 Manuscript *Yǔcóng* 語叢," 40; and Harbsmeier, "The Philosophy of the Analytic *Aperçu*," 171. On the applicability of the translation of "human-heartedness" or "humaneness," compare, however, Robert H. Gassmann, "Understanding Ancient Chinese Society: Approaches to *rén* 人 and *mín* 民," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120.3 (2000): 348-359, esp. 356-359. Gassmann argues that *rén* 仁 does not typically indicate a general quality of "humaneness" or "humanity" in pre-imperial texts, in that *rén* 仁 only applies to *rén* 人 and not to *mín* 民. Gassmann overall argues that the terms *rén* 人 and *mín* 民 both indicate kinship-based structures, with the ruling clan designated by *rén* 人, whereas other clans are subsumed under the rubric *mín* 民.

[344] For such a reading of parallel statements across early Chinese texts, in which the first statement functions as a subordinate, almost gratuitous commonplace statement, and in which the final assertion represents the culmination of the argument, compare Andrew H. Plaks, "Beyond Parallelism: A Rethinking of Patterns of Coordination and

statement, that the association between 'person/human' (*rén* 人 *niŋ) and 'human-heartedness' (*rén* 息/仁 *niŋ) appears to have been already highly conventionalized by the time of the Guōdiàn textual material. This is despite the orthographic differences within this corpus to today's script, as the character for the latter is consistently written differently, usually either with the phonetic components 'body' (*shēn* 身 *n̥in) or 'thousand' or (*qiān* 千 *s.n̥ʿin) over the semantic component 'heart' (*xīn* 心).[345] This conventionalized association may be further inferred from the following example:

> [殘 8] 息 (仁), 人也。*Human-heartedness* is due to *mankind*.[346]

The written forms of these terms in the Guōdiàn material offer good arguments to debunk the more speculative attempts of linking them through their written representation.[347] Nonetheless, this example is a clear paronomastic gloss, one that can also be found in a plethora of transmitted texts. In spite of a missing etymological link, this association through paronomasia indicates also a *conceptual* association: the connection between 'human-heartedness' and 'human beings' can be considered self-evident to speakers of the underlying language. For the authors of the Guōdiàn material, what was important in establishing such a gloss was clearly not the shape of the characters, but the underlying corresponding sounds.

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Subordination in Chinese Expository Prose," in *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China*, ed. Joachim Gentz and Dirk Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 67-86.

[345] Compare the characters listed in Zhāng Shǒuzhōng 張守中 et al., *Guōdiàn chǔjiǎn wénzì biān* 郭店楚簡文字編 (Beijing: Wenwu, 2000), 117-118.

[346] Compare also Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 824; 943 for an alternative translation, and footnote 89 for an argument that this strip should be part of *Yǔ cóng yī*, preceding the previous example from that text.

[347] Compare Goldin, forthcoming, 2-3 and 6-7 (preprint), for an in-depth discussion of the fallacies of this sort of character associations. For an overview of current scholarship on the likely etymology of *rén* 仁, see Wolfgang Behr, "Der gegenwärtige Forschungsstand zur Etymologie von *rén* 仁 im Überblick," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 38 (2015): 199-224.

To summarize, then, the above examples share a certain motivatory element, despite their brevity. They comment text-internally on the names of key values, highlighting conceptual and ontological connections valid for ancient language users. Additionally, they provide evidence for the importance of sound in establishing this connection, regardless of the specificities of the writing system.

At the same time, the ways of writing 'human-heartedness' (*rén* *niŋ, written esp. 息 or 忎, as opposed to 仁) in the Guōdiàn corpus offer a better understanding for other latent paronomastic associations of this term across the corpus. Compare, for example, the following passage, occurring in the text "Nature arises from Mandate" (*xìng zì mìng chū* 性自命出):[348]



> Cultivating your *body* comes close to achieving *human-heartedness*.
> [57]… 攸（修）身近至 [身心]（仁）。...[349]

While this association may be less clear than the preceding paronomastic gloss – it is less pointillistic and more directly embedded in a full sentence – the link between the terms 'body' (*shēn* 身 *n̥i[ŋ]) and 'human-heartedness' (*rén* 息/仁 *niŋ) functions here not just aurally but also

[348] For an overview, compare Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 667-695.

[349] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 181; image of the bamboo strip from p. 65. For a translation, see Kenneth W. Holloway, *The Quest for Ecstatic Morality in Early China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 122. A closely related manuscript was also discovered in the Shanghai Museum corpus and entitled "Xìng qíng lùn" 性情論, published in Mǎ Chéngyuán 馬承源, ed., *Shànghǎi bówùguǎn cáng Zhànguó Chǔ zhúshū (yī)* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (一) (Shanghai: Guji, 2001), 215-277; and 69-115 for higher resolution images of the bamboo slips. For a thorough examination of these manuscripts and competing transcriptions, compare Dīng Yuánzhí 丁原植, *Chǔjiǎn Rújiā "Xìng qíng shuō" yánjiū* 楚簡儒家《性情說》研究 (Taibei: Wànjuǎnlóu túshū yǒuxiàn gōngsī 萬卷樓圖書有限公司 2002).

graphically. A reading of this passage through the lens of paronomasia may further make for a clearer association between the key terms: If we take 'body' (*n̥i[ŋ]) and 'human-heartedness' (*niŋ) to be not just connected graphically and aurally but also conceptually (just as we took 'human-heartedness' and 'human' to be inextricably intertwined), then this statement, whereby cultivation of one's 'body' is close to mastery over the virtue of 'human-heartedness,' appears as yet another quasi-self-evident statement, comparable to the ones above on the origins of 'human-heartedness' within humans. This sort of paronomasia, still focused on building utterance-internal connections, clearly functions as a sort of "intuition pump," to echo Sluiter's characterization of ancient Mediterranean practices of etymology.[350]



The text *Xìng zì mìng chū* contains other ambiguous instances of paronomasia, where the device may potentially have an effect more reminiscent of ludic wordplay, with the aim of stupefying readers or listeners. Compare the following passage:

> In general, for the *Dào*, the heart-mind's *procedure* is [in a] dominant [position]. Of the *Dào*'s four *procedures*, only the human *Dào* is one that can be *taken as a guide*. The [other] three *procedures* – those can be *instructed*, and that is all.
>
> [14]…凡 衍（道），心述（術）為 宝（主）。 衍（道）四述（術），唯 [15] 人 衍（道）為可 衍（導）也。其參（三）述（術）者， 衍（導）之而已。…[351]

Mentioning four procedures or techniques, this passage explicates one them, the 'human Dào' (*rén dào* 人道), and describes the other three only in terms for how they can be transmitted, specifically through instruction. The following text (omitted above)

[350] Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology," 899.

[351] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 179; images of the bamboo strips from p. 62. For an alternative translation, see Holloway, *The Quest for Ecstatic Morality*, 117.

describes the processes for this sort of instruction of the unnamed, manifested through the Odes (*Shī* 詩), historical documents (*shū* 書), and through ritual-conform behavior (*lǐ* 禮) and music (*yuè* 樂).

In regard to paronomasia, the repeated occurrence of the key terms 'Dào' (*dào* 衍/道 *[kə.l]ˁuʔ), 'to guide/instruct' (*dǎo* 衍/導 *lˁuʔ-s), and 'procedures' (*shù* 述/術 *Cə-lut) is noteworthy. Their shared initial (*l$^{(ˁ)}$-) and close rime (*-u[t/ʔ]) in the Old Chinese reconstruction of Baxter and Sagart would render these terms candidates for paronomasia, and given the recurring alternation between those terms, in combination with the lack of argumentative elaboration of the other three procedures or techniques, this passage is best understood to operate on a more aural level than a purely argumentative one. In particular, the two statements that "*of the Dào's* (*[kə.l]ˁuʔ) *four procedures* (*Cə-lut), *only the human Dào* (*[kə.l]ˁuʔ) *is one that can be taken as a guide* (*lˁuʔ-s)" and that "*the [other] three procedures* (*Cə-lut) – *those can be instructed* (*lˁuʔ-s)" work potently together when read in this way. The recurrence of sound supports the underlying claim of the limitations of transmissibility, despite the near-confusion of terminology, manifest in the difficulties in differentiating between those procedures of the Dào that can be taken as a guide, and those that cannot be properly discussed but taught through the classical tradition, embodied in Odes (*Shī* 詩), in historical documents (*shū* 書), and in ritual-conform behavior (*lǐ* 禮) and music (*yuè* 樂).[352]

[352] In this way, this passage may be reminiscent of the opening lines of *Dàodéjīng* 道德經 or *Lǎozǐ* 老子 *receptus* (*Dào kě dào, fēi cháng dào; míng kě míng, fēi cháng míng* 道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名), lines that do not occur in the closely related textual material in the Guōdiàn corpus.

While the text itself does not provide any further indication for the underlying epistemic assumptions, such a flurry of repeated phonological material (with a related flabbergasting effect) offers links to other usages of the device, and hence appears feasible.

The *Xìng zì mìng chū* also features the following lines. These are perhaps more explicit in their usage of aural recurrence and paronomastic expression, used to disambiguate two of the text's key terms:

[3]… 衍（道）司（始）於青（情）， The Dào begins in [outward] reactions,

青（情）生於眚（性）。… and reactions arise from inborn characteristics.[353]

Most accessible in this parallel construction is the rhyme between the key terms 'reactions' (*qíng* 情 *[dz]eŋ) and 'inborn characteristics' (*xìng* 性 *seŋ-s), as both end in OC *-eŋ, highlighting from the outset the potentially poetic usage of language. This potential is further present in the second line, where 'reactions' (*[dz]eŋ) are said 'to be born from' or 'arise from' (*shēng* 生 *sreŋ) 'inborn characteristics' (*seŋ-s). Particularly clear is the paronomasia inherent between the latter two terms, which may furthermore be considered *figura etymologica* due to the likely etymological connection between these two terms.[354]

That this recurrence is not accidental can be glimpsed from the following comparable passage, as it features one of the two lines above in full, and the other in part. Most notably, the key terms remain the same. This passage occurs in "Bundled Sayings 2" (*Yǔcóng èr* 語叢二):[355]

[353] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 179; compare also images of the bamboo strip on p. 61. This translation is based on Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 698-700. Compare, for an alternative translation, also Holloway, *The Quest for Ecstatic Morality*, 114.

[354] See Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 431-432; 459-460; and 541. Compare also p. 433 for the difficulties Schuessler points out in connecting 'feelings,' 'reactions' (*qíng* 情) to these lexemes.

[355] Compare Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 845-848 for a general overview thereof.



[1] 情生於 眚（性），　　[Outward] reactions arise from inborn characteristics;

豐（禮）生於情。　　and ritual behavior arises from [outward] reactions.[356]

The overlaps of this couplet – both lines rhyme again in OC *-eŋ – to the previous example are significant, as mentioned: the first line of this couplet is identical to the second line of the previous example, with repeating the claim of 'dispositions' (*qíng* 情 *[dz]eŋ) 'being borne by' (*shēng* 生 *sreŋ) 'inborn characteristics' (*xìng* 性 *seŋ-s). Additionally, the overall parallel structures of these statements are identical. The only differences between the two couplets consist in 1) a substitution of 'Dào' through 'ritual behavior' (*lǐ* 禮); 2) a substitution of 'to begin' (*shǐ* 司/始) through 'to be borne by,' resulting in a repetition of the latter; and 3) the changed order of the underlying lines.

This suggests the overall stability of the paronomastic associations of the underlying terms, giving further evidence for how they are employed in these passages. Paronomasia is here primarily employed along the lines of *figura etymologica* – most clearly articulated in the usage of 'to be borne by' and 'inborn characteristics' – and more broadly speaking in a rather poetic usage that features paronomasia among other structural devices such as end rhyme and parallelism.

This link points to Behr's hypothesis on the origin of paronomasia and its roots in poetic expression. Such an overlap between parallelism and paronomasia also comes into play in the text

[356] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 203; images of the bamboo strip from p. 69. Translation based on Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 849-850.

*Five Conducts* (*wǔ xíng* 五行), a manuscript found both in the Guōdiàn corpus and tomb 3 from the Mǎwángduī 馬王堆 site (dating to approximately 168 BCE):[357]

| | |
|---|---|
| [25] 見而智(知)之，智也。 | To see and *know* it – that is *knowledge*. |
| 聲(聞)而智(知)之，聖也。 | To hear and know it – that is sagacity.[358] |

Juxtaposing visual and auditory forms of epistemic apprehension, the recurrence between 'to know' (*zhī* 知 *tre) and 'knowledge' (*zhì* 智 *tre-s) is obvious in these statements. Given the clear employment of paronomasia to gloss this first term, the second statement warrants closer inspection too, and it features a more interesting pun: the usage of 'sage' (*shèng* 聖*l̥eŋ-s) to define auditory knowing may perhaps be surprising to a modern reader, but is fully understandable given the close connection of the term to 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ), which features a strong phonological overlap and a comparable derivational relation as in 'to know' and 'knowledge.'[359]

Underlying these instances is again a motivatory principle, in which the aural parallel (with its roots here in derivational principles) intuitively highlights conceptual connections. The same text also features the following passage, in which we find two apparent glosses:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| [39]…柬（簡）之為言， | *kˁre[n]ʔ | *Purposeful* as an utterance |

[357] Compare Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 465-478 for an overview of the main intellectual positions of this text; compare also pp. 478-482 for differences to the Mawangdui manuscript with the same title, esp. the addition of a commentarial layer to the earlier stratum of text. The Mǎwángduī texts stem from an early Western Hàn dynasty site, specifically from the Chángshā 長沙 kingdom, located in the former Chǔ state and corresponding to present-day Húnán 湖南 province.

[358] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 150; compare also p. 33 for an image of the bamboo strip. Compare also Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 503-504. Also note the recurrence of the first part of this statement in passage 20 of the same text; compare Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 506-507.

[359] For the connection between those two terms, compare Behr 2005: 29-31; compare also Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 460. As noted on p. 9 of this chapter, paronomasia is inaccurately applied to the typical phenomenon in early Chinese texts, where two similar-sounding terms are brought up side by side; this instance could, however, be accurately be described as paronomasia, as the connection to 'sound' is not provided in the text itself and just suggested. Also compare Ning Chen, "The Etymology of *Sheng* (Sage) and Its Confucian Conception in Early China," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 27.4 (2000): 409-27.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 猷（猶）練[40]也， | *[r]ˁen-s | is like *boiling silk*. |
| 大而晏（罕）者也。 | | It is for the important but rare. |
| 匿之為言也， | *nrək | *Lenient* as an utterance |
| 猷（猶）匿匿（暱）也， | *nik | is like being lenient to *close relations*. |
| 少（小）而訪（旁）者也。 | | It is for the minor but frequent. [360] |

In both instances, the glossed terms – first 'purposeful' (*jiǎn* 簡 *kˁre[n]ʔ) and secondly 'lenient' (*nì* 匿 *nrək) – are explicated through terms that are phonologically close. The text hence provides paronomastic glosses for these terms, consisting of 'boiling silk' (*liàn* 練 *[r]ˁen-s) and 'close relations' (*nì* 暱 *nik). These are paronomastic glosses in the fullest sense of the term, as they are performing a sort of exegetical function. This is in reference to earlier occurrences of the key terms in the text, which read as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| [37] 不柬（簡）不行。 | If one is not *purposeful*, one cannot act. |
| 不匿不（辨）於道。 | If one is not *lenient*, one cannot discern the Way.[361] |

These glosses hence function intratextually, or in an auto-commentarial way, as the gloss refers to terms occurring within the same textual material. These two examples are hence useful in establishing the apparent existence of such commentarial glosses around the time of the Guōdiàn material, especially when compared to the above examples that utilize paronomasia more to a narrative or poetic effect, or for infusing a passage with intuitive connections. Compared to those

[360] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 151; compare also p. 34 for images of the bamboo strips. The transcription and translation above are based on those of Mark Csikszentmihalyi; compare hence his translation and notes in *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 303-305; also compare the parallel passage from the Mawangdui material, for which compare Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue*, 351-354. Note particularly how additional layers of commentaries are integrated in the latter manuscript; compare Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 478-480.

[361] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 150; for an image of the bamboo strip, compare also p. 34. Again, compare Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue*, 303-305.

functions, this single passage is more of an exception; paronomasia in this commentarial function (that is, auto-commentarial) may have been a rather rare phenomenon in this early stage, compared to the more poetic occurrences observed above.

Other passages in the Guōdiàn material are noteworthy for their focus on auditory performance, wherein sound recurrences function primarily as allusions to underlying themes. Compare in this context the following passage, contained within the same text:

> Those that resound like a bronze bell and revibrate like a jade stone – those have virtue.
>
> Resounding like a bronze bell – that is aptness;
>
> The tone of jade – that is sagacity.
>
> Aptness is the human Dào; virtue is Heaven's Dào.
>
> Only for someone who has virtue
>
> may there be resounding like a bronze bell and revibrating like a jade stone.

[19] ... 金聖（聲）而玉晨（振）之，又（有）（德）者也。

金聖（聲），善也。

玉音，聖也。

善，人 [20] 道也，（德）而【天】【道】【也】。

【唯】又（有）（德）者，

（然）句（後）能金聖（聲）而玉晨（振）之。...[362]

Regardless of the wider implications of the contents of this passage and its parallel to the transmitted text *Mèngzǐ* 孟子,[363] the allusion of the homophonous 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ) to the

[362] *Guōdiàn Chǔ mù zhújiǎn*, 150; compare also p. 32 for images of the bamboo strips. Compare also the translations of Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 498-501; and Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 290-291.

[363] For an interpretation of this passage, the employment of the metaphor of resonance between metal bell and jade stone for expressing moral transformation, and the parallels of these lines to a passage in the *Mèngzǐ*, see Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue*, 179-192. For the *Mèngzǐ* passage, compare Jiāo Xún 焦循 and Shěn Wénzhuō 沈文倬 (eds.), *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 孟子正義 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1987), 5B1.672.

term ‘sage’ (*shèng* 聖 *l̥eŋ-s) features prominently here. Additionally, the imagery of the resounding bronze bell and the revibrating jade stone is attributed to someone who has mastered virtue, suggestive of its further connection to ‘sagacity.’ In this context, note that both terms (‘sound’ and ‘sagacity’) are written the same way in this passage. These terms are frequently collated throughout early Chinese material, and within the classical tradition, this sort of allusion is decoded with relative ease, suggesting the possible function here of creating, both textually and performatively in the act of decoding, a sort of allegiance to this tradition.

**c) Summary**

In sum, paronomasia is used in this corpus for a plethora of functions, many of which occur in transmitted texts attributed to the same period as well. Importantly, direct ‘correlative’ tendencies cannot be established in this corpus, which would anyways predate the general rise of ‘correlative’ schemes of thought and also Zōu Yǎn 鄒衍 (early to mid 3rd century BCE), the alleged founder of this line of thought. Paronomasia can hence not have arisen as a result of ‘correlative’ thought. Generally, paronomasia in the Guōdiàn material can be summarized to function as follows:

1) As frequent recurrences to illustrate verbal artistry, with a stupefying effect; related is the poetic effect, as the device is used
    a. in connection to:
        i. parallelism;
        ii. and end rhyme;
    b. along the lines of *figura etymologica.*[364]
2) As text-internal glosses, used:
    a. to establish intuitive connections between key terms;

[364] *Figura etymologica* implies genuine etymological connections; for certain instances above, these connections cannot be established.

b. to disambiguate similar sounding key terms;
c. and, rarely, in an auto-commentarial way.

3) For narrative and argumentative effect, used especially in combination with previous points.
4) Lastly, in certain instances, as mere allusions, possibly to highlight allegiance to a specific cultural tradition.

Given the wide range of different functions already present in this material that dates to around 300 BCE, it is reasonable to assume that the device must have been in use for a longer period, especially in prior material in similar genres of text. Behr's hypothesis regarding the origin of paronomasia, according to which its origins can be found in genuine *figura etymologica*, can hence not verified nor disproven with the analyzed material. Additionally, the genres of writing present in the Guōdiàn corpus may certainly not cover all usages of paronomasia at around 300 BCE, but given the argumentative focus of the texts therein, they may be most representative of how this device was in use in argumentative texts around that point in time.

## 4.4 Transmitted Warring States Texts

### 4.4.1 Introduction – Glossing the Floods of Yǔ in *Mèngzǐ*

Many of the above-mentioned functions occur also in the transmitted texts generally attributed to the Warring States period, suggesting a certain continuity in the usage of paronomasia. This should not come as a surprise, but rather as a general confirmation that many of these texts may contain material from that period. In general, compared to excavated texts, such transmitted texts are not straightforward to date, as many of them have may be the product of later editorial processes.

Nonetheless, certain passages and usages of paronomasia may be telling for how they invoke different functions of the device of paronomasia, especially when compared to the functions thereof in the Guōdiàn corpus. Consider, in this context, the following passage from the *Mèngzǐ*:

> "A long time has passed since the world was created; and a [period of] good order took turns with one [of] chaos. In the time of Yáo, the waters flowed out of their courses, causing floodings across the Central States, [so that] serpents and dragons [started to] dwell in them. The people had nowhere to settle, so the inferior [ranks] made nests; the superior [ranks] carved cave dwellings. It says in the *shū*: 'The inundating waters warned me.' *Inundating* waters are *overflooding* waters. Yǔ was directed to regulate them, so he dug out earth [to form canals] to direct the waters to the ocean. He drove out the serpents and dragons to expel them to the bogs. The waters flowed out in these channels; these are [now] the Jiāng, the Huái, the Hé, and the Hàn rivers. When the danger was already in the distant [past], and the attacks by birds and beasts had ceased, only then did people get hold of the plains and inhabit them."
>
> 天下之生久矣，一治一亂。當堯之時，水逆行，氾濫於中國。蛇龍居之，民無所定。下者為巢，上者為營窟。《書》曰：『洚水警余。』洚水者，洪水也。使禹治之，禹掘地而注之海，驅蛇龍而放之菹。水由地中行，江、淮、河、漢是也。險阻既遠，鳥獸之害人者消，然後人得平土而居之。[365]

The figure of Mèngzǐ describes the famous legendary event of the cultural hero Yǔ's subduing the floods that had been ravaging the lands, and how Yǔ restored order. Perhaps no other event in the supposed distant past had such a grip on writers and thinkers in the Warring States and the Hàn periods of Chinese history. It may thus not be surprising that – allegedly – the historical Master Mèng (Mèng Kē 孟軻, 371–289 BCE), the famous Confucian master who could be described "as the second major founder of Confucianism,"[366] would refer back to such an event in the distant past. If we assumed, however, that the above passage is a genuine reflection of Mèng Kē's thoughts

[365] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 3B9.446-448; for a different translation, compare, for example, Bryan W. Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), 83-84.

[366] Wing-cheuk Chan, "Philosophical Thought of Mencius," in *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy*, ed. Vincent Shen (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 153. Compare that chapter (153-178) for a general overview of the philosophy attributed to Mèngzǐ and its later influences. At the same time, compare Paul R. Goldin, "Xunzi and Early Han Philosophy," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 67, no. 1 (2007): 135–66, for the prominent role of Xúnzǐ – and not Mèngzǐ – among Western Hàn thinkers.

and explications thereof, we should be surprised by how paronomasia is utilized here, found in the following line:

洚水者，洪水也。　　"*Inundating* waters – those were *overflooding* waters."[367]

This short statement may hence be less interesting for what specifically is stated and more so for *how* it is phrased. It is a paronomastic gloss, as the historical phonological reconstructions of both 'overflooding' (*hóng* 洪 OC *[N-]kˤoŋ) and 'inundating' (*jiàng* 洚 OC *kˤruŋ-s) offer large overlaps – in other words, the two terms are to be considered equal because they sound similar. More specifically, this paronomastic gloss is applied to a term that first appears in a quotation that the figure of Mèngzǐ brings up. Mèngzǐ does so in a way that connects the gloss to a quotation from *shū* 書, which – if we again assume that this passage reflects the thoughts and words of Mèng Kē – should be understood as a genre of historicizing documents that resulted in the later classic of the *Shàngshū* 尚書.[368] What Mèngzǐ does, then, is to perform a mode of *textual exegesis*, within which the phonological parallel (between the *shū* 書 quotation and what he himself utters) is transposed onto a semantical plane, as if Mèngzǐ talked about decoding the actual quotation (either through deciphering a written textual unit, or through glossing a passage Mèngzǐ quotes in speech) and how to understand it.

This is a function of paronomasia not encountered in the Guōdiàn corpus, where the already rare commentarial function of paronomasia was limited to text-internal references. This

[367] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 3B9.447; 6B11.859.

[368] Compare 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; and the overarching argument of Dirk Meyer, *Documentation and Argument in Early China: The Shàngshū* 尚書 *(Venerated Documents) and the Shū Tradition* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021). For canonization of the later text, compare Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 120-167.

paronomastic gloss in the *Mèngzǐ* fulfills, in other words, an "allo-commentarial function," to reiterate Behr's words.[369] Moreover, we encounter Mèngzǐ uttering those words not just once, but twice in the eponymous text,[370] and unsurprisingly, both passages are about this mythical flood event in the distant past. This passage occurs in *Mèngzǐ* 6B11 ("Gàozǐ II" 告子下):

> "How Yǔ controlled the waters was by means of the [preexisting] ways of the water. (…) When the waters flowed out of their courses, we refer to it was inundating waters. *Inundating* waters are *overflooding* waters, and they are what human-hearted people abhor."
>
> 禹之治水，水之道也。… 水逆行，謂之洚水。洚水者，洪水也，仁人之所惡也。[371]

As in the above example from *Mèngzǐ* 3B9, the figure of Mèngzǐ here embeds the paronomastic gloss in a discussion of the legendary controlling of the floods by Yǔ. Beyond the specific gloss, another parallel to the introductory example is present here, as both texts use the terse expression 'the waters flowed out of their courses' (*shuǐ nì xíng* 水逆行). These passages hence appear to be closely related, both in topic and in wording. In this second instance, however, the gloss is in relation to a term that the figure of Mèngzǐ brings up himself, and not a quoted external textual unit. This text-internal paronomastic gloss unpacks the previous utterance of the master and performs a mode of exegesis onto the statement of the Mèngzǐ figure.

This difference of commenting may appear minuscule at first sight, but a comparison to other textual material reveals that this shift is rather significant. If we were to accept that the Guōdiàn material represents the typical features of paronomasia around 300 BCE, then the passage above from *Mèngzǐ* 3B9 (and its usage of the device to gloss an outside text) would mean that this passage is atypical for that period. Yet beyond the survey of paronomasia in the Guōdiàn material

[369] See Behr, "Rhymes and Reason, Puns n' Proses, Winsome Words."

[370] The text *Mèngzǐ* 孟子 ('Master Mèng') is traditionally attributed to the philosopher bearing the same name, known in the West also in the latinized form Mencius.

[371] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 6B11.859; comp. also Van Norden, *Mengzi*, 168.

undertaken above, a general comparison of its specific functions across the corpus of transmitted texts generally dated to the Warring States period will be more telling, as it will reveal which functions are typical and which other ones may be clear outliers. Hence, in order to approach this topic, a general survey of the typical features of this corpus is in place in the following section.

To preface these considerations that will be discussed in more detail in the following, there are other reasons to question a Warring States dating for both passages above from the *Mèngzǐ*: the specific term used by the *shū* 書 text quoted therein (a passage which, by the way, does not occur in the transmitted text of the *Shàngshū* 尚書) and by the Mèngzǐ figure is itself atypical for Warring States texts. In this form, the term 'inundating waters' (*jiàng shuǐ* 洚水 OC *m-kˁruŋ s.turʔ, as well as the slightly more common variant *jiàng shuǐ* 降水), occur only in a handful other texts, all dating to the Hàn dynasty.[372] This rare phrasing should be compared with the far more common *hóng shuǐ* 洪水 (OC *gˁ(r)oŋ s.turʔ), with the same meaning (and employed in the *Mèngzǐ* as the gloss to the previous term), which occurs also in the *Shī jīng* 詩經,[373] and yet another, more common term for the same phenomenon and frequently applied to the floods that Yǔ held back, *hóng shuǐ* 鴻水 (*[g]ˁoŋ s.turʔ).[374] Most of these designations generally denote the same

[372] The first occurs only, besides the *Mèngzǐ*, in the *Shuōwén jiězì* and the *Hàn shū*; for the occurrence in the *Shuōwén*, see Xǔ Shèn 許慎; Táo Shēngkuí 陶生魁 (ed.), *Shuōwén jiězì* 說文解字 (Bejing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2020), 357; for that in the *Hàn shū*, see Bān Gù 班固, *Hàn shū* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1962), 29.1675. The latter form occurs in *Hàn shū* 28.1534; twice in the *Shǐ jì*; and in two rather highly questionable chapters in the *Shàng shū* 尚書. For the occurrences in the *Shǐ jì*, see Sīmǎ Qiān 司馬遷, *Shǐ jì* 史記 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1982), 2.70 and 29.1405; for the *Shàng shū* passages, occurring in the „Yǔ gòng" 禹貢 and the „Dà Yǔ mó" 大禹謨 chapters, see *Shísān jīng zhùshū* 4.285 and 6.319.

The few occurrences in early texts of the homophonous *jiàng shuǐ* 絳水 are all unrelated and refer to the name of a specific river; compare, for example, *Shǐ jì* 44.1855.

[373] This occurs in *Máo* 304 („Cháng fā" 長發); see Máo Hēng 毛亨; Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄, Lù Démíng 陸德明, and Kǒng Xiángjūn 孔祥軍 (eds.), *Máo Shī chuánjiān* 毛詩傳箋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2018), 495. Also note that the Máo commentary more generally relies on this rendition of the term.

[374] This occurs for example in *Shǐ jì* 2.50; 38.1611; 57.3050.

phenomenon, used in particular for Yǔ's mythical subduing of the floods, and could hence be considered cognates; Wáng Lì and Schuessler even list them as such, based on the evidence from the *Mèngzǐ*.[375]

The issue in this is the phonological difference between *jiàng* 洚/降 (*kˁruŋ-s) on the one hand, and *hóng* 洪 (*gˁ(r)oŋ) and *hóng* 鴻 (*[g]ˁoŋ) on the other. The latter two characters do not pose a big difficulty – they express largely the same phonological material.[376] The former set of characters (*jiàng* 洚/降 *kˁruŋ-s) is different, and this difference is significant: the rimes (*-oŋ vs. -uŋ, representing rime categories *dōng* 東 vs. *dōng* 冬) pose an issue.[377] This poses a problem for glossing one set of glyphs with the other, and the *Mèngzǐ* alone cannot be used as sole evidence that such a difference of sound in glossing could genuinely occur in the pre-imperial era.[378]

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[375] See Wáng Lì 王力, *Tóng yuán zìdiǎn* 同源字典 (Beijing: Shāngwù yìn shūguǎn chūbǎn, 1982), 379; and Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 278.

[376] They admittedly belong to separate phonophoric series (*gòng* 共 and *gōng* 工), but these two series are known to have been used interchangeably in the Warring States period.

[377] The initials of these characters (*gˁ- vs. kˁ-) would be unproblematic. These rimes are clearly kept apart in pre-imperial and most Hàn texts (with *-o- thought to represent a back vowel, and *-u- more of a front vowel).

[378] Using the *Mèngzǐ* passages to justify listing these terms as cognates would be circular logic in the line of the argument above; compare p. 195, footnote 375.

The question becomes therefore that of when and where it would have made sense to consider these two different pronunciations similar enough to be considered passable. For comparison, Zhōu Zǔmó described the merger of these rimes in poetry from the state of Wú 吳 in the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 CE); see Zhōu Zǔmó 周祖謨, *Wèi Jìn Nánběicháo yùnbù zhī yǎnbiàn* 魏晋南北朝韻部之演變 (Taibei: Dōngdà túshū gōngsī 東大圖書公司, 1996), 63. That specific date may certainly too late for this passage in the *Mèngzǐ*, including any possible editorial interventions, yet it may point us to potential dialectal influences – common during the late Western and throughout the Eastern Hàn – in this text; for a possible dialect responsible for this, specifically the dialect of Wú-Yuè 吳越, compare Paul L.-M. Serruys, *The Chinese Dialects of Han Time according to Fang Yen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), esp. 95-96; 172-175.

A different explanation would consist in the phenomenon described by Schuessler as "vowel bending" or "warping," which would render the two vowels at play more compatible (*hóng shuǐ* 洪 LHan *goŋ vs. *jiàng* 洚/降 LHan *go(u)ŋ). This, again, would point to a late Western to Eastern Hàn context for when the floods of Yǔ could be described as *jiàng shuǐ* 洚水. Most pertinently, in this universal phenomenon, the vocalic onset of low syllables is bent down, resulting in a closer overlap between the two syllables in question. See Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 120-121 for a short overview; and, for more details, Axel Schuessler, "The Qièyùn System 'Divisions' as a Result of Vowel Warping," in *The Chinese Rime Tables: Linguistic Philosophy and Historical-Comparative Phonology*, ed. David Prager Branner (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2006), 83-96.

This issue of the gloss employed in the mentioned two passages of the *Mèngzǐ* may point to either one of two things: either the connection between these terms is not one of paronomasia (in which case they are irrelevant to the discussion of this chapter), or it constitutes a later intervention in the text. This possibility becomes more credible when also taking the issue of the invoked function of paronomasia into account – which, as discussed above, makes direct reference of an external textual unit, a function not seen in the Guōdiàn texts.

The following section will continue to present an overview of the history of paronomasia, focused on transmitted Warring States texts and early- to mid-Western Hàn texts, thereby largely confirming that this allo-commentarial function of paronomasia represents a later innovation. Reference to external units of text through paronomasia are, as we shall see, clearly the exception in the transmitted textual corpus traditionally ascribed to the Warring States period.

### 4.4.2 *Analects, Lǐjì, Xúnzǐ*

Mentioned already at the very beginning of this chapter, the *Lúnyǔ* 論語 (*Analects*) features paronomasia in a few passages prominently, and it is worth reiterating the quote that "to *govern* is to *rectify*" (*zhèng zhě, zhèng yě* 政者正也), as paronomasia (between 'to govern' *zhèng* 政 and 'to rectify *zhèng* 正) occurs here as a short, intuitive connection to point out the basis for a subsequent argument.[379]

Other examples in the *Lúnyǔ* largely follow the trend seen in the Guōdiàn corpus, according to which paronomasia is used predominantly to point out intuitive connections between key terms. Compare, in this context, also the following statement of the master figure in 3.10:

[379] *Lúnyǔ jíshì* 25.864.

"At the grand sacrifice, after having already *performed the libation* and turned around,

I do not wish to *observe* it [further]!"

「禘自既灌而往者，吾不欲觀之矣。」[380]

This short statement emphasizes the aspect of performance, juxtaposing 'to perform a libation' (*guàn* 灌 *[C.q$^{w}$]$^{ʕ}$ar-s) and 'to observe' (*guān* 觀 *C.q$^{wʕ}$ar). The master figure here appears to point out the redundancy of the latter, after having already finished the former, a statement that makes intuitive sense when taking the shared phonological material into account: why would anybody 'observe' or 'contemplate' (*C.q$^{wʕ}$ar) if they had already 'performed the libation' (*[C.q$^{w}$]$^{ʕ}$ar-s)? This further argumentative effect, here of pointing out redundancy, operating on both the semantic and the aural level, is clearly reminiscent of functions of paronomasia observed in the Guōdiàn material.

Across the transmitted chapters of the *Lǐjì* 禮記, this trend is upheld as well, and paronomasia is not employed as an exegetical tool for external textual units. The examples confirming this trend across the *Lǐjì* are too numerous to list here, but a typical example shall suffice. Encountered already in the above examples from the Guōdiàn corpus, the connections between 'human-heartedness' (*rén* 仁 *niŋ) and 'human' (*rén* 人 *niŋ), and between 'propriety' (*yi* 義 *ŋraj-s) and 'to be proper' (*yi* 宜 *ŋraj), perhaps the most prominent example among paronomastic glosses, occur also in the "Doctrine of the Mean" (*Zhōng yōng* 中庸), transmitted as a chapter of the *Lǐjì*. In this chapter, we find the following statement: "'*To be humane' is 'human' ... 'Propriety' is 'to be proper'*." (*rén zhe, rén yě ... yì zhě, yí yě* 仁者，人也…義者，宜也).[381] This certainly creates

[380] *Lúnyǔ jíshì* 5.164.

[381] *Shísān jīng zhùshū* 52.3535.

a memorably simple, intuitive explanation for terms that arguably form some of the most important ones in early Chinese thought. In the *Zhōng yōng*, as in the rest of the *Lǐjì,* the usage of paronomasia remains focused on referencing such key terms that occur throughout the text itself.

Significant in all of this is, then, the limitation of paronomasia to remain within the boundaries of the same text. This same trend can also be observed in the text *Xúnzǐ* 荀子. Again, for the sake of concision, compare just the following example, from the ninth chapter (*wáng zhì* 王制) of the text:

君者, A *ruler*...
善群也。 …is apt at *gathering people*.[382]

This statement is loosely embedded in a longer exposition on the craft of the ruler. While both terms – 'ruler' (*jūn* 君 *C.qur) and 'gathering people' (*qún* 群 *[g]ur) – each occur in preceding and succeeding sections of the chapter, they remain unconnected, apart from this short sentence. Paronomasia is here hence employed to intuitively connect terms, in that one term is seemingly glossed through the other term.

### 4.4.3 *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ*

In these functions, paronomasia occurs also in the text *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lǚ* (*Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋), compiled around the year 239 BCE, under the auspices of Lǚ Bùwéi 呂不韋, chancellor of the state of Qín that would come to conquer the territories of its political rivals in the following years. This text – or at least parts thereof – may be dated more securely to the Warring States period than other texts discussed in this section. Most pertinent for our purposes here is a

[382] *Xúnzǐ jíjiě* 9.165.

passage in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 4/2.2, which makes use of paronomasia in a spinning sequence of similar sounding terms:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 凡說者, | *l̥ot-s | In general, those who persuade |
| 兌之也, | *lot-s | should be sharp-edged towards [their audience],[383] |
| 非說之也。 | *lot | and shouldn't just please [their audience]. |
| 今世之說者, | *l̥ot-s | But in the current generation of persuaders |
| 多弗能兌, | *lot-s | many are incapable of being sharp-edged, |
| 而反說之。 | *lot | and instead go back to pleasing [their audience].[384] |

This passage attempts to establish the issue of contemporary persuaders and how they use language and arguments. In other words, this passage points out that persuasion *should not* consist in mere sycophancy, but rather in moving the target audience by sharp, critical arguments. This ideal of persuasion is contrasted with the practice supposedly common at the time of the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*, in which the opposite holds true. This is expressed in a series of terms that stunningly overlap in their phonological properties, as the repeated key terms 'persuasion' (*shuì* 說 *l̥ot-s), 'sharp-edged' (*ruì* 兌 *lot-s) and 'to please' (*yuè* 說 *lot) all are remarkably close. On an aural level, this near-confusion of terms mirrors the semantic content of these statements, as it hinges upon an implied inability to distinguish between sycophancy and critical argumentation.

Altogether, this passage may pose considerable difficulties to a reading audience due to the nature of the Chinese script, just as it would have stunned a listening audience in a similar way, as all these terms would have likely sounded rather similar. On both planes, this passage reveals a

[383] Note that I am interpreting the glyph *ruì* 兌 here as 'sharp' or 'keen' (usually written *ruì* 銳).

[384] Lǚ Bùwéi 呂不韋 and Xǔ Wéiyù 許維遹 (eds.), *Lǚshì chūnqiū jíshì* 呂氏春秋集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 4/2.90. I follow the suggestions of Chen Qiyou and Gao Heng on the reading of this passage. For a full translation, compare Knoblock and Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei* 120.

fundamentally ludic engagement with the device of paronomasia, as it *performs* the confusion implied by this statement.[385]

Compare also the following example from *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 14/1.9, a chapter that may be of a later dating. Nonetheless, this passage makes a comparable use of paronomasia:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 民之本教曰孝, | *s.kˁraw-s == *qʰˁruʔ-s | The people's basic *teaching* is called '*filial devotion*' |
| 其行曰養。 | *[g]ˁraŋ-s == *[ɢ]aŋʔ | and their [filial] *conduct* is called '*nourishing*.' |
| … | | |
| 仁者仁此者也, | | *Human-heartedness* is being *humane* in it; |
| 禮者履此者也, | *[r]ˁijʔ == *[r]ˁijʔ | *ritual etiquette* is *treading* in it; |
| 義者宜此者也, | *ŋ(r)aj-s == *ŋ(r)aj | *propriety* is being *proper* in it; |
| 信者信此者也, | | *trustworthiness* is being *trustworthy* in it; |
| 彊者彊此者也。 | | and *strength* is being *strong* in it.[386] |

This passage begins by establishing the fundamental role of filial devotion for the people, both in thought and in practice. This is highlighted in particular by linking the aural qualities for that virtue (*xiào* 孝 *qʰˁruʔ-s) to that of the term 'teaching' (*jiào* 教 *s.kˁraw-s).[387] This play on words is further strengthened through the parallelism of the subsequent statement, in which 'conduct' (*xíng* 行 *[g]ˁraŋ-s) is juxtaposed to 'nourishing' (*yǎng* 養 *[ɢ]aŋʔ). Both connections are, in essence, based on paronomasia, yet neither is in reference to an outside text. Rather, both instances

[385] This function was also described above in regard to the *Xìng zì mìng chū* from the Guōdiàn corpus. Further note that this passage may present significant difficulties in understanding, as the characters used are all polysemous and almost interchangeable with one another. As such, 'sharp-edged' is here written *ruì* 兌, typically rendered *ruì* 銳 in the later tradition, and 'to please' is written *yuè* 說, which can also be represented through the graph *yuè* 悅, but in this form may be confused with the term 'persuasion' *shuì* 說. To complicate things, the character 兌 could also stand for this latter term 'to please' *yuè*. Compare also footnote 271.

[386] *Lǚshì chūnqiū jíshì* 14/1.309. Compare also Knoblock and Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, 306.

[387] Note the differences between the terms involved, as the two terms differ notably in nucleus and coda in OCNR (*-aw- vs. *-u-). However, both *xiào* 孝 and *jiào* 教 are attributed traditionally to the same rhyme category (*xiāo* 宵), and in a late Warring States context were likely much closer than reflected in the OCNR reconstruction.

highlight notions put forth by this passage itself. Paronomasia hence quite evidently supports the intuitive connectivity between those notions.

This becomes even clearer in the second half of the passage above, wherein other virtues – 'human-heartedness' (*rén* 仁), 'ritual etiquette' (*lǐ* 禮), 'propriety' (*yì* 義), 'trustworthiness' (*xìn* 信), and 'strength' (*qiáng* 彊) – all appear derived from filial devotion. These other virtues are each in turn connected through paronomasia to another term, which may or may not be written with the same graph.[388] While the relationship between many of those terms may be based on genuine derivational principles, it appears that derivation may only be of secondary importance in those instances of *figura etymologica.* Importantly, as these statements form an argumentative extension of the first two phrases that link 'filial devotion' to 'teaching' and 'nourishing' to 'conduct' (terms which likely do not feature genuine etymological connections).

This last example also contains a longer chain of different paronomastic expressions, a feature not observed in the Guōdiàn corpus or any of the above texts. This passage consists, specifically, of the first section, featuring two paronomastic glosses and short, laconic pronouncements, comparable to other examples of Warring States paronomasia observed above, and in the second section five statements that include paronomasia along the lines of *figura etymologica* (even if they do not feature genuine etymological relations), thus creating a tighter net of such paronomastic expressions. Overall, this sort of paronomasia chain appears to be an innovation of either the Late Warring States era or subsequent periods.

[388] It would be speculation anyways to discuss the specifics of the transmitted characters, as it is uncertain how this passage would have been written by the time of the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*.

### 4.4.4 *Zhuāngzǐ*

In the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 collection, paronomastic glosses are generally rare. The main exception is the following passage occurs in the chapter "The Discourse that Evens Things Out" ("Qí wù lùn" 齊物論), a passage that – like the above passage from *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 14/1.9 – creates a longer chain with different instances of paronomasia:

> It is only those who reach far that know how to *comprehend* unity.
> Being like this, they don't *use*, but attribute it to the *commonly applied*.
> 唯達者知通為一，為是不用而寓諸庸。
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | 庸也者， | *loŋ | 'The *commonly applied*' is… |
> | 用也； | *m.loŋ-s | …'to *use*.' |
> | 用也者， | *m.loŋ-s | '*To use*' is…. |
> | 通也； | *l̥ˤoŋ | …'to *comprehend*.' |
> | 通也者， | (*l̥ˤoŋ) | And 'to comprehend' is… |
> | 得也。 | (*tˤək) | …'to apprehend.'[389] |

This passage first posits a statement that includes several occurrences of similar sounding terms, and in a second step lists these terms and strings them together as paronomastic glosses. The effect of this overall construction, with its two main components, may be read to first create a similar near-confusion of terms as encountered in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* and the *Xìng zì mìng chū* from the Guōdiàn corpus, and secondly to equalize these terms fully in the string of paronomastic glosses. In this, this chain of glosses comments on and remains in reference to text-internal key terms. Again, such paronomastic glosses are the clear outlier in the *Zhuāngzǐ*.

[389] Guō Qìngfān 郭慶藩 and Wáng Xiàoyú 王孝魚 (eds.), *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2012), 2.71.

Instead, the poetic potential of paronomasia appears more latent in this collection. Consider the following passage, from the chapter "Webbed Toes" ("Pián mǔ" 駢拇), which may possibly show traces from the interregnum after the fall of the Qín dynasty, according to Graham.[390]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 且夫屬其性乎仁義者, | | Moreover, those who entrust their predisposition to human-heartedness and righteousness, |
| 雖通如曾、史, | | even if they might attain them like Zeng [Can] and Shi [Qiu?] |
| 非吾所謂臧也； | *[ts]ˤaŋ | they are not what I refer to as *good*; |
| 屬其性於五味, | | Those who entrust their predisposition to the five flavors, |
| 雖通如俞兒, | | even if they might attain them like Shu-er, |
| 非吾所謂臧也； | *[ts]ˤaŋ | they are not what I refer to as *right*; |
| 屬其性乎五聲, | | Those who entrust their predisposition to the five sounds, |
| 雖通如師曠, | *l̥ˤoŋ *[k]ʷʰˤaŋ-s | even if they might *attain* them like music master Kuang, |
| 非吾所謂聰也； | *s-l̥ˤoŋ | they are not what I refer to as *keen of hearing*; |
| 屬其性乎五色, | | Those who entrust their predisposition to the five colors, |
| 雖通如離朱, | | even if they might attain them like Li Zhu, |
| 非吾所謂明也。 | *mraŋ | they are not what I refer to as *clear of sight*.[391] |

The specific occurrence of paronomasia, occurring between 'to attain/pass through' (*tōng* 通 *l̥ˤoŋ) and 'to be keen of hearing' (*cōng* 聰 *s-l̥ˤoŋ), is here embedded in a list of four critiques of qualities, connected through a longer rhyme scheme on rhyme categories *yáng* 陽 and *dōng* 東 (a rather typical cross rhyme for the Late Warring States period). Additionally, the occurrence of paronomasia is located

[390] See Angus Charles Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001), 197-199.

[391] *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 8.327. For an alternative translation, compare Graham, *Chuang-tzu*, 202.

within the specific part of the passage that refers to auditory apprehension, only to deny that it can be truly referred to as being 'keen of hearing.'

As this sort of paronomasia is more common in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, with its connections to other forms of poetic expression, the text largely conforms to other evidence from the Warring States period. The occurrence in the "The Discourse that Evens Things Out," with its longer paronomastic chain, is shared only with *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 14/1.9 in the selection of the above texts, which may indicate either the rarity of this phenomenon in Warring States texts, or its atypical nature, indicating that it may be a later interpolation.[392]

### 4.4.5 Paronomasia in the *Mèngzǐ* beyond the Floods of Yǔ

This brings us back to the *Mèngzǐ,* and a short summary of interim findings is in place. It should be highlighted that the examples above regarding the flood myth surrounding the figure of Yǔ have made use of a commentarial function of paronomasia, applied in one instance to a specific external unit of text, in a way that can be succinctly summarized as a mode of textual exegesis. None of the other transmitted texts generally attributed to the Warring States period features such an allo-commentarial usage of paronomasia, nor does this occur in the more securely dateable Guōdiàn corpus. Another rare usage that similarly is absent in the Guōdiàn corpus consists of the paronomastic chain, in which multiple separate terms are each glossed paronomastically.

[392] Additionally, this may in turn be taken as a general indication of a later dating of this passage than the, which is the dating usually assumed for

The "The Discourse that Evens Things Out" is usually assumed to stem from the 4th century BCE, but the phrasing appears rather odd and more alike to Late Warring States to Western Hàn texts. Such an indication cannot, of course, be extended to the chapter as a whole, as the passage in question could be interpreted as the insertion of a later commentary into an older stratum of text. The placing of this chapter within the so-called "Inner Chapters" (*nèi piān* 內篇) of the *Zhuāngzǐ* – one of the key arguments routinely brought up in ascribing it to the historical Zhuāng Zhōu 莊周 (c. 4th to early 3rd century BCE) – cannot be taken as guarantee for an early dating; compare, in this regard, Esther Klein, "Were there "Inner Chapters" in the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence about the *Zhuangzi,*" *T'oung Pao* 96.4 (2010), 299-369.

More common is certainly the auto-commentarial function of paronomasia, in which a term from within the text is in the subsequent text reiterated and glossed. Instances of this function are nonetheless rare, especially compared to passages that either feature paronomasia in addition to other poetic devices or simply along the lines of *figura etymologica*.

**a) Glosses and Comments**

Only few other passages in the rest of the *Mèngzǐ* appear to use paronomasia in a directly commentarial way, and none does so in the specific allo-commentarial function. The focus is more on text-internal terms. A comparable passage occurs in *Mèngzǐ* 3A3 ("Téng Wén gōng I" 滕文公上), in which the figure of Mèngzǐ unpacks three terms related to schools:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 「設為庠序學校以教之： | | "They set up schools with different names to instruct them; |
| 庠者，養也； | *s-[ɢ]aŋ ≈ *[ɢ]aŋʔ | *xiáng* were for 'nurturing;' |
| 校者，教也； | *[m-k]ˤraw-s ≈ *s.kˤraw-s | *xiào* were for 'instructing;' |
| 序者，射也。 | *[sə.l]aʔ ≈ *Cə.lAk-s | and *xù* were for 'shooting arrows.' |

In Xià, [schools] were called *xiào*; in Yīn, they were called *xù*; and in Zhōu, they were called *xiáng*. [The term] *xué* (lit. learning) was the same in all three dynasties. They were all used to make human relations clear.

夏曰校，殷曰序，周曰庠，學則三代共之，皆所以明人倫也。[393]

This series of paronomastic glosses, centered around terms for supposed educational institutions, uses the device in a way that is distinctly motivatory in nature,[394] in the sense that this

[393] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 3A3.343.

[394] The clarity with which this motivatory mode of glossing employs a quasi-etymological reference to the deep past is rather noteworthy and quite atypical for the Warring States period and the early- and mid-Western Hàn dynasty; comparable underlying assumptions recur only again in chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* 春秋繁露 (*Luxurious Dew of the Springs and Autumns Annals*), a text traditionally attributed to Dǒng Zhòngshū 董仲舒 (ca. 179-104 BCE), but very likely in large parts not by him. The next chapter discusses this text in more detail.

mode of glossing explicates a term through a phonological parallel, thus pointing out the underlying reasons for the glossed term. More specifically, after the initial introduction of the terms, the passage provides clear explanations for why these terms were in use: the *xiáng* 庠 (*s-[ɢ]aŋ) schools derive from the term "to nurture" (*yǎng* 養 *[ɢ]aŋʔ), the *xiào* 校 (*[m-k]ˤraw-s) schools from "to instruct" (*jiào* 教 *s.kˤraw-s), and the *xù* (序 *[sə.l]aʔ) from "to shoot arrows" (*shè* 射 *Cə.lAk-s). This list of paronomastic glosses is followed by a historical embedding for the glossed terms, going through the Three Dynasties in chronological order.

Importantly, however, paronomastic glosses are here applied to terms previously uttered by the figure of Mèngzǐ, not an external textual unit. Through the clear mode of internal commentary, however, this passage is more explicit than other comparable passages in the texts surveyed above. Additionally, this series of glosses is clearly akin to the paronomastic chains observed in two rare instances above.

While such a chain of paronomastic glosses is unique in the *Mèngzǐ*, a gloss fulfilling a similar commentarial function can be found in 7B4 ("Jìn xīn II" 盡心下):

> The phrase '*to launch a punitive attack*' is '*to correct*.' If everybody wanted to *correct* themselves, what use would warfare have?
>
> 征之為言正也，各欲正己也，焉用戰？[395]

The figure of Mèngzǐ here explicates a term previously used in his own speech. He does so by means of the apparent phonological overlap, encountered already at the very beginning of this chapter: 'to launch a punitive attack' (*zhēng* 征 *teŋ) is 'to correct' (*zhèng* 正 *teŋ-s), an equivalence that, according to this passage, would intuitively justify the use of force. The similarity to the previous chain of paronomastic glosses lies in the auto-commentarial nature of their usage:

[395] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 7B4.962.

both there and in this instance, the gloss is used in reference to terms used previously by the same speaker. A similar operating principle of paronomasia occurs also in *Mèngzǐ* 1B4 ("Liáng Huì wáng II" 梁惠王下), where we find Mèngzǐ retelling how Yànzǐ 晏子 supposedly advised Duke Jǐng of Qí (Qí Jǐng gōng 齊景公) on the semantics of the inspection tour:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 天子適諸侯曰巡狩, | *[sə.l]u[n] s.tuʔ-s | When the Son of Heaven goes to the feudal lords, it's called an '*inspection tour*.' |
| 巡狩者巡所守也； | ≈ *[sə.l]u[n]...s-tuʔ | An *inspection tour* is when he *tours* what they *protect*.[396] |

Here, Yànzǐ – in the retelling of Mèngzǐ – glosses the meaning of the term 'inspection tour' (*xún shòu* 巡狩) through the phrase 'he tours what they protect' (*xún suǒ shǒu* 巡所守). Paronomasia comes here into play in the close phonological connection between the characters *shòu* 狩 *s.tuʔ-s and *shǒu* 守 *s.tuʔ. Note, in particular, that the way of glossing occurs here similar to previously observed instances in the *Mèngzǐ*, in that the key term is first presented by the speaker, and in a secondary step unpacked by that same speaker. Here, that speaker is the figure of Yànzǐ in a narrative exposition presented by the figure of Mèngzǐ.

The *Mèngzǐ* also features short, authoritative internal glosses, similar to ones that occur throughout other Warring States material. The following example, occurring in *Mèngzǐ* 7B16 ("Jìn xīn II" 盡心下), may admittedly be somewhat short to provide enough information about the specific ways of how paronomasia is embedded:

| | |
|---|---|
| 仁也者，人也。 | "'*Human-heartedness*' is [what makes a] *human*. |
| 合而言之，道也。 | When they are uttered together, they are 'Dào.'"[397] |

[396] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 1B4.122.
[397] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 7B16.977.

As this is staple paronomastic gloss, highlighting the connection between ‘person’ or ‘human’ (*rén* 人 *niŋ) and ‘human-heartedness’ (*rén* 仁 *niŋ), a value central to the text, it is posed in a comparable way to similar utterances found in the excavated Guōdiàn material. Despite its brevity, some information about the usage of paronomasia can it still be inferred in this statement attributed to the figure of Mèngzǐ. As a laconic, authoritative statement, it appears like a self-contained kernel of wisdom, in which the *gravitas* of the statement rests on the phonological parallel and the association between these terms in the tradition the *Mèngzǐ* positions itself in. The link to the Guōdiàn material is hence meaningful; despite the lack of etymological connections between the terms connected here, they are nonetheless inherently tied to one another. The second line quoted above emphasizes this further: as ‘human-heartedness’ and ‘human’ belong to one another, they form together nothing less than the Dào.

**b) Usages with Links to other Poetic Devices**

In that same exposition, a few lines further, we find Yànzǐ state the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 從流下而忘反 | | Forgetting to return while floating along downstream |
| 謂之流, | *ru | is called ‘*drifting*.’ |
| 從流上而忘反 | | Forgetting to return while floating along upstream |
| 謂之連, | *[r]a[n] | is called ‘*lingering*.’ |
| 從獸無厭 | *s.tʰu(ʔ)-s | To lack contentment when following after *beasts* |
| 謂之荒, | *m̥ˤaŋ | is called ‘*wild*.’ |
| 樂酒無厭 | *tsuʔ | To lack contentment when enjoying *wine* |
| 謂之亡。 | *maŋ | is called ‘*being doomed*.’ |
| 先王無流連之樂, | *r- | The former kings did not have the joy of drifting-lingering, |
| 荒亡之行。 | *-aŋ | nor actions of wild running away.[398] |

[398] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 1B4.126.

To be clear, in this sequence of glosses, the figure of Yànzǐ does not directly use a paronomastic gloss, but instead utilizes a plethora of other poetic devices. Most prominently, the coordination of two key terms 'wild' (*huāng* 荒 *mˤaŋ) and 'to run away' (*wáng* 亡 *maŋ) – both used to gloss preceding statements – results in a distinct reprise of sounds across lines, in a form of paronomasia. To a lesser extent, such a recurrence can also be found in 'beasts' (*shòu* 獸 *s.tʰu(ʔ)-s) and 'wine' (*jiǔ* 酒 *tsuʔ). This recurrence is only partial.[399]

The other set of key terms, 'drifting' (*liú* 流 *ru) and 'lingering' (*lián* 連 *[r]a[n]), does not appear to be coordinated by paronomastia, but rather by the alliterative recurrence of the initial in both terms (*r-). This becomes more evident in the final couplet of sorts, where we first find the phrase 'the joy of drifting-lingering' (*liú lián zhī lè* 流連之樂 *ru [r]a[n] tə [r]ˤawk), coordinated again through alliteration of the initial (*r-), followed by the second phrase 'actions of wild running away' (*huāng wáng zhī xíng* 荒亡之行 *mˤaŋ maŋ tə [g]ˤraŋ-s). This second phrase plays on the recurring rime of the employed terms (all featuring *-aŋ).

In this recounting of Yànzǐ's words, we hence find different poetic devices used in the context of glossing beyond paronomasia. Paronomasia itself occurs in the juxtaposition of two sentences, wherein both glossed terms are near-homophonous. The function of all of these devices is nonetheless still auto-commentarial, in that they are reflective of previous utterances of the same speaker.

Quite similar to this last passage is a passage in *Mèngzǐ* 1A7 ("Liáng Huì wáng I" 梁惠王上), where the figure of Mèngzǐ utters the following:

[399] Note the difference in the prefix/initial position, realized as *s.tʰ- vs. *ts-.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 今王發政施仁, | | Now, if your majesty were to apply humaneness in governing, |
| | 使天下仕者 | *[m-s-]rəʔ | this would cause all those under heaven who *serve* |
| | 皆欲立於王之朝, | *k.rəp | to want to *stand* at your majesty's morning audience; |
| | 耕者 | *kˤreŋ | all those who *plow* |
| A | 皆欲耕於王之野, | *kˤreŋ …lAʔ | to want to *plow* in your majesty's fields; |
| | 商賈 | *s-taŋ | all *merchants* and tradespeople |
| | 皆欲藏於王之市, | *m-tsʰˤaŋ | to want to *store up* in your majesty's markets; |
| | 行旅 | *[r]aʔ | all wanderers and *travelers* |
| A | 皆欲出於王之塗, | *lˤa | to want to go out onto your majesty's ***roads***.[400] |

This passage does not feature paronomastic glosses, in the sense that no direct process of glossing occurs, but paronomasia along the lines of *figura etymologica* comes into play. The four statements that Mèngzǐ lists in regard to four categories of people – officials, farmers, merchants, and travelers – each feature one instance of paronomasia. Therein, one term used for the category of people stands in a paronomastic connection to the actions associated with the relevant category: officials – those who 'serve' (*shì* 仕 *[m-s-]rəʔ) – strive to 'stand' (*lì* 立 *k.rəp) at the royal morning audience, just as 'merchants' (*shāng* 商 *s-taŋ) strive to 'store up' (*cáng* 藏 *m-tsʰˤaŋ) in royal markets, and 'travelers' (*lǚ* 旅 *[r]aʔ) strive to be on the 'royal roads' (*tú* 塗 *lˤa). The same term is employed for 'plowers' striving to 'plow' (*gēng* 耕 *kˤreŋ), which may, strictly speaking, not constitute an instance of paronomasia, but further supports the connection between the other terms, which may admittedly not follow the usual definition of paronomasia.[401] This regularity is, moreover, embedded in rhyme, as the second and fourth statements – on farmers and

[400] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 1A7.92.

[401] As the other terms do not fully employ identical initials, nuclei, and finals in OCNR, these terms are hence not employing typical notions of paronomasia, but given the regularity of these four statements, it is safe to assume that either a looser usage of paronomasia occurs here, or that the model of OCNR may be obscuring the paronomastic connections here somewhat.

travelers, respectively – end in terms rhyming on *-a, which corresponds to the traditional rhyme category *yú* 魚 (highlighted through "A").[402] These terms are, specifically, 'fields' (*yě* 野 *lAʔ) and 'roads' (*tú* 塗 *lˤa).

This passage's Mèngzǐ figure further describes this regularity as the result of good government, with the ruler responsible for a harmonious social order through the employment of humaneness (*rén* 仁). Good government results here in similar-sounding terms, as if language itself contains this ideal order. In this sense, paronomasia may here function in both an auto-commentarial and a motivatory way to justify the use of terms.

Shorter passages in the *Mèngzǐ* that feature paronomasia may fall into any one of the above-mentioned categories. These may be terser than the above examples and provide less information on the employment of paronomasia. Nonetheless, the following passage from *Mèngzǐ* 3B3 ("Téng Wén gōng II" 滕文公下) may be reminiscent of the preceding example elaborating activities appropriate to one's social standing:

> That a *gentleman serves* [in office] is just as a farmer plows.
> 士之仕也，猶農夫之耕也[403]

While using the same expression 'to serve' (*shì* 仕 *[m-s-]rəʔ) as in the preceding passage, the paronomastic link to 'gentleman' (*shì* 士 *[m-s-]rəʔ) is even clearer here. Additionally, this instance may further illustrate the link of paronomasia to *figura etymologica*. The implications of this seemingly intuitive connection between the two terms (especially in conjunction with the follow-up claim that this relationship is the same as that between a farmer and the act of plowing)

[402] Compare Axel Schuessler, *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese: A Companion to Grammata Serica Recensa* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 55-56.

[403] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 3B3.426.

here hints at the underlying motivatory, 'etymological' epistemic claims: officials *ought to* serve. This *figura etymologica* is clearer than the preceding example given the closer aural and semantic connection of the terms, but both indicate a similar employment of the device of paronomasia.

On a related note, compare also the short utterance attributed to the discipline Péng Gēng 彭更 in the same chapter, *Mèngzǐ* 3B4 ("Téng Wén gōng II" 滕文公下):

> "That a retainer is fed, despite not being in service – that is not permissible!"
>
> 士無事而食，不可也。[404]

Again, parallel to the above passage from 3B3, the term 'gentleman' (*shì* 士 *[m-s-]rəʔ) is invoked there, only to be tied this time to the term 'to be in service' (*shì* 事 *[m-s-]rəʔ-s). Again, this connection may best be classified as *figura etymologica*, as the underlying semantic and etymological relations of the two terms appear to be invoked in this connection, and additionally, there is no glossing relation present. At the same time, however, this utterance also ties in the term 'to be fed' (*sì* 食 *s-m-lək-s), which may not provide a full phonological overlap – and certainly no etymological nor clear semantic relation – but still offers a recurring rime and related initial and pre-initial material.[405] Nonetheless, argumentatively, this statement appears to benefit from the repetition of sounds. Phrased differently: to be fed while *not being in service* – and that as a *gentleman* – that does not go well together. The underlying connection between 'being in service' and 'gentleman' is hence clearly more meaningful, while 'being fed' appears to be employed deliberately through its close, but not full, aural overlap, akin to a false friend in this mixture of repeated sounds.

[404] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 3B4.428.

[405] While the initials employed differ, *r- vs. *l-, they appear nonetheless as phonologically close; the pre-initial material, *m-s- vs. *s-m-, is similarly not identical, as it is reversed in order.

There are marked differences of these three instances to the previous etymologizing of terms for educational institutions across the Three Dynasties, discussed earlier on pages 46 to 47. There, we found three distinct paronomastic glosses directly following one another; in the three examples above classified as *figura etymologica*, no direct glossing occurs. Paronomasia is embedded within a regular sentence without exegetical deixis, by which I mean that neither term directly refers to the other one in order to explicate the meaning of said term. Instead, the connection is, again as Behr reasoned, rooted in poetic expression, in which the underlying etymological connections and aural recurrence are utilized to highlight the argumentative soundness of a proposition.

More links of paronomasia to the rhetorical device *figura etymologica* and other poetic devices can be found in the following passage, from *Mèngzǐ* 5B1 ("Wàn Zhāng II" 萬章下), again in the words of the figure of Mèngzǐ:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 伯夷, | | "Elder Yí – |
| 目不視惡色, | | with his eyes, he wouldn't look at hues he detested, |
| 耳不聽惡聲。 | *l̥ˤeŋ ... [l̥]eŋ | and with his ears, he wouldn't *listen* to *sounds* he abhorred. |
| 非其君不事, | *[m-s-]rəʔ-s | He wouldn't *serve* once he disapproved of his ruler, |
| 非其民不使。 | *s-rəʔ | and he wouldn't *command* his folk once he disapproved of them."[406] |

Here, the figure of Mèngzǐ shows the limitations inherent in the idealism of Elder Yí, who is said to have lived at the transition of the Shāng to the Zhōu dynasty and refused to serve both as ruler and as official out of his own convictions. Here, paronomasia – again realized as a form of *figura etymologica* – occurs first in the line in which Elder Yí "wouldn't listen to sounds he abhorred," as the two terms 'to listen' (*tīng* 聽 *l̥ˤeŋ) and 'sounds' (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ) share not only

[406] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 5B1.669.

phonological material, but stem furthermore from the same semantic field.[407] The next two lines feature *figura etymologica* in line-end position, describing Elder Yí as not 'serving' (*shì* 事 *[m-s-]rəʔ-s) and not 'commanding' (*shǐ* 使 *s-rəʔ) others. Both terms can be connected derivationally,[408] and a speaker of the underlying language would have recognized the potent underlying connections of these two terms. Note, additionally, the parallel construction inherent in these statements. The effect of these poetic devices is straightforward: Elder Yí, while described in the following as the purest among the sages (*shèng zhī qīng zhě yě* 聖之清者也), is hence portrayed as holier than thou.

The same device occurs, by the way, also in the following example from the same chapter of the *Mèngzǐ* attributed to Yī Yǐn 伊尹, the legendary official who helped establish the Shāng dynasty:

『何事非君？ *[m-s-]rəʔ-s "Whom would I serve, if I disapproved of the ruler?

何使非民？』 *s-rəʔ Whom would I command, if I disapproved of the people?"[409]

The repetition of all key terms – 'to serve,' 'ruler,' 'to command,' 'people,' and, most importantly, 'to disapprove' (*fēi* 非) – in these two statements is remarkable, but for Yī Yǐn, the portrayal is one of moral ambiguity, serving whichever ruler is in power. In the following, he is

[407] For arguments in favor of derivational connections between these terms, compare William G. Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1994),116; and Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 460; 461; and 497-498.

[408] Compare Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 359; and 465-466.

[409] *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 5B1.671.

further described by the figure of Mèngzǐ as the one most inclined to take office among the sages (*shèng zhī rèn zhě yě* 聖之任者也), further highlighting parallel to the previous passage.[410]

**c) Summary**

The range of functions of paronomasia include, to summarize, clearly poetic uses in equally poetic sections; short, authoritative statements; many text-internal references to create intuitive connections; longer sequences of motivatory or etymologizing paronomastic glosses; and, in the singular occurrence from the example quoted at the very beginning of this section, glosses that are applied exegetically to external textual units.

The first few kinds are rather typical of Late Warring States texts: short, authoritative statements, in which a paronomastic gloss is posed either in phrase-initial or phrase-final position and explicates a self-contained connection, can also be observed in excavated material, just like usages along the lines of *figura etymologica* and other forms of paronomasia that are embedded in sections with other poetic devices. Text-internal references are the norm in both the Guōdiàn corpus and the other transmitted texts attributed to the Warring States period, and these occurrences in the *Mèngzǐ* are hence typical for Warring States forms and functions of paronomasia.

On the other hand, longer chains of different glosses, are rarer, and could only be observed above in one instance from the *Zhuāngzǐ* and one from the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*. The last two usages are even rarer, if not completely atypical: Etymologizing glosses – especially in how *Mèngzǐ* 3A3.10 features a sequence of paronomastic glosses to unpack the meaning of educational institutions in the distant past – do not really feature in other texts. Typically, in the other texts, the function of

[410] Note here also the parallel in *Mèngzǐ* 2A2.22 ("Gōngsūn Chǒu I" 公孫丑上), where both instances of the juxtaposition of 'serving' and 'commanding' are reiterated, and the partial parallel to *HSWZ* 3.33. This juxtaposition of these two related terms hence appears to serve as the poetic "glue" that keeps these statements together.

paronomasia is directed at the present, rather than the past.[411] Secondly, the allo-commentarial function of paronomasia, or in other words paronomasia applied to external textual units, does not occur at all within the other textual material analyzed above.[412] This range of function of paronomasia within the *Mèngzǐ* is remarkable, distinguishing it from the other texts discussed thus far. In particular, the shift towards commentarial functions to external textual units deserves more attention in the following.

### 4.4.6 *Guǎnzǐ*

There is one more text traditionally attributed to the Warring States period that shares this range of functions in regard to how paronomasia is employed with the *Mèngzǐ*. This text is the *Guǎnzǐ* 管子, associated with the name of Guǎn Zhòng 管仲, the famous statesman of the 7th century BCE, but long known to stem from a wide array of sources that in turn have been composed centuries after the life of the namesake of the text. The *Guǎnzǐ* is also one the few texts where we know when and by whom it was compiled, specifically around 26 BCE by the imperial librarian Liú Xiàng 劉向 (77-6 BCE), even if the content of this compilation may have changed further over the course of the next few centuries.[413]

[411] This is a parallel to ancient Greek etymological practices; compare Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology," 898, where Sluiter states the following: "Ancient etymology, on the other hand, is all about synchrony, even though it invokes a discourse that references the past … it wants to know *why* anything is called *why* anything is called what it is called, the *reason* for the name, and what *motivates* the namegiver—and the explanations it comes up with are not intended to give us insight into the past, into the historical processes and developments leading to the present situation; rather, and importantly, (ancient) etymology is about *understanding the present*."

[412] Note, furthermore, that excavated Warring States texts rarely distinguish between the "main" text and what is quoted (if there is even a title provided, by which the "main" text could be quoted). This is prominently the case in the *Five Conducts* (*wǔ xíng* 五行), as the Mǎwángduī text includes a commentarial section directly in embedded in the main text, evident in the complete absence of this commentary in the Guōdiàn version.

[413] For one of the best overviews in English of this process of compilation, focused specifically on the *Guǎnzǐ*, see Piet van der Loon, "On the Transmission of *Kuan-tzu*," *T'oung Pao* 41 (1952): 357-393.

**a) Verbal artistry**

Quite prominently, the *Guǎnzǐ* features paronomasia with connections to other forms of poetic expression. These are relatively clearly distributed among chapters that Allyn Rickett, in his in-depth study and translation of this text,[414] has consistently ascribed to an earlier, late-Warring States strata of text. For example, in the chapter "Shèng Mǎ" 乘馬, which may represent such a Warring States text,[415] we find the following passage that resonates well with the example from the very beginning of this chapter on the connection between government and rectification:

| | |
|---|---|
| 地者，政之本也。 | Land is the basis for government. |
| 是故 | For this reason, |
| 地可以正政也， | land can be taken to *rectify* the *government*; |
| 地不平均和調， | but if land is not [distributed] equally and harmoniously, |
| 則政不可正也； | then the *government* cannot be *rectified*. |
| 政不正， | When the *government* isn't *upright*, |
| 則事不可理也。 | then *services* cannot be *structured*.[416] |

This passage makes frequent use of the homophonous double between 'government' (*zhèng* 政 *teŋ-s) and both 'rectifying' and 'upright' (both *zhèng* 正 *teŋ-s), and culminates in a final assertion that when the 'government' is not 'upright,' 'duties' or 'services' (*shì* 事 *[m-s-]rəʔ-s) of officials could not be 'structured' (*lǐ* 理 *m(ə).rəʔ),[417] thereby juxtaposing the first paronomastic connection with a second one. This juxtaposition may have hence played on the underlying aural

[414] See Allyn W. Rickett, *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China*, Volume One (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), and Allyn W. Rickett, *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China*, Volume Two (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[415] Compare the discussion in Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 115-116.

[416] Lí Xiángfèng 黎翔鳳 and Liáng Yùnhuá 梁運華 (eds.), *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 管子校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2004), 5.84-85; for an alternative translation of this passage, compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 116.

[417] These two terms may furthermore feature etymological connections; compare Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 350; and 465-466.

parallelism and hence on its latent poetic potential, in order to position a seemingly quasi-natural line of argumentation.

The apparent roots of paronomasia in poetic expression become also clear in the largely rhymed chapter "Bái Xīn" 白心, "one of the major Daoist Huang-Lao 黃老 chapters in the *Guanzi*" that may stem from the third century BCE and could potentially be connected to texts such as the *Lǎozǐ* and the *Zhuāngzǐ*, all of which are often assumed to stem from the state of Chǔ.[418] The following passage highlights the ease with which paronomasia is embedded in poetic expression:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 故口為聲也, | *[l̥]eŋ | Thus, the mouth is for producing *sounds*, |
| 耳為聽也, | *l̥ˤeŋ | the ears are for *hearing*; |
| 目有視也, | *gijʔ | the eyes have [the faculty of] *sight*, |
| 手有指也, | *mə.kijʔ | the hands have fingers *to point*, |
| 足有履也, | *[r]ijʔ | and the feet have sandals *to tread on*. |
| 事物有所比也。 | *C.pijʔ | Things and [their] tasks have that to which they *compare*.[419] |

Here, each statement ends in a key term that forms an aural connection to either the preceding or succeeding statement's key term. This connection consists in either paronomasia – occurring in 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *[l̥]eŋ) to 'hearing' (*tīng* 聽 *l̥ˤeŋ), and 'sight' (*shì* 視 *gijʔ) to 'to point' (*zhǐ* 指 *mə.kijʔ) – or end rhyme, occurring in the very last pair of 'to tread on' (*lǚ* 履 *[r]ijʔ) to 'to compare' (*bǐ* 比 *C.pijʔ). Moreover, most of these statements are construed in a highly parallel way, further marking paronomasia as part of a larger poetic repertoire in this passage.

[418] Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 82. Compare also Rickett's arguments for a Chǔ connection on p. 83, and his reasons to date this text to the third century BCE on pp. 84-85; most importantly, Rickett points out the absence of terminology connected to Yin-Yang and Five Phases thought.

[419] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 38.800; for a full translation, compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 92.

Utterance-internal paronomastic recurrences – either as direct *figura etymologica* or without etymological connections – form yet another device in this repertoire. These feature, for example, in the *Guǎnzǐ* chapter "Jun chen II" 君臣下, which dates perhaps to the middle of the third century BCE:[420]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 故德之以懷也, | *[g]ˤruj | Thus, if he receives them through an *embrace*, |
| 威之以畏也, | *ʔuj *ʔuj-s | and *intimidates* them through *intimidation*, |
| 則天下歸之矣。 | *[k]ʷəj | then the world will *return* to him.[421] |

Circumscribing the ways how a successful ruler should act, this passage most directly connects the terms 'to overawe' or 'to intimidate' (*wēi* 威 *ʔuj) and 'fear' or 'intimidation' (*wèi* 畏 *ʔuj-s). As the two terms are closely related,[422] this connection is one of *figura etymologica*. This instance of *figura etymologica* is further embedded within statements that contain another paronomastic pair, consisting of 'to embrace' (*huái* 懷 *[g]ˤruj) and 'to return' (*guī* 歸 *[k]ʷəj). Both of these terms appear to be alluded to performatively in this passage's structure, as the pair first surrounds the described occurrence of *figura etymologica* and secondly, on an aural plane, performatively returns to the pun of 'embrace' and 'return' (in the sense that the text 'returns' to the pun from the first line, and that these two statements 'embrace' the second line). In other words, this passage performs not only its own content, but also a form of verbal artistry that focuses not just on semantic content, but also (and perhaps more importantly) on phonological recurrence as a point of reflection.

[420] See Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 412.

[421] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 31.571; for a full translation, compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 413. Compare also Schuessler's reconstructions for *guī* 歸, OCM *kwəi > LHan *kui (Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 267).

[422] See Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 510.

Compare also a pair of statements that occurs in the essay portion of "Yòu guān" 幼官 (likely also 3rd c. BCE), which forms the latter part of the chapter and is attached to the preceding Five Phases calendar:[423]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 官處四體 | *ɻˤijʔ | Those who occupy the four *limbs* |
| 而無禮者 | *[r]ˤijʔ | but lack *proper conduct* … |
| … | | |
| 立四義 | *ŋ(r)aj-s | Those who set up the four [kinds of] *righteousness* |
| 而毋議者 | *ŋ(r)aj-s | but will not *discuss* … |
| …[424] | | |

These statements make use of paronomasia in the same way, as the device is embedded within regular phrases. The recurrence of phonological material in the subsequent negation is utilized to point out apparent contradictions. These contradictions rest on the fact that 'body' or 'limbs' (*tǐ* 體 *ɻˤijʔ) and 'proper conduct' (*lǐ* 禮 *[r]ˤijʔ), just like 'righteousness' (*yì* 義 *ŋ(r)aj-s) and 'to discuss' (*yì* 議*ŋ(r)aj-s), ought to go together.

The kinds of paronomasia surveyed in the above examples – all from chapters tentatively dated by Rickett to the Late Warring States era – are largely in line with examples from the Guōdiàn corpus and other transmitted Warring States texts in that they illustrate verbal artistry.

[423] For a brief overview of this section, compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 164-166. Rickett estimates that this section cannot predate the late fourth century BCE, but likely stems from the last part of the Warring States period (see p. 169). This assumption appears sound to me. Note that Rickett was primarily concerned with the preceding calendar section, for which his astute insights on pp. 148-164 are invaluable.

[424] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 8.159; for a full translation, compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 183-184.

**b) Text-internal Glosses**

Similarly, text-internal glosses – which also occur in the Guōdiàn corpus and in other transmitted Warring States texts – feature rather prominently in the likely Late Warring States stratum of the *Guǎnzǐ*. One passage containing this device occurs in the second section of the chapter "Xiǎo wèn" 小問, which Rickett takes to stem from sometime between the Late Warring States and the Hàn period.[425] Here, we find a Guǎn Zhòng 管仲 persona, the namesake protagonist of the collection of texts assembled in the *Guǎnzǐ*, state the following:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 信也者, | *s-ni[ŋ]-s | "The *trustworthy* ones – |
| 民信之。 | *s-ni[ŋ]-s | those, the people will *trust* in. |
| 仁也者,[426] | *ni[ŋ] | The *human-hearted* ones – |
| 民懷之。 | *[g]ˤruj | those, the people will *feel close to*. |
| 嚴也者, | | The earnest ones – |
| 民畏之。 | *ʔuj-s | those, the people will *revere*. |
| 禮也者, | | The ones with ceremonial form – |
| 民美之。 | *[m]rəjʔ | those, the people will *praise*. |
| | | |
| 語曰： | | There's a saying: |
| 『澤命不渝』, | | 'To cast aside one's lot and not renounce'[427] – |
| 信也。 | *s-ni[ŋ]-s | that is *trustworthiness*. |
| 非其所欲, | | To reject what one desires, |
| 勿施於人, | *niŋ | and not impose it onto *others* – |
| 仁也。 | *ni[ŋ] | that is *human-heartedness*.[428] |

[425] See Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 186.

[426] I follow the emendation of *zhōng* 忠 to *rén* 忎/仁, as suggested by Sòng Xiángfèng 宋翔鳳 in *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 51.961, footnote 6.

[427] I follow the emendation of Hé Rúzhāng 何如璋 and Liú Jī 劉績 suggested in *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 51.961-962, footnote 7, reading *zé* 澤 as *shì* 釋. Also note the apparent parallel to Ode/*Shi* 羔裘, Mao 80 (*shě mìng bù yú* 舍命不渝), within which further note the phonological proximity between *shè* 舍 *[l̥]Ak-s and *shì* 釋 *l̥Ak.

[428] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 51.959; compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 190 for a full translation.

This passage combines paronomasia, including an instance of paronomastic glossing, with other forms of poetic expression, in particular parallelism and rhyming, the latter consisting of 'to embrace' (*huái* 懷 *[g]ˤruj), 'to fear' or 'to revere' (*wèi* 畏 *ʔuj-s), and 'to praise' (*měi* 美 *[m]rəjʔ). Paronomasia is here first at play between the terms 'trustworthiness' (*xìn* 信 *s-ni[ŋ]-s) and 'human-heartedness' (*rén* 仁 *ni[ŋ]), which appear tied to one another in a stable way in both the first section of the passage, and the concluding saying. At the same time, the latter term is further glossed through a sentence that ends on 'others' (*rén* 人 *niŋ), forming the mentioned instance of internal glossing paronomasia. Through its combination of paronomastic glossing with other devices of verbal artistry, this passage highlights the likely roots of paronomasia in poetic expression, and further points to the Late Warring States increase in number of passages that utilize the glossing function of the device.

To be clear, the *Guǎnzǐ* also features glosses without this link to poetic expression. In this context, compare also the following example from chapter "Fǎ Fǎ" 法法, which may date to the middle of the 3rd century BCE.[429] This passage plays directly on the theme of the "rectification of names" encountered throughout this chapter. Note here how the tool of paronomasia is used only utterance-initial:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 政者 | *teŋ-s | To govern… |
| 正也。 | *teŋ-s | …means to rectify. |

> Rectification is what corrects and stipulates the names of the myriad things. For this reason, a Sage refines his virtue and sets up the central position in order to bring forth [this] correct order. By clarifying this order, he governs the state.
>
> Thus [this] rectification is [the means] with which to stop those who went too far [in the ranks] and take advantage of those who did not reach [the ranks] yet. Both going too far and

[429] Compare Rickett's line of argument in Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 250.

> not reaching [the ranks] are not [according to] the correct order. Since they are not [according to] the correct order, they are the same as harming the state.
>
> 正也者，所以正定萬物之命也。是故聖人精德立中以生正，明正以治國，故正者所以止過而逮不及也。過與不及也，皆非正也。非正，則傷國一也。[430]

The gloss is here "to govern" (*zhèng* 政 *teŋ-s) and "to rectify" (*zhèng* 正 *teŋ-s), seen also at the very beginning of this chapter and there attributed to a Kǒngzǐ figure. Here, the following explanatory section first unpacks this stock paronomastic gloss by highlighting the theme of the "rectification of names" and the role of the ruler therein. This theme is in the second half of the passage applied to the topic of official positions and ranks: both qualified but unappreciated and unqualified but employed candidates would hence pose a danger to the state order.

This utterance-initial paronomastic gloss appears here to allude to the broader discursive tradition of the "rectification of names," thus setting the stage for the following elaboration by highlighting the allegiance to this cultural tradition. The subsequent unpacking of this gloss supplements the implied context, which clarifies the target discourse alluded to. In this sense, this gloss may stand in reference to a larger external discourse, but this connection is only implicit, rather than explicit. Additionally, no specific text is brought up here, as the subsequent elaboration of the theme of the "rectification of names" instead provides an internal frame of reference.

In this way, such a paronomastic gloss remains text-internal, just like the following gloss from the chapter "Shuǐ dì" 水地, a chapter that may, as Rickett speculates, "be influenced by Five Phases correlative thinking and perhaps derived some inspiration from the fact that during the Qin and early Han water was considered the dominant power."[431] The specific dating of the chapter is, as so often for early Chinese texts, unclear, with suggestions ranging from the early fourth century to

[430] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 16. 307-308; compare also Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 261 for an alternative translation.
[431] Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 98.

the mid-second century BCE; Rickett favors the interpretation that the chapter was a product of the textual compilation endeavors of the court of Liú Ān 劉安 (c. 179–122 BCE), king of Huáinán 淮南 in the mid-Western Hàn period.[432]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 是以水者 | *s.turʔ | *Water* is, for this reason,… |
| 萬物之準也。 | *turʔ | the *water-level* for the myriad things.[433] |

The key term 'water' (*shuǐ* 水 *s.turʔ) is here specifically glossed as the guiding mechanism for all things and matters. This paronomastic gloss builds in particular on the recurrence of sound in the term 'water-level' (*zhǔn* 準 *turʔ). As the glossed term 'water' is the main theme of the whole chapter, the gloss itself remains text-internal and builds on the intuitive phonological parallel to highlight the guiding qualities of this main theme.

This passage illustrates well how this text-internal mechanism of paronomastic glossing operates, namely by remaining close to the precedence from the Guōdiàn examples surveyed above and thus by expanding the semantic field of core terms through pointing out the intuitive aural parallels present in both gloss and glossed.

**c) Text-external glosses**

The same procedure occurs also in the following passage from the chapter "Xīn shū I" (心書上), which may similarly stem from the second century BCE, placed by Allyn Rickett again in the context of Liú Ān's court:[434]

[432] See the discussion in Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 99-100. Compare also Harold D. Roth, "Redaction Criticism and the Early History of Taoism," *Early China* 19 (1994): 1-46.

[433] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 39.814. For a full translation of the surrounding passage, compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 101.

[434] See Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 69-70.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 德者道之舍, | | *Virtue* is the abode of the Way. |
| 物得以生。 | | Things [must] *obtain* it to live; |
| 生知得 | | what lives [must] know how to *obtain* it |
| 以職道之精。 | | in order to recognize the essence of the Way. |
| 故德者 | *tʰək | Thus *virtue* is… |
| 得也。 | *tʰək | …*to obtain*.[435] |

As in many other texts, this passage posits 'virtue' (*dé* 德 *tʰək) in relation to 'Way' (*dào* 道), tying it to this term through highlighting the roots of the term in the homophonous 'to obtain' (*dé* 得 *tʰək). This instance of paronomasia is further highlighted in the paronomastic gloss in the second part of this passage, as it directly juxtaposes these two terms. By reiterating the same key terms in this paronomastic gloss, the mode of glossing is more explicit than in previous instances. The connection to other modes of paronomastic glossing are evident a few lines down in the same chapter, where we find the following gloss:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 義者, | *ŋ(r)aj-s | *Propriety*… |
| 謂各處其宜也。 | *ŋ(r)aj | …refers to the *appropriate* in each situation.[436] |

This instance harks back to other instances observed earlier, as it consists of a clear example of *figura etymologica*: the two terms 'propriety' (*yì* 義 *ŋ(r)aj-s) and 'appropriate' (*yí* 宜 *ŋ(r)aj) are morphologically related, a relationship recognizable in modern pronunciation and even in the provided English translation. As noted above, the employment of *figura etymologica* is comparable to other poetic devices, which suggests the range of paronomastic modes in the "Xīn shū I" chapter.

[435] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 36.770; compare Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 77 for an alternative translation.
[436] *Ibid.*

At the same time, as this chapter consists of two parts – namely a first part consisting of short, largely rhymed statements, followed by an explanatory section – these instances may further illustrate the gradual development of text-internal to text-external glosses. Specifically, the two examples above are both from explanatory sections (VII and VIII, by Rickett's numbering) and are referring to an earlier employment of the key terms in a prior section from the first part of the chapter. This textual distance between gloss and referenced passage may go unacknowledged in the "Xīn shū I," a classificatory marker that sets these instances squarely in between text-internal and text-external glossing practices. Nonetheless, it is this distance between glossing and glossed that marks an important development for paronomasia, and by extension also for early textual practices more generally. By separating these two variables, the paronomastic gloss begins to function as a distinctly exegetical tool.

To illustrate this separation, compare, again, the example brought up above, wherein 'propriety' was connected to 'appropriate,' which refers to the following passage occurring in the very first part of the chapter. This passage is itself focused on a gloss, but one that is not focused on any phonological parallel:

| | |
|---|---|
| 君臣父子人間之事 | The affairs between ruler and subject,<br>between father and son,<br>and between people [more generally] |
| 謂之義。 | those are referred to as *propriety.*[437] |

While this passage defines 'propriety' already, specifically through a list of diametrically opposed social relations, this key term is further explicated in the paronomastic gloss between 'propriety' and 'appropriate' listed above – a gloss which occurs at a much later place in the

[437] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 36.759; compare also Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. Two, 72 for an alternative translation.

discussed chapter, in completely separate sections. In other words, the paronomastic gloss specifies in a mode of textual exegesis that the key to understand this passage properly lies in "the appropriate in each situation," to cite the above passage again. By building on the intuitive link offered by the paronomastic gloss, the later section appears to further comment and elaborate on the earlier occurrence.

It should further be noted that in the corresponding statement from the first section, 'propriety' (*yi* 義 *ŋ(r)aj-s) (loosely) rhymes with 'ritual conform behavior' (*li* 禮 *[r]ˁijʔ). That term is in turn defined there as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 登降揖讓, | | Ascending and descending, bowing and giving way to one another; |
| 貴賤有等, | | that high and low have degrees; |
| 親疏之體, | *ɻˁijʔ | and the *configuration* between close and distant kin; |
| 謂之禮。 | *[r]ˁijʔ | those are referred to as *ritual conform behavior*.[438] |

'Ritual conform behavior' is here used as a gloss to circumscribe proper ways to delineate social groupings and behavior, while it is, at the same time, close in sound to the term 'configuration' (*tǐ* 體 *ɻˁijʔ). In this way, paronomasia is again employed to construe an intuitive seeming connection between things that appear to go together, based both on semantic content and recurring phonological material. In this way, the "Xīn shū I" chapter appears to straddle in between the text-internal and text-external usage of the paronomastic gloss.

Clearer is this turn to the text-external gloss in the following example from the chapter "Zhòu hé" 宙合, specifically in the explanatory section of this chapter that quotes and explicates an earlier textual passage. In general, this commentarial section from the "Zhòu hé" shows clear "syncretistic" tendencies, in the sense that we find here a combination of concepts traditionally attributed to

[438] *Ibid.*

Daoist (esp. *Lǎozǐ*), Confucian, Yin-Yang, and Five Phases texts. This, among other factors, lead Rickett to suspect that these explanations may again stem from the court of Huáinán of Liú Ān's.[439]

While impossible to verify and perhaps nothing more than a best guess, this interpretation is intriguing due to its conceptual and historical implications, and further works along the trend towards commenting pointed out over the course of this chapter. Approximately during the mid-Western Hàn period, the repertoire of usages of the paronomastic gloss was expanded to allow for exegetical commentaries of external textual units. Compare how this passage at first verbatim restates the line in question from the earlier passage (highlighted below through quotation marks), and then unpacks it:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 「不用其區」, | | "[He] could not make use of his *dispersed* [people]." |
| 區者, | *qˤ(r)o | *Dispersed*… |
| 虛也, | *qʰ(r)a | …is *deserted*. |
| 人而無良焉, | | Among the people were no good ones; |
| 故曰虛也。 | | – therefore [this text] says *deserted.*[440] |

By first restating the initial line from the first section of the chapter, this short gloss – stemming from explanation VIII (by Rickett's numbering) – essentially forms a commentary that attempts to reveal the meaning of the earlier passage.[441] This occurs in a similar way as in the example above from the "Xīn shū I," in that the paronomastic gloss between 'dispersed' (*qū* 區 *qˤ(r)o) and 'deserted' (*xū* 虛 *qʰ(r)a) proposes a reading that builds on the intuitive, aural connection between

[439] See Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 201-202. Rickett writes, in particular, that "several passages in the explanations are reminiscent of the *Huainanzi*" (202).

[440] *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 11.227; compare also Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 210 for an alternative translation, based on Rickett's considerations outlined in the following footnote.

[441] This earlier passage can be found in *Guǎnzi jiàozhù* 11.206.

the two terms. By quoting the initial line fully, however, this passage directly expands the semantic content of the quoted line accordingly.[442]

The mode of reference thus shifts entirely to an external unit of text that needs to be reiterated and *quoted* for the gloss to make sense, a process similar to the passage from the *Mèngzǐ*, wherein Master Mèng explained a line about the flood myth.

In this way, the linguistic evidence points largely to a mid-Western Hàn context for this short passage. Nonetheless, this development is in line with the general evidence for the development of the paronomastic gloss and its employment, centered here on a mode of exegesis that is concerned primarily with explicating the semantics of an external textual unit.

[442] It should be further noted that the suggested dating to the second century BCE and a tentative attribution to the milieu of Liú Ān's court of Huáinán is further supported by linguistic evidence, in the form of phonological evidence for the two key characters qū 區 and xū 虛.

By contrast, Rickett asserts that this passage appears corrupt, with the paronomastic gloss in the explanation, as well as the reduplication of the character *qū* 區 in the statement itself, allegedly stemming from the hand of a later copyist, in what represents an "erroneous insertion into the text of a later commentary" (Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. One, 203, footnote 4). Rickett appears to base his interpretation primarily on semantic grounds, and while the argument against the reduplication of the character *qū* 區 is feasible, the linguistic evidence speaks against a (considerably) later insertion of the paronomastic gloss.

Importantly, the rimes of both characters are also too dissimilar for the pre-imperial period (OC *-o vs. *-a, representing rime category *hóu* 侯 and *yú* 魚). Similarly, their Middle Chinese readings, which can be rendered as khju and xjo, respectively, are also too dissimilar for this passage to function properly in Medieval periods. This also does not appear to be an insertion from the Eastern Hàn period, given Schuessler's reconstruction of both characters as LHan *k$^{h}$io$^{c}$ and *hiɑ, respectively. In both Middle Chinese and Later Hàn Chinese, these terms differ both in the initial (MC kh- < LHan *x- vs. MC x- < LHan *h-) and rime (MC -ju < LHan *-io$^{c}$ vs. MC -jo < LHan *-iɑ). Altogether, this paronomastic gloss instead functions best during the Western Hàn dynasty, especially in a context when rimes *-o (rime category *hóu* 侯) and *-a (rime category *yú* 魚) can be considered interrhyming, conditions met specifically in the text *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 from Liú Ān's court. Compare Luó Chángpéi 羅常培 and Zhōu Zǔmó 周祖謨, *Hàn wèijìn nánběicháo yùn bù yǎnbiàn yánjiū* 漢魏晉南北朝韻部演變研究, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Kēxué chūbǎnshè 科學出版社, 1958), 20-24.

Further note that the *Huáinánzǐ* may only be related in language, and not in assumptions on how to use paronomasia. Specifically, the *Huáinánzǐ* does not utilize proper text-external, allo-commentarial paronomastic glosses.

### 4.4.7 Summary of Findings for Transmitted Warring States Texts

Altogether, this section has highlighted the wide range of functions for how paronomasia is employed in transmitted texts traditionally attributed to the Warring States period, especially when compared to the excavated Guōdiàn material from Chǔ (and hence genuinely from the Warring States period) discussed in the previous section. This wider range of functions in the transmitted texts should not be surprising, as many of them have been known to include material from later periods, especially from the Hàn period. To be clear, this is more clearly attested for some texts in this category, and less so for others: for that matter, the *Guǎnzǐ*, despite its inclusion of Warring States material, came together as a compilation only over the course of the Hàn period.

Altogether, the majority of instances in how paronomasia is employed in this corpus continues the trend observed in the Guōdiàn material. This includes the many occurrences where paronomasia is used along the lines of verbal artistry, especially in combination with other forms of poetic expression (esp. parallelism and end rhyme). The paronomastic *gloss* is similarly used predominantly as a text-internal device to both establish intuitive connections between terms and at the same time disambiguate similar sounding terms more fully. Additionally, this survey has also highlighted the apparent roots of this auto-commentarial function of glossing in more poetic uses of paronomasia, especially in *figura etymologica*, thus confirming Behr's hypothesis of the relative chronology in the development of functions for paronomasia.

Only a handful of instances utilize the paronomastic gloss in reference to external textual units, a function not observed in the Guōdiàn manuscripts. These text-external glosses are hence the clear exception, rather than the norm. They occur only in two texts or textual collections: one is the *Guǎnzǐ*, a text where the editorial history is relatively clear (as elaborated above), and especially in chapters that have previously been described as mid-Western Hàn products. The other text

where such glosses occur is the *Mèngzǐ*, which is traditionally ascribed to the historical Mèng Kē and hence the early 3rd century BCE – but given the evidence for the range of functions of paronomasia presented above, however, this usage in the *Mèngzǐ* is highly atypical for its times. The recurrence of this usage only in the *Guǎnzǐ* may be telling but is perhaps not enough to invalidate such an early dating for the *Mèngzǐ*, or at least the specific passages that make use of the potential of the paronomastic gloss in regard to external units of text.[443]

### 4.5 Structural Approaches to Paronomasia in Hàn Texts

As paronomasia also occurs among the exegetical works dateable to the early Hàn dynasty, our turn now to distinctly later texts may help to provide yet another point of comparison to clarify this relative chronology and how the allo-commentarial function of paronomasia came into use. This function was identified above roughly in a stratum of texts that may stem from the mid-Western Hàn period, marked by the reign of Emperor Wǔ 漢武帝 (r. 141-87 BCE).

Notably, this allo-commentarial function is absent in exegetical texts preceding his reign. Paronomasia occurs here more akin to the dominant modes and innovations from the Late Warring States period, including motivatory functions and paronomasia chains featuring a host of different pairings. Compare, in this context, the following passage from the *Xīnshū* 新書, traditionally attributed to Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 (201-169 BCE):

> For this reason, bringing these [values] forth on bamboo strips and silk manuscripts is called documents – *documents* are their *record*. The *Odes* are their *aspirations*; the *Changes* are their

[443] However, there are also other reasons to doubt an early 3rd century BCE dating of the entirety of the *Mèngzǐ* and to problematize this text more fully. Most pertinently for this context, the passage from 3B9, mentioned in section 4.4.1 on pp. 190ff. above, contains also other elements that are highly unusual for a Warring States text. This includes two explicit authorship attributions of the *Chūnqiū* 春秋 (*Springs and Autumn Annals*) to Confucius, and similarly odd are the described reactions to that text.

> divinatory signs; the *Springs and Autumns* are their sequence; the *rites* are their *embodiments*; and the *music* are their *joy*.
>
> 是故著此竹帛謂之書，書者此之著者也，詩者此之志者也，易者此之占者也，春秋者此之紀者也，禮者此之體者也，樂者此之樂者也。[444]

This motivatory passage explains the terms of the different classics and classical values by building on the recurrence of paronomastic pairs, including 'documents' (*shū* 書 *s-ta) and 'records' (*zhuó* 著 *trak), 'Odes' (*Shī* 詩 *s.tə) and 'aspirations' (*zhì* 志 *tə-s), 'rites' (*li* 禮 *[r]ˁijʔ) and 'embodiments' (*tǐ* 體 *ɻˁijʔ), as well as 'music' (*yuè* 樂 *[ŋ]ˁrawk) and 'joy' (*lè* 樂 *[r]ˁawk).[445] This passage hence connects these central values intuitively through paronomasia to what motivates them, in a way that is somewhat reminiscent of the *Máo Commentary of the Odes* (*Máo Shī* 毛詩):

> The *Odes* are what make *aspirations go* [through].
> 詩者志之所之也。[446]

This short passage explains 'Odes' (*Shī* 詩 *s.tə) again through 'aspirations' (*zhì* 志 *tə-s), but additionally also through 'to go' (*zhī* 之 *tə). This hence forms a tightly knit and highly memorable pun, one which may further highlight the shared epistemic associations to the above *Xīnshū* passage. Paronomasia, during the Late Warring States and early Hàn period, could clearly be used to internally gloss what motivates a term.

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[444] Jiǎ Yì 賈誼; Yán Zhènyì 閻振益 and Zhōng Xià 鍾夏 (eds.), *Xīnshū jiàozhù* 新書校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2000), 8/5.325.

[445] This passage does not, however, propose paronomasia for the *Changes* (*Yì* 易) and the *Springs and Autumns Annals* (*chūnqiū* 春秋).

[446] Máo Hēng 毛亨; Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄, Lù Démíng 陸德明, and Kǒng Xiángjūn 孔祥軍 (eds.), *Máo Shī chuánjiān* 毛詩傳箋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2018), 1. Note that this statement occurs – in variants – also throughout other Warring States material.

### 4.5.1 *Hán Shī wàizhuàn*

One text that may offer even more salient instances of paronomasia, especially in regard to this glossing potential, is the *Hán Shī wàizhuàn* 韓詩外傳 (*Hán's Outer Tradition of the Odes*). This text, traditionally attributed to Hán Yīng 韓嬰 (between ?200 – ?120 BCE), is thought to be from around 150 BCE, thus stemming from the years of Emperor Jǐng 漢景帝 (r. 157 – 141 BCE). There is not much reason to doubt this texts' dating. Essentially a compilation, it highlights the applicability of Odes through the retelling of anecdotes and stories, thus employing a mode of exegesis that is focused on the practical use of these poems, especially in regard to moral and ethical considerations.[447]

Notably, paronomasia occurs is here again primarily *not* applied to connect a quoted text and interpretation, but is focused on internal key terms, comparable to its dominant usage in the Warring States period. Paronomasia is therefore again utilized to connect in an intuitive, motivatory way. Again, the mode of reference for paronomasia remains internal to the elaborations of the *Hán Shī wàizhuàn* itself and does not directly engage the Odes. This is even more pronounced in the following example:

> Thus it is the ***herdsmen***[-inspectors]
> …who open in [all] four [directions] the [ruler's] gates,
> …who shed light in [all] four [directions] onto the [ruler's] ***eyes***,
> …and *extend* in [all] four [directions] [the ruler's] ***keen sense of hearing***.
> 故牧者所以開四門，明四目、通四聰也。[448]

[447] For a more comprehensive overview, compare James R. Hightower, "Han shih wai chuan," in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Loewe, 125-128.

[448] *Hán Shī wàizhuàn jíshì* 6/17.219.

While paronomasia is again present in this example, specifically in two separate instances, the passage does not directly use it as a gloss, but rather as a wordplay. The first pun builds on the one hand on the term for 'inspectors,' or more literally 'herdsmen' (*mù zhě* 牧者 *mək tAʔ), and on the other hand on 'eyes' (*mù* 目 *C.m(r)[u]k).[449] The second one consists in the recurrence of sound in 'to extend' (*tōng* 通 *l̥ˤoŋ) and the ruler's 'keen ear' (*cōng* 聰 *s-l̥ˤoŋ). These instances of paronomasia reinforce the point made by highlighting connections between those properties: just as the phonological material recurs, the "herdsmen-inspectors" function as a sort of double and an extension of the ruler's senses. This implicit argumentative function is also present in the previous example between 'rites' and the 'bodies' of Heaven and Earth.

Compare, however, also the following example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 所謂士者, | | Whom we refer to as a gentleman, |
| 雖不能盡備乎道術, | *[kə.l]ˤuʔ Cə-lut | even if he cannot be fully prepared in the *Way's techniques*, |
| 必有由也； | *l[u] | must have [where he] *comes from*.[450] |

This passage, defining a gentleman, includes a sort of double paronomasia for the term 'to come from' (*yóu* 由 *l[u]) by presenting the similar sounding terms 'Way' (*dào* 道 *[kə.l]ˤuʔ) and (*shù* 術 *Cə-lut) beforehand. While this may again suggest an implied intuitive connection between these terms (comparable to one example in the Guōdiàn material), this interpretation is clearly far from certain. Either way, paronomasia is again not applied to an external text – despite the *Hán Shī wàizhuàn* being about the Odes – and is instead focused on an internally mentioned key term.

[449] Note here the Han overlap of rhyme categories.
[450] *Hán Shī wàizhuàn jíshì* 1/10.12.

To be clear, genre constraints may come into play for this exclusively internal frame of reference, as the *Hán Shī wàizhuàn* essentially forms a collection of anecdotal material, to which lines from the *Odes* are provided in order to highlight the applicability of the latter. In this sense, the mode of exegesis present in the *Hán Shī wàizhuàn* is largely dominated by the historical exemplification and application of a couplet of the *Odes*, rather than in parsing individual terms or lines of the *Odes*. Still, the continuity of paronomasia to the precedents from the Warring States period are remarkable.

### 4.5.2 Commentaries to the *Chūnqiū*

More clearly exegetical and thus potentially more useful to document the developments of paronomasia in Hàn texts are the catechistic texts to the classical *Chūnqiū* 春秋 (*Springs and Autumns Annals*), of which the *Gōngyáng* 公羊 and the *Gǔliáng* 谷梁 traditions are extant.[451]

Both texts gloss individual terms from the *Chūnqiū*. The *Gōngyáng Tradition*, which may be viewed as a layered text dating roughly from the Late Warring States period (3rd century BCE) to the reign of Emperor Jǐng 景 (r. 157-141 BCE),[452] was favored at the court of Emperor Wǔ, while

[451] The *Chūnqiū* likely began as the court annals of the ancient state of Lǔ 魯, covering the period from 722 to 479 BCE. Important for our understanding of the history of this textual exegesis is the endowment in 136 BCE of scholastic positions by Emperor Wǔ; one of these positions was devoted to the study of the *Chūnqiū*, but different interpretations of this classic led to the development of diverging commentarial traditions. Three of these commentaries survive, which became dominant over the course of the Hàn dynasty: the *Gōngyáng* 公羊, the *Gǔliáng* 谷梁, and the *Zuǒ* 左 tradition. Both the *Gōngyáng* and the *Gǔliáng* tradition are direct textual commentaries, in which the text of the classic is unpacked through the exegetical principle of "praise and blame." For a review of this, see Newell Ann Van Auken, "Could 'Subtle Words' have Conveyed 'Praise and Blame'? The Implications of Formal Regularity and Variation in Spring and Autumn (*Chūn Qiū*) Records," *Early China*, 31 (2007): 47-111.

For the establishment of these posts – actually labelled as *bóshì* 博士 – see *Hàn shū* 6.159; 36.1967; and 88.3617-21. For the different commentarial traditions, compare *Hàn shū* 30.1712-15 further records two more commentarial traditions: the *Zōu Tradition* 鄒氏傳, and the *Jiā Tradition* 夾氏傳. Both are lost.

[452] Compare Joachim Gentz, *Das 'Gongyang zhuan': Auslegung und Kanonisierung der Frühlings' und Herbstannalen ('Chunqiu')* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 67-68; and esp. 345-385 for a more detailed analysis.

the *Gǔliáng* tradition was likely put together later, and received official sponsorship during the reign of Emperor Xuān 宣 (r. 73-49 BCE).[453]

As such, both the *Gōngyáng* and *Gǔliáng* commentaries may offer better insights into the developments of how paronomasia, especially in its application to external units of text, was utilized during the mid- and late-Western Hàn dynasty. Specifically, by tracing the continuities and changes of how this device was employed in these two closely related commentaries, further light can be shed on the exegetical developments thereof during these crucial periods.

**a) *Gōngyáng Tradition***

As the earlier of the two direct commentaries, the *Gōngyáng Tradition* employs the recurrence of similar sounding terms primarily in the context of the textual exegesis it performs on the *Chūnqiū* text or on terms the *Gōngyáng Tradition* itself brings up to explicate the meaning of the classic. These glosses predominantly appear to establish intuitive connections between the glossed term and the commentarial suggestion. The openness with which the *Gōngyáng* switches between

[453] For an overview of the changing popularity of those two texts and their functions, see Mark Csikszentmihalyi, "The Social Roles of the *Annals* Classic in Late Western Han," in *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China*, ed. Michael Nylan and Griet Vankeerberghen (Seattle: University of Washington, 2014), 461-476.

Compare the third surviving text in relation to the *Chūnqiū*, the *Zuǒ Tradition*, largely written in narrative form and expounding on the historical background mentioned in the *Chūnqiū* through lively accounts. The *Zuǒ Tradition* furthermore covers a longer period than the *Chūnqiū* itself (thus covering the years 722 to 463 BCE) and may have originally not been intended as a direct commentary, as it may largely stem from the Warring States period. However, through its association with the *Chūnqiū* over the course of the Hàn dynasty, it became inextricably linked to that classic, but receiving official recognition only after the other two extant *Chūnqiū* commentaries. Furthermore, it would not be associated in the ancient period with a similar amount of prestige as these other two traditions. For a study of the *Zuǒ Tradition*, see David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001); for a study of the commentarial structures in the *Zuǒ Tradition*, see Newell Ann Van Auken, *The Commentarial Transformation of the 'Spring and Autumn'* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), esp. pp. 144-146 for the shift from ritual prescription to the "Praise and Blame" form typical of the Hàn reading of the *Chūnqiū*. For the reception history of the *Zuǒ Tradition* in the Hàn dynasty, see Pauli Wai, "Merging Horizons: Authority, Hermeneutics, and the *Zuo Tradition* from Western Han to Western Jin (2nd c. BCE – 3rd c. CE)" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2013).

glossing its own terms through phonological recurrences to glossing terms from the *Chūnqiū* through the same device is noteworthy. In many ways, then, this allo-commentarial function of what are essentially paronomastic glosses can be seen as a continuation of the auto-commentarial, text-internal function observed throughout the Warring States and early Western Hàn corpus surveyed above, only that the framework of reference is squarely centered on what can be identified as terms from the *Chūnqiū* itself. As such, the *Gōngyáng* commentaries are directly attached to *Chūnqiū* quotations, similar to how certain examples in the *Guǎnzǐ* engage text-external material.

To provide an example, one commentary in the *Gōngyáng* (found in chapter Zhuāng 莊 19.3) glosses the term 'sister-in-law' (*dì* 娣 *lˤəjʔ), itself occurring in the *Gōngyáng* as part of a longer explication to the *Chūnqiū*, in the following way: "*What is a 'younger sister-in-law'? It's [like] a 'younger brother'*" (*Dì zhě hé? Dì yě* 娣者何？弟也).[454] The *Gōngyáng* thereby glosses the mentioned term through the homophonous 'younger brother' (*dì* 弟 *lˤəjʔ), a gloss that builds on inherent parallel structures of social divisions and thus with what would have been intuitively similar to speakers of the underlying language.[455]

For comparison, a different passage in the *Gōngyáng*, in Zhuāng 8.1, applies the paronomastic gloss not to a term from the *Gōngyáng*, but one that is directly found in the *Chūnqiū* text:

> Why does it say here '*await*'?
> [The general] was entrusted [with their troops] but did *not yet* receive them.
> 此其言俟何？托不得已也。[456]

[454] Liú Shàngcí 劉尚慈 (ed.), *Chūnqiū Gōngyáng zhuàn yìzhù* 春秋公羊傳譯注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2010), 144.
[455] This passage in the *Gōngyáng* could also be read to reflect the same underlying word.
[456] *Chūnqiū Gōngyáng zhuàn yìzhù* 122.

In its rather typical catechistic wording, the *Gōngyáng* commentary first points to the *Chūnqiū* text, specifically the term ‘to await’ (*sì* 俟 *s.[ɢ]rəʔ), used there to describe a general’s awaiting the armies from the states of Chén 陳 and Cài 蔡. This is glossed through the subsequent statement, which may admittedly be somewhat cryptic – the term is used, according to the *Gōngyáng*, to express that despite being “entrusted” with these troops, said general had “not yet received” them. This gloss becomes clearer when taking the aural parallel into consideration, as the term ‘not yet’ (*yǐ* 已 *ɢəʔ), used in the above statement in the phrase-final position, sounds similar to the glossed term: ‘awaiting’ (*s.[ɢ]rəʔ) is hence due to something ‘not yet’ (*ɢəʔ) having occurred.

The following example from Yǐn 1.2 is even clearer in its employment of paronomasia:

> What is ‘to catch up with’?
> It is ‘to join;’
> ‘to meet,’ ‘to catch up’ and ‘to gather’ are all ‘to join.’
> Why does it sometimes say ‘to meet,’ sometimes ‘to catch up,’ sometimes ‘to gather’?
> - ‘To meet’ (*m-kˤop-s) is collected (*[ts]ˤot-s);
> - ‘to *catch up*’ (*[m-k-]rəp) is *hasty* (*[k-]rəp [k-]rəp);
> - ‘*to gather*’ (*[g]rə[p]-s) is *resolutely* (*[g]rə[p]-s [g]rə[p]-s).
>
> 及者何？與也，會及暨皆與也。曷為或言會，或言及，或言暨？會猶最也；及猶汲汲也；暨猶暨暨也。[457]

This passage discusses the usage of the term ‘to catch up’ (*jí* 及 *[m-k-]rəp), used in the *Chūnqiū* to describe how three figures met. Typical for the *Gōngyáng*, this term is pointed out in a question, glossed at first through the neutral umbrella term ‘to join’ (*yǔ* 與), followed by the explication that the terms ‘to meet’ (*huì* 會 *m-kˤop-s), ‘to catch up,’ and ‘to gather’ (*jì* 暨 *[g]rə[p]-s) all express nuances of this umbrella term. As is typical of the *Gōngyáng* commentarial

[457] *Chūnqiū Gōngyáng zhuàn yìzhù* 4.

strategy, a follow-up question is posed to clarify when each term is appropriately used, thus defining those nuances. It is in this follow-up that a series of essentially paronomastic glosses is employed, most clearly articulated in the glossing of 'to catch up' (*[m-k-]rəp) through 'hasty (*jí jí* 汲汲 *[k-]rəp [k-]rəp). The term 'to gather' (*[g]rə[p]-s) is glossed through the reduplication of the same character, hence expressing a nuance of resoluteness. Note that these two terms – 'to catch up' (*[m-k-]rəp) and 'to gather' (*[g]rə[p]-s) – already share a considerable amount of phonological material: the purpose of linking these terms to even more similar sounding glosses in the *Gōngyáng* hence appears to disambiguate them more fully.

Only the first in this series of glosses – between 'to meet' (*m-kˤop-s) and 'collected' (*zuì* 最 *[ts]ˤot-s) – cannot be considered paronomastic in nature, as there are considerable differences in sound between the involved terms. Shared are, however, the nuclei (*-o-) and similar finals (*-p-s vs. *-t-s), which at least offers some connecting points between these terms.[458]

Nonetheless, this series of glosses is noteworthy: by offering glosses similar in sound, the *Gōngyáng* most importantly disambiguates terms close in meaning to draw out nuances. These are, then, glosses that are rooted in the conviction that the underlying sounds are essential to reach a proper understanding of their meaning. This process can also be found in the glosses for the term 'to install' (*nà* 納 *nˤ[u]p), where the *Gōngyáng* (in both Zhuāng 9.2 and Wén 文 14.9) points out the supposed meaning of the *Chūnqiū* in the following way: *"What is 'to install'? It is a phrase for 'sending in'"* (*Nà zhě hé? Rù cí yě* 納者何？入辭也).[459] In both instances, the glossed term is simply defined as 'to send in' (*rù* 入 *n[u]p). The two terms – or rather, characters – sound the

[458] Additionally, these terms would have likely rhymed.
[459] *Chūnqiū Gōngyáng zhuàn yìzhù* 124; 318.

same, which hence means (in the understanding of the people behind the *Gōngyáng Tradition*) that there must be a connection in meaning.

Overall, the *Gōngyáng Tradition* does not contain a significant number of paronomasia.[460] This mode of highlighting seemingly intrinsic connections between two terms, occurring on both an aural and a semantic level, is clearly related to the text-internal, utterance-initial paronomastic glosses, seen, for example, at the very beginning of this chapter in the *Lúnyǔ* or in the Guōdiàn material, and yet differs considerably. The allo-commentarial gloss seen here is not just a summation that necessarily precedes or succeeds a more argumentative section, as the earlier auto-commentarial glosses did; it is also not motivatory in nature, as no explanation is provided. Rather, it is a self-contained truism, wherein the aural and supposed semantic congruences suffice to make a point.

**b) *Gǔliáng Tradition***

A comparison in how such glosses occur in the *Gōngyáng Tradition* 公羊傳 and the second important commentary on the *Springs and Autumns*, the *Gǔliáng Tradition* 穀梁傳, shows, however, how the paronomastic potential of such glosses developed primarily over the course of the late 2nd- and 1st-centuries BCE. Like the *Gōngyáng*, it is organized in a question-and-answer format to provide an exegesis for the *Springs and Autumns*, and functioned largely along similar interpretive principles, but was in all likelihood written later than the *Gōngyáng*.[461] It received official recognition in 51 BCE.

[460] To my knowledge, there are only a handful of additional instances.

[461] For a more substantial comparison between the *Gōngyáng* and *G ǔ li áng* texts, also taking the later direct commentaries into account, compare Van Auken, *The Commentarial Transformation,* 147-173

The clearest difference in regard to paronomasia between the two commentaries is that the *Gǔliáng* contains more frequently clearly paronomastic glosses than the *Gōngyáng*. In other words, the association between two terms involved in paronomasia builds more and more on the intrinsic parallel that is grounded in the recurrence of sound but extends to a semantic congruence: in short, the distinct paronomastic gloss, as it is known from the late Western and Eastern Hàn dynasty (which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter), occurs not as much in the *Gōngyáng*, but throughout the *Gǔliáng Tradition*. The former features, as observed above, paronomasia not only in this form of the paronomastic gloss, but also in instances more closely aligned with other poetic forms of expression (reminiscent especially of Warring States forms of *figura etymologica*).

Due to the respective chronology between the two texts, this provides us with a general understanding of how such glosses were transformed in the mid- to late Western Hàn period: the poetic forms of paronomasia, focused on establishing intuitive connection between terms, gradually disappeared. Instead, paronomastic glosses, focused in particular on the allo-commentarial function and thus on text-external points of reference, increased in number. Compare the following example*:*

> The phrase '*comet'* just means '*shooting star*.'
> 孛之為言，猶茀也。[462]

While the mode of referring to the *Chūnqiū* text is largely comparable to the *Gōngyáng*, this short paronomastic gloss occurs by itself. Importantly, both terms – 'comet' (*bèi* 孛 *[b]ˢ[u]t-s) and 'shooting star' (*bèi* 茀 *[b]ˢ[u]t-s) – are homophonous and generally signify the same phenomenon. This passage attempts no further explanation for why one of the characters was

[462] Kē Shàomín 柯劭忞 and Zhāng Hóngmíng 張鴻鳴 (eds.), *Chūnqiū Gǔliáng zhuàn zhù* 春秋穀梁傳注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2020), 245.

utilized in the *Chūnqiū*. One character (*bèi* 孛) is simply glossed through another (*bèi* 茀) that both sounds and signifies the same. A similar exegetical strategy can be observed in the following example:

> '*Boundary'* (*kaŋ) means '*territorial limit.'* (*[k]raŋʔ-s).
> 疆之為言，猶竟也。[463]

Picking up the term 'boundary' (*jiāng* 疆 *kaŋ) from the *Chūnqiū* text, this short gloss explains it simply as a 'territorial limit' (*jìng* 竟 *[k]raŋʔ-s), a term that both signifies something similar, and shares pertinent phonological material. [464] In other words, this paronomastic gloss is similarly an attempt to supply a homophonous synonym to elucidate the *Chūnqiū* text, as no further explanation is provided with this passage, and supposedly also not needed: the intrinsic connection offered by paronomasia suffices. Such an explanation can be found in the following passage, which nonetheless operates on the same principles:

> '*Father'* means '*tutor*.' It is a male honorific.
> 父，猶傅也，男子之美稱也。[465]

This gloss is meant to clarify part of a figure's name in the *Chūnqiū* text, Father Zhūyí (Zhūyí fù 邾儀父). The passage hence restates the character in question, 'father' (*fù* 父 *p(r)aʔ), and provides an almost homophonous term with related semantics, specifically 'tutor' (*fù* 傅 *p(r)a(ʔ)-s). Unlike the previous examples, this passage includes a further explanation of why this term is utilized, highlighting the merely honorific usage in this context. This appears necessary here given the broader semantic field of the first term, as it ordinarily indicates family relations. Nonetheless,

[463] *Chūnqiū Gǔliáng zhuàn zhù* 386.

[464] Despite the presence of an infix *-r- and postcodas *-ʔ-s in the term 'territorial limit' (*jìng* 竟), these terms are importantly identical in both initial (*k-/*[k]-) and rime (*-aŋ) positions.

[465] *Chūnqiū Gǔliáng zhuàn zhù* 2.

the exegetical principle is identical to the previous examples, in that a similar-sounding term with overlapping semantics is supplied as a gloss to clarify the connotations of the glossed term.

Altogether, the *Gǔliáng Tradition* continues to employ paronomasia in the same way as certain exegetical glosses in the *Gōngyáng*, focused on highlighting the intrinsic semantic and aural connections between two terms. Notably, these glosses dominate the usage of paronomasia in the *Gǔliáng*, indicating a further normalization of the self-contained truisms that the main function of the paronomastic gloss gradually moved towards.

### 4.6 Discussion

This last point is essential to describe the gradual transformation of the paronomastic gloss over the course of the Western Hàn dynasty. Specifically, the evidence presented above highlights a gradual shift away from more poetic usages of paronomasia (along the lines of *figura etymologica*) as seen in early Western Hàn texts such as the *Hán Shī wàizhuàn*, and towards the terse mode of exegesis through the paronomastic gloss seen to a certain extent in the *Gōngyáng*, but more frequently in the *Gǔliáng Tradition*.

This shift works well with the evidence from both the preceding pre-imperial era – surveyed earlier in this chapter – and the succeeding late Western and Eastern Hàn era, which will be described in more detail in the following chapter. In short, however, the majority of supposed Warring States material, including the excavated Guōdiàn material, dating to approximately 300 BCE, and most of the transmitted textual material from this period, highlights the poetic roots of paronomasia and the text-internal focus of the device, while the short, self-contained paronomastic glosses from the *Gǔliáng Tradition* are more reminiscent of examples from the *Báihǔ tōng* and the

*Shì míng*, two Eastern Hàn texts known for their frequent usage of paronomasia in similar functions, or the Eastern Hàn textual commentaries of, say, Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄 (127–200 CE).

It is therefore at some point between the mid- to late Western Hàn dynasty that paronomasia was beginning to be utilized as a way to gloss meaning of text-external passages, especially by linking meaning through sound on a purely intrinsic basis, in the sense that no further explanation was necessary to justify the gloss. Earlier passages remained more deeply connected to the more poetic origins of paronomasia, and offering more space for argumentatively vague connections. The case for this gradual shift towards the allo-commentarial or exegetical function of the paronomastic gloss is particularly strong through its absence in the material surveyed above that is traditionally attributed to the Warring States period (with the exceptions of a handful of passages in the *Mèngzǐ* and the *Guǎnzǐ*), and furthermore its non-existence in the *Hán Shī wàizhuàn*, itself a clearly exegetical text, and the gradual adoption thereof in the catechistic *Chūnqiū* commentaries. The nexus between gloss and glossed in these examples is narrowed down towards succinct, one-character phrases, rather than the earlier longer, more poetical expositions.

This chapter thus provided a survey of paronomasia in textual material dating from the Warring States (esp. from 300 BCE) to the last century of the Western Hàn dynasty, and consequently described the long arc of paronomasia over this three-hundred-year period. By delineating the developments of what is essentially a wordplay, this chapter has not just shown that paronomasia existed and changed over time, especially how it functioned, but more importantly, how it implicitly highlighted a changing epistemological framework within which paronomasia could operate.

Generally, early Chinese paronomasia could provide a shared object of thought by directing the attention of either readers or listeners through the recurrence of sound. In this way, the words

strung together in paronomasia "become," to echo Sluiter's description of ancient Greek etymology once more, "'intuition pumps' for how the world they represent functions."[466] By studying early Chinese paronomasia in more detail, then, we can gain a better understanding for *how* this intuitive mode of signification functioned.

In sum, genuine etymological considerations are of secondary importance for paronomasia in likely Warring States textual material, and even less so for what are clearly Western Hàn texts. The former featured many passages where etymological relations were at play, in the form of *figura etymologica*, while the latter reduced these to largely conventionalized pairings of terms. Similarly, none of the examples above reveal any fundamental roots of paronomasia in 'correlative' schemes, even though they may coincide in some of the later examples. This invalidates the previously dominant interpretation of the roots in paronomasia in those schemes. If anything, 'correlative' schemes may have played an influence in creating paronomastic chains of multiple pairings in Late Warring States texts, such as *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*.

Two other factors may have been even more significant to the epistemic changes underlying the developments of paronomasia. The first of these builds on the gradual standardization of the writing system during the Qín and Hàn periods: while the Late Warring States period witnessed certain developments towards a phoneticization and desemantization in the usage of individual graphs, the subsequent regularization of usage during the early imperial period resulted in a renewed expectation that a singular graph represents not just sound, but also a word, or at least a semantic unit.[467] The consequences of this shift are readily available in the *Gǔliáng Tradition*,

[466] Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology," 899.

[467] For general overviews over this process, compare Qiu Xigui; Gilbert Louis Mattos, and Jerry Norman (trans.), *Chinese Writing* (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 2000); William G. Boltz, *The Origin and the Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2003); and Imre Galambos,

where providing a paronomastic gloss on a character suffices to draw out this assumed overlap between sound and meaning. This can be compared to the greater context provided by earlier auto-commentarial glosses, even if such contexts were limited to short explanations by a master figure or poetic embeddings.

Secondly, paronomasia also changed under the influence of the gradual stabilization and adoption of certain key texts. In this context, this occurred most directly through the canonization of the classics, especially after Emperor Wǔ's (r. 141-87 BCE) move to establish posts for what would later become part of the Confucian canon, in particular during the retrenchment after the mid-Western Hàn expansionism beginning with Xuān (r. 73-49 BCE).[468] This process was not just focused on guaranteeing the aural stability of these key texts, but also on defining their semantic implications. For this, the paronomastic gloss was readily available to be adapted for the purposes of textual exegesis due to its previously well-established auto-commentarial function.

These two factors contributed to setting the occurrences of paronomasia in the excavated Guōdiàn material from the Warring States period clearly apart from that in the catechistic commentarial literature to the *Chūnqiū*, especially in form of the *Gǔliáng Tradition* from the mid-

*Orthography of Early Chinese Writing: Evidence from Newly Excavated Manuscripts* (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2006).

Boltz, in particular, highlights the universality of the developmental stages the Chinese writing system underwent, with clear parallels in the Egyptian writing system; in this context, compare also his "The Invention of Writing in China," *Oriens Extemus* 42 (2000): 1-17.

The general implications of this process are, in Galambos' words, as follows: "This naturally leads to the conclusion that the Chinese writing system might have also evolved into a syllabary or an alphabet, and indeed, Warring States manuscripts demonstrate a tendency towards desemanticization. This trend, however, was arrested by the Qin-Han standardization of writing and the scholars' attitude towards the script and the tradition it embodied" (Imre Galambos, "The Chinese Writing System," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature (1000 BCE – 900 CE)*, ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 36).

[468] For this process of the canonization of the classics during the late Western Hàn, compare Michael Nylan, "Classics without Canonization: Reflections on Classical Learning and Authority in Qin (221-210 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220)," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One, Shang through Han (1250 BC - AD 220)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 721-77.

to late-Western Hàn dynasty. Other factors, such as changing genre constraints, may certainly also have contributed, but these two illustrate best how paronomasia could be utilized to further help stratify unclear textual material, present especially in the transmitted texts that allegedly date to the Warring States period. In particular, the highly atypical text-external glosses observed above in the *Mèngzǐ* and the *Guǎnzǐ* build on the epistemological assumptions regarding textuality and the writing system of the mid- to late Western Hàn dynasty. From the corpus of texts surveyed above, these passages share their assumptions most with the *Gǔliáng Tradition*, and in part with the *Gōngyáng Tradition*. Furthermore, as the passages in the *Mèngzǐ* and the *Guǎnzǐ* can also be linked to the mid- to late Western Hàn dynasty on linguistic grounds, it is reasonable to assume that they represent such a residue from this period. In this sense, the *Mèngzǐ* – just like the *Guǎnzǐ,* and many other supposed Warring States text – may not just exclusively represent the language of the Warring States period, and later material from the Hàn dynasty may have entered the textual material we have come to designate with that title.[469]

This arc of developments of paronomasia – from its usage in instances of verbal artistry and as *figura etymologica*, to its function as auto-commentarial device, and finally as an exegetical strategy to highlight seemingly intuitive connections – hence reflects not just the usages of wordplay throughout the ages, but also the assumptions people held towards them. Naturally, these changed, based on cultural and social conditions. The story of the Hàn developments of paronomasia does not end here, however, as the prime period when the device was particularly utilized came about only in the late Western Hàn and Eastern Hàn. Importantly, the standardization of the script entailed further developments as to what the written characters represented. As the

[469] Note, in this context, also Gentz' observation that the *Mèngzǐ* performs early exegetical functions in regard to the *Chūnqiū* with strong moralistic implications, thus rendering this text akin to the *Gōngyáng Tradition* in yet another way; see Gentz, *Das 'Gongyang zhuan,'* 42-43.

next chapter will highlight, however, yet another factor must be accounted for to explain those developments.

# Chapter 5. On Paronomasia, Pitch Pipes, and the Production of Meaning during the Hàn Dynasty

## 5.1 Introduction: To be a Sage is to Resound

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 聖人者何？ | | What is a "Sage"? |
| 聖者, | *l̥eŋ-s > LHan *śeŋ$^{C}$ | *Sagacity* is |
| 通也, | | …to penetrate; |
| 道也, | | …to lead; |
| 聲也。 | *[l̥]eŋ > LHan *śeŋ | ...and to *resound*. |
| 道無所不通, | | Through [a Sage's] lead, nothing will not be penetrated; |
| 明無所不照, | | Through [a Sage's] brilliance, nothing will not be illuminated. |
| 聞聲知情, | | Listening to sounds, [a Sage] knows dispositions; |
| 與天地合德。 | | joining Heaven and Earth in [their] potency! …[470] |

The exercise of how to define a Sage in this passage exemplifies a trend that came to dominate the process of glossing during the Hàn dynasty. Especially the first portion of the answer to the question of sagacity, offering a vague list of terms, illustrates the epistemological principle through which this passage operates: in short, the meaning of sagacity is here unpacked not just semantically, but also – and perhaps more potently – through glosses based on sound. In this sense, the passage above from the *Bóhǔ tōng* 白虎通, a 1st-century text (which may, in turn, reflect scholastic discussions held in 58 CE in the namesake White Tiger Hall),[471] offers valuable insights into how terms seemingly unrelated (at least to our modern eyes) could be connected in the Hàn dynasty.

[470] Bān Gù 班固, Chén Lì 陳立 (ed.), *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 白虎通疏證 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1994), 7/4.334. Note that for Eastern Hàn texts, I also include Later Hàn reconstructions according to Axel Schuessler, *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese: A Companion to Grammata Serica Recensa* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

[471] For an overview over arguments for and against this dating of the *Bóhǔ tōng*, compare Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po hu t'ung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1949, 1952).

More specifically, the passage builds on a paronomastic gloss and thus on a clear recurrence of sound: 'sagacity' (*shèng* 聖 OC *[l̥]eŋ-s > LHan *śeŋᶜ) shares similar sounds with 'sound' or 'to resound' (*shēng* 聲 OC *[l̥]eŋ > LHan *śeŋ).[472] Embedded within a longer list of terms that are in a glossing function,[473] paronomasia here forms a bracket, elevating the link between Sage and sound through both a clear phonological recurrence and a supposed semantic connection.

The remainder of the above passage brings these and other glossing terms more fully into connection with one another: the text illustrates how the Sage's 'lead' (*dǎo* 道) enables a deeper understanding or 'penetrating' (*tōng* 通) of issues, just as the role of sound becomes evident through its role in knowing 'dispositions' (*qíng* 情). This last statement highlights the importance of sound, making it the basis for the epistemological process of the Sage.

Phrased differently, the above passage first utilizes inherent phonological characteristics of the terms involved to suggest an intrinsic relationship between them, and in a second step explicates how this connection of sound is meaningful. Sound thus forms not only the premise for this passage's proposition, but it also becomes the basis for sagacity itself – 'sagacity' and 'sound' are therefore invariably related.[474] Beyond mere ornamentation, the connection established through such a paronomastic gloss – and thus through sound – formed the basis not just for an argument

[472] These terms are marked by an almost identical recurrence of the underlying phonological material, with only the tone differing.

[473] The other terms listed above – and thus supposed qualities of a Sage – are 'to penetrate' (*tōng* 通 OC *l̥ˤoŋ > LHan *tʰoŋ); and 'to lead' (*dǎo* 道 OC *lˤuʔ-s > LHan *dou$^{B}$). These terms are drawn into this gloss apparently based on purely semantical considerations, as the phonological reconstructions of both differ substantially from the other key terms invoked here.

[474] Compare p. 137, footnote 268.

on narrow textual exegesis, but also with implications for how to universally conceive of the world itself and the social hierarchies contained therein.

This chapter describes how paronomasia came to be associated with a mode of totalizing world-explaining, outlining the general shift from paronomasia's earlier role in rhetorical-aesthetical persuasive contexts towards its function as a valid epistemic device in texts such as the *Bóhǔ tōng* and the *Shì míng* 釋名.[475] Additionally, this chapter will illustrate how texts of the Hàn dynasty or in the directly preceding decades participate in this discourse and in sum build an intricate epistemic framework on sound in language use. A gradual shift occurred over the course of the Western Hàn dynasty, resulting, in the end, in claims that are evident in the passage above.

Furthermore, I will show in four main parts how paronomasia's changes during the Hàn occurred: first, I will circumscribe a shift towards decoding signifiers in the world, such as the stars, the pitches emanating from the pitch pipes, and names themselves. Second, I will highlight how the modality of sound was seen as an intermediary capable of encoding the intentions of Heaven. In a third part, I will deal with critiques of this mindset, arising in the late Western Hàn dynasty. Lastly, I will describe Eastern Hàn texts that identify a certain normativity of the world, identified through sonic recurrences. Compare the gloss above from the *Bóhǔ tōng*: because of the sonic congruence, a Sage hence *has to* pay attention to sound – it is encoded in the terms themselves.

[475] The *Shì míng* is attributed to Liú Xī 劉熙 (c. 200 CE) and conventionally regarded as a glossary that utilizes paronomasia heavily. The *Shì míng* itself contains a little over 1,500 entries that build on such sound glosses. For a study of the *Shì míng*, see Bodman, *A Linguistic Study of the 'Shih Ming.'* As Harbsmeier "Language and Logic," 65, footnote 3 notes, Bodman consistently spells the term as "paranomastic glosses," which can as a consequence also occurs in later sinological writings, e.g. W. South Coblin's *Handbook of Eastern Han Sound Glosses* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983); refer to South Coblin's *Handbook* also for a listing of paronomastic glosses in texts and commentaries during the Eastern Hàn period, esp. on pp. 145-240. Note that for South Coblin, paronomastic glosses form a specific category of the broader phenomenon of sound glosses.

## 5.2 The Pitch Pipes & the Paronomastic Gloss

In the paronomastic gloss of the late Warring States period and the early Hàn dynasty, a considerable epistemological shift occurred. Paronomasia's sound recurrences were placed not just within the rhetorical-aesthetic framework of earlier textual material, but more directly within the context of the interpretation of signs. As in the exegetical function of paronomasia, this application induced meaning, but turning its attention to text-external signifiers, it was used to divine the meaning of the world.[476] In the rhetoric of the source texts, such signs are decoded in the same way as in the distinctly textual exegesis encountered in the previous chapter: the congruence of sound is interpreted as an ontological connection.

Unlike the mode of *textual* exegesis, early Western Hàn texts analyzed in this chapter do not refer to other distinctly written material, but rather other signifiers that are significant to early Hàn audiences and that are generally associated with the realm of Heaven (*tiān* 天). This sort of (for lack of a better term) *divinatory* function of paronomasia– in which a process reminiscent of exegesis is seemingly performed on signifiers from Heaven – occurs in a rather standardized way across Western Hàn texts, most prominently in textual passages associated with the position of the stars, the pitch pipes, and names themselves.

### 5.2.1 Decoding Heavenly Patterns & the Sacrality of Sounds

One of these categories of signs was astronomy – or more accurately, Heavenly patterns (*tiān wén* 天文). In the *Huáinánzǐ* (around 139 BCE), especially in a list of twelve entries in the text's

[476] While this epistemic usage of paronomasia differs markedly from the majority surveyed in the preceding chapter, it can be interpreted as a development that occurred at first in tandem with the rise of the exegetical function of paronomasia. This exegetical function was outlined in the previous chapter as an innovation occurring only in the *Gōngyáng zhuàn*, the Guǎnzi, perhaps the *Mèngzǐ*, and Hàn texts such as the *Gǔliáng zhuàn*, in which one term was glossed with another one. The interpretation of sonic recurrence was limited to signs that remained internal to a text. However, the paronomastic gloss in the example above from the *Bóhǔ tōng* is directed at general notions beyond the scope of a single text: with such glosses, general categories like that of a Sage could be decoded and understood.

third chapter ("Treatise on Heavenly Patterns," *tiān wén xùn* 天文訓), paronomasia is featured prominently among the terms used in the interpretation of the cosmograph. This list further highlights the significance of the position of a star during each individual month and features extensive wordplay, which may appear rather incomprehensible without recourse to the aural aspects of the graphs used: in that sense, paronomasia unveils concealed meaning.

The figure or phenomenon seen as responsible for indicating meaning through these constellations is described as the "Thearch" (*dì* 帝) who manipulates the Dipper (*dòu* 斗), seemingly in order to point to appropriate actions.[477] Within the system of the cosmograph, the Dipper points to a constellation associated with one of the twelve Earthly Branches (*dì zhī* 地支) to indicate a specific month, from which the pitch pipes were thought to "receive" (*shòu* 受) the twelve pitches (*lǜ* 律) associated with the month and relevant Earthly Branch. In the following, paronomasia can be found in the terms for the Earthly Branches, as well as in many of the associated pitches:

1.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指寅， | When [the Dipper] points to *yín*,[478] | *[ɢ](r)ər |
| 則萬物螾螾也， | the myriad beings *wriggle like earthworms*. | *[ɢ](r)ə[r]ʔ [ɢ](r)ə[r]ʔ |
| 律受太蔟。 | The pitch pipes take the note Grand Budding. | |
| 太蔟者， | *Grand Budding* – | |
| 蔟 | …means that there's *buds* | |
| 而未出也。 | but that these have not yet emerged. | |

[477] For a more substantial explanation of the content of this section, including its relation to the cosmograph and the notes on the pitch pipes, see John S. Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought: Chapters Three, Four, and Five of the 'Huainanzi'* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 107-108. Compare also pp. 299-300 for Major's notes on this passage, and for an alternative translation, compare John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, and Harold D. Roth, *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 132-133.

[478] 'Bending,' 'stretching'; compare Jonathan M. Smith, "The *Di Zhi* 地支 as Lunar Phases and Their Coordination with the *Tian Gan* 天干 as Ecliptic Asterisms in a China before Anyang," *Early China* 33 (2001): 215-216.

2.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指卯， | When [the Dipper] points to *mǎo*, | *mˤruʔ |
| 卯 | and [the myriad beings] *pour out*,[479] | *m-rˤu |
| 則茂茂然， | they *thrive forth*. | *m(r)uʔ-s m(r)uʔ-s |
| 律受夾鍾。 | The pitch pipes take the note Pinched Bell. | |
| 夾 | *Pinched* | *kˤrep |
| 鍾者， | *Bell* – | *toŋ |
| 種 | …means that the *seeds* | *k.toŋʔ |
| 始莢也。 | …begin to *husk*. | *kˤep |

3.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指辰， | When [the Dipper] points to *chén*, | *[d]ər |
| 辰 | and it proceeds,[480] | *[d]ər |
| 則振之也， | then it *agitates* [the myriad things]. | *tər-s |
| 律受姑洗。 | The pitch pipes take the note Maiden Purity. | |
| 姑 | *Maiden* | *kˤa |
| 洗者， | *Purity* – | *[s]ˤərʔ |
| 陳去 | …means that the withered is *discarded*… | *[kʰ](r)aʔ |
| 而新來也。 | …and the new comes. | (*s.tsʰi[n] > *sin) rˤə[481] |

4.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指巳， | When [the Dipper] points to *sì*, | *s-[ɢ]əʔ |
| 巳 | there being a fetus | *s-[ɢ]əʔ |
| 則生已定也。 | then birth is *already* certain. | *ɢ(r)əʔ |
| 律受仲呂。 | The pitch pipes take the note Median Regulator. | |
| 仲 | *Median* | *N-truŋ-s |
| 呂者， | *Regulator* – | [r]aʔ |
| 中 | …means that the center… | *truŋ |
| 充 | …fills… | *tʰuŋ |
| 大也。 | …the maximum. | *l̥ˤa[t]-s |

[479] I interpret *mǎo* 卯 in this second instance here to reflect its potential etymological root as argued by Smith, "The Di Zhi 地支 as Lunar Phases," 215. It would hence reflect the term 'to flow' (*liú* 流 *mru) and a volitional OC prefix *m-, thus 'cause to flow.'

[480] Schuessler relates this term *chén* 辰 etymologically to *shí* 時, hence as "that which proceeds."

[481] BS2015 list OC *s.tsʰi[n]; BS 2014 list *C.si[n]. LHan *sin; it appears reasonable to assume that *sin is more appropriate as a reconstruction for the mid-Western Han.

5.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指午， | [The Dipper then] points to *wǔ.* | |
| 午者， | and *wǔ…* | *m-q$^{hʕ}$aʔ |
| 忤也。 | …is ‘defiance.’ | *m-q$^{hʕ}$a[-s] |
| … | …[482] | |

6.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指未， | [The Dipper then] points to *wèi..* | |
| 未者， | and *wèi…* | *m[ə]t-s |
| 昧（味）也。 | …is ‘flavor.’ | *m$^{ʕ}$[u][t]-s |
| … | … | |

7.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指申， | [The Dipper then] points to *shēn.* | |
| 申者， | and *shēn…* | *l̥i[n] |
| 呻之也。 | …is ‘to chant it.’ | *l̥i[n] |
| … | …[483] | |

8.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指酉， | [The Dipper then] points to *yǒu.* | |
| 酉者 | and *yǒu…* | *N-ruʔ |
| 飽也。 | …is ‘fullness.’ | *p$^{ʕ}$ruʔ |
| 律受南呂。 | The pitch pipes take the note Southern Regulator. | |
| 南 | *Southern* | *n$^{ʕ}$[ə]m |
| 呂者， | *Regulator* – | *[r]aʔ |
| 任 | …means that the *loaded* | *n$^{ʕ}$[ə]m-s |
| 包 | *bundle* | *p$^{ʕ}$ru |
| 大也。 | is at a maximum. | *l̥$^{ʕ}$a[t]-s |

9.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指戌， | [The Dipper then] points to *xū.* | |
| 戌者， | and *xū…* | *s.mi[t] |
| 滅也。 | …is ‘to destroy.’ | *[m]et |
| … | … | |

10.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指亥， | [The Dipper then] points to *hài,* | |

[482] For simplicity’s sake, I abridge some sections and omit the pitch pipes here that do not feature aural puns; omitted sections are indicated by “…” in both translation and the Chinese text.

[483] Features minor pun on 夷則者，易其則也

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 亥者 | and *hài* … | *[g]ˤəʔ |
| 閡也。 | …is ‘obstruction.’ | *[N-g]ˤək-s |
| … | … | |

11.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指子， | [The Dipper then] points to *zǐ*, | |
| 子者 | and *zǐ* … | *[ts]əʔ |
| 茲也。 | …is ‘black.’ | *[ts]rə |
| … | … | |

12.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 指丑， | [The Dipper then] points to *chǒu*, | |
| 丑， | and *chǒu*… | *t.qʰuʔ |
| 紐也。 | ...is ‘knotting.’ | *nuʔ |
| 律受大呂。 | The pitch pipes take the note Great Regulator. | |
| 大 | *Great* | *lˤa[t]-s |
| 呂者， | *Regulator* – | *[r]aʔ |
| 旅旅 | …means that they in proper sequence… | *[r]aʔ [r]aʔ |
| 而去也。 | …depart.[484] | *[k]ʰ(r)ap-s |

The order of the Earthly Branches follows here that of the seasons: the list starts with the three branches that are conventionally correlated with the three months of spring (*yín* 寅, *mǎo* 卯, and *chén* 辰), followed by those for summer (*sì* 巳, *wǔ* 午, and *wèi* 未), autumn (*shēn* 申, *yǒu* 酉, and *xū* 戌), and winter (*hài* 亥, *zǐ* 子, and *chǒu* 丑). Each of the Earthly Branches is semantically expanded here on an aural level – either through paronomasia or adjacent devices.[485] In the dizzying array of imageries presented in the glosses, the seasonal structure is adhered to in a seemingly correlating manner. While this connection is clearest for the glosses used for the Earthly

[484] Liú Ān 劉安, *Huáinánzǐ jíshì* 淮南子集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1998): 3.238-243. For this passage, I base my translation in part on Major’s; see Major, *The Huainanzi,* 106-107.

[485] Historical reconstructions for gloss and Earthly Branch likely differ in the nucleus position in entry 6 (*wèi* 未 *m[ə]t-s vs. *wèi* 味 *mˤ[u][t]-s) and entry 9 (*xū* 戌 *s.mi[t] vs. *miè* 滅 *[m]et); entry 8 features a high degree of uncertainty in regard to the proximity of the initial position (*yǒu* 酉 *N-ruʔ vs. *bǎo* 飽 *pˤruʔ); and entry 12 offers relatively distant phonological material in the initial position (*chǒu* 丑 *t.qʰuʔ vs. *niǔ* 紐 *nuʔ), meaning that the latter pairing can only be considered to be rhyming.

Branches of spring that are fittingly focused on plant growth and increased fauna activity, it appears equally valid for the glosses of most of the other months.[486] The following table highlights both the seasonal structure and the presence of paronomasia to gloss the 12 Earthly Branches:

| | *Earthly Branch* | | *Gloss* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 寅 | *yín* < *[ɢ](r)ər | 螾螾 | *yǐn* < *[ɢ](r)ə[r]ʔ | "to wriggle like earthworms" |
| | 卯 | *mǎo* < *mˤruʔ | 茂茂 | *mào* < *m(r)uʔ-s | "to thrive forth" |
| | 辰 | *chén* < *[d]ər | 振 | *zhèn* < *tər-s | "to agitate" |
| Summer | 巳 | *sì* < *s-[ɢ]əʔ | 已 | *yǐ* < *ɢ(r)əʔ | "already" |
| | 午 | *wǔ* < *m-qhˤaʔ | 忤 | *wǔ* < *m-qʰˤa[-s] | "defiance" |
| | 未 | *wèi* < *m[ə]t-s | 昧 / 味 | *wèi* < *mˤ[u][t]-s | "flavor" |
| Autumn | 申 | *shēn* < *l̥i[n] | 呻 | *shēn* < *l̥i[n] | "to chant" |
| | 酉 | *yǒu* < *N-ruʔ | 飽 | *bǎo* < *pˤruʔ | "fullness" |
| | 戌 | *xū* < *s.mi[t] | 滅 | *miè* < *[m]et | "to destroy" |
| Winter | 亥 | *hài* < *[g]ˤəʔ | 閡 | *hé* < *[N-g]ˤək-s | "obstruction" |
| | 子 | *zǐ* < *[ts]əʔ | 茲 | *zī* < *[ts]rə | "black" |
| | 丑 | *chǒu* < *t.qʰuʔ | 紐 | *niǔ* < *nuʔ | "to knot" |

*Table 1: Earthly Branches & their Aural Glosses in HNZ 3.238-243*

[486] The glosses for autumn, for example, are marked by terms potentially associated with both harvest ('fullness' *bǎo* 飽 *pˤruʔ) and warfare ('to destroy' *miè* 滅 *[m]et), two activities conventionally associated with that season. Similarly, the glosses for winter feature terms that can feasibly be associated with conventional ascriptions to that season, esp. for the terms 'black' (*zī* 茲 *[ts]rə) and 'obstruction' (*hé* 閡 *[N-g]ˤək-s).

Structurally, the above glosses can further be divided into two distinguishable patterns: while entries 1 to 4 embed paronomasia more fully into descriptive full sentences, entries 5 to 12 feature constructions either akin to or directly identifiable as paronomastic glosses, in which a given Earthly Branch is simply glossed through a term.[487]

Nonetheless, there is a remarkable regularity with which this passage establishes semantic connections through overlapping aural qualities of terms. Given that *each* of its description regarding the twelve Earthly Branches offers such explications, either directly through paronomasia (as is the case for at least eight Branches) or at least through related constructions (which would be the case for the remaining four), the grounding of close semantics through recurring sounds is evidently deliberate, especially given the parallel usage in other texts such as the *Bóhǔ tōng* and the *Shǐjì*.[488]

In the list above from the *Huáinánzǐ*, the pitches (described by Kenneth DeWoskin as the "initializing sounds" of early Chinese musical theory)[489] are also juxtaposed to similar sounding material. The following table explicates the identifiable recurrence of phonological material in the glosses for the 12 pitches:

| | *Pitch* | | *Gloss* | | *Paronomasia* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spring | 太蔟 | *tài cù* < *l̥ˤa[t]-s [tsh]ˤok | 蔟而未出 | "buds have not emerged yet" | *n/a* (restating of used character *cù* 蔟) |
| | 夾鍾 | *jiā zhōng* < *kˤrep toŋ | 種始莢 | "seeds begin to husk" | *zhǒng* 種 *k.toŋʔ<br>*jiá* 莢 *kˤep |

[487] This results in the typical structure "X 者，Y 也", in which the Earthly Branch X is glossed through term Y.

[488] For other passages that connect the Earthly Branches similarly to other terms through recurring phonological material, compare *Bóhǔ tōng* 3/3.4-8 (卯者，茂也); and *Shiji* 25.12-19 (其於十二子為亥)

[489] Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1982), 48.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 姑洗 | *gū xǐ* < *kˁa [s]ˁərʔ | 陳去而新來 | "the withered is discarded and the new comes" | *qù* 去 *[kʰ](r)aʔ<br>*xīn lái* 新來*sin rˁə |
| Summer | 仲呂 | *zhòng lǚ* < *N-truŋ-s [r]aʔ | 中充大 | "the center fills the maximum" (?) | *zhōng* 中 *truŋ<br>*chōng* 充 *tʰuŋ<br>*tài* 大 *l̥ˁa[t]-s |
| | 蕤賓 | *ruí bīn* < *nuj (?) pi[n] | 安而服 | "at ease and compliant" | *n/a* |
| | 林鍾 | *lín zhōng* < *[r]əm toŋ | 引而止 | "extend and halt" | *n/a* |
| Autumn | 夷則 | *yí zé* < *ləj [ts]ˁək | 易其則 | "changes its norm" | *n/a* (restating of used character *zé* 則) |
| | 南呂 | *nán lǚ* < *nˁ[ə]m [r]aʔ | 任包大 | "the loaded bundle is at a maximum" | *rèn* 任 *nˁ[ə]m-s<br>*tài* 大 *l̥ˁa[t]-s |
| | 無射 | *wú yì* < *ma lAk | 入無厭 | "bring in without satiation" | *n/a* (restating of used character *wú* 無) |
| Winter | 應鍾 | *yīng zhōng* < *[q](r)əŋ toŋ | 應其鍾 | "respond to its bell" | *n/a* (restating of used characters *yīng* 應 and *zhōng* 鍾) |
| | 黃鍾 | *huáng zhōng* < *N-kʷˁaŋ toŋ | 鍾已黃 | "the bell begins to be yellow" | *n/a* (restating of used characters *zhōng* 鍾 and *huáng* 黃) |
| | 大呂 | *dà lǚ* < *l̥ˁa[t]-s [r]aʔ | 旅旅而去 | "depart in proper sequence" | *lǚ* 旅 *[r]aʔ<br>*qù* 去 *[k]ʰ(r)ap-s |

*Table 2: Pitch Pipes & their Aural Glosses in HNZ 3.238-243*

Like the Earthly Branches, many of the pitches are explicated through paronomasia, and similarly, this phenomenon is not limited to the *Huáinánzǐ*.[490] Paronomasia is in particular identifiable in pitch 2 to 4, pitch 8, and pitch 12, and often, paronomasia may be at play for *both* terms involved in the pitch's designation. For example, pitch 2, "Pinched Bell" (*jiā zhōng* 夾鍾 *kˁrep toŋ) is glossed as "seeds begin[ning] to husk" (*zhǒng shǐ jiá* 種始莢), wherein "seeds"

[490] Similar use of paronomasia for pitch pipes in *Hanshu* 律曆志上: also, again, *Bóhǔ tōng* 3/3.4-8 (卯者，茂也); and *Shiji* 25.12-19 (其於十二子為亥)

(*zhǒng* 種 *k.toŋʔ) can be paired up with "Bell" (*zhōng* 鍾 *toŋ), and "to husk" (*jiá* 莢 *kˤep) with "Pinched" (*jiā* 夾 *kˤrep). Pitch 8, "Southern Regulator" (*nán lǚ* 南呂 *nˤ[ə]m [r]aʔ), further shows that this connection functioned primarily aurally (and not graphically), as its gloss involves the key terms "load (n.)" (*rèn* 任 *nˤ[ə]m-s) and "maximum" (*tài* 大 *l̥ˤa[t]-s). The glyphs for these terms are written differently, but offer a large overlap of shared phonological material.[491] Additionally, the description of this pitch also features the intricate paronomastic reprisal of "fullness" (*bǎo* 飽 *pˤruʔ), used in turn earlier to gloss the Earthly Branch *yǒu* 酉 (*N-ruʔ), through the similar-sounding "bundle" (*bāo* 包 *pˤru).

Unlike the Earthly Branches, however, many of the connections between pitch and gloss are unclear.[492] The greater part of the glosses for the twelve pitches does not feature paronomasia, in that those glosses just restate the *same* glyphs as used in the designation for the corresponding pitch.[493] Additionally, some glosses may directly involve semantical puns.

This does in some way indicate that "[t]he use of puns here amounts to almost a kind of logomancy; the puns, in other words, would have been thought to have magical qualities."[494]

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[491] The second pairing, between "Regulator" (*lǚ* 呂 *[r]aʔ) and "maximum" (*tài* 大 *l̥ˤa[t]-s), is less clear, but given the related initial material (*[r]- vs. *l̥ˤ-), overlapping nuclei (*-a-) and similar final and suffix material (*-ʔ vs. *[t]-s), I consider this pairing a distinct possibility.

[492] Furthermore, one pitch and its corresponding gloss appear to reshuffle phonological material, reminiscent of instances of countertomic paronomasia observed in a previous chapter. Specifically, pitch 3, "Maiden Purity" (*gū xǐ* 姑洗), is glossed through the phrase "the withered is discarded and the new comes" (*chén qù ér xīn lái* 陳去而新來). In this, there is a distinct usage of paronomasia between "maiden" (*gū* 姑 *kˤa) and "to discard" (*qù* 去 *[kʰ](r)aʔ), but potentially also a more complex connection between "purity/cleanse" (*xǐ* 洗 OC *[s]ˤərʔ) and the two terms "new" (*xīn* 新 *s.tsʰi[n] > *sin), sharing the initial (*s-) with the glossed term, and "to come" (*lái* 來 rˤə), which shares the nucleus (*-ə-), and further more appears to offer its initial (*r-) as the *final* to the glossed term (*-r).

[493] Note, however, that such an argument is contingent on the orthography of the transmitted characters. However, since we do not have any excavated parallels to verify this list, I opt to consider these different usages.

[494] Major, *Heaven and Earth*, 107. Major sees parallels to other parts of the *Huáinánzǐ*, as this "logomancy" functions "in a manner exactly equivalent to the numerological resonances found in several sections of this [fourth] chapter [of the text]" (*ibid.*)"

Playing on the connections highlighted above performs, however, an additional epistemic function, as puns (including paronomasia, and the process of connecting terms through sound) function according to a specific *a priori* knowledge, according to which sound and an understanding of sound is paramount. Regardless of the presence or absence of paronomasia, such glosses infuse each designation with an alleged underlying reason.

In other words, this list from the *Huáinánzǐ* identifies the ostensible motivations for the terms used both for the twelve pitches and for the twelve Earthly Branches. Paronomasia is here used to ground astronomical insight in tangible, sonic congruences, and by decoding this list – also on a phonological level – early audiences could unveil meaning, allegedly indicated through the Thearch's manipulation of the Dipper.

Phrased differently, as an epistemic process, decoding meaning through sound recurrences is presented here as the key to reveal the significance of those Heavenly signifiers. The sonic modality of language (or, more precisely, our evidence of this in the form of Old Chinese reconstructions) functions as an intermediary between those signifiers and what they signify: in this list, sound is thus necessary to understand both Heavenly patterns and musical pitches.

While this passage from the *Huáinánzǐ* does not provide an explicit reasoning to account for this link between decoding Heavenly signifiers and paronomasia, it nonetheless offers a clear indication to how such connections were thought of. The divinatory function of paronomasia becomes entangled with the imagery of the twelve pitches of the pitch pipe, a device that inherently suggests an emphasis on sound congruences. While these pitches and the intervals between them

were used to extract and reproduce scales on different pitch levels,[495] paronomasia does something similar: it exposes sonic recurrences in language use to indicate meaningful connections.

### 5.2.2 Anchoring Sounds

#### a) The Five Tones in the *Héguānzǐ*

Related to the concept of the twelve pitches is that of the "five tones" (in their canonical sequence *gōng* 宮, *shāng* 商, *jué* 角, *zhǐ* 徵, and *yǔ* 羽), and in descriptions of these tones – in their intervals distributed evenly on a pentatonic scale[496] – recurrences of sound come into play in a similar fashion as in the example above from the *Huáinánzǐ*. This play features prominently in the following passage from the chapter "Tài hóng 泰鴻" in the text *Héguānzǐ* 鶡冠子:

I.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 東方者， | In the eastern quarter – | |
| 萬物立止焉， | the myriad things come to a standstill; | *-ə- -ə- |
| 故調以徵。 | for this reason, [they] attune to [the tone] *zhǐ*. | *trəʔ |

II.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 南方者， | In the southern quarter – | |
| 萬物華羽焉， | the myriad things are lustrous and feathered; | *[ɢ]$^{wʕ}$ra-s [ɢ]$^{w}$(r)aʔ |
| 故調以羽。 | for this reason, [they] attune to [the tone] *yǔ*. | *[ɢ]$^{w}$(r)aʔ |

III.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 西方者， | In the western quarter – | |
| 萬物成章焉， | the myriad things are complete and well-ordered; | *-ŋ -ŋ |
| 故調以商。 | for this reason, [they] attune to [the tone] *shāng*. | *s-taŋ |

IV.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 北方者， | In the northern quarter – | |
| 萬物錄臧焉， | the myriad things are collected and stored; | *[r]ok |
| 故調以角。 | for this reason, [they] attune to [the tone] *jué*. | *C.[k]$^{ʕ}$rok |

[495] Generally, compare DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, 46-49. Compare also Needham summary that "it should not be imagined that this gamut ever functioned as a scale, and it is erroneous to refer to the 'Chinese chromatic scale', as some Western writers have done. The series of twelve notes known as the twelve *lü* were simply a series of fundamental notes from which scales could be constructed," in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 4: Physics and and Physical Technology, Part 1: Physics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 170–171.

[496] See DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, 43-45. Compare also Needham, *Science and Civilization*, 157-63.

V.

| | |
|---|---|
| 中央者， | The center |
| 太一之位， | is the place of the supreme one. |
| 百神仰制焉， | The hundred spirits rely on and arrange through it; |
| 故調以宮。 | for this reason, [they] attune to [the tone] *gōng*.[497] |

These pronouncements are marked by an inherent parallelism, focused on three distinct parts: first, either one of the four quarters (in turn each denoted by one of the cardinal directions) or the center; second, a supposed characteristic of the myriad things in that quarter; and third, the association of the preceding two points with one of the five tones. This association is made explicit through the repeating use of the phrase-initial expression 'for this reason' (*gù* 故), and the recurring 'attuning' (*diào* 調) of the myriad things to the respective tone.

It may not be evident at first glance what the specific grounds of explanations are for these associations, but again, these grounds are transposed onto phonological recurrences. Specifically, for the eastern quarter, the expression used for the characteristic of the 'standstill' (*lì zhǐ* 立止 *k.rəp təʔ) and the tone *zhǐ* 徵 (*trəʔ) share recurring nuclei (*-ə-). Paronomasia is additionally at play between the term for the tone *zhǐ* and the term 'to stop' (*zhǐ* 止 *təʔ). A similar recurrence is also present for the western quarter, wherein the tone *shāng* 商 (*s-taŋ) shares the final (*-ŋ) of the graphs used for the expression 'complete and well-ordered' (*chéng zhāng* 成章 *m-[d]eŋ taŋ): the last term ('well-ordered' *zhāng* 章 *taŋ) and the tone *shāng* share again both initial and rime, features typical for early Chinese paronomasia. For the northern quarter, something akin to paronomasia occurs, as the expression 'collected' (*lù* 錄 *[r]ok), used in the respective

[497] Huáng Huáixìn 黃懷信 (ed.), *Héguānzǐ jiàozhù* 鶡冠子校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2014), 10.229-231. Credit is due to Paul R. Goldin, who pointed this passage out to me in private communication.

characteristic, considerably overlaps on a phonological level with the tone *jué* 角 (*C.[k]ˁrok).[498] For the southern quarter, the graph for tone *yǔ* 羽 (*[ɢ]ʷ(r)aʔ) occurs directly in the characteristic 'lustrous and feathered' (*huá yǔ* 華羽 *[ɢ]ʷˁra-s [ɢ]ʷ(r)aʔ), but more importantly, full paronomasia comes into play twice, as the terms represented by *both* glyphs in said characteristic are phonologically similar to the tone.

Hence, throughout this description of the tones corresponding to the four quarters, characteristics of the myriad things *attune* on a sonic level to the five tones, specifically based on phonological recurrence. This forms a sort of a mirroring of sonic resonance (expressed through the terms for the five tones and related phonological material) to a semantic congruence, but the passage goes further in that it makes clear that the myriad things allegedly share certain traits *because of* the underlying resonances. Phrased differently, meaning is again thought to be encoded in this resonance of specific sounds.

Only the fifth entry, which focuses on the center, differs from the recurring formula described above. Both its semantic content and overall context provide indications for the reasons of this difference: the association of the note *gōng* 宮 (OC *k(r)uŋ) with the center – which is not one of the four quarters itself, but rather a superordinate spatial descriptor – already hints at the divergence of this pronouncement. Its description is even more explicit in its reasoning: all other tones modulate according to this fundamental note, just like the hundred spirits (*bǎi shén* 百神) 'look up to' or 'rely on' (*yǎng* 仰) the tone *gōng* in order to 'arrange through' (*zhì* 制) it.[499]

[498] The difference to full paronomasia is here that the term for the tone *jué* 角 (*C.[k]ˁrok) has different initial material, while its medial (*-r-) overlaps with the initial for the term 'collected' (*lù* 錄 *[r]ok).

[499] Note that the usage of syllables to express this pentatonic scale is a form of solmization, and thus vaguely reminiscent of the solfège in Western musicology ("do re mi fa so la ti"), under the assumptions of a movable do.

To summarize, the five tones, located on a movable pentatonic scale and thus fundamental to creating harmonious sounds, are here presented as harmonious with the characteristics of things in the corresponding cardinal direction. This suggests again an intimate connection between hearing, decoding, and understanding, and again points us to the nexus of sage hearing and knowing, as in the introductory example from the *Bóhǔ tōng*: whoever understands which note a given phenomenon attunes to knows an inherent characteristic of said phenomenon.

**b) The Five Tones in the *Bóhǔ tōng***

The *Bóhǔ tōng* similarly features such a description of the five tones and their decoding through paronomasia, pointing to the stability of this association between paronomasia and the five tones. While sometimes related to the previous list from the *Héguānzǐ* in the specific associations of terms, the five entries in the *Bóhǔ tōng* are more explicit concerning the underlying reasons of this resonance:

I.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 所以名之為角者何？ | What is it that [the tone] *jué* is named for? | |
| 角者 | [The tone] *jué* | LHan *kɔk |
| 躍也， | is *jumping*, | LHan *jɑk |
| 陽氣動躍。 | because the *yáng* aethers move and jump. | |

II.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 徵者， | [The tone] *zhǐ* | LHan *ʈiəᴮ |
| 止也， | is *stopping*, | LHan *ʈśəᴮ |
| 陽氣止。 | because the *yáng* aethers stop. | |

III.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 商者， | [The tone] *shāng* | LHan *śɑŋ |
| 張也， | is *spread out*, | LHan *ʈiɑŋ |
| 陰氣開張， | because the *yīn* aethers open and spread out, | |
| 陽氣始降也。 | and the *yáng* aethers start to descend | |

IV.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 羽者， | [The tone] *yǔ* | LHan *wɑ$^{B}$ |
| 紆也， | is *skewed*, | LHan *ʔyɑ |
| 陰氣在上， | because the *yīn* aethers are above, | |
| 陽氣在下。 | and the *yáng* aethers below.[500] | |

V.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 宮者， | [The tone] *gōng* | LHan *kuŋ |
| 容也， | is *accomodating;* | LHan *joŋ |
| 含也。 | it is containing. | |
| 含容四時者也。 | This is because it contains and accommodates the four seasons.[501] | |

Most importantly, these entries relate the reasons for these associations to the workings of *yīn* and *yáng* aethers (*qì* 氣), evident through the statements that follow the paronomastic glosses themselves. These statements embed the glossing terms further into a seemingly coherent explanation that describe changes in the aethers, in which the first four tones follow their waxing and waning, akin to the supposed working of *yīn* and *yáng* across the four seasons.

Some of the paronomastic glosses used are identical to the ones in the *Héguānzǐ*; others differ. Among the identical glosses are the associations between the tone *zhǐ* 徵 (*trəʔ > LHan *ʈiə$^{B}$) and ‘to stop’ (*zhǐ* 止 *təʔ > LHan *tśə$^{B}$); and between the tone *shāng* 商 (*s-taŋ > LHan *śɑŋ) and *zhāng* 張 (*C.traŋ > LHan *ʈiɑŋ). Unlike in the list from the *Héguānzǐ*, however, the tone *jué* 角 (*C.[k]$^{ʕ}$rok > LHan *kɔk) is here associated with ‘to jump’ (*yuè* 躍 *lewk > LHan *jɑk), and the tone *yǔ* 羽 (*[ɢ]$^{w}$(r)aʔ > LHan *wɑ$^{B}$) with ‘to skew’ (*yū* 紆 *q$^{w}$(r)a > LHan *ʔyɑ). Additionally, while the fifth tone *gōng* 宮 (*k(r)uŋ > LHan *kuŋ) is here also glossed, specifically with the term ‘to accommodate’ (róng 容 *[ɢ](r)oŋ > LHan *joŋ), it remains outside of the workings of the two aethers. As in the *Héguānzǐ*, its explanation points to its superordinate category (as all other tones

[500] The opposite is usually assumed.
[501] *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 3/10.119.

could be modulated from this tone), pointed out in the above passage through a remark containing the four seasons (and thus the characteristics of the waxing and waning of the other four tones).

Overall, then, these descriptions of the five tones are remarkable because the terms for the individual tones are embedded through paronomasia in thought patterns common at the time. Whereas the list found in the *Héguānzǐ* was vaguer in its simply pointing out a resonance between tones and characteristics of things east, south, west, and north, the one in the *Bóhǔ tōng* is more explicit. It postulates that these differences are due to the workings of the four seasons and the underlying changes in *yīn* and *yáng* aethers. Consequently, attuning to differences in sound – as in the use of the pitch pipes or by detecting paronomasia – would allegedly lead to a better understanding for the changes of the aethers.

### 5.2.3 Sounds that Replicate, Sounds that Command

#### a) Correlating, Resembling, Qì

It may not be surprising that Hàn discourses embed both the twelve pitches (as in the *Huáinánzǐ*) and the five notes (as in both the *Héguānzǐ* and the *Bóhǔ tōng*) in what constitute larger, overarching epistemes common at the time. These epistemes are often subsumed under what is generally termed "correlative thinking," an umbrella term that includes bifurcations of phenomena along the fault lines of *yīn* and *yáng*, of the twelve months, and of the five phases. More accurately, however, these systems of thought were at first distinct and separate, and eventually over time fused together.[502]

[502] For an overview of the umbrella term "correlative thinking" and its problems, compare Michael Nylan, "*Yin-yang*, Five Phases, and *qi*," in *China's Early Empires: A Re-appraisal*, ed. Michael Nylan and Michael Loewe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), esp. 398.

Still, by further linking paronomasia to these epistemes, the stakes of this aural device are fundamentally altered: the above descriptions of the twelve pitches and the five notes all imply epistemic processes, more specifically through decoding the modality of sound in paronomastic glosses. Each instance points out significant overlaps, manifested through phonological similarity between two terms (and each is further expressed through a single glyph). In these instances, recognizing that overlap is presented as a way to gain a better understanding for the workings of all phenomena.

**b) On the Invention of the Pitch Pipes and Other Tales of the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū***

The link of knowing, sound in language use, and early Chinese musical theory is further elaborated on in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋. Its chapter "Music of the Ancients" (*gǔ yuè* 古樂) contains passages that describe a mythical past, and that test scenarios wherein cultural achievements are absent.

One of these passages attributes the formation of the twelve pitch pipes as the basis for all subsequent music to the figure Líng Lún 伶倫 (alternatively written as 泠綸).[503] After a general introduction of the figure – said to have "gone from Dàxià to the West" (*zì Dàxià zhī xī* 自大夏之西)[504] – the passage describes the process of Líng Lún's invention. Líng Lún first fashioned a bamboo branch into a first pipe, and then, after establishing the first pitch through this first pipe, "listened to the calls of male and female phoenixes to set the twelve pitches apart" (*tīng fèng huáng*

[503] As in *Han shu* 律曆志上. This passage is also contained in 說苑· 脩文 and 風俗通義· 聲音

[504] Xǔ Wéiyù 許維遹, and Liáng Yùnhuá 梁運華 (eds.), *Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 呂氏春秋集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2009), 5/5.120; compare also Knoblock and Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, 1470-1480. *Dàxià* 大夏 was the name used by Zhāng Qiān 張騫 (d. 114 BCE) for what might be identifiable as Tokharistan in the Greco-Bactrian kingdom (*Shiji* 123).

*zhī míng, yǐ bié shí'èr lǜ* 聽鳳皇之鳴，以別十二律).[505] The scales of the pitch pipes were thus modelled after the differences between cries of male and female phoenixes, and the figure of Líng Lún thus used the twelve pitches as an intermediary to model these differences inherent in the mythical bird's gender categories. Simply put, Líng Lún fixed the pitches based on preexisting categories: Líng Lún simply used the pitches to categorize them.

However, the chapter "Music of the Ancients" (*gǔ yuè* 古樂) in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* does not limit the implications of sound to one of *representation* – and curiously, the name of the figure Líng Lún can be read descriptively, literally meaning *commanding categories* (*lìng lún* 令倫). Compare the following anecdote from section 5/5.8, which focuses on Kuí 夔 creating new musical compositions:

> Thearch Yáo was set up [on the throne], and then he mandated that Kuí create musical pieces. Kuí then replicated the sounds of mountains, groves, creeks, and valleys in song. He then covered pieces of earthenware with deer hides and drummed on them. Then he clapped with stones and beat rocks in order to imitate the notes of the High Thearch's jades and stone chimes. With [the resulting sound], he caused the hundred wild animals to dance.
>
> 帝堯立，乃命(質)[夔]為樂。(質)[夔]乃效山林谿谷之音以歌，乃以麋輅冒缶而鼓之，乃拊石擊石，以象上帝玉磬之音，以致舞百獸。[506]

Kuí's compositions, ordered by the culture hero Yáo 堯, do not just represent settings in song: they somehow granted him the ability to influence animals to dance. Like Líng Lún as the one commanding categories, Kuí thus *commanded*.

How did Kuí manage to tame these beasts? Kuí's compositions are described to fulfill functions expressed in two terms. The first of these terms is *xiào* 效 (OC *m-[k]$^{ʕ}$raw-s), which can loosely be translated as 'to replicate.' Generally, this term conveys nuances of connecting and of

[505] *Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 5/5.122. Note that the subsequent sentence is more explicit in the juxtaposition between male and female bird calls ("its male calls were six, and the female calls were also six" *qí xióng míng wèi liù, cí míng yì liù* 其雄鳴為六，雌鳴亦六), thus providing a clear indication for this reading.

[506] *Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 5/5.125-126.

reproducing a specific effect.[507] Kuí's songs thus 'replicated' sounds of existing phenomena.[508] Additionally, beyond replicating the sounds of mountains, groves, and valleys, Kuí managed to 'imitate' (*xiàng* 象 *s.[d]aŋʔ) other, more elusive sounds he perceived, emanating from the High Thearch's jade and stone chimes. Here, the passage turns the Heavenly realm, and this link of the skilled musician Kuí to that realm presumably had a part to play in his ability to command wild beasts.

This claim – that sound links humans and other beings to the Heavenly realm – is noteworthy, and it further elevates the interlinked modes of gaining insights through sound analysis and of influencing phenomena through sound. The scope of what control over sound achieves hence goes beyond small-scale effects. These effects are discussed in *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 5/5.4, the section immediately preceding that of Líng Lún's creation of the pitch pipes:

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[507] Schuessler considers the term either connected to 'to cross,' 'to associate with' (*jiāo* 交 OC *[k]ˁraw; see Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary,* 307), or as the endopassive of 'to instruct,' 'to set an example' (*jiào* 教 *s.kˁraw-s ; see Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary,* 310). Crucially, it does *not* mean to imitate mimetically, as the replicated effect is the *same* as the one it was modelled on.

[508] The term 'to replicate' (*xiào* 效) occurs a second time in this chapter, specifically in an example involving the mythological figure of Zhuānxū 顓頊:

> [Zhuānxū] then ascended to become a Thearch. He was indeed a fitting match for Heaven! The rectifying winds thus came forth, and their sounds were like *$q^h$(r)ə $q^h$(r)ə*, like *[$ts^h$]ˁəj [$ts^h$]ˁəj*, and like *[$ts^h$]aŋ [$ts^h$]aŋ*. Thearch Zhuānxū was fond of their sounds, and thus ordered Flying Dragon to establish music that replicates the sounds of the eight winds; this [music], [Zhuānxū] named 'Supporting Clouds,' and it was used to sacrifice to the Supreme Thearch. [Zhuānxū] then ordered an alligator[508] to lead as lead singer of the music. The alligator thus reclined to rest, and used its tail to beat its belly like a drum. The sound thereof was *ʔraŋ ʔraŋ.
>
> 乃登為帝。惟天之合，正風乃行，其音若熙熙淒淒鏘鏘。帝顓頊好其音，乃令飛龍作[樂][508]效八風之音，命之曰承雲，以祭上帝。乃令鱓先為樂倡，鱓乃偃寢，以其尾鼓其腹，其音英英 (*Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 5/5.123-124).

The term 'to replicate' (xiào 效) is here applied to the musical piece "Supporting Clouds," and the passage implies that this musical piece expresses the inherent qualities of the "sounds of the eight winds," listed previously in the passage as what Zhuānxū allegedly perceived as sequences of reduplicative binomes (*xī xī* 熙熙 *$q^h$(r)ə $q^h$(r)ə; *qī qī* 淒淒 *[$ts^h$]ˁəj [$ts^h$]ˁəj; *qiāng qiāng* 鏘鏘 *[$ts^h$]aŋ [$ts^h$]aŋ). The passage goes into further detail and describing how such a reduplicative binome comes into existence, illustrated through the narrative of how Zhuānxū ordered an "alligator" (*shàn* 鱓 or *tuó* 鼉) to perform the recently composed musical piece as lead singer. Here, the passage describes the sound generated by the "alligator" using its tail to essentially play belly drums through yet another binomial expression (*yīng yīng* 英英 *ʔraŋ ʔraŋ). Note that all the reduplicative binomes used here are also found in early Chinese poetry, mostly in the *Shijing*. As this section highlights, these expressions function beyond mere sound, and supposedly replicate the 'eight winds.'

> *Yīn* [aethers], having gotten stuck, largely lay low, and oozingly accumulated. Water, in its path, got blocked and obstructed, and it could not flow from springs. The aethers of people became dense and clogged up, and their muscles and bones [started to] coil and contract, and could not reach [one another anymore]. For this reason [they] set up dance to circulate and guide [the *Yīn* aethers].
>
> 陰多滯伏而湛積，水道壅塞，不行其原，民氣鬱閟而滯者，筋骨瑟縮不達，故作為舞以宣導之。[509]

In this mythologizing account of a time before the existence of dance, the lack thereof is associated not just with a blockage of water, but also with direct corporeal harm to people. The necessity to guide the aethers was thus paramount, which is why – allegedly – dance was invented. Dance is here portrayed as one aspect of music, just like the tunes from the five-stringed zither (*wǔ xián sè* 五弦瑟), featured in an earlier passage, *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* 5/5.2: like dance, the zither is said to have been invented to guide the aethers, specifically to balance an excess of *yáng* aethers.[510] Control over music – and sound more broadly – meant control over the aethers themselves, not just locally, but as an all-encompassing, totalizing scheme.

These passages thus portray sound as a transmission medium that can directly impact physically tangible phenomena, including clogged up waters, wild beasts, and the muscles and bones of people. The result is essentially a conflation between two spheres, specifically of "substance" and corresponding sounds.[511] Other passages in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*, in addition to other texts, elaborate on the inherent potential of music and how its effects ripple through the world and society; and it is for these reasons that music is linked to governance in early China.[512]

To return to the pitch pipes and Líng Lún – the one commanding categories – their importance thus appears to lie not just in controlling the aethers (which could be achieved by Sages alone),

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[509] *Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 5/5.119.

[510] See *Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 5/5.118.

[511] Compare also Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 262; Lewis focuses on writing and visual signs, he notes a similar focus on a conflation between 'substance' (*zhì* 質) and sign.

[512] Compare, in particular, *Lǚ shì chūnqiū jíshì* 5/4.116-117.

but more importantly in making sounds and their effects measurable and thus replicable. In theory, then, the pitch pipes thus offered a reproducible way to reach insights, and any skilled practitioner of music could strive for these insights of a Sage.

### 5.2.4 On the Pitch Pipes and Encoding Names

At the same time, while the passages above from the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* highlight sound – in particular music – and its potential, they do not clarify the role of sound in language use. This issue leads back, however, to the topos of the pitch pipes and its connection to paronomasia, as the examples from the *Huáinánzǐ*, the *Héguānzǐ*, and the *Bóhǔ tōng* illustrated: like the pitch pipes, paronomasia allowed for attuning and finding congruences.

#### a) Of Naming and Wailing in the *Xīnshū*

Further usage of the pitch pipe in relation to the human voice is featured prominently in a passage in the *Xīnshū* 新書 chapter "Tāi jiào" 胎教, which describes its use during a ceremony for a newly born crown prince.[513] This chapter – like the overall *Xīnshū* – is generally attributed to Jiǎ Yì 賈誼 (ca. 200–168 BCE), but this attribution is (as it is for many early Chinese texts) somewhat uncertain. Certainly, the overall implications of the chapter fit both the biographical details of Jiǎ's life and the intellectual climate of the early- to mid-second century BCE well,[514] but this does not directly confirm Jiǎ's authorship.[515] Regardless of the specific background of the chapter, the

[513] For an overview of this chapter and its intellectual contexts, see Elisa Sabattini, "Prenatal Instructions and Moral Education of the Crown Prince in the *Xinshu* by Jia Yi," *Oriens Extremus* 49 (2009): 71-86.

[514] Compare Sabattini, "Prenatal Instruction," 74-75.

[515] For a comprehensive overview on the question of authenticity of the *Xīnshū*, compare Rune Svarverud, *Methods of the Way: Early Chinese Ethical Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1-153; Svarverud concludes that "[b]oth external and internal evidence have shown that all sections of the extant editions of the *Xīnshū* can be dated to early Western Hàn times and are thus compatible with the authorship of Jiǎ Yì" (150), and that the latter sections of the *Xīnshū*, including the "Tāi jiào" chapter, "are closely related to the life and teachings of the historical Jiǎ Yì and represent speeches and tutorial material applied by Jiǎ Yì during his time in the state of Liáng [梁]" (151), referring to the

intellectual implications of this passage fit neatly in with the previous examples from the *Huáinánzǐ,* the *Héguānzǐ,* and the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*.

In the passage of the "Tāi jiào" chapter that details the naming ceremony, the stock figure of a music master (*tài shī* 太師) is credited with detecting the appropriate pitch-measure for the crown prince, solely on the basis of hearing the crown prince's cries:

> As the crown prince wails after birth, the Music Master blows the pitch pipe, saying: "Such-and-such pitch-measure is in his voice!"
>
> The Steward states: "Such-and-such flavors should be offered to him!", and the Grand Diviner says: "He should be called such-and-such!"
>
> 太子生而（立）【泣】，太師吹銅曰：「聲中某律。」太宰曰：「滋味上某。」太卜曰：「命云某。」[516]

Like the figure Líng Lún encountered before, the music master mentioned in this passage attributes a non-verbal crying to a specific pitch-measure. Other specialists are then credited with establishing the flavor profile that should be offered to the newborn, and in naming him. The transition from non-verbal sonic phenomenon to name and flavor is here again mediated through the pitch pipes: in that sense, the crown prince's name appears indirectly linked to this initial wailing of the newborn, with the musical scale serving as an intermediary.

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time when he served as tutor to Liú Yī 劉揖 (d. 168 BCE) from approx. 172-168 BCE. Svarverud hence suggests that at least some of this material can be connected "to students or close relatives of Jiǎ Yì" (*ibid.*).

For early- to mid-second century BCE texts, the question of authorship may be problematic in and of itself. Other texts in the Jiǎ Yì corpus, especially the *Fù on the Owl* (*fú niǎo fù* 鵩鳥賦), further highlight the general mode of *mouvance* of textual material in the Jiǎ Yì corpus and other, roughly contemporaneous works. More specifically, the *Fù on the Owl* shares vast swaths of shared material not just chapter 12 ("Generational Warfare" *shì bīng* 世兵) of the anonymous, enigmatic text *Heguanzi* (*Pheasant Cap Master*), but also with recently unearthed material; for more details on the relationship between these texts, compare Chapter 4 of this dissertation (esp. pp. 123ff; revised Shadow-Play/Echo-Play chapter).

[516] Yán Zhènyì 閻振益, and Zhōng Xià 鍾夏 (eds.), *Xīnshū jiàozhù* 新書校注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 2000), 10.391.

In addition to highlighting the use of the pitch pipe in an actual naming ceremony, this passage specifies some of the considerations that went into the process of naming itself in the following section:

> Thereafter, [they] foretell the king's crown prince's name. Above, they shall not pick from the Heavenly [realm]; and below, not from the Earthly. They shall not choose from named mountains or open valleys, so as to not confuse [his name] with provincial customs. For this reason, the name of the lord's son is difficult to know and easy to be avoided; this is the way through which concealment is nourished.
>
> 然後，卜王太子名，上毋取於天，下毋取於土，毋取於名山通谷，毋悖於鄉俗。是故君子名難知而易諱也，此所以養隱之道也。[517]

The passage highlights the need to make the name of the crown prince easily avoidable, as his name should thus not contain elements from named places. This step, occurring after the initial identification of the corresponding pitch measure, features various considerations to make avoiding the future ruler's name less difficult, and thus to ensure naming taboos common at the time.[518] At the same time, the passage is explicit in stating that there is another consideration at play: the name of the crown prince should be "difficult to know" (*nán zhī* 難知).

Such an opaqueness of the crown prince's name is sensible if we accept the premises laid out above on the potential inherent in knowing sounds – they allow knowledge of inherent characteristics of sound and what is associated with it, and, ultimately, to manipulate the underlying phenomenon, in this case the crown prince. The deliberate obscuring of a name thus also performed an additional function beyond the convention of naming taboos: it ensures that the name and the person carrying that name remained rather inscrutable.

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[517] *Xīnshū jiàozhù* 10.391.

[518] For a detailed study on naming taboos in early China, compare Piotr Adamek, "A Good Son Is Sad If He Hears the Name of His Father: The Tabooing of Names in China as a Way of Implementing Social Values" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2012), 103-135. Generally, the name of a ruler was to be avoided, but there were also other forms of naming taboo common at the time.

The link between sound and carrier becomes further mediated through a name (*míng* 名). In this case, a newborn's cry contains fundamental qualities of the newborn, which a music master can detect through utilizing the pitch pipes. Subsequently, the name itself is picked, with the aim of keeping it inscrutable, through a process simply described above as 'to foretell' or 'to divine' Nonetheless, it contains the qualities of that initial, primal wailing of the newborn, encoded through the identical nature or proximity of the sounds occurring in the three elements at play: the wailing, the pitch pipe, and the name.

### 5.3 On Names and Sound in Language Use

While the *Xīnshū* accounts for the proximity between names (*míng* 名), pitch pipes, and non-verbal sounds in the human voice (specifically, a newborn's wailing), texts from later parts of the Hàn dynasty further expand this list to include sound in language use. Paronomasia in particular comes to occupy a central role in this scheme, as the sound congruences it offers are reminiscent of the attuning properties of the pitch pipes.

#### 5.3.1 Of Roots and Branches: *Chūnqiū fánlù* chapter 35

Chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* 春秋繁露 (*Luxurious Dew of the Springs and Autumns Annals*) features the clearest articulation of how sound and meaning overlap in what we may have come to call a paronomastic gloss, but it stands for a larger trend that dominates the discourse on language during the late Western to early Eastern Hàn dynasty. This chapter likely stems from this transitional period, even though the *Chūnqiū fánlù* is traditionally attributed to the figure of Dǒng Zhòngshū 董仲舒 (ca. 179-104 BCE). Like other early texts, large parts of the text were only later attributed to this figure, including the chapter in question. Among the indications that chapter 35 is not by Dǒng Zhòngshū is its interest in exegetical principles; the inclusion of paronomasia in

this practice may point to a late Western Hàn dating.[519] That paronomasia fits into that period is highlighted by the following passage:

> It is Heaven and Earth that create the general sense of names and designations. The Sages of old howled (*q$^{hs}$aw-s) and replicated (*m-[k]$^{s}$raw-s) Heaven and Earth, which is called a designation (*Cə.[g]$^{s}$aw-s).[520] They called out (*m.reŋ) and implemented [their] orders (*mreŋ-s), which is called a name (*C.meŋ).
>
> 天地為名號之大義也。古之聖人，譟而效天地謂之號，鳴而施命謂之名。[521]

A special status paronomasia is attributed to paronomasia in this passage, found near the beginning of chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*. Paronomasia is crucial within the invention of language – more specifically of 'names' (*míng* 名) and 'designations' (*hào* 號). Mythical Sages are here attributed with coming up with these appellations and said to have replicated Heaven and Earth in their creation of sound.

Even the ways the Sages gave voice to what they replicated had an apparent underlying reason: 'designations' (*hào* 號 *Cə.[g]$^{s}$aw-s) are derived from Heaven and Earth by means of the Sages'

[519] By emphasizing the exegetical aspects of this chapter, I follow Sarah Queen, who argues that this chapter ought to be grouped in an "exegetical" group of chapters of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*; compare Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the* Spring and Autumn, *according to Tung Chung-shu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 77-84. As for a proposed date, Michael Loewe speculates that the chapter may reflect discussions of 79 CE; see Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, a 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu Fanlu* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 240. Additionally, paronomasia used in this chapter fits best with phonological reconstructions of approx. the late Western Hàn dynasty.

[520] Further note the potential play here on an attested alternative historical reading of this character *háo* 號 as 'to call out' (*C.g$^{s}$aw > MC haw), instead of 'designation' (*Cə.[g]$^{s}$aw-s > MC hawH), which links nicely up to the claim of Sages 'howling' (*xiào* 嘵 *q$^{hs}$aw-s > MC xaewH).

[521] Sū Yú 蘇輿 and Zhōng Zhé 鍾哲 (eds.), *Chūnqiū fánlù yìzhèng* 春秋繁露義證 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1992), 35.285. For a full translation of this chapter, see Sarah A. Queen and John S. Major (eds.), *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 343-352. For a fuller interpretation of this chapter, see also Rafael Suter, "Philosophy of Language: Pre-Qín through Eastern Hàn," in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics* (Vol. III), ed. Rint Sybesma et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 382-383. Lastly, compare also *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 6/5.279, which features a similar recurrence as above between 'designations' and 'to replicate' (*kè shí jì hào zhě, zhuó jǐ zhī gōng jī yě, yǐ zì xiào fàng yě* 刻石紀號者，著己之功跡也，以自效放也).

vocal reproduction of what they perceived – ‘designations’ sound not only like ‘replicating’ (*xiào* 效*m-[k]ˤraw-s), but also like the memorable ‘howling’ (*xiào* 謞 or 嚆 *qʰˤaw-ʔ) of the Sages. Similarly, ‘names’ (*míng* 名 *C.meŋ) are linked to the Sages’ ‘calling out’ (*míng* 鳴 *m.reŋ) and ‘orders’ (*mìng* 命 *mə-riŋ-s > *mreŋ-s). The passage thus progresses from non-verbal utterances (howling, calling out) to key terms such as ‘replicating,’ ‘designations,’ and ‘names.’

While this passage is explicit in regard to the processes of the creation of language, part of the argument remains implicit, as the passage performs the process of signification itself by means of aural recurrences. Paronomasia – as the process of replicating sounds – is here used to point to the inherent mode of replication, as claimed by this passage. That the Sages ‘howling’ and ‘calling out’ overlaps aurally with the key terms of the passage fits the scheme of a seeming derivation from Heaven and Earth that it proposes. The text thus further points to the significance of these sonic recurrences, as these congruences themselves perform the Sages’ replicating or attuning to Heaven and Earth.

In their initial creation of sound in language use, the Sages thus allegedly recreated the primordial workings of Heaven and Earth. Language – especially the sonic aspect thereof – is thus presented not as arbitrary, according to this passage, but rather deeply meaningful: it stems from the Sages’ discovery and duplicating of an allegedly universal truth and is explicitly grounded in the seemingly natural workings of the world.

Chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* therefore largely propagates paronomasia as a tool for making sense of language, coated in a description of ‘names’ (*míng* 名) and ‘designations’ (*hào* 號). It further highlights the underlying epistemic assumptions employed therein: the chapter’s beginning (located just before the passage quoted above) contains a fuller description of what is at stake in

the usage of paronomasia during the late Western Hàn to early Eastern Hàn dynasty. Names are there described as the "initial displays of grand patterns" (*dà lǐ zhī shǒu zhāng* 大理之首章). This beginning also describes their function: specifically, in forming the basis of "discerning the important" (*biàn dà* 辨大), which in turn allows for the "ordering of All-Under-Heaven" (*zhì tiān xià* 治天下).[522] In other words, this text claims that language itself forms the basis for governance, specifically through its link to these "patterns" created by Heaven and Earth.

Besides reiterating the point on the connections between 'howling,' 'replicating,' and 'designations,' as well as between 'calling out,' 'mandates' or 'orders,' and 'names,' subsequent sections of chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* elaborate on the theme of 'names' and 'designations,' and feature a few noteworthy claims. Compare the following passage:

> What is howled in imitation of Heaven and Earth is a designation; what is called out and mandates is a name. Even if names and designations differ in their sounds but are the same in their root – they call or cry out and thus convey Heaven's intent.
>
> 謞而效天地者為號，鳴而命者為名。名號異聲而同本，皆鳴號而達天意者也。[523]

Through the phrasing of "to be the same in their root" (*tóng běn* 同本), applied to 'names' and 'designations,' this passage further points to the ultimate source of language: in this, we encounter again the motivatory functions of paronomasia discussed in chapter 4. [524] The imagery of the 'root' nonetheless clarifies here the idea of the origin of 'names' and 'designations:' it is not just because

[522] *Chūnqiū fánlù yìzhèng* 35.284-285.

[523] *Chūnqiū fánlù yìzhèng* 35.285.

[524] While this offers a comparison to etymology as the study of the origins of words, the applicability of this term to ancient material is certainly problematic. However, modern etymology also differs siginificantly from ancient Western etymology; compare Ineke Sluiter, "Ancient Etymology: A Tool for Thinking," In *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. Franco Montanari, Stefanos Matthaios, Antonios Rengakos, and Antonios Rengakos (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 896-922.

of the Sage's 'calling out' and 'howling' that these terms are in use. This passage explicitly claims that language – as instituted by the Sages – expresses the 'meaning' or 'intent' (*yì* 意) of Heaven.

In other words, according to chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*, the 'roots' of words lie in the realm of Heaven. Any aural recurrence, for example paronomasia, is thus due to an underlying pattern that ultimately derives from Heaven. 'Names' and 'designations' are thus consecrated: they are evidence of Heaven's 'grand patterns,' to borrow a term used in the *Chūnqiū fánlù*. Due to language being patterned, aural recurrences can and should be deciphered, in order to reach of Heaven's 'intent,' as the following passage highlights:

> Heaven does not speak, but it causes people to emit its intent. It doesn't effect it, but causes people to implement its centrality. Naming is how Sages emit Heaven's intent; it must be considered deeply.
>
> 天不言，使人發其意；弗為，使人行其中。名則聖人所發天意，不可不深觀也。[525]

Harking back to the importance of the Sages in the codification of 'names' and 'designations,' the text here emphasizes an intermediary phase: language does not directly stem from Heaven, but the Sages established *correct* terms that reflect Heaven's 'intent.' The language of the Sages is hence presented not as a dialogic, evolving practice, but a prescriptive system that contains a sacred order. Like the sonic modality of language regarding patterns indicated by the cosmograph in the *Huáinánzǐ*, or the pitch pipes in both the *Xīnshū* and the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū*, language itself represents an intermediary, and recurrences of sound within language are revelatory of the encoded underlying order itself.

[525] *Chūnqiū fánlù yìzhèng* 35.285.

The *Chūnqiū fánlù* subsequently performs this act of revealing the Heavenly order, after the explanatory section opening the chapter as described above. The following passage decodes the alleged nuances of the term 'king:'

> If we deeply examine the general meaning of the designation 'king,' then there are five branches in it … We combine these five branches into one utterance and call it 'king.'
>
> 'King' (*wáng* 王 *ɢʷaŋ) is 'august' (*huáng* 皇 *ɢʷˤaŋ);
>
> 'king' (*wáng* 王 *ɢʷaŋ) is 'all-encompassing' (*fāng* 方 *C-paŋ);
>
> 'king' (*wáng* 王 *ɢʷaŋ) is 'enframing' (*kuāng* 匡 *k-pʰaŋ);
>
> 'king' (*wáng* 王 *ɢʷaŋ) is 'yellow' (*huáng* 黃 *N-kʷˤaŋ);
>
> 'king' (*wáng* 王 *ɢʷaŋ) is 'advancing' (*wǎng* 往 *ɢʷaŋʔ).
>
> 深察王號之大意，其中有五科 … 合此五科以一言謂之王。王者、皇也，王者、方也，王者、匡也，王者、黃也，王者、往也。[526]

Overall, this passage establishes connections from 'king' to other terms, summarized as 'branches' or 'sections' (*kē* 科),[527] claiming that 'king' contains aspects of all five terms 'august,' 'all-encompassing,' 'enframing,' 'yellow,' and 'advancing.'[528] These glosses all feature the same rime and offer in the majority of cases a considerable overlap in onset material (*ɢʷ-, *kʷˤ-, *k-, or prefixes *k-, *C-). Still, just like the explanatory section specifies that "names and designations [may] differ in their sounds but be of the same root" (*míng hào yì shēng ér tóng běn* 名號異聲而同本), these are paronomastic glosses that are claimed to belong together. Sound thus encodes a

[526] *Chūnqiū fánlù yìzhèng* 35.289.

[527] Here, the term 'branches' is noteworthy in the comparison to etymology: it presents a model for conceptualizing etymology not through a single point of origin, but through a plurality of options. Compare, in this context, Zucker and Le Feuvre, *Ancient and Medieval Greek Etymology*, 11, where the authors contrast the modern model of etymology, with its background in modern linguistics (which in turn has its roots in Prussia towards the end of the 18th century), as a sort of genealogical reconstruction and the underlying parental metaphor (just like a person has "only one mother … words have a sole origin"), with that of a "peaceful multiplicity of etymological options," which the authors link to the polytheistic principle in ancient Greek divine onomastics.

[528] Compare in this context Edward Schafer's argument that the term 'king' (*wáng* 王) belongs to a series of words with strong connections to the realm of shamanism, with other words of this family including 'mad' (*kuáng* 狂), 'disabled' (*wāng* 尪), 'frame' (*kuāng* 匡), 'crooked' (*wǎng* 枉), and 'deceive' (*kuáng* 誑); see Edward H. Schafer, "Ritual Exposure in Ancient China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14.1 (1951): 160-162.

pattern: thus, by examining sound recurrences, associations of designations can be detected, which in turn allows for a full understanding thereof.

To summarize, in this line of thought, paronomasia not only associates terms through recurrent sounds, but also allows for bringing out meaning, encoded the Sages, who took their cues from Heaven itself. In this system, sounds stand for things, and things are definable through sound alone. To properly examine things, it is hence paramount to understand the sounds that designate them (in the way the Sages 'howled' them) and what these sounds encode. By analyzing these sounds – not in a linguistic-analytical, but rather in an associative way – connections are revealed beyond the realm of language, but in the world at large. The rhetoric of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* pushes this even a step further, in that these connections represent a normative order ordained by Heaven itself.

### 5.4 Critique and Limitations of Paronomasia

Throughout the Western Hàn period and in the immediately preceding decades, sounds circumscribed Heaven's order, manifested through the encoding of the Sages. By the late Western Hàn dynasty, the language of the Sages came to be equated with this Heavenly order: this naturally was the language of the classics.[529] Paronomasia was therefore understood to lead to a stability of referentiality, building on the stability located earlier already in the pitch pipes, used to attune instruments to establish stable sounds.

However, building on the impermanent medium of sound in such a quest for permanence naturally led to critiques of this model. While these critiques did not upend paronomasia from its role as a meaning-making device, they nonetheless defined its scope and constraints.

[529] The preference for the classical forms of the Chinese language is here noteworthy. Implicitly, this preference fully excludes other languages, or regional varieties that deviate from the classical forms.

### 5.4.1 The Piping of Heaven

A first textual unit that appears to stand in direct relation to the considerations above – in particular the topos of the pitch pipes and the defining sections of chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* – stems from the rather cryptic opening of chapter 2 of the text *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 ("The Sorting that Evens Things Out" *qí wù lùn* 齊物論). The overall chapter is likely not "pervaded by the sensation, rare in ancient literatures, of a man jotting the living thought at the moment of its inception," as Angus C. Graham once held, but instead, it is more likely the result of extensive editorial work and combination of separate earlier textual material.[530] This position certainly does not negate the philosophical implications of the chapter, but allows us to read the building blocks therein as distinct textual units, and interpret them addressing different intellectual contexts.[531] The overall anecdote in question from chapter 2 of the *Zhuāngzǐ* begins as follows:

> South-Wall-Zǐqí was sitting, leaning on a stool. Looking up at Heaven, he slowly exhaled. As if in a trance, he seemed to have lost the counterpart of himself.
>
> Yán-turned-Zǐyóu stood and waited in front of him, and declared:
>
> "What is [he] dwelling on? Can [his] form really be made to be like withered wood? Can [his] heart really be made like dead embers? He who leans on a stool now is *not* the one leaning on a stool before!"
>
> Zǐqí said: "Yǎn, aren't you smart in asking that! I've lost myself just now, do you understand that? Having heard the pipes of the human realm, you have not yet heard the pipes of Earth. Having heard the pipes of Earth, you have not yet heard the pipes of Heaven, isn't that right!"
>
> 南郭子綦隱机而坐，仰天而噓，嗒焉似喪其耦。顏成子游立侍乎前，曰：「何居乎？形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎？今之隱机者，非昔之隱机者也。」子綦曰：「偃，

[530] Graham 2001: 48. At the same time, on the plurality of authorial voices in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, compare his seminal "How much of Chuang Tzu Did Chuang Tzu Write?," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47.3 (1979): 459-501. Nonetheless, Graham (and many others) accepted the so-called "inner chapters" (*nèi piān* 內篇) as representing a consistent vision and thus followed the traditional attribution to the text's eponymous master, Zhuāng Zhōu 莊周 (4th century BCE). For a summary of this position the matter of the "inner chapters" and a refutation thereof, compare Esther Klein, "Were There 'Inner Chapters' in the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence about the Zhuangzi," *T'oung Pao* 96, no. 4/5 (2010): 299–369. Specifically, Klein argues that "we should see the inner chapters as last, rather than first, to take fixed shape. This does not at all prevent them from preserving some authentically early ideas, nor should it detract from our enjoyment or admiration of them" (361).

[531] To be clear, I am unsure as to the dating of the relevant passages.

不亦善乎而問之也！今者吾喪我，汝知之乎？女聞人籟而未聞地籟，女聞地籟而未聞天籟夫！」[532]

After introducing the two figures of the dialogue and posing an initial question, a topos clearly associated with attuning and stable sound takes centerstage: specifically, the 'tubes' or 'pipes' (*lài* 籟) of the human realm – identifiable as the pitch pipes (a pan flute made of bamboo) – are used here in juxtaposition to the 'tubes' of Earth and Heaven.[533] This contrast appears to allow the figure of South-Wall-Zǐqí 南郭子綦 to make his point, seemingly expressed in the final rhetorical question.[534] While the point made by Zǐqí of invoking the pitch pipes is subject to interpretation, it is noteworthy that they are brought up in the first place.

This initial exchange between the two figures, South-Wall-Zǐqí and Yán-turned-Zǐyóu 顏成子游,[535] then sparks a further discussion between them, which is similarly dominated by the topic of the pipes of these three realms. Crucially, and as was noted above, this topos of the pitch pipes and of their transfiguration into the realms of Heaven and Earth is not unique to this passage from the *Zhuāngzǐ*, but part of a broader discourse in early Chinese thought on issues of signification in language. This passage thus uses the claim from chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*, a claim that was

[532] Guō Qìngfān 郭慶藩 and Wáng Xiàoyú 王孝魚 (eds.), *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2012), 2.43-45.

[533] This identification of the human 'tubes' as the pitch pipes is clear because Yán-turned-Zǐyóu later on in the dialogue again invokes them in a question to Zǐqí, calling them there 'lined up bamboo' (*bǐ zhú* 比竹). Both Zǐqí and Zǐyóu place them in juxtaposition to the "pipes of earth" and the "pipes of Heaven."

[534] I thus translate the first two characters of Nánguō Zǐqí 南郭子綦 as a description of the figure of Zǐqí, following the subcommentary (*shū* 疏) of Chéng Xuányīng 成玄英 (7th century CE); see *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 2.45, note 1. Further note that other chapters found in the *Zhuāngzǐ* feature Dōngguō Zǐqí 東郭子綦 ('East-Wall-Zǐqí'), Nánbó Zǐqí 南伯子綦 ('Southern Elder Zǐqí'), and Sīmǎ Zǐqí 司馬子綦 ('Grand Marshall Zǐqí').

[535] As in the case of 'South-Wall-Zǐqí,' I opt to translate part of the name of Yánchéng Zǐyóu 顏成子游 (thus 'Yán-turned-Zǐyóu'): specifically, I understand the second character literally ('to become,' 'to turn into' *chéng* 成). Further note that Zǐqí refers to this figure as Yǎn 偃, which is also the given name of Yán Yǎn 言偃. Given that Yán Yǎn's courtesy name (*zì* 字) was also Zǐyóu 子游, I suspect that this dialogue is part of a larger critical tradition surrounding that figure (note that Yán Yǎn could be feasible written with the character *yán* 顏 *C.ŋˢrar > MC ngaen, since *yán* 言 *ŋa[n] > MC ngjon is near-homophonous in OC).

implicitly also present in the *Lǚ shì chūnqiū* and the *Huáinánzǐ*, among other texts. Common in their usage is in particular a reference to the evaluative and differentiative function of the pitch pipes.

At the same time, *Zhuāngzǐ*'s chapter 2 transposes the pitch pipes onto sound in human utterances. While this transposition is not immediately clear in the opening section quoted above (nothing appears to point to sound in speech in this discourse between Zǐqí and Zǐyóu 子游, despite the explicit, recurring references to the dimensions of sound), but a closer look at the subsequent discourse shows intricate aural patterns. There, Zǐyóu asks about the 'method' or 'secret' (*fāng* 方) of the triad of piping,[536] to which Zǐqí responds:

[536] *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 2.45.




537 I am opting here for a looser translation to capture the possible alliteration present in the terms 'boards' (*jī* 枅 *[k]ˁer, more literally 'beam'), (*juàn* 圈 *[g](r)o[n]ʔ, more literally 'enclosure') and 'ponder' (*jiù* 臼 *C.[g]ʷ(r)əʔ, more literally 'mortar').

538 Alternatively, these terms could be translated as 'splashes' and 'plashes;' or more literally, 'like puddles,' 'like bogs.'

539 The two terms 'shouting' (*chì* 叱 *[tsʰ]i[t]) and 'sucking' (*xī* 吸 *qʰ(r)[ə]p) seem out of place here, and I suspect that these terms from an interlinear commentary;

540 Alternatively, these terms could be translated as 'whooshing,' 'wheezing,' 'swooshing;' or more literally, 'swelling,' 'howling,' 'bawling.' Note that the rhymes *-awk and *-ewk form rhyme category *yào* 藥, and *-awʔ is comparable.

541 Alternatively, these terms could be translated as 'hissing,' 'swishing,' 'fizzing.' Or more literally, 'roaring,' 'whistling,' 'gnawing.'

542 *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 2.45-46. For an alternative translation, compare Graham, *Chuang-tzu*, 48-49.

It this passage, which features soaring winds, howls and other apparent onomatopoeia, and singers that resound, Zǐqí's elaboration itself *performs* the topos of the pitch pipe through a frequent repetition of key sounds. These recurrences in Zǐqí's words are apparent only when they are read with an eye on the seemingly hidden phonological content, but such a reading is invited through the focus of this passage on the 'method' or 'secret' of the different forms of piping. The phonological reverberations focus on three key groupings, just like the triad of pipes it describes.

Structure is provided in this passage by a recurring pattern that features a first aural device, specifically the recurrence of seemingly rhetorical questions, each ending in reduplicative expressions. Importantly, these reduplicatives all rhyme (OC *-iw, part of the traditional rhyme group *yōu* 幽). They are found specifically in the expressions 'have you not heard it soar forth?' (ending in *liù liù* 翏翏 *[r]iw-s [r]iw-s) and the two-part expression 'have you not seen how it attunes, how it quivers and shivers?' (rhyming individually on 'attune' *tiāo tiāo* 調調 *[d]ʕiw [d]ʕiw, and 'quiver and shiver' *diāo diāo* 刁刁 *tʕiw tʕiw). These questions each stand at the end of short descriptive sections centered around the imagery of wind (sections I. and III. above).

The first of these descriptive sections (section I. above) contains the statement that "the myriad hollows furiously cry out" (*wàn qiào nù háo* 萬竅怒呺), which points to two of the main sounds that recur throughout the remainder of Zǐqí's remarks. First, 'hollows' (*qiào* 竅 *[k]$^{hʕ}$ewk-s), one of the key terms of this section and directly derived from the pitch pipe imagery, features a velar initial (*k-) and a rime traditionally assigned to rhyme group *yào* 藥 (*-ewk).[543] Second, 'to cry out' (*háo* 呺 *[g]ʕaw) similarly features a velar initial (*g-), but contains a rime assigned to rhyme

[543] Note that in OCNR, rhyme group *yào* 藥 is differentiated into rimes *-ewk and *-awk.

group *xiāo* 宵 (*-ew).[544] This sequence of sounds, with first a term belonging to rhyme group *yào* 藥, and then a term belonging to rhyme group *xiāo* 宵, is significant, and recurs later on again.

Specifically, the following longer section (II.) that includes long lists – first of openings and other things the described wind blows upon, then of onomatopoeia that apparently mimic the sounds resulting from the wind's blowing – contains the same sequence: the terms translated above as 'growling' (*jī* 激 *[k]ˁewk), 'howling' (*xiào* 謞 *qʰˁawʔ), and 'yowling' (*jiào* 叫 *kˁewk-s) either directly belong to rhyme group *yào* 藥, or are very similar.[545] Additionally, these terms also all feature either velar (*k-) or closely related uvular (*q-) initials. Similarly, the terms translated above as 'bawling' (*háo* 謞 *[g]ˁaw), 'cawing' (*yǎo* 宎 *[ʔ](r)aw), and 'gnawing' (*yǎo* 咬 *[k]ˁraw) all belong to rhyme group *xiāo* 宵 (*-aw), and feature, as an initial, either a velar (*k- or *g-) or a glottal stop (*ʔ-). In other words, the terms in this cryptic sequence all sounded like either one of these two groups.[546]

Throughout Zǐqí's speech, similar phonological material thus reverberates. Another group of terms similarly seems to play on a related congruence: this third group of sound occurs first in the terms translated above as 'holes' (*wā* 洼 *qʷˁra) and 'shoales' (*wā* 汚 *qʷˁra), and then again in the exclamatory 'Woah!' (*yú* 于 *ɢʷ(r)a). All of these terms feature a labialized uvular initial (*qʷ- or *ɢʷ-) and a rime belonging to the rhyme group *yú* 魚 (*-a). The exclamation 'Woah!' likely

[544] Note that in OCNR, rhyme group *xiāo* 宵 is differentiated into rimes *-ew and *-aw.

[545] Note that 'growling' (*xiào* 謞 *qʰˁawʔ) is typically not attributed to that rhyme group, but rather to rhyme group *xiāo* 宵; however, given the tone category or suffix *-ʔ, it is likely that this term had significant overlap with rhyme group *yào* 藥. Also, note that the translations listed here are tentative, proposed to primarily capture the consonances of these terms; more accurate translations are found above, in footnotes to the source text.

[546] Note that the differentiation between velar and uvular initials appears to blur over the course of the Western Hàn dynasty, as argued in section 2.6 of this dissertation.

also links to the subsequent 'Oh!' (*yú* 喁 *ŋoʔ).[547] Fittingly, this sequence of exclamations is included in the statement that can be translated as "The ones ahead sing 'WOAH!', the ones behind resound with 'OH!'," which seemingly comments on the recurrence of this and other aural devices: these sounds enclose the long list of onomatopoeia that dominate the latter half of section II.[548]

While it is certainly tempting to link these three groups of sounds to the concept of the three categories of pipes, these sound blocks do not directly correspond to one of the pipe categories. The point made here by Zǐqí is presumably another, which links to larger arguments of chapter 2 of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. While the overall argument of chapter 2 is beyond the scope of this chapter,[549] the proximity of sound groups to the topos of the pitch pipes appears to lead this passage's Zǐyóu to clarify what specifically the three categories of pipes are in his follow-up question:

> Zǐyóu asked: "The pipes of Earth – these are the numerous hollows; the pipes of the human realm – these are the bamboo rows [of a pan flute]. But may I dare to inquire about the piping of Heaven?"
>
> 子游曰：「地籟則眾竅是已，人籟則比竹是已。敢問天籟。」[550]

Through this clarification and subsequent question, the figure of Zǐyóu aims to provide an understanding for Zǐqí's cryptic monologue. While the mentioned various openings (Zǐyóu summarizes these again by the term 'hollows' *qiào* 竅 *[k]$^{hʕ}$ewk-s, which belongs to one of the

[547] Note that these two exclamations belong to different rhyme groups: *yú* 于 ('Woah!', *ɢ$^{w}$(r)a > MC hju) belongs to rhyme group *yú* 魚 (*-a), while *yú* 喁 ('Oh!', *ŋoʔ > MC ngju) belongs to rhyme group *hóu* 侯 (*-o). These two rhyme groups are common cross-rhymes during the Western Hàn dynasty, however.

[548] Additionally, there is another term that potentially fits into this group: 'mouth' (*kǒu* 口 *k$^{hʕ}$(r)oʔ), listed towards the beginning of section II. This group may recall an earlier line, posed at the very beginning of the anecdote: the terms 'to exhale' (*xū* 噓 *q$^{h}$(r)a) and 'counterpart' (*ǒu* 耦 *ŋ$^{ʕ}$(r)oʔ), both used in relation to Zǐqí, offer considerable similarity to the terms mentioned above. Note that the former of these terms belongs to rhyme group *yú* 魚 (*-a), while the latter is part of rhyme group *hóu* 侯 (*-o) – again, these two groups are common cross-rhymes during the Western Hàn dynasty). These terms and their potential rhyming occur in description of Zǐqí "sitting, leaning on a stool. Looking up at Heaven, he slowly exhaled (*q$^{h}$(r)a). As if in a trance, he seemed to have lost the counterpart (*ŋ$^{ʕ}$(r)oʔ) of himself" (see p. 1).

[549] As one interpretation of the overall argument, compare, however, Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 176-183.

[550] *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 2.49.

mentioned sound groups) act as the pipes of Earth, the pitch pipes serve as those of the human realm. Zǐyóu hence asks what the piping of Heaven is, which Zǐqí explains as follows:

> Zǐqí responded: "What puffs the myriads that never stay the same, in order to cause them in their self-ceasing, [in order to cause them to] be all-encompassing in their self-choosing – this fury, what would that be?!"
>
> 子綦曰：「夫吹萬不同，而使其自已也，咸其自取，怒者其誰邪！」[551]

Responding, again, in a rhetorical question, the text – through the words of Zǐqí – turns here to its seemingly central point. Arguably, this might be a point of interdependence, specifically between Heaven on the one side, and Earth and humans on the other.[552] The piping of Heaven is thus that which causes the pipes of Earth and of the human realm to resound. Heaven is thus at work in the form of the wind that cause the pipes of Earth to reverberate, just as much as Heaven allows humans to voice various sounds.

At the same time, however, the specific words that Zǐqí uses emphasize that Heaven does not predetermine the specific sounds that the Earthly and human pipes emit: they are "self-ceasing" and "self-choosing." Zǐqí hence implies that the pipes of Heaven are *not* distinct entities from which one could take their cues, thus disagreeing with the idea of the pitch pipes representing something with roots in the Heavenly realm (as seen in the *Huáinánzǐ*, and implied in the naming ceremony of the *Xīnshū*), and with the idea of sound in language replicating something in Heaven, which chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* elaborated on. Zǐqí's parable of the pipes of Heaven overcomes a strict dichotomy between Heaven and humans.

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[551] *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 2.50.

[552] Compare, for example, Watson: "Heaven is not something distinct from earth and man, but a name applied to the natural and spontaneous functioning of the two," in Burton Watson (trans.), *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 32, and Graham, whose interpretation is as follows: the "parable of the wind compares the conflicting utterances of philosophers to the different notes blown by the same breath in the long and short tubes of the pan-pipes, and the noises made by the wind in hollows of different shapes. It is natural for differently constituted persons to think differently; don't try to decide between their opinions, listen to Heaven who breathes through them" (Graham, *Chuang-tzu,* 49).

This, in turn, points to latent issues of semiosis and reference in language use that arose during the late Western Hàn dynasty in the drive to establish permanent signifiers. The following passage from the same chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* is noteworthy in this context:

> But an utterance is not [just] puffing [breath] – speech says something, but what it says is just not yet fixed. Is there really an utterance? Or has there never been an utterance? If you consider it different from the noise of hatchlings – is there proof, or is there no proof?
>
> 夫言非吹也。言者有言，其所言者特未定也。果有言邪？其未嘗有言邪？其以為異於鷇音，亦有辯乎，其無辯乎？[553]

By comparing human language to the chirping of hatchlings, this passage questions the relationship between the former and Heaven, and may even go as far as ridiculing the notion that the sound in language use replicates anything from Heaven. This passage certainly clarifies that there is no proof for such a claim as in chapter 35 of the the *Chūnqiū fánlù*. According to these snippets contained within chapter 2 of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the semantic content of language does not, in the end, depend on Heaven. At the same time, this passage further highlights the impossibility of permanence within human language – whatever it points to is *not* a stable referent.

The anecdote of Zǐqí stringing together the topos of the pitch pipes, paronomasia, and the three realms of Heaven, Earth, and humans can hence be interpreted within the context of the intellectual climate of the late Western Hàn dynasty. Additionally, there are certain phonological indications that make such an interpretation feasible, including the conflation of uvular initials with velar ones, and inter-rhyming between rhyme groups *yú* 魚 (*-a) and *hóu* 侯 (*-o). More importantly, however, this anecdote plays strongly with the recurrence of phonological material inherent in the term 'howling' (*xiào* 謞 *q$^{h\varsigma}$awʔ), which featured prominently also in chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*. Unlike the latter, however, there is no 'howling' of the Sages in this textual material contained within the *Zhuāngzǐ*, and 'howling' certainly does not replicate designations from Heaven. Like

[553] *Zhuāngzǐ jíshì* 2.63.

its connections in the above passages to other forms of shouting, crying, and yowling, it remains a mere arbitrary sound that derives meaning only through its usage in context.

### 5.4.2 Yáng Xióng & Someone by the Name of Kǒng Zhòngní

Despite the vehemence with which the previous critique seemingly debunked understandings of paronomasia during the late Western Hàn dynasty, paronomasia retained many of its functions as a meaning-making device during the transition from the Western to the Eastern Hàn dynasty. At the same time, the model laid out in chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* also proved to be successful. That being said, one critique from a different direction proved even more influential, and this sort of critique is attestable in the writings of Yáng Xióng 楊雄 (53 BCE – 18 CE).

In spite of Yáng Xióng's critique in his text *Fǎ yán* 法言 (*Model Sayings*), this text employs paronomasia frequently. However, despite the frequent utilization of paronomasia therein, the text provides a good overview of paronomasia's changing function occurring over the course of the late Western Han dynasty. Most importantly, paronomasia is marked by a stark condensation of the repertoire available for such puns. The *Fǎ yán* employs distinct paronomastic glosses, but these are limited to a select number of stock glosses. Noteworthy is that the *Fǎ yán* presents them as inherently sounds – they offer a seemingly deeper layer of connection beyond the surface of the terms.

One example of paronomasia in the *Fǎ yán* is the following passage:

> The Way, potency, humaneness, propriety, and etiquette – can we compare those [virtues] to a body?
>
> Well, to be guided by the Way; acquired through potency; humanized through humaneness; made proper through propriety; and embodied through etiquette – [that] is Heavenly.

道、德、仁、義、禮，譬諸身乎？夫道以導之，德以得之，仁以人之，義以宜之，禮以體之，天也。[554]

Paronomasia is here given in Yáng Xióng's answer as a set of pairs of terms denoting virtues. The 'Way' (*dào* 道 *[kə.l]ˤuʔ) is connected to 'to guide' (*dǎo* 導 *lˤuʔ-s), just like 'potency' (*dé* 德 *tˤək) and 'to obtain' (*dé* 得 *tˤək). Similarly, 'humaneness' (*rén* 仁 *niŋ) and 'human' (or rather verbally: 'to humanize' *rén* 人 *niŋ), 'propriety' (*yì* 義 *ŋraj-s) and 'to be proper' (*yí* 宜 *ŋraj), as well as 'etiquette' (*lǐ* 禮 *rˤijʔ) and 'to embody' (*tǐ* 體 *r̥ˤijʔ). These terms are all placed in relation to one another, and this relationship is then considered 'Heavenly' (*tiān* 天 *l̥ˤin).[555]

Such a usage of paronomasia (and in particular the comparison to the realm of Heaven) may at first sight be reminiscent of chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*. However, a closer examination reveals a narrowing of paronomasia to conventionalized associations: where the *Chūnqiū fánlù* discussed 'branches' of terms, the *Fǎ yán* confines paronomasia to set formulations.

The above glossing of the five core virtues hence utilizes glyphs that are placed in relation to one repetitiously throughout the *Fǎ yán*. Compare the following lines:

To engage in something and to do so properly (*yí*), that is called propriety (*yì*).

事得其宜之謂義。[556]

[554] Yáng Xióng 揚雄; Wāng Róngbǎo 汪榮寶, and Chén Zhòngfū 陳仲夫 (eds.), *Fǎ yán yìshū* 法言義疏 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 1987), 4.111; for an alternative translation, compare Michael Nylan (trans.), *Exemplary Figures: Fayan* 法言 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013): 55.

[555] Note, additionally, a rhetorical usage of paronomasia in that the passage construes an overarching pairing of "body" (*shēn* 身 *n̥iŋ) and "Heaven," thus playfully using the key term of the question to lead to a similar sounding term in the answer. This last pairing between "body" and "Heaven" – the fulcrum upon which the whole pun hinges – thus functions as potent rhetorical pun playing on the recurrence of sound between the terms involved.

[556] *Fǎ yán yìshū* 10.598.

Just like in the passage encountered earlier, "propriety" (*yì* 義 *ŋraj-s) and "to be proper" (*yí* 宜 *ŋraj) are connected here. The passage does not contain further indications of what this device achieves, but due to this laconic statement being presented by itself, it appears that this pairing of terms may have been perceived as a self-evident truism. The same appears to apply also for the following passage:

> It is only the Five Classics that [truly] function as differentiations. In explaining Heaven, nothing differentiates as well as the *Changes*; in explaining affairs, nothing like the *Documents*; in embodiments (*tǐ*), nothing like the *Rites* (*lǐ*); in intentions (*zhì*), nothing like the *Odes* (*Shī*); in inherent patterns, nothing like the *Springs and Autumns*.
>
> 惟五經為辯。說天者莫辯乎《易》，說事者莫辯乎《書》，說體者莫辯乎《禮》，說志者莫辯乎《詩》，說理者莫辯乎《春秋》。[557]

Again, conventional truths of the late Western Hàn dynasty are the focus here. The *Odes* (*Shī* 詩 *s.tə) are connected to 'intentions' (*zhì* 志 *tə-s), while the term for the *Rites* (*lǐ* 禮 *rˁijʔ) is again linked to 'to embody' (*tǐ* 體 *r̥ˁijʔ), reemploying a gloss already encountered in the passage quoted above. Furthermore, this pairing occurs also in chapter 4 of the *Fǎ yán* as a simple summation that "ritual etiquette *is* embodying."[558] The terms for the other classics notably do not build on such paronomastic glosses but are presented in a rather conventionalized way.

Overall, then, paronomastic glosses appear in Yáng Xióng's *Fǎ yán* largely through already conventionalized associations, focused on a single glyph of central importance. This single glyph is in turn glossed by one that is felt as inherently and self-evidently connected. Paronomasia present in the *Fǎ yán* is therefore employed in a highly limited way, associated specifically with terms that are already highly meaningful and that would not have required glossing. By providing such

[557] *Fǎ yán yìshū* 7.215.

[558] *Lǐ, tǐ yě* 禮，體也 (*Fǎ yán yìshū* 4.112).

glosses, however, the text appears to use the established connection between gloss and glossed in order to provide explanations for *why* a term is fitting. This is particularly evident in the last passage quoted above, in which each of the Five Classics is associated with a field of knowledge that this classic excels at. In this way, the *Odes* form the pinnacle of expressing 'intentions,' just as the *Rites* do for 'embodying.' These connections not only function to connect the titles of the two texts to what the texts contain – more importantly, they provide an explanation for *why* these titles are meaningful.

A possible explanation for this narrowing of paronomasia in the *Fǎ yán* can be found in its second chapter, entitled "My Masters" (*wú zǐ* 吾子). The specific passage that is most pertinent for our purposes here, however, may at a first glance appear somewhat unconnected to the previous discussion, as an interlocutor asks about a sort of *Doppelgänger* of Kǒngzǐ, also known through his courtesy name Zhòngní 仲尼 (lit. "Medius Ní"), and whether said *Doppelgänger* could take Kǒngzǐ's place:

> Someone asked, "Suppose there were a man who said his family name was Kǒng, and his courtesy name was Zhòngní.
>
> *He entered [Kǒngzǐ's] gate*,
>
> *ascended his hall*; (*-aŋ)
>
> *leaned on his stool*,
>
> *and donned his robe*. (*-aŋ)
>
> Could [this man truly] be referred to as [Kǒng] Zhòngní?"
>
> [Yáng Xióng] responded: "It would be so for his outside appearance (*wén*), but not for his basic substance (*zhì*)."
>
> "May I ask about the basic substance?" "
>
> "The sheep in the tiger's skin is delighted when seeing grass; but when it spots a wild dog, it shivers in terror, as it forgets about the skin it wears! The sage is as distinguished as a tiger: his pattern (*wén*) is brilliant. The gentleman is as distinguished as a leopard: his pattern is lush. The quibbler is as distinguished as the mangut: his pattern is patchy. With a change, the mangut [can look] like a leopard; and with a [further] change, the leopard [can look] like a tiger!"

或曰：「有人焉，自云姓孔而字仲尼，入其門，升其堂，伏其几，襲其裳，則可謂仲尼乎？」曰：「其文是也，其質非也。」「敢問質。」曰：「羊質而虎皮，見草而説，見豺而戰，忘其皮之虎矣。聖人虎別，其文炳也。君子豹別，其文蔚也。辯人貍別，其文萃也。貍變則豹，豹變則虎。」[559]

In what presents itself as a dialogue between an anonymous interlocutor and Yáng Xióng, the latter denies that the *Doppelgänger* could truly function in Kǒngzǐ's stead. The conundrum of identical 'names' (*míng* 名) appears at a first glance to have little to do with issues of reference, but the initial question of the interlocutor clarifies that it is not just the name that is identical: the *Doppelgänger* sits in Kǒngzǐ's seat and wears his clothing. However, none of that matters for Yáng Xióng: the relationship between name and name bearer is more complicated.

Most importantly, in his reply, Yáng Xióng distinguishes between 'outside appearance' or 'pattern' (*wén* 文) and 'inner, basic qualities' or 'substance' (*zhì* 質), and crucially, 'names' (*míng*) are subsumed under the concept of 'pattern.'[560] Yáng Xióng thus argues that the names of individuals may be the same, but that their referents can differ in a quality *not* encapsulated by those names. A great name – such as Kǒng Zhòngní – hence does not describe the person carrying that name sufficiently, and it is for that reason that the *Doppelgänger* of this hypothetical scenario, even when sitting in the Sage's hall and wearing the Sage's robes, is ontologically separate from the master himself.[561]

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[559] *Fǎ yán yìshū* 2.71-72; for a full translation, compare Nylan, *Exemplary Figures*, 2013: 31-33.

[560] Compare David Schaberg's understanding of *wén*, 'pattern:' "The word that came to denote specifically literary patterns, *wen*, suggests connections between those patterns and a much larger set of markings, the signs that function in representation, imitation, and the preservation of cultural norms" (David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, 13).

[561] Note that the question first posed is reminiscent of descriptions of the role of the impersonator (*shī* 尸) in the pre-imperial ancestral sacrifice, a role usually carried out by an adolescent male member of the family to serve as a sort of medium for the deceased ancestor. When in the role, the impersonator was thought to be identical with and actually emit the words of the impersonated ancestor. For an overview of this role, its implications, and its reflections in the transmitted classics, see Martin Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou," in *Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BCE-220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 154-176. In this context, Yáng Xióng's answer – that the person in question bearing the name Kǒng Zhòngní, wearing the Sage's robes, and sitting in Kǒngzǐ's stead – points to the fact that this person cannot function as an impersonator for the Sage, nor can he

When further pressed about 'inner, basic qualities,' Yáng Xióng elaborates on it through the imagery of animals with different patterns, which he equates to people of different rank. The 'outside appearance' of a Sage is comparable to a tiger, that of a gentleman to a leopard, and so on. However, appearances are misleading, as Yáng Xióng then exemplifies: a minor change in appearance blurs the image of, say, tiger and leopard. However, even if they appeared identical, these two felines would still not be *truly* alike, just as Kǒng Zhòngní, the *Doppelgänger* of Kǒngzǐ, could not truly match the Sage master himself.[562]

To return to the noteworthy initial focus on the recurrence of 'names' (*míng*) between *Doppelgänger* and Sage, and its subsequent relegation to the concept of 'outside appearance' or 'ornament' (*wén*), as opposed to 'inner qualities' (*zhì*), it is noteworthy how this discussion of 'names' stands in opposition to a point made explicitly in the *Chūnqiū fánlù*, and implicitly in the *Xīnshū*'s naming ceremony of a newborn: any links a 'name' offers, including recurrences of sound, are *not* inherently meaningful. Names and recurring sounds are, for Yáng Xióng, just semblance on the surface, just like the fur patterns he elaborates on (deceptive as they are, considering that only a single change can make a mangut look like a leopard) –other, deeper qualities are more decisive, for which a different level of engagement is necessary beyond mere perception.

This link is particularly prominent after the lengthy discussion of aesthetic styles contained within this second chapter of the *Fǎ yán*, as "My Masters" notably features a strong rejection of specific styles of poetry and rhetoric, but also of music.[563] In this way, this passage is particularly

emit the Sage's words: the Kǒng Zhòngní in question and the Sage with the same name are, according to Yáng Xióng, to be considered separate entities due to their inner qualities (*zhì* 質) differing.

[562] It is furthermore noteworthy that Yáng Xióng's answer centers on visual imagery, especially when he compares the initial problem to that of a sheep in a tiger's skin, followed by his elaboration of how fur patterns (*wén* 文) of animals may differ, even if they bear a certain resemblance.

[563] Among the authors rejected throughout the chapter are Qū Yuán 屈原, Méi Chéng 枚乘, Gōngsūn Lóng 公孫龍, Mò Dí 墨翟, and Yáng Zhū 楊朱; this appears like a rather random assortment of people/texts in their name, but

important to the issue of wordplays: just like the name Kǒng Zhòngní as a sign may not suffice to determine the inner qualities of a person and establish a link to the Sage, recurring sounds that occur across different glyphs may not suffice to establish a meaningful connection between those glyphs. It is in these contexts that the conundrum of Kǒng Zhòngní's *Doppelgänger* forms a stark critique of certain trends of how paronomasia was used during the late Western Hàn (and elaborated on in chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*): phonological ornamentation may not be reflective of *what* is presented.[564]

### 5.5 The Eastern Hàn Paronomastic Gloss

Yet paronomasia did not abate during the Eastern Hàn dynasty. On the contrary, Eastern Hàn texts such as the *Bóhǔ tōng* and the *Shì míng*, as well as various Eastern Hàn commentarial traditions, made frequent use of the device, especially as a distinct paronomastic gloss. Paronomasia was thus used just like in the introductory example from the *Bóhǔ tōng* of the

perhaps they can just be summarized through what they do *not* belong to: the ideal of classical learning according to Yáng Xióng.

[564] Lastly, the *Fǎ yán* features two related statements immediately after the passage above of Kǒng Zhòngní the *Doppelgänger*. These statements similarly make use of comparisons, specifically disparaging of people who do not take Kǒngzǐ as their model but have a fondness for the written heritage and persuasive words:

> Those who are fond of the written but do not seek it from Kǒngzǐ – those are like a market-stall for books!
>
> Those who are fond of persuasion but do not seek it from Kǒngzǐ – those are like a jingling bell of persuasion!
>
> 好書而不要諸仲尼，書肆也。好説而不要諸仲尼，説鈴也。 (*Fǎ yán yìshū* 2.74)

Through the imagery of the market-stall and the jingling bell, this passage points to bookish knowledge and rhetoric without the guidance of what Yáng Xióng considers proper: Presenting Kǒngzǐ and his supposed writings as the pinnacle of scholastic and persuasive efforts, Yáng Xióng certainly extols the qualities of Kǒngzǐ's style and rhetoric, and also hints at the advantages of his own writing. The text of the *Fǎ yán* itself, adopting a sparse style of dialogue, is clearly reminiscent of earlier texts such as the *Lunyu*, attributed to Kǒngzǐ, and the *Mengzi*, both of which are frequently listed as models for the *Fǎ yán;* compare Nylan, *Exemplary Figures,* XXI.

The imagery used is itself also remarkable: the market-stall clearly functions well to describe a quasi-encyclopedic approach for any culture of reading, as the market-stall imagery hints at an arbitrary, rather shallow engagement with material contained therein. The imagery of the 'jingling bell' (*líng* 鈴), on the other hand, is a less clear: certainly, the imagery points to a primarily ornamental function, but perhaps it even hints at a frequent but shallow recurrence of sound.

What we encounter here, at the end of the Western Han era, is a complete monopolization of this allegedly deeper engagement with the written heritage and persuasive speech through the canon, held together by the figure of Kǒngzǐ, and mediated through the likes of Yáng Xióng, scholar-officials that formed a rather restricted community, held together by classicist beliefs.

resounding Sage. Crucially, these Eastern Hàn texts inherited the discourses on paronomasia from the preceding era, and accordingly employed the device within the parameters set during the late Western Hàn dynasty: paronomasia's recurrence of sound *could* be meaningful, but only if it could point out an inherent, deeper connection between glyphs.

In this way, paronomasia was utilized to perform a sort of exegesis to draw out ontological connections, either applied to textual material, or to signs in other semiotic modalities. Unlike earlier forms of paronomasia, Eastern Hàn texts feature longer explanations and thereby embed paronomasia within seemingly sound reasoning for *why* a specific gloss is appropriate to highlight actual connections.

It is also in this period that links of paronomasia to later lexicography arise (for example in the *Shì míng*), but functions of the device are not limited to that of metalinguistic analysis. These were distinctly scholastic glosses that aimed at recognizing a semantic link through the associative procedure of recognizing recurrences of sound, with *conceptual* implications. Compare the following example, again from the *Bóhǔ tōng*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 情性者，何謂也？ | Predilections and predispositions – what do they refer to? | |
| 性者，陽之施； | Predispositions are what *yáng* bestows; | |
| 情者，陰之化也。 | Predilections are what *yīn* transforms. | |
| 人稟陰陽氣而生， | By receiving *yīn*- and *yáng*-aethers, humans are brought into existence – | |
| 故內懷五性六情。 | thus in their interior they harbor the five predispositions and the six predilections. | |
| 情者， | 'Predilections' | (*qíng* 情 *[dz]eŋ > LHan *dzieŋ) |
| 靜也， | …are 'still.' | (*jìng* 靜 *tseŋʔ > LHan *ts$^{h}$ieŋ$^{c}$) |
| 性者， | 'Predispositions' | (*xìng* 性 *seŋ-s > LHan *sieŋ$^{c}$) |
| 生也， | …are 'inborn.' | (shēng 生 *sreŋ > LHan *ṣeŋ) |

此人所稟六氣以生者也。This is that by which humans receive the six aethers and are brought forth.[565]

[565] *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 8/5.381.

Drawing on the terminology of *yīn*- and *yáng*-aethers, this passage employs paronomastic glosses to highlight a seemingly inherent connection of 'predilections' (*qíng* 情) – as responses to external factors – to 'stillness' (*jìng* 靜), as well as between 'predispositions' (*xìng* 性) – as inherent traits – and 'to be born' (*shēng* 生). The function of these glosses thus goes beyond a linguistic analysis of the terms involved: it directly justifies the explanation of differing aethers in the form of *yīn* and *yáng* through highlighting an inherent pattern in the sounds involved.

It would be equally wrong to reduce such an example to an underlying "correlative" scheme: while the dichotomy between *yīn* and *yáng* is central to the argument of this passage, it is coincidental to the functional element of the paronomastic glosses. After all, the glosses build on the recurrence of sound to point out underlying conceptual connections. Compare the following example, again from the *Bóhǔ tōng*, which most certainly cannot be explained through a "correlative" scheme:

> Why is it that he is referred to as Zhuānxū? '*Zhuān*' (*ton) is 'to have sole control' (*ton); '*xū*' is 'to rectify.' He was able to have sole control and rectify the Way of Heaven and humans – it is thus that we refer to him as Zhuānxū.
>
> 謂之顓頊何？顓者，專也；頊者，正也；能專正天人之道，故謂之顓頊也。[566]

This gloss extends a claim into the distant past by emphasizing certain aspects of the name of the mythological Sage ruler Zhuānxū. Specifically, 'to have sole control over' (*zhuān* 專 *ton > LHan *tśuan) is a the paronomastic gloss for the first glyph used for the name of the Sage, *Zhuān*

[566] *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 2/1.53.

顓 (*ton > LHan *tśuan).[567] In this gloss, then, Zhuānxū's name itself is revelatory of his function – to rule and thus to bring order.

The above passage also exemplifies approaches to explain names through such paronomastic glosses. This can also be seen in the following example for the clan names of the founders of the pre-imperial "Three Dynasties" (the Xià 夏, the Shāng 商 or Yīn 殷, and the Zhōu 周):

| | |
|---|---|
| 禹姓姒氏, | Yǔ's clan name was *Sì*, |
| 祖昌意以薏苡生。 | for his ancestor Chāngyì was born in [a field of] Job's tears. |
| 殷姓子氏, | The clan name of the Yīn was *Zǐ*, |
| 祖以玄鳥子也。 | for their ancestor was the *offspring* of a dark bird. |
| 周姓姬氏, | The clan name of the Zhōu was *Jī*, |
| 祖以履大人跡生也。 | for their ancestor was born by stepping into a giant's footsteps.[568] |

Recurring, throughout these statements, is the drive to trace clan names through the conditions of a progenitor's birth. Paronomasia occurs already in this connection between 'clan names' (*xìng* 姓 *seŋ-s > LHan *sieŋ$^{c}$) and of being 'born' (*shēng* 生 *sreŋ > LHan *ṣeŋ). This connection may seem intuitive, given that family names are usually conferred through birth,[569] and it is exactly this sort of intuitive association that paronomasia highlights here.

The passage goes further, however, in juxtaposing each clan name with the conditions of the progenitor's birth. These conditions explain why these clan names are fitting: for example, the second statement, which links the clan name of the Yīn dynasty, Zǐ 子, to the well-known myth of

[567] On the other hand, the second term glossed, 'to rectify' (*zhèng* 正) offers no clear connection to the glossed character. Potentially, it is a graphic pun: the glyph *xū* 頊 (lit. 'disconcerted') features the graphic component *wáng* 王 ('king'), which maybe was interpreted (either graphically or semantically) as *zhèng* 正 ('to rectify').

[568] *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 9/1.405.

[569] Additionally, the two terms in question may reflect genuine etymological relations; compare Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary*, 541.

the miraculous conception of Xiè 契 after his mother ate the egg of a dark bird. Instrumental in establishing an intuitive justification of naming is the recurrence of the glyph *zǐ/zì* 子 in both the explanation ('to be offspring') and the clan name. Paronomasia is at play in the first statement, where we are here told that Sì 姒, the clan name of Yǔ, mythical founder of the Xià dynasty, stems from his ancestor being born in a field of Job's tears. Paronomasia occurs across two separate pairings, both encoded in the term 'Job's tears' (*yì yǐ* 薏苡 *ʔ(r)ək ləʔ > LHan *ʔɨk jəᴮ): the sounds of the first glyph recur in the name of his ancestor Chāngyì 昌意 (*mə-tʰaŋ ʔ(r)ək-s > LHan *tɕʰaŋ ʔɨəᶜ),[570] while the second glyph attunes to the clan name Sì 姒 (*sə.ləʔ > LHan *ziəᴮ) itself.[571] In these statements, the conditions of the progenitor's birth hence feature much of the same phonological material as the clan name presents. Phrased differently, conditions of how an ancestor was born are encoded in the name through sound.[572]

While the examples listed above may appear as exercises of scholasticism to construe meaningful connections between mythical accounts and inexplicable names, the effects of paronomasia were considerably higher during the Eastern Hàn dynasty. Paronomasia, as an

[570] Specifically, the *second* glyph of Chāngyì is near-homophonous with the *first* glyph of 'Job's tears' (*yì yǐ* 薏苡).

[571] Note that these glosses work better in OCNR than in LHan, first due to the separation of prefix-material from the initial in the case of Sì 姒 (*sə.ləʔ), and secondly seemingly due to regular sound changes in the case of the pairing of *yì* 意 *ʔ(r)ək-s and *yì* 薏 *ʔ(r)ək. As to whether Eastern Hàn readers would been aware of prefixes, compare William Boltz argument that the commentator Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄 (127–200) recognized the ways prefixes were written in earlier texts, in William G. Boltz, "'Where Have All the Prefixes Gone?': Iambic Prefixes and Semanticization in Old Chinese," *Asiatische Studien* 3-4 (2007): 767.

[572] The third statement does not offer paronomasia in this form. Liú Qīngsōng argues that it does offer a clear paronomastic gloss, one that may only have functioned starting in the second half of the Western Hàn dynasty, when the terms involved would have cross-rhymed; for this argument, see Liú, *'Bóhǔ tōng' yìlǐ shēng xùn yánjiū*, 52. However, rimes of Jī 姬 (*[k](r)ə > LHan *kiə) and *jì* 跡 (*[ts]ek > LHan *tsiak) do not at all share significant phonological material. More likely is that a scribal error led to a crucial omission, as a parallel in the Lunheng attests the following gloss: "'footstep' is the 'basis'" (*jī zhě, jī yě* 跡者， 基也; in Wáng Chōng 王充, and Huáng Huī 黃暉 (ed.), Lùnhéng jiàoshì 論衡校釋 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1990), 3/6.163). Importantly, the term 'basis' (*jī* 基 *k(r)ə > LHan *kiə) would form a similar-sounding term fitting for paronomasia.

explanatory device, was used not just for names attested in texts, but also for terms related to societal patterning. Compare the following list of examples regarding marriage-related terms:

| | |
|---|---|
| 嫁娶者，何謂也？ | To go as bride' and 'to take a wife' – what do they refer to? |
| 嫁者，家也， | 'To go (as a bride) to a new home' is 'household;' |
| 婦人外成， | A woman becomes married outside [of her own household]; |
| 以出適人為家。 | and she takes the people she moves out to as [her] household. |
| 娶者，取也。 | 'To take a wife' is 'to take.' |
| 男女，何謂也？ | 'Man' and 'woman' – what do they refer to? |
| 男者，任也， | 'Man' is 'responsibility;' |
| 任功業也； | that is because [a man] is entrusted with work. |
| 女者，如也， | 'Woman' is 'to comply;' |
| 從如人也。 | that is because [a woman] follows and complies to someone else. |
| 在家從父母， | In the [old] household she follows [her] father and mother; |
| 既嫁從夫， | as she marries out, she follows [her] husband; |
| 夫歿從子也。 | and when [her] husband passes, she follows her sons.[573] |

Paronomastic glosses here function to unveil connections of each of the four terms in question. As to the terms of the first question, 'to go (as a bride) to a new home' (*jià* 嫁 *kˁra-s > LHan *ka$^{C}$) is here juxtaposed to 'household' or 'home' (*jiā* 家 *kˁra > LHan *ka), and 'to take a wife' (*qù* 娶 *[ts]$^{h}$oʔ-s > LHan *ts$^{h}$io$^{C}$) is (*qǔ* 取 *ts$^{h}$oʔ > LHan *ts$^{h}$io$^{B}$). That these terms may share etymological relations and graphical material is secondary to the main exegetical principle at work here,[574] which is focused on sound alone. This focus is made clear by the terms of the second question: the connections both between 'man' (*nán* 男 *nˁ[ə]m > LHan *nəm) and 'to burden;' 'to entrust' (*rèn* 任 *n[ə]m-s > LHan *ńim$^{C}$), and between 'woman' (*nǔ* 女 *nraʔ > LHan *ṇɑ$^{B}$) and

[573] *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 10/1.491

[574] Schuessler lists 'to go (as a bride) to a new home' (*jià* 嫁) as an exoactive cognate of 'household' (*jiā* 家); see Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary,* 300-301. Similarly, 'to take a wife' (*qù* 娶) may have etymological connections to 'to take' (*qǔ* 取); for an argument thereof, see Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary,* 436. The glyphs of each pair furthermore share graphical components.

'to comply' (*rú* 如 *na > LHan *ńa) are most importantly aural in nature. Most of these connections are then explicated in short statements, but the focus of these explanations remains squarely focused on embedding the paronomastic gloss within more meaningful units of text, and in highlighting the presented, seemingly intuitive connections. By means of the phonological connection between terms, claims are generated about the proper roles and behaviors in marriages.

While these connections present themselves as merely descriptive, highlighting a connection of sound that supposedly points to an underlying semantic connection, the paronomastic glosses in fact promote normative claims. The ostensible overlap between sound and meaning associates the terms involved – for example between 'woman' and 'complying' – in order to bring about new connotations in a term and embed these connotations in seemingly inherent patterns. Glossing these terms through paronomasia hence induces a new layer of meaning, one that was seemingly already present.

This practice thus made claims about society at large and supposedly proper behavior through sound recurrences. In this context, compare also the following example:

> 'Husband' and 'wife,' what do they refer to? 'Husband' is 'to support' – it is someone who 'supports' but is guided by others. 'Wife' is 'to submit' – it is someone who 'submits' to the duties of the household, and who serves others.
> 夫婦者，何謂也？夫者，扶也，扶以人道者也；婦者，服也，服於家事，事人者也。[575]

Parallel to the previous example, this textual passage first detects apparent connections between the terms, and then describes a behavioral ideal: these connections are rooted both in paronomastic recurrences, and supposedly deeper conceptual parallels. 'Husband' (*fū* 夫 OC

[575] *Bóhǔ tōng shū zhèng* 10/1.491.

*p(r)a > LHan *puɑ) is thus linked to ‘to support’ (*fú* 扶 *m-[p](r)a > LHan *puɑ), and ‘wife’ (*fù* 婦 *mə.bəʔ > LHan *bu$^{B}$) to ‘to submit’ (*fú* 服 *bək > LHan *buk). As in the previous example, this passage first presents the key terms in a question, embeds them in a paronomastic gloss, and then roots the other term used in the gloss within a short sentence. This structure instills the intuitive connection noted above, in order to present similar claims as in the preceding passage.

In both passages, glosses pertaining to family relations quite clearly extend into a normative realm in the sense that they present standards or norms that are to be emulated and that can serve as a basis to evaluate behavior. In the second example, that was most clearly articulated by presenting wives in a subservient role in marriage. The approach taken by the *Bóhǔ tōng* can thus be summarized as follows: these relations *ought to* be like that because it is inherent in the terms (or, perhaps more appropriately, because the people behind this text, the scholars who claimed mastery over the language, the script, and the canon, could draw out such connections).

Such glosses occur as stock devices across texts of the period, indicating the overall stability of the associations generated through them. Compare, for example, the following list of paronomastic glosses from the *Dà Dài Lǐjì* 大戴禮記 (1st to 2nd century CE):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 女者，如也， | ‘Woman is ‘to comply.’ | (*nǚ* 女 *nraʔ ≈ *rú* 如 *na) |
| 子者，孳也； | ‘Offspring’ is ‘to proliferate.’ | |
| … | … | |
| 婦人，伏於人也。 | ‘Wife’ is ‘to submit’ to another. [576] | |

[576] Kǒng Guǎngsēn 孔廣森 and Wáng Fēngxiān 王豐先 (eds.), *Dà Dài Lǐjì bǔzhù* 大戴禮記補注 (Beijing: Zhōnghuá shūjú 中華書局, 2013), 80.245.

Two of these paronomastic glosses are identical with ones surveyed above that occur in the *Bóhǔ tōng*: 'woman' (*nǚ* 女 *nraʔ > LHan *ṇɑ$^{B}$) is again linked to compliance (*rú* 如 *na > LHan *ńa), just as 'wife' (*fù* 婦 *mə.bəʔ > LHan *bu$^{B}$) is connected to submission (*fú* 伏 *[b]ək > LHan *buk). Additionally, 'child' or 'offspring' (*zǐ* 子 *tsəʔ > LHan *tsiə$^{B}$) is tied to 'to multiply' or 'to proliferate' (*zī* 孶 *tsə > LHan *tsiə). As in the examples from the *Bóhǔ tōng*, phonological recurrence is transposed onto societal hierarchies, and presented as an indication for meaningful semantic overlaps. As such parallel usages of glosses in both the *Bóhǔ tōng* and the *Dà Dài Lǐjì* attest, the associations construed through paronomasia calcified into a set of stock glosses. This limitation in the ways of how to employ paronomasia corresponds with the attempted normative claims inherent in their usage.

Still, such paronomastic glosses serve as intermediaries: they are used to make sense of a seemingly patterned world. In this sense, Eastern Hàn paronomastic glosses continue important features from the Western Hàn dynasty: the recurrence in sound and meaning offered by such glosses could thus be used to gain insights not just about textual material and historical accounts, but also about societal patterning. Encoded in these connections are, however, broader societal norms.

In the Eastern Hàn dynasty, paronomastic glosses formed seemingly sound connections, building on what was readily available (through the recurrence of phonological material between different glyphs). Passages like the ones above additionally illustrate the epistemological function of the device during the Eastern Hàn dynasty: paronomastic glosses form the premises that lead to the presented conclusions. Despite the seeming soundness of the arguments presented, the usage of paronomasia conceals a normative agenda, in that the patterns of the world – such as mythical

accounts or gender roles and their hierarchies – become not just legible, but rewritten through a gradual limitation of what can be associated with each glyph.

In sum, then, paronomasia remained important throughout the Hàn dynasty as a semiotic modality to make sense, to explicate, and to associate. Paronomasia's functions naturally shifted further, from its early associations with the pitch pipes to presenting sound in language use as an encoding of Heavenly intentions, to its subsummation into wider scholastic practices of world-reading in the Eastern Hàn dynasty. The overall importance of paronomasia in the Hàn dynasty's inclination to establish meaning through sound connections is exemplified and further underscored by the initial quote from the *Bóhǔ tōng*: a Sage *had* to pay attention to sound.

**Coda: From Sound to Shape**

The preceding chapters of this dissertation have proposed an alternative account of the connection between sound and meaning in early China. Rather than rely on the notion of the 'Rectification of Names' (*zhèng míng* 正名) or a stark dichotomy between genres, this dissertation traced aurality throughout the corpus of early Chinese texts, especially the so-called "Masters' literature" (*zǐ shū* 子書) and later material from the Hàn period. Throughout the selected textual examples, connections between sound and meaning occurred in complex and unexpected ways.

Such connections of sound and meaning include rhymed sections in the Later Mohist chapters of the text *Mòzǐ* 墨子, and these sections appear focused on justifying rhyming itself. Similarly, collocations between the terms 'shadow' (*yǐng* 影, OC *qraŋʔ) and 'echo' (*xiǎng* 響, OC *qʰaŋʔ) play on repeated parallelisms, as phonological recurrence mirrored syntactic and semantic ones, in particular in pre-imperial and early Western Hàn texts. In those instances, sound connects not just textual units, but also different terms and concepts. Mastery over language through a skilled rearrangement of phonological material is exhibited by a number of figures, including a Mòzǐ persona playing with the terms 'shadow' and 'echo.' This sort of reshuffling of phonological material (specifically in the form of "countertomic paronomasia") further reveals an iconicity or referentiality of sound in language use.

However, paronomasia proves to be perhaps the most influential sound-based device, and chapter 4 highlights the changing functions of paronomasia from the Late Warring States period to the Western Hàn dynasty. Most importantly, in a process coinciding with the establishment of the imperial states of the Qín and Hàn dynasties, paronomasia's functions begin to shift to one of locating meaning not in text-internal utterances, but in external units of signification. This

observation naturally leads into chapter 5, where paronomasia is used to decode not only patterns associated with Heaven (such as the twelve Earthly Branches, the pitch pipes, and the five tones) but also regular utterances. By the late Western Hàn dynasty, the aural patterns in language itself are seen as deeply meaningful, as well as being portrayed as containing Heaven's intent. Phonological recurrences in language thus become ominous, prescriptive markers, in which the iconicity of sound points to inherent patterns in the world at large. Understanding sound recurrences thus leads to knowing the dispositions of all phenomena. As a consequence, within the epistemic principles of large parts of the Hàn dynasty, the world itself is understood as a complex of meaningful signs, interpretable through the modality of sound. Compare this to the semiotic situation in ancient Egypt, as highlighted by Jan Assmann in the following passage:

> Egypt was a culture of 'direct signification' … This means that the world reveals the godly or sensual in inexhaustible forms. These are then deciphered by the 'fascinated glance' of the observer. Hieroglyphs refer to these forms in their iconical 'world reference' and in this way offer themselves not only as reading material but for contemplative observation. If the divine manifests itself in the sensually comprehensible physical forms of the world, then the world reference of the images signifies god reference.[577]

Parallel to this description of the importance of sight in ancient Egypt, *sound* in early China is understood iconically: while this is most evident for the case of early Chinese music,[578] this dissertation shows that early Chinese texts also attest to an understanding of sound recurrences in language use as deeply revealing. The 'world reference' in the early Chinese soundscape may be articulated most clearly in the case of Eastern Hàn paronomasia. However, the 'Sages' (*shèng* 聖 *ɬ̥eŋ-s) – near-homophonous in Old Chinese and closely interwoven with both 'sound' (*shēng* 聲 *[ɬ̥]eŋ) and 'hearing' (*tīng* 聽 *ɬ̥ˤeŋ-s) – could observe deep connections also in other fields, and certainly long before the Eastern Hàn period, just like the above-mentioned Mòzǐ persona, or the

[577] Jan Assmann, "Ancient Egypt and the Materiality of the Sign," in *Materialities of Communication*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, William Whobrey, trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 28-29.

[578] Compare page 20, footnote 52.

figures who claims mastery over language – and this gives rise to the suggestion that Sages could apprehend the very principles of the universe through sound. Like hieroglyphs encapsulating the divine in ancient Egypt, in early China, Heaven's will seemingly manifest itself in sound, at least according to chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù*.[579]

Throughout the previous chapters that focuses on the connections of sound and meaning in early China, a distinct arc all the way from the Later Mohists to the paronomastic glosses of the Eastern Hàn period conspicuously arises. Whereas passages from the Later Mohists appear to interpret resonating 'categories' (*lèi* 類) at play in the poetic function of language (to again use Jakobson's term), instances of paronomasia in the late Western Hàn and Eastern Hàn texts are predicated upon the idea that significant 'replications' (*xiào* 效) were deeply embedded in how language was reproduced and understood.

This connection between sound and meaning might be best described as sound iconicity, perhaps even as synesthetic sound iconicity.[580] Crucially, this connection went beyond purely aesthetic considerations, in that sound connections are ontologically valid. Moreover, by the late Western Hàn dynasty, these connections also have cosmic implications, and in that sense are again more akin to the ancient Egyptian model: an understanding of sound as expressing Heaven's will quite easily lends itself to claims of power. As chapter 5 highlighted, paronomasia also incited

[579] Discussed above in section 5.3.1.

[580] Compare page, 82, footnote 178.

Compare also the Kenneth J. DeWoskin description of this feature of the early Chinese aesthetic process, specifically about music, in the following:

> This feature of aesthetic process, relating, resembling, corresponding, or correlating, narrowed to the compass of a "device" and used to describe the affective potentials of art, is called "synaesthesia." Given the epistemological background of early Chinese thinking on art, I would argue that such thinking was characteristically synaesthetic, the term taken in a broad and fundamental sense […] Described broadly, a synaesthetic theory of art focuses on the commutability of sensations, the exchangeability of objects and images, the intertranslatability of meaning from genre to genre, and, finally, the natural interpenetration of art and life. A synaethetic theory of art describes as the end of art a sense of harmony, equilibrium, and integration […] (DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, 172-173).

certain normative claims about society. In that sense, this sort of interchange between semiotic modalities (in this case between sound and semantic modalities, as well as the position of the stars in the example from the third chapter of the *Huáinánzǐ*)[581] may perhaps be better described in the terms of Webb Keane as "transduction: the act of transforming something across semiotic modalities in order to produce or otherwise have effects on power."[582]

Of course, the actual power inherent in these linguistic devices is difficult to estimate. Nonetheless, the transitional centuries from the Late Warring States to the Eastern Hàn dynasty exhibit a shifting cultural importance of sound: the Late Warring States period employs aural connections primarily for rhetorical-aesthetic purposes and in order to connect textual units. For Late Warring States texts, utilizing the poetic function of language thus proved expedient in constructing effective phrases, although the reasons for this effectiveness are left largely unexplained. The assumptions underlying paronomasia change, becoming more explicit during the Hàn period, especially when compared to its earlier developments during the Warring States period. Throughout the Hàn dynasty, texts present paronomastic pairs as harmonious connections, just like tunes that attune to a certain pitch: these sounds are portrayed as *out there* and real, and as potentially indicative of fundamental ontological connections.

Similarly, the rhetorical-aesthetic usages of aural patterns in texts from the Late Warring States period also offer other important differences to the paronomastic glosses dominating the Eastern Hàn dynasty. Unlike the later glosses, where one glyph is glossed through another, earlier patterns are less dependent on the boundaries of the writing system: paronomasia is often embedded in

[581] As discussed in section 5.2.1.

[582] Webb Keane, "On spirit writing: materialities of language and the religious work of transduction," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)* 19 (2013): 1-17.

rhyme schemes, and instances of "countertomic paronomasia" appear to build on a deliberate reshuffling of phonological material to induce meaning. This difference is significant, and as I will argue in this coda, occur as a consequence of large-scale socio-cultural developments from the turn of the Late Warring States period to the Eastern Hàn dynasty, and furthermore represent one stage in an even more significant process.

### 6.1 Larger Developments from the Late Warring States to the Eastern Hàn dynasty

Throughout this chapter, a gradual transition emerges during the Hàn period that was tied to the limitation of wordplay towards a single glyph as the main nexus for sound and meaning. To reiterate, unlike Warring States and early Hàn examples, paronomasia from the late Western Hàn and Eastern Hàn dynasty is less integrated with other poetic structures. While Warring States examples played on connections between rhyme, homophony, and alliteration (or, at times, radical reorganizations of phonological material), Hàn paronomastic glosses adhere to the structural units inherent in the script itself. This transition is significant and reveals a cultural shift in the appreciation of writing.

#### 6.1.1 Textual Exegesis

This may be connected to the development of textual exegesis, including the exegetical function of paronomasia as discussed in chapter 4. The context of exegesis provides a framework for the paronomastic gloss to become the dominant mode of connecting sound and meaning, especially in the shift from composition to interpretation. At the same time, this framework is a direct consequence of the gradual stabilization of texts and subsequent canonization of a select few. Underlying these changes is the rise of classical learning in the late Western Hàn, starting in particular during the reign of Emperor Xuān 漢宣帝 (73-48 BCE). These last decades of the

Western Hàn dynasty also marked a fulcrum for wider acceptance of classical texts in political discourse, with evidence for a growing number of *shì* 士 trained in classical learning and of the usage of the classics (*jīng* 經) for the purpose of interpretating ominous events. Ultimately, thinkers such as Liú Xiàng 劉向 (77-6 BCE), Liú Xīn 劉歆 (c. 50 BCE - 23 CE), and Yáng Xióng 楊雄 (53 BCE – 18 CE) began to craft their political viewpoints based on models from the classical texts. Viewpoints such as these were subsequently tested out in the short-lived Xīn 新 dynasty (9-23 CE) under Wáng Mǎng 王莽 (45 BCE - 23 CE).[583]

Most importantly, these transitions also marked a socio-cultural change, with textual experts starting to control dominant forms of cultural production and subsequently leveraging the resulting gradual monopolization of intellectual discourse into political influence.

### 6.1.2 Changes of the Writing System

These processes – the rise of classical learning and textual exegesis, as well as the drive towards paronomasia – coincided with significant changes in the Chinese writing system. In short, a gradual stabilization of the writing system occurred during the early imperial era.[584] Whereas Late Warring States and early Western Hàn manuscripts in particular are proof of a more

[583] For this process of canonization, an overview over classical learning during the Hàn dynasty, and a revision of previous narratives, see Michael Nylan, "Classics Without Canonization: Learning and Authority in Qin and Han," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC – AD 220)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 721-776.

[584] Compare the process outlined in William G. Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1994), and also Imre Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing: Evidence from Newly Excavated Manuscripts* (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2006). Compare in this context also the developmental stages the Chinese writing system underwent; for this, see William G. Boltz, "The Invention of Writing in China," *Oriens Extemus* 42 (2000): 1-17. Boltz asserts that the same stages were also at work in other writing systems.

phoneticized usage of glyphs, this trend was reversed in the late Western Hàn and the Eastern Hàn periods. Compare Imre Galambos' summary about this process:

> This naturally leads to the conclusion that the Chinese writing system might have also evolved into a syllabary or an alphabet, and indeed, Warring States manuscripts demonstrate a tendency towards desemanticization. This trend, however, was arrested by the Qin-Han standardization of writing and the scholars' attitude towards the script and the tradition it embodied.[585]

The standardization of the Chinese script during the Qín and Hàn dynasties was, however, a gradual process. It is in this context that the arc of changing forms of wordplay – observed in chapters 3 to 5 of this dissertation – merit further commentary: whereas chapter 3 highlighted how Late Warring States and early Western Hàn texts also featured countertomic paronomasia (thus using individual glyphs not just for their semantic content but also for their aural features), the descriptions of paronomasia in chapters 4 and 5 are reflective of this process of standardization.

Most importantly, wordplays were gradually limited to equivalences of single glyphs, which the paronomastic gloss in Eastern Hàn texts such as the *Bóhǔ tōng* 白虎通 or the *Shì míng* 釋名 is known for. The changing attitudes towards the script also appear at work in the changing functions of paronomasia, especially as it became a tool to induce meaning to both text and the world at large for exegetical and scholastic purposes.

### 6.2 The Turn to the Visual Modality of Writing

The increased appreciation for the written glyph that was initiated with the establishment of the imperial states of Qín and Hàn led to another development beyond changing habitual rules for early Chinese wordplay. Specifically, the further cultural elevation of the script led to a fundamental restructuring in the hierarchy of semiotic modalities embodied in the script during the

[585] Imre Galambos, "The Chinese Writing System," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature (1000 BCE – 900 CE)*, ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 36. Compare in this regard also Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System*, 168-177.

Eastern Hàn dynasty: unlike Western Hàn texts, which describe sound in language as a mediation between Heaven and the human realms (as described in chapter 5), Eastern Hàn texts begin to describe the visual modality of the script in the following ways.

Such a view of the central position – if not even sacrality – of the script is most clearly articulated approximately one hundred years after the reign of Wáng Mǎng, specifically in the postface (*xù* 序) to the *Shuōwén jiězì* 說文解字 of Xǔ Shèn 許慎 (c. 58 – 148 CE). Writing itself (and not language) becomes a vehicle for decoding the will of Heaven, specifically the visual components inherent in the Chinese script. Compare the following passage from the postface:

> In former times, Páoxī ruled over all-under-heaven. Looking up, he observed the figures in Heaven. Looking down, he observed models on Earth. He looked at the markings of birds and beasts and their appropriateness on earth. Close by, he took [patterns] from his body, and farther away, he drew on [other] things. With that he first set up the *Changes*' eight trigrams,[586] and using them, he let the figures descend and promulgated them. Up to [the time of] Shénnóng, [people] tied knots in rope to regulate, and to conduct their affairs. While numerous endeavors flourished, embellishing and deception also sprouted and arose.
>
> Cāng Jié, the astrologer-archivist of the Yellow Emperor, saw traces in tracks of beasts and birds, and he recognized [inherent] distinguishing patterns, through which they could be kept apart. He [thus] at first created inscriptions of records. With [this script,] all the crafts could be ordered, and the myriad qualities could be examined. He likely took it from 'dividing,' [the Hexagram *guài* 夬].
>
> 古者庖羲氏之王天下也，仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地，視鳥獸之文與地之宜，近取諸身，遠取諸物；於是始作《易》八卦，以垂憲象。及神農氏，結繩為治，而統其事。庶業其繁，飾偽萌生。
> 黃帝史官倉頡，見鳥獸蹄迒之跡，知分理之可相別異也，初造書契。百工以乂，萬品以察。蓋取諸夬。[587]

[586] Note that this first section occurs *verbatim* also in the "Xìcí zhuàn" 繫辭傳 (A4.2 and B2.1-7); for a translation and discussion thereof, compare Willard J. Peterson, "Making Connections: 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Book of Change*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.1 (1982): 110-111.

[587] Wáng Píng 王平, Lǐ Jiàntíng 李建廷 (eds.), *"Shuōwén Jiězì" biāodiǎn zhěnglǐ běnfù fēnlèi jiǎnsuǒ*《說文解字》標點整理本 附分類檢索 (Shanghai: Shànghǎi shūdiàn chūbǎnshè 上海書店出版社, 2016), 15.395. Compare also the translation by Marc Winter, *"…und Cang Jie erfand die Schrift:" Ein Handbuch für den Gebrauch des ‚Shuo Wen Jie Zi.'* (Bern: Peter Lang: 1998), 557-559.

The underlying claims made in this passage essentially follow those made in the "Xìcí zhuàn" 繫辭傳 ("Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations") of the *Yìjīng* 易經.[588] Xǔ Shèn's postface claims the Chinese script follows the main contours of the 'figures' (*xiàng* 象) that the "Xìcí zhuàn" describes: Cāng Jié did not invent the Chinese script, but rather discovered it in the tracks of beasts and birds – the script was "out there," and like the 'figures' (*xiàng*), it existed "independent of any human observer."[589] The visual modality of the script hence encapsulates fundamental truths about the order of things.[590]

This description transposes the claims about aurality made in chapter 35 of the *Chūnqiū fánlù* onto the visual modality of writing, especially by grounding it in the tradition of the "Xìcí zhuàn." Mark Edward Lewis argues that such a theory of writing being analogous to the 'figures' (*xiàng*) "sought to escape the perceived inadequacies of language by privileging writing as an extralinguistic phenomenon directly reproducing the structure of reality."[591]

In this way, the postface of the *Shuōwén jiězì* presents a narrative of Cāng Jié's first written glyphs as extensions of the 'figures' (*xiàng*) and thus duplicating the world itself. This, in turn, legitimizes the overall endeavor underlying the *Shuōwén jiězì*, as the study of ancient forms of the script could lead to such original insights about the world.[592]

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[588] For the best overview of these claims, compare Peterson, "Making Connections."

[589] Peterson, "Making Connections," 80.

[590] For a fuller description of the role of the 'figures' (*xiàng*) as the perceived basis of writing, compare Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1999), 241-286, esp. 272-276.

[591] Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 285.

[592] Note that despite the elevation of the visual aspects of the script, paronomasia occurs throughout the *Shuōwén*, but as a *secondary* form of making meaning. In other words, paronomasia appears to have been relegated. About the role of paronomasia in the *Shuōwén*, compare also Winter, *"…und Cang Jie erfand die Schrift,"* 95-98.

### 6.3 Further Remarks about the Turn from Sound to Shape

As a result of these pivotal intellectual discourses about the importance of sound and shape from the late Western Hàn to the Eastern Hàn dynasties, early and early medieval Chinese perceptions of their script appear to have further approached those from ancient Egypt. Like Assmann's characterization of the 'world reference' of the hieroglyphic script, the postface of the *Shuōwén jiězì* describes the visual modality of the script.

However, this was a late development in early China, and the iconicity attributed to these visual aspects of the script occurs only after attempts to locate similar importance in sound, and not just in music, but also in the sounds and sound patterns in language use. Similarly, according to Antonio Loprieno, ancient Egyptian wordplays prior to the Ptolemaic era made frequent use of phonological features, but beginning with the Ptolemaic rule an equal shift towards the visual modality occurred:

> In general, during the Ptolemaic and roman times (fourth century B.C.E. to third century C.E.), an increasing consciousness of the symbolic potential inherent in the relation between hieroglyphic signs and semantic meanings led to the development of previously unknown phonetic values and also of so-called cryptographic solutions. This evolution, which originated in priestly circles and remained until the end the monopoly of a very restricted intellectual community, threatened the accessibility of the hieroglyphic system, favoring a dramatic increase in the number of signs, from around 750 to many thousands and exploiting the full array of potential meanings of the hieroglyphic sign. And it is exactly this radical change in the nature of the writing system in the Greco-Roman period that is at the origin of the view, held in the Western world from Late Antiquity to the emergence of modern Egyptology, of the symbolic, rather than phonological character of hieroglyphic writing.[593]

[593] Antonio Loprieno, "Puns and Word Play in Ancient Egypt," in *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, ed. Scott B. Noegel (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2000), 10-11.

Compare in this context also Assmann's claim about the correlation between increasing numbers of signs and strengthening of what he calls the world reference of the script: "New signs can constantly be introduced on the basis of both the meaningfulness of the world and the iconicity or world referentiality of the sign. … The world reference of the system is strengthened, not by the traditional means of iconical realism, but by the new means of increasing the things that serve as signs. The virtual congruence between the corpus of the *signs* and the corpus of *things* is important. Through this, the world is definable as a corpus of signs and writing as a corpus of things. Writing takes on cosmic traits; the cosmic takes on written traits. Both are codifications of signs …" (Assmann, "Ancient Egypt and the Materiality of the Sign," 29).

This comparison to this similar process in ancient Egypt further helps in the understanding and analysis of developments during the late Western Hàn and Eastern dynasty. The developments outlined above, specifically including the gradual canonization of core texts, the rise of classical learning, and the growing number of *shì* 士 trained in classical learning appear to have inaugurated a stabilization and elevation of the writing system, like in ancient Egypt.

While further research on these developments is necessary, the account I presented on how pre-imperial and Western Hàn wordplay functioned contributes to a fuller understanding of the changing importance of semiotic modalities across early Chinese intellectual communities.

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