



A Positive Case for the Visuality of Text in Warring States Manuscript Culture

Daniel Patrick Morgan

► **To cite this version:**

Daniel Patrick Morgan. A Positive Case for the Visuality of Text in Warring States Manuscript Culture. Creel-Luce Paleography Forum, Apr 2010, Chicago, United States. <halshs-01333472>

HAL Id: halshs-01333472

<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01333472>

Submitted on 17 Jun 2016

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

A Positive Case for the Visuality of Text in Warring States Manuscript Culture

Daniel Morgan, University of Chicago¹

Paper for
“The Creel-Luce Paleography Forum”
University of Chicago, 24-25 April 2010

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 1.1-14

When in early antiquity Pao Hsi ruled the world, he looked upward and contemplated the images in the heavens; he looked downward and contemplated the patterns on earth. He contemplated the markings of birds and beasts and the adaptations to the regions. He proceeded directly from himself and indirectly from objects. Thus he invented the eight trigrams in order to enter into connection with the virtues of the light of the gods and to regulate the conditions of all beings.

Xici zhuan 繫辭傳, tr. Wilhelm/Baynes

The first impression one gets when working with Chu manuscripts is that their language is equivocal and erratic, as if randomization was the rule in writing graphs and transmitting texts. In the absence of clear contemporary evidence, attempts to explain the variation must rely primarily on conjecture and analogy, the result of which is impassioned and irresolvable debate. The inspiration for this paper came from just such a debate at the *International Symposium of Excavated Manuscripts and the Interpretation of the Book of Odes* (Chicago, 9/13/2009) between several scholars subscribing to very distinct approaches. When the issue of textual transmission was raised, Martin Kern reiterated the conclusions of his previous research: in *Shijing* quotations in early manuscripts the large majority of

¹ I would like to thank Professors Donald Harper and Edward Shaughnessy for their invaluable feedback on this project, as well as their invitation to present it at the “Creel-Luce Paleography Forum.”

variants are phonetic, and this is best explained by the role of orality and memory, i.e. the transmission of texts as sound independent of writing.² In response, Edward Shaughnessy and William Baxter each offered their own explanations for these phonetic variants: respectively, that scribes may have simply had a habit of phonetic loaning, and that regional languages and scripts might be responsible. A consensus was not met.

At the time, my own work with the two copies of the Shanghai Museum *Tianzi jian zhou* 天子建州 (TZJZ) in 2007 had led me to the conclusion that texts were copied visually.³ However, this conversation reminded me that my own conclusions rested on a number of untested assumptions and a sample that was at once too small and too incomparable with Kern's *Shijing* quotations to claim broader representativeness.

In 2007, when TZJZ was essentially the only Warring States text to have been recovered in two editions from the same tomb, I submitted its duplicates to rigorous comparison, figuring that their relative proximity in time and space would make them better controls in assessing the features of textual transmission. Their proximity promised to eliminate the unknowable vagaries lurking between the hundreds of years and kilometers separating editions of other, more studied texts.⁴

Reading the two editions side-by-side, I compiled a list of every single divergence, down even to the difference of a single decorative stroke, lest I be criticized for not being thorough. These “textual variants” I then divided among five categories:

- **Stylistic:** variants at the level of base components or 文, i.e. the omission, abbreviation or decorative addition of strokes (可 vs. 可 for 可), the different execution of same component (彡, 彡, 彡, 彡, 彡 and 彡 for 彡) and the rearrangement of components in composite graphs (𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎). Except for superficial visual differences, such variants do not reflect any difference in the triumvirate of form 形, sound 音 or meaning 義; they are, for all intents and purposes, exactly the same.
- **Graphic:** variants at the level of composite graphs or 字 in the typical addition, omission or exchange of semantic classifiers in phonograms 形聲字 or semantographs 表義字

² See Martin Kern, “Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China,” *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1-4 (2002), 143-181; Martin Kern, “The *Odes* in Excavated Manuscripts,” in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington, 2005), 149-193.























³ In this paper I make use of the following Warring States manuscripts, which I have abbreviated for convenience: **BS** for Hubeisheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui 湖北省荊沙鐵路考古隊, ed., *Baoshan Chu jian* 包山楚簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1991); **GD.LZa-c** for *Laozi* 老子 A-C, **XZMC** for *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出 and **GD.ZY** for *Zi yi* 緇衣 in Jingmen shi bowuguan 荊門市博物館, ed., *Guodian Chu mu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998); **XQL** for *Xing qing lun* 性情論, **SB.ZY** for *Zi yi*, **SB.Zhouyi** for *Zhou yi* 周易, **SB.RCS** for *Rongcheng shi* 容成氏, **TZJZa-b** for *Tianzi jian zhou* 天子建州 A-B, **ZZJSa-b** for *Zheng zi Jia sang* 鄭子家喪 A-B, **JRZa-b** for *Junren zhe he bi an zai* 君人者何必安哉 A-B, **FWLXa-b** for *Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流型 A-B in Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2001-). **ZJT** for Hubei Sheng Jingzhou Shi Zhouliang yuqiao yizhi bowuguan 湖北省荊州市周梁玉橋遺址博物館, ed., *Guanju Qin Han mu jian du* 關沮秦漢墓簡牘 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001).

⁴ The Guodian and Mawangdui *Wu xing* 五行, for example, were written in different scripts and interred some two centuries and 250km apart. It seems to me that a lot could have happened in between.

expressing the same word, e.g. 青 vs. 情 for “inner state” or 樂 vs. 樂 for 樂 “music.” In this category I also include allographs 異體字—distinct graphs used to express the same word, i.e. sound and meaning—such as 竹 and 瘦 for 道 “Way”.

- **Phonetic:** the loan of a semantically unrelated graph to stand in for the phonophoric of a graph or the graph itself to express the same word, e.g.: 童 (**doŋ*) for 重 (**drjoŋ*) in 動/動 “to move” (**doŋ?*) or 要 (**?jew*) for 謠 (**ljaw*) “ditty”.⁵
- **Lexical:** variants expressing graphically, sonically and semantically distinct words, e.g. “night” and “day”.
- **Omissions/additions:** where one edition has text the other does not, e.g. “you look good” and “you look good for someone your age”.

Naturally, such categories are somewhat arbitrary and imperfect, but they adequately serve my purpose: to illustrate clearly *how* and *how much* Chu editions of the same text differ. I have listed all textual variants in the Appendix and invite the reader to audit my findings.

When compared, manuscripts A and B are starkly identical. Of 344 overlapping graphs, only 9 (2.6%) vary at the structural or phonetic level, and even then only prosaically so. Even starker is the coincidence of form in ways that can only be explained by visual copying. First, there are a number of orthographies peculiar to TZJZ that are reproduced exactly in both MSs, e.g. A4  and B3  for 孽 “calamity,” A6  and B5  for 斗 (斗) “Centroseptentriones.” Second, there are peculiarities that occur alongside common orthographies, the pattern of which is identical in both MSs, e.g. the particle 也 appears first as A3  and B2 , and subsequently in the common form A3 /B2 ; 凡 occurs both as A1 /B1  and the peculiar A8 /B7  in exactly the same places in the text; likewise for 義, which is written peculiarly as A6 /B6  and A8 /B7 . Furthermore, in both MSs 語 “to speak of” is used at the head of eight formulaic admonitions, the first two of which give the full form and the last six of which are abbreviated to 語.⁶ Third, even *non-linguistic information* coincides with startling fidelity, e.g. the decoration of basic graphs like 不 (A2 /B2 ) is identical, as is the pattern of alternation, such that 尺 (度) is written in the first instance with a decorative horizontal line (A7 /B7 ) , then without (A8 /B7 ) . Even the size, shape and distribution of punctuation and reader’s marks is identical.⁷ One cannot be certain of the exact circumstances, but it appears that the one was

⁵ All phonological reconstructions are those of William Baxter’s Old Chinese from *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992).




















⁶ The graph 語 is found nowhere else outside of TZJZ. The logic behind simplifying the phonophoric 吾 (**ŋra*) to its phonophoric 五 (**ŋa?*), however, is quite obvious.

⁷ Both manuscripts feature an assortment of markings typical of the Shanghai corpus and Chu manuscripts in general. First in apparent importance are L- or hook-shaped punctuation marks that appear twice, once at the very end and once near the middle of the text, appearing to mark the end of textual sections. This usage is common within the Shanghai corpus and seems to coincide with a change of topic in the text itself. Both manuscripts are consistent in their use of this mark. Second are the short, bold lines appearing at the right edge of the strip after the last in a line of repetitive statements as caesura, as well as between densely packed graphs apparently to facilitate disambiguation. This later usage can be seen in strip 8 of Manuscript B where two such marks fall between three densely packed graphs. Because this usage is determined by unique conditions of legibility and spacing one does not expect nor see consistent use between manuscripts. Both MSs are consistent except in cases of disambiguation peculiar to each. Of course both manuscripts also feature ligature marks 合文號.

copied from the other or from some hypothetical antecedent or line of antecedents. What *is* certain, is that there can be no other explanation for these coincidences than the two MSs are connected through unbroken visual copying.⁸

To argue the representativeness of such a small sample would be foolhardy. Conveniently, the latest volume (VII) of the Shanghai Museum corpus has furnished an additional three duplicate MSs to submit to such analysis: *Zheng zi Jia sang* 鄭子家喪 (ZZJS), *Junren zhe he bi an zai* 君人者何必安哉 (JRZ) and *Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流型 (FWLX). Like the TZJZ, the differences between these MSs are minimal.⁹

	TZJZ		ZZJS		JRZ		FWLX	
Overlapping graphs	344		216		234		537	
Variants	25	7.3%	29	13.4%	7	3%	28	5.2%
Stylistic	16	4.7%	17	7.9%	5	2.1%	18	3.4%
Graphic	8	2.3%	12	5.6%	2	0.9%	10	1.9%
Phonetic	1	0.3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Lexical	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Omissions/additions	0		1		0		0	



Aside from their mechanical similarity, each manuscript provides other, unequivocal evidence of visual copying between editions. Throughout both MSs ZZJSa and ZZJSb consistently render the particle 而 as A1  and B1 , however, ZZJSa slips once into the orthography of ZZJSb—A4 . Both MSs also read 炎 “inflammation” (A2 /B2 ) where context suggests the graphically similar 光 “glory” (usually written like BS261 )—an obvious clerical error.¹⁰ The two editions of JRZ feature orthographies seen nowhere else in pre-Qin writing, such as A2  and B2  for 飮 (c.f. BS202 ) , A3  and B3  for 貞 (c.f. GD.LZa13  and SB.Zhouyi15 ) , A4  and B4  for 十 (c.f. BS137  and SB.RCS14 ) . The case for copying in FWLX is the most evident. In the first instance of the graph 骨, both MSs produce the same common orthography—A5 /B4 —yet one slip later

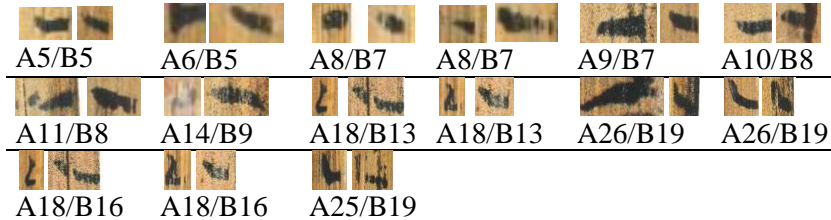
	TZJZa		TZJZb	
	Strip no.	TOTAL	Location	TOTAL
hooks	6, 13	2	5	1
caesura	5, 8(x2), 9,	4	8(x4)	4
ligature marks	1, 2(x2), 5, 7, 8, 9	7	1(x2), 2(x2), 5, 7, 8	7

⁸ I presented these findings in a paper entitled “*The Son of Heaven Builds in the Realm: A Material and Textual Study*” delivered for the University of Chicago’s China Before Print Workshop (Dec. 9, 2007) and submitted for part of my M.A. thesis, a portion of which can be found in Mo Zihan 墨子涵 (Daniel Morgan), “*Tianzi jian zhou zhong suo jian fanyinwen, weishizi ji ji dian yiduan*” 《天子建州》中所見反印文、未釋字及幾點臆斷, BSM <http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=764>, posted Dec. 25, 2007.

⁹ For all subsequent analysis, please consult the appendix.

¹⁰ These examples are from Li Songru 李松儒, “*Zheng zi Jia sang jia yi ben ziji yanjiu*” 《鄭子家喪》甲乙本字跡研究, BSM <http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1062>, posted Jun. 2, 2009. Li argues that ZZJSa is a fair copy of ZZJSb.

both feature an irregularly thick inkblot of a line in the exact same place—A6 /B5 . Furthermore, not only is the distribution of reader's marks identical, they undergo the same general evolution in shape from line to hook over the course of both manuscripts:¹¹



Of course, none of this disproves the influences of orality, scribal creativity or regional languages on Warring States textual transmission. Rather, it merely proves what most had assumed in the first place: that exact copying was indeed one mode of textual transmission practiced at the time.

Now I would like to return to Martin Kern's argument for orality in his "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China" (2002) and "The *Odes* in Excavated Manuscripts" (2005). The goal of Kern's 2002 article, as I understand it, is to problematize William Boltz' application of the neat *stemma codicum* model of text criticism to what is a rather linguistically erratic corpus of manuscripts. For his sample, Kern (2005) compares the Mao recension of the *Shijing* against quotations found in ① the *Ziyi* 緇衣 of the Guodian and Shanghai Museum corpora and the received *Liji* 禮記, ② the Shanghai Museum *Kongzi Shi lun* 孔子詩論, and ③ the Guodian and Mawangdui *Wu xing* 五行. From this Kern (2002: 161-2) produces some weighty statistics: textual variants occur in about one of every three graphs, and only 24 out of 171 (i.e. 14%) "show no immediately apparent phonological connection." He concludes that the necessary explanation for these statistics is the transmission of the text of the *Shijing* through memory and oration—as sounds outside of the written word. This does not need to be the sole, or even the primary mode of transmission, but it must have happened occasionally, and so long as it did, it would randomize the linguistic information of a text, thwarting a *stemma codicum* model predicated upon the assumption of faithful copying:

Comparing two manuscripts, or a manuscript and a received text, the evidence from textual variants therefore poses the following two alternatives to decide upon: either there is a direct act or an uninterrupted sequence of copying from the first to the second manuscript, or the transmission processes included at least one interruption of such a sequence (or was perhaps entirely based on memory or oral transmission).¹²

¹¹ For additional evidence and analysis, see Li Songru, "Fan wu liu xing jia yi ben ziji yanjiu" 《凡物流形》甲乙本字跡研究, BSM <http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1066>, posted Jun. 5, 2009.

¹² Kern, "Methodological Reflections," 172.

Here two points require attention in the context of the present discussion. First, his comparisons of excavated and received quotes are against the Mao recension, not against each other. This helps quantify the sort of changes the *Odes* underwent in the Han to become the text it is today, as is the purport of Kern (2005), but cannot tell us much about the features of its transmission in the Warring States. Second, his emphasis that 86% of variants are phonologically related is to draw a distinction with lexical variants and scribal errors—the sort of variants more typical of *stemma codicum* analysis.¹³ In actuality, this 86% is predominately composed of what I have classified as “graphic variants” (e.g. 共、龔=恭) with only a very small percentage of phonetic loans.

If, for example, one compares all the overlapping *Shijing* quotations between the Guodian and Shanghai Museum versions of the *Zi yi* 緇衣 (ZY) as I have done in the Appendix, one finds that they differ considerably more than our duplicates overall, *but not in ratio*.

Comparison of <i>Shijing</i> quotations in Guodian and Shanghai <i>Zi yi</i> MSs ¹⁴			
Overlapping graphs	161		
Variants	44	27.3%	
	Graphic	34	21.1%
	Phonetic	3	1.9%
	Lexical	6	3.7%
	Unknown	1	0.6%
Omissions/additions	3		

Even before the important manuscript finds of the recent decades Li Xueqin 李學勤, He Linyi 何林儀, Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 and the like had already laid out fairly comprehensive frameworks of diachronic and synchronic development of Warring States script, nuanced by choice of medium and levels of formality, that helped make sense of the seemingly endless graphic variability and phonetic loaning.¹⁵ From this we know that, for many words, some semantic classifiers *and even phonophorics* are either optional or interchangeable.¹⁶ Some words are even written with wholly independent graphs, e.g. Chu

¹³ Kern is primarily reacting against the example set by William Boltz, “Manuscripts with Transmitted Counterparts,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, ed. Edward Shaughnessy (Berkeley: Society for the study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, 1997), 253-284.

¹⁴ Note that I have omitted the category of stylistic variant from this analysis because the history between these texts would make it time-consuming and irrelevant.

¹⁵ See Li Xueqin, “Zhanguo timing gaishu (shang)” 戰國題銘概述 (上), *Wenwu* 文物 1959.7, 50-54; Li Xueqin, “Zhanguo timing gaishu (zhong)” 戰國題銘概述 (中), *Wenwu* 1959.8, 60-63; Li Xueqin, “Zhanguo timing gaishu (xia)” 戰國題銘概述 (下), *Wenwu* 1959.9, 58-61; He Linyi, *Zhanguo wenzi tonglun (ding bu)* 戰國文字通論 (訂補) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu, 2003); Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing* 文字學概要, tr. Gilbert L. Mattos and Jerry Norman (Berkeley: University of California, 2000).

¹⁶ On the fluidity of semantic classifiers and phonophorics in Warring States script see especially He Linyi, *Zhanguo wenzi tonglun (ding bu)*, 216-220, 229-241 and Haeree Park, “The Shanghai Museum *Zhouyi* Manuscript and the Warring States Writing System,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2009), 221-317.

𠄎 “circumspect” and 𠄎 “to lose” vs. Qin 慎 (慎) and 夫 (失).¹⁷ Qiu Xigui’s argument for the parallel development of “standard” 正 and “vulgar” 俗 scripts also helped explain intra-regional variation.¹⁸

In the last few years, the excellent work of a new generation of scholars has contributed to an even more nuanced picture of Warring States script and textual transmission. Imre Galambos, Haeree Park and Fan Limei 范麗梅 are each compiling statistics on actual usages in early scripts to uncover the patterns behind which graphs were chosen to write which words.¹⁹ This is vital considering Chu and other regional scripts are often treated as nothing more than a bastardized version of the modern standard—that is, modified Qin regional script.²⁰ These scholars all set out to problematize the idea of a standard for this reason; Galambos, for example, likens pre-Qin script to the orthographic chaos of Middle English. However, their aim is not to undermine the concept of standard but to retrace those that actually governed Chu script as an entity in itself.

For example, certain words are consistently written with orthographies featuring different semantic classifiers and/or phonophorics than their Qin counterparts: Chu 𠄎 “to pass” is always written from (cong 从) a 化 (*h^hw^rajs) phonophoric, c.f. Qin 過 from 𠄎 (*kh^waj);²¹ and Chu 𠄎 “scheme” is consistently written from a 母 (*mǝ?) phonophoric and 心 semantic, c.f. Qin 謀 from a 某 (*mjǝ?) phonophoric and 言 semantic.²² In both cases the Qin script has conserved the structure of the Western

¹⁷ Chu examples are from Guodian *Laozi* A, slip 11 and Guodian *Yucong san* 語叢三, slip 59; Qin are examples from Shuihudi 20.196, in *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* 睡虎地秦墓竹簡. Beijing: Wenwu, 1977.



¹⁸ Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing*, 88-9, 104-7.



¹⁹ See Imre Galambos, *Orthography of early Chinese writing: evidence from newly excavated manuscripts*. (Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, 2006) and Park, “The Shanghai Museum *Zhouyi* Manuscript and the Warring States Writing System.” Unfortunately, at this date Fan Limei’s dissertation at National Taiwan University does not yet appear to have been published. I know about her work I learned through her conference paper “*Shijing wenben* ‘ban ben’ yiwen zuqun de kaocha—jian shi jianbo *Wu xing* ‘yanse rongmao wen fen ye’” 《詩經》文本“韻賞”異文組群的考察—兼釋簡帛《五行》“顏色容貌溫賞也” delivered at the 2009 *International Symposium of Excavated Manuscripts and the Interpretation of the Book of Odes* (Chicago, Sep. 12-13, 2009) and speaking to her personally. In her work she is compiling 異文組群 “lexeme variant clusters” (?), that is clusters of graphs that are used to express the same root meaning across *xiesheng* series, e.g. graphs from 分、奔、弁、番、扁 phonophorics that carry the sense of “flying”, “bellicosity” and “mottled”, then isolating the patterns of phonophorics and significs used for a particular sense in a particular corpus. The idea behind this is that as semantically and etymologically self-contained as *xiesheng* series and semantic elements may have been in some hypothetical past state, there was a significant amount of semantic bleed between them. This fact, then, requires us to look beyond such constructs to truly understand the script of any one time or place, especially for the purposes of assessing issues of textual transmission and variation.

²⁰ This is, of course, why it is the first ritual duty of the paleographer to “fix the text into the clerical script” 隸定, or to be less anachronistic, the “correct” 正書 or “standard script” 楷書—“fix” being the operative word both etymologically (定 and 正) and conceptually. That all Chinese scripts are essentially the same, and all the paleographer needs to unlock their secrets is, basically, a *pianpang* decoder ring is a very old and ingrained idea. For a classic response, see Chen Mengjia’s 陳夢家 methodological manifesto and criticism of Tang Lan’s 唐蘭 *pianpang* analysis method in *Yinxu buci zongshu* 殷墟卜辭綜述 (1956; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2004), 67-73.

²¹ Chu example is from GD.LZb13; Qin is example from Shuihudi 23.13. Note that 過 does appear written from a 𠄎 phonophoric in Guodian *Yucong san*, slip 52 (𠄎). However, this is one of the texts identified by Feng Shengjun 馮勝君 as containing undigested Qi script (*Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu* 郭店簡與上博簡對比研究 [Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2007], 250-319).

²² Chu example from Shanghai *Peng zu* 彭祖, slip 6; Qin example from Shuihudi 32.5.

Zhou orthography ( and , respectively), and, in a sense, Chu script is making phonological loans.²³ However, these “loans” are clearly regional conventions, not the choices of individual scribes.

Some graphs function differently in the Chu and Qin scripts: Chu , for example, is used consistently to write both “nature” 性 (**sjɛŋs*) and “surname” 姓 (**sjɛŋs*), while  is used in the sense of “to be born” (**sreŋ*) 生 and “surname” 姓 (**sjɛŋs*), but never for “nature” 性 (**sjɛŋs*).²⁴ After clericalizing (*liding* 隸定) these graphs into 性 and 生, respectively, these distinctions are easily lost, and the fact that 性 and 生 are frequent loans in the Standard Script (*kaishu* 楷書) can complicate our reading of a Chu text.²⁵

Furthermore, because Chinese scripts are constantly redistributing lexical loads through graphic differentiation and consolidation, comparison across scripts and eras can be misleading. In FWLX (a9-10), for example, we have the following line:

日之有耳，將何聽？ The sun has ‘ears’ but what does it hear? (*-ənʔ)
月之有軍，將何征？ The Moon an ‘army’ but what does it conquer? (*-əʔ)

This is a pun in Chu script, where 耳 (**njəʔ*) is used to write both “ear” as well as “parhelia” (**njəs*), and 軍 (**kjun*) is used to write “army” as well as “halo” (**wjuns*)—both important astrological omens. Now these lexical loads are now distributed between 耳 and 珥, 軍 and 暈, respectively. Thus, this Chu phrase is actually impossible to convey in our “Correct Script” (*zheng shu* 正書).

Warring States script existed as the network of family relationships binding conventions of overlapping social communities at the regional and local levels, the most salient unit of which was likely the school or scribal lineage.²⁶ As irreconcilable as the writing of craftsmen on pottery and weapons between two neighboring states might seem, the whole family of myriad and volatile conventions was predicated on a common lexicon and meta-language inherited from the Zhou.²⁷ The boundaries between scripts would have been fuzzy and permeable, allowing written texts to travel fluidly through them as

²³ Western Zhou examples from Guo Bo *gui* 過伯簋 (JC 03907) and Qin *gui* 禽簋 (JC 04041), in *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成 (JC), ed. Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1984-1994).






²⁴ Feng Shengjun, *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu*, 209-210. Bai Yulan 白於藍 does list some apparent crossovers in his *Jian du bo shu tongjiazhi zidian* 簡牘帛書通假字字典 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin, 2008), 293-296. None of these are unequivocal. Chu example orthographies are from Guodian *Cheng zhi wen zhi* 成之聞之, slip 28 and GD.LZa21.

²⁵ Gao Heng 高亨, ed., *Guzi tongjia huidian* 古字通假會典 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1989), 64. Throughout this study I use the terms “Standard Script,” “modern script” and “Correct Script” to refer to *kaishu* 楷書 or *zhengshu* 正書, the standard script adopted in the third century C.E. by the Cao Wei and used until modern times. For the evolution of Chinese scripts, see Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing*, 59-150.

²⁶ Galambos, *Orthography of early Chinese writing*, 105-114; Li Mengtao 李孟濤 (Matthias Richter), “Shi tan shuxie zhe de shizi nengli ji qi dui liuchuan wenben de yingxiang” 試探書寫者的識字能力及其對流傳文本的影響, in *Jianbo* 簡帛 4 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2009), 395-402; “Faithful Transmission or Creative Change: Tracing Modes of Manuscript Production from the Material Evidence,” *Asiatische Studien/ Études Asiatiques* LXXIII.4 (2009), 889-908.

²⁷ Park, “The Shanghai Museum Zhouyi Manuscript and the Warring States Writing System,” 321-4.

appears to have been the case with the penetration of Ruist ideological tracts into the Chu capital region. Feng Shengjun 馮盛君 has convincingly isolated elements of Northern, especially Qi, script at different stages of “domestication” 馴化 in several Chu manuscripts—the Guodian *Wu xing*, *Tang Yu zhi dao* 唐虞之道, *Zhong xin zhi dao* 忠心之道, *Yu cong* 語叢 I-III, and the Shanghai *Zi yi*—reminding us to consider also the possibility of orthographic contamination in discussions of textual transmission and variation:²⁸

	好	免	慎	寡
Typical Chu orthography	 郭店《緇衣》1, 从女。	 郭店《緇衣》24。	 郭店《老子》甲11。	 郭店《緇衣》22
Qi orthography in Chu manuscript	 上博《緇衣》1, 从丑。	 上博《緇衣》13。	 《語叢一》46	 《語叢三》31
Typical Qi orthography	 《古文四聲韻》引《古文尚書》，从丑。	 三體石經《左傳》36上。	 朱公華鐘	 《汗簡》引三體石經

The complexity of this picture is even more damning for the *stemma codicum* model than the case which Kern (2000) presents. At the same time, however, it also undermines the simple dichotomy—written/oral—that is the cornerstone of a positive argument for the very existence of orality and memory as modes of textual transmission in the Warring States. The *Shijing* quotations examined in Kern (2005), for example, are in every single case compared *across scripts*: the Chu script of the Guodian *Zi yi* against the half-Chu, half-Qi script of the Shanghai *Zi yi* against the modern script of the Mao recension, and the half-Chu, half-Qi script of the Guodian *Wu xing* against the Clerical Script of the Mawangdui *Wu xing* against the modern script of the Mao recension, etc. In each case it would be impossible to isolate hypothetical traces of orality from all the other factors at hand when a text is essentially *translated* from one script to another to another. Ironically, the presence of half-digested Qi script in these very texts is, instead, unequivocal evidence for visual copying.

To be fair, one might argue that duplicate texts from the same site and *Shijing* quotes from the Guodian and Shanghai *Zi yi* MSs are, respectively, too controlled and too small a sample to reflect how texts may have been transmitted over longer periods of time. For this reason I also submitted to

²⁸ Feng Shengjun devotes several hundreds of pages to such analysis, from which my table draws only several examples, see his *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu*, esp. 250-506. Feng’s research and the term “domestication” is inspired by the tentative observations of Zhou Fengwu 周鳳伍, “Chu jian wenzi de shufa shi yiyi” 楚簡文字的書法史意義, delivered at *Guwenzi yu Shang Zhou wenming—di san jie guoji hanxue huiyi lunwenji wenzixue zu* 古文字與上周文明—第三屆國際漢學會議論文集文字學組 (Taipei, 2002) and Lin Suqing 林素清, “Guodian, Shangbo *Zi yi* jian zhi bijiao—jian lun Zhanguo wenzi de guobie wenti”, in *Xin chutu wenxian yu gudai wenming yanjiu* 新出土文獻與古代文明研究, ed. Xie Weiyang 謝維揚 and Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清 (Shanghai: Shanghai daxue, 2004), 83-96.

comparison the Guodian *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出 (XZMC) and Shanghai *Xing qing lun* 性情論 (XQL)—two versions of the same text with at least some history in between them:²⁹

Comparison of XZMC and XQL			
Overlapping graphs	1177		
Variants	364	22.4%	
Stylistic	206	17.5%	
Graphic	132	11.2%	
Phonetic	10	0.8%	
Lexical	16	1.4%	
Omissions/additions	43		

Like the *Shijing* quotes, it is not surprising that these two texts vary at a higher rate than texts presumably copied one from the other, but the similar ratio of typologies is, again, suggestive.

Meaningless stylistic variants aside, of the six sets of texts surveyed herein, the bulk of their differences come down to little more than the act of abbreviation. Abbreviation is perhaps one of the most salient features of Warring States script as a whole—so much so that William Boltz imagines that if the Qin and Han were not to have put an end to it, the Chinese language may very well have developed into a syllabary.³⁰ TZJZ’s abbreviation of 語 to 詁 is a perfect example of how texts tend to begin with full forms, then abbreviate in the face of incessant repetition.³¹ Furthermore, some hands simply exhibit stronger and weaker propensities to abbreviate, such as the XQL, which consistently writes 情, 忼, 節 and 與 where XZMC has 青, 交, 即 and 与. Closely related is the addition or interchange of seemingly superfluous semantic classifiers. There could be any number of reasons for this—different conventions, mistakes, creative alteration, etc.—but it is important to remember that in most cases this is not random. There are clear patterns of graphic variability throughout the current Chu MS corpus: *qing* “inner state” (情), for example, is almost always written as 情 or the apparently abbreviated form 青, but never from the semantic classifier 言—which in other graphs is completely interchangeable with 心—let alone from 馬, 人, 食, 水, 火, 日, 鳥, etc.³²

Of course, the fact of abbreviation implies an opposite process of elaboration. When two MSs differ between full and abbreviated forms, it could just as easily be the case that the hand behind the one

²⁹ Unfortunately, because the Shanghai Museum corpus was pilfered from an undisclosed location, we cannot know exactly how far apart it was from the Guodian corpus in time and space.

³⁰ William Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1994), 129-77, esp. 169.

³¹ Park, “The Shanghai Museum *Zhouyi* Manuscript and the Warring States Writing System,” 104-110.

³² In *kaishu* goggles, the Chu scribe’s cavalier employment of semantic classifiers would seem to mire the language in irresolvable ambiguity; however, in most cases context plays the role of classifier just as well as it does in the modern script, in which, for example, the words “law,” “method,” “France,” and “*dharma*” are written with the same graph (法) but rarely confused.

had made an editorial decision to fill out the abbreviated forms of the other rather than *vice versa*.³³ Personal editorial decision is probably also the main factor behind the occasional lexical variant and omission/addition, as well as such outlandish orthographies as FWLX's consistent addition of a 鼠 “rodent” signfic to *yi* — “unity” (A17).³⁴

Actual phonetic loaning is so rare as to be statistically insignificant—14 out of 2,669, or 0.5% of my entire sample—and when it does occur, it often involves an obvious etymological or allographic relationship that confounds neat classification.

All of this could be taken one step further. The duplicate manuscripts of the Shanghai Museum corpus show unequivocal evidence of unbroken lines of visual copying, as do those with elements of foreign scripts. Furthermore, because the ratio of variants between the XQL and XZMC is similar, it might seem reasonable to suppose that they were products of the same mode of textual transmission. And because, thus far, almost every text in multiple Warring States editions that we have discovered so far fits this pattern, one might claim that this mode—unbroken visual copying—was the norm. But I suspect that things were not so simple.

The Visuality of Orality

It is my hope that the discussion so far has not appeared unduly critical towards Martin Kern's 2002 and 2005 articles; it is actually my intent argue for a similar theses by reframing the issue at hand. Common sense, cultural comparison and the occasional contemporary testimony tell us that memory and orality must have played a role in Warring States textual transmission.³⁵ Unfortunately, searching for evidence of orality in written texts is ultimately like “climbing a tree to look for fish” 緣木求魚 (Mencius: 1A.7).

For reconstructing modes of textual transmission from manuscripts, Kern's distinction of “texts with a history” and occasional texts (e.g. legal documents, divination records, tomb inventories) is an

³³ Richter, for example, argues that the scribe of TZJZa has filled out the abbreviations of TZJZb in this manner (see below).

³⁴ Naturally, not all omissions/additions are conscious decisions. Sometimes the scribe appears to have accidentally copied the same line of text twice or skipped over a word or line (see Appendix). Naturally, some lexical variants and omissions could also be construed as the unconscious results of storage in fallible human memory.

³⁵ Sima Qian's 司馬遷 commonly quoted account of the history of the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 only four centuries after the fact, for example:

七十子之徒口受其傳指。為有所刺譏褒諱挹損之文辭，不可以書見也。魯君子左丘明懼弟子人人異端。各安其意。失其真。故因孔子史記。具論其語。成左氏春秋。

The students of the seventy disciples orally received the intent of the tradition. Because it contained text that poked fun, satirized, commended and euphemized, they could not be made seen in writing. The gentleman of Lu, Zuoqiu Ming, was afraid that all the disciples had different biases and that, each being content in his own idea, they would lose the truth of it. Thus, based on the scribal records of Confucius he assayed their sayings and made *Mr. Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals*. (*Shiji* 史記 [Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 ed.], 509-10)

excellent start. It is this distinction, for example, that Feng Shengjun utilizes to isolate samples of pure, indigenous Chu script for comparison with contaminated script.³⁶ I suggest delineating within this rubric subcategories of texts based on their hypothetical conduciveness to oral vs. visual transmission.

In my comparative work, I found most of the true phonetic variants clustered around only a few lines of the XQL and XZMC—all laconic and rhythmic aphorisms about judging personal character with a rather vague vocabulary, stilted syntax and a number of enigmatic binomes:³⁷

XQL35-37	XZMC42-45	
凡甬心之[圖]者思為甚	凡甬心之[圖]者思為甚	Now , contemplation comes first for he who employs his mind restlessly;
甬智之疾者[圈]為甚	甬智之疾者[愚]為甚	worry comes first for he who employs his knowledge rashly;
甬情之至者哀樂為甚	甬青之至[口]樂為甚	sorrow and joy come first for he who employs his emotional state to extremes;
甬身之弁者悅為甚	甬身之弁者兌為甚	pleasure comes first for he who employs his body impetuously;
甬力之聿者利為甚	甬力之聿者利為甚	and advantage comes first for he who employs his strength exhaustively.
目之好色	目之好色	The eye's fondness for color
耳之樂聖	耳之樂聖	and the ear's fondness for sound
臧[淘]之燮也	臧[稻]之燮也	are due to built-up pneumas.
...
又其為人之[漆]如也	又其為人之[迎]如也	For he who is as though reservedly restrained as a person—
不又夫東之心則采	不又夫東之心則悉	without a guileless heart, he becomes degenerate.
...

The one overlapping chapter of the A and C versions of the Guodian *Laozi* (ch. 64; LZa10-13, LZb11-15), furthermore, exhibits a total rate of variation far above that that of the duplicate Shanghai MSs and the XQL/XZMC:

Comparison of Guodian <i>Laozi</i> A & C		
Overlapping graphs	61	
Variants	26	42.6%
Stylistic	7	11.5%
Graphic	9	14.8%
Phonetic	1	1.6%
Lexical	9	14.8%
Omissions/additions	20	

It is probably not a coincidence that it is in the singsongy and opaque text of the XQL/XZMC, *Shijing* and *Laozi* that we find the highest density of overall and phonetic variants—it is precisely this sort of text that is both easy to commit to memory, and easy to commit to memory *incorrectly*.³⁸ It is in this category of

³⁶ Feng Shengjun, *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu*, 251-2.

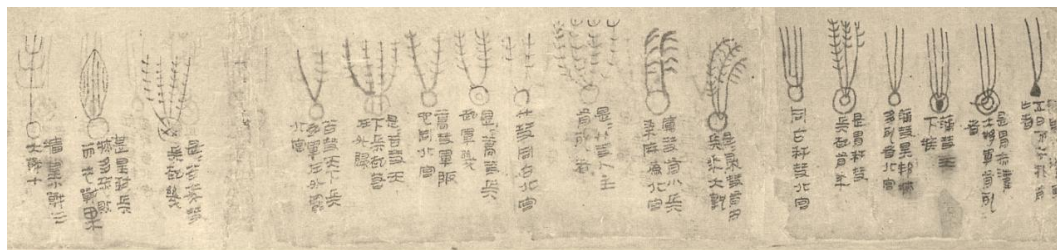
³⁷ My translation of the following passage relies on the readings of Li Tianhong 李天虹 and Feng Shengjun in Li, *Guodian zhujian Xing zi ming chu yanjiu* 郭店竹簡《性自命出》研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu, 2003), 178-80 and Feng, *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu*, 232-5.

³⁸ A contemporary example might be the child reciting the Pledge of Allegiance:
I pledge allegiance to the flag,

text that we are most likely to isolate traces of memory and orality. However, this task first requires a significantly larger and more controlled sample—that is, a sample that is demonstrably free of contamination from diachronic and synchronic (inter-regional, intra-regional and personal) discrepancies between orthographic standards.³⁹

Due to the limitations of the current MS corpus, the primary focus of my comparative work has been prose ideological tracts. These texts tend to be repetitive and vernacular, with clear structural logic—features that we might expect to invite a different variety and rate of variation than misheard lyrics. Of course, this is all purely hypothetical; so far, the differences between these texts are too few and too difficult to isolate from personal editorial decisions.⁴⁰

There is a third category of “texts with a history” that should not be neglected: almanacs, recipe books, incantations, do-it-yourself guides to healing, exorcism, sex and fortunetelling—the real texts of everyday life.⁴¹ These texts are often laconic, technical and modular, with illustrations and information arrayed in lists, tables and diagrams for easy reference—features better suited for written transmission and storage. Oral transmission seems unlikely for hemerological tables and diagrams or a text like the Mawangdui *Tianwen qixiang za zhan* 天文氣象雜占, which is little more than a list of captioned illustrations:⁴²



Dangerous comets, *Tianwen qixiang za zhan*

of the United States of America,
and to the republic for witches dance,
one nation underdog,
invisible, with liberty and just us for all.

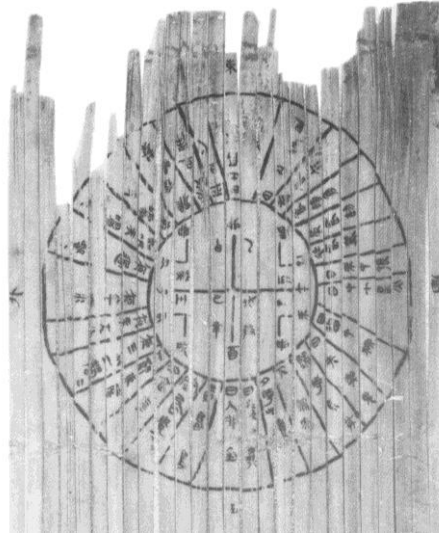
³⁹ Another possible avenue for the exploration of the role of orality in textual transmission could be the occurrence of sandhi between compounds and binomes explored in Lai Guolong 來國龍, “Shuo ‘sha’/’san’, jian tan guwenzi shidu zhong de tongjiazi wenti” 說“殺”·“散”，兼談古文字釋讀中的通假字問題, *Jianbo* 4, 367-84.

⁴⁰ Lexical variants, for example, and the different ordering and insertion of passages between the XQL and XZMC. See Li Tianhong, *Guodian zhujian Xing zi ming chu yanjiu*, 6-13; Feng Shengjun, *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu*, 200-204.

⁴¹ For an overview of this genre of texts—*shushu* 數術—see Donald Harper, “Warring States, Qin, and Han Manuscripts Related to Natural Philosophy and the Occult,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History*, 223-252 and Liu Lexian 劉樂賢, *Jianbo shushu wenxian tanlun* 簡帛數術文獻探論 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu, 2002). Because of significant overlaps in the growing number of excavated *rishu* 日書, there is excellent potential here to do the same sort of comparative analysis.

⁴² For a study of *Tianwen qixiang za zhan*, see Liu Lexian, *Mawangdui tianwen shu kaoshi* 馬王堆天文書考釋. (Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue, 2003), 100-159; Donald Harper, “Communication by Design: Two Silk Manuscripts of Diagrams (*tu*) from Mawangdui Tomb Three,” in *Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China: The Warp and the Weft*, ed. Francesca Bray, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 169-189. The following image is from Chen Songchang 陳松長 and Fu Juyou 傅舉有, *Mawangdui Hanmu wenwu* 馬王堆漢墓文物 (Changsha: Hunan, 1992), p. 160.

甬成蓋坐空寧平彼陷建羸濡
 亥戌酉申未午巳辰卯寅丑十一月須
 子亥戌酉申未午巳辰卯寅丑十二月須
 丑子亥戌酉申未午巳辰卯寅正月營
 寅丑子亥戌酉申未午巳辰卯二月奎
 卯寅丑子亥戌酉申未午巳辰卯三月胃
 辰卯寅丑子亥戌酉申未午巳四月畢
 巳辰卯寅丑子亥戌酉申未午五月東
 午巳辰卯寅丑子亥戌酉申未六月柳
 未午巳辰卯寅丑子亥戌酉申七月張
 申未午巳辰卯寅丑子亥戌酉八月角
 酉申未午巳辰卯寅丑子亥戌九月氏
 戌酉申未午巳辰卯寅丑子亥十月心



“Chu” 除, Shuihudi *Rishu* 日書 (s1-13 upper register)

Let us not forget that even Confucius, of all people, is on record as constantly *reading* from his favorite divination manual:

孔子晚而喜《易》、《序》、《彖》、《繫》、《象》、《說卦》、《文言》。讀《易》韋編三絕。曰“假我數年，若是我於《易》則彬彬矣”。

In his later years, Confucius grew fond of the *Changes* and [its commentaries] “The Sequence [of the Hexagrams],” “Tuan,” “The Appended Statements,” “The Images,” “The Explanation of the Hexagrams” and “The Patterned Words.” **He read the *Changes* [so often that] the binding broke three times.** [Once] he said “Give me a couple more years such that I may be conversantly versed in the *Changes*!”⁴³

But much more urgent than such categorization is the reappraisal of how memory and orality potentially functioned. We will never know, to be sure, but it begs to ask: texts (words) surely could have existed outside the confines of the written document, but did they exist only as sounds, disassociated from the script? Or to rephrase the question, is it unreasonable to expect that someone who could commit the words of such an important text as the *Shijing* to memory might also know, or at least be willing and able to memorize, the graphs used to write them? The answer is obvious.

The Warring States undeniably had its share of illiterates for whom language (words) functioned only at the level sound; however, script was central to the identity, way of life and even the cosmology of the literate elite. The *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 tells us that human civilization began with Fuxi’s 伏羲 transcription of the patterns of nature into the trigrams, after which, the *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字 adds some centuries later, Cangjie 倉頡 creates the first true script “upon looking at the tracks of the birds and beasts and realizing that their distinct patterns could be discriminated” 見鳥獸蹄迹之跡，知分理可相別

⁴³ *Shiji* 47.29a-b.

異也。⁴⁴ By at least the Warring States period, the Chinese graph is considered the language of nature. This is why, in His solemn communications with mankind, Heaven does not dictate: He sends animals to vomit up scrolls to read and commits His directives to “skywriting” 天文。⁴⁵ Likewise, the living do not speak but write to their deceased ancestors, who respond with trigrams and crack-patterns on tortoise plastrons.⁴⁶ This entire worldview is no doubt why, considerably later, when from the very beginnings of

⁴⁴ *Zhouyi zhu* 周易註 (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (SKQS) electronic ed.), 8.2a-b; *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2003), 15A.1a-b.

⁴⁵ This was how the Zhou Dynasty was thought to have begun, for example:

遷至乎商王紂，天不序其德，祀用失時。兼夜中，十日雨土于薄，九鼎遷止，婦妖宵出，有鬼宵吟，有女為男，天雨肉，棘生乎國道，王兄自縱也。赤鳥銜珪，降周之岐社，曰：「天命周文王伐殷有國。」泰顛來賓，河出綠圖，地出乘黃。武王踐功，夢見三神曰：「予既沈漬殷紂于酒德矣，往攻之，予必使汝大堪之。」武王乃攻狂夫，反商之周，天賜武王黃鳥之旗。

In the case of King Zhou of Shang, Heaven took umbrage at his virtue, and sacrifices were not held according to the seasons. For ten days and ten nights it rained earth at Bo, and the nine cauldrons moved about. Female goblins came out after dark and there were ghosts wailing at night. Women turned into men, flesh rained down from Heaven, and brambles grew on the national highways. And yet the king grew even more dissolute. A red bird holding in its beak a jade tablet alighted at the Qi earth altar of Zhou, [the tablet reading]: “Heaven orders King Wen of Zhou to attack the ruler of Yin.” Taidian came as a guest, the River revealed records and charts, and the land disgorged the “riding-yellow” [beast]. King Wu ascended the throne and dreamt of three spirits who said to him: “We have already drowned Zhou of Yin in the power of wine. Go and attack him, and we will assuredly cause you to win great victory over him.” King Wu thereupon attacked the deranged man and overturned the Shang for the Zhou, [whereupon] Heaven bestowed a yellow bird pennant to King Wu. (*Mozi* 墨子 [SKQS ed.], 5.10a; tr. modified from Burton Watson, *Mo tzu: Basic Writings* [New York: Columbia, 1963], 57-58)

Here spirits do talk to King Wu in a dream, but later versions tend to focus solely on the procurement of physical texts from the mouths and stomachs of animals—the details of which are progressively elaborated—e.g.: *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (SKQS ed.), 13.5a, *Shuo yuan* 說苑 as cited by Zhang Shoujie 張守節 in *Shiji zhengyi* 史記正義 (SKQS ed.), 23.1b, and *Lunheng* 論衡 (SKQS ed.), 22.14b. By early imperial times, this trope is so fixed in the popular imagination that it becomes the frequent subject of political hoaxes: e.g. Chen She’s 陳涉 rebellion against the Qin begins with a piece of silk declaring his future kingship planted in the belly of a fish (*Shiji* 48.3a) and General Wencheng’s 文成將軍 feeding a prophetic document to an ox after failing to ingratiate himself with Han Emperor Wu by invoking the spirit of Taiyi (*Han shu* 漢書 [Zhonghua shuju ed.], 458-59).

⁴⁶ On the communication with ancestors through texts, see for example Lothar von Falkenhausen, “Issues in Western Zhou Studies: A Review Article,” *Early China* 18 (1993), 146-56. As the earliest systematic treatise on the topic, the “Gui ce liezhuan” 龜策列傳 (*Shiji* 68) describes divination by yarrow and tortoise shell as a communication with the “spirits” (*shen* 神). Both are “numinous” (*ling* 靈) materials conducive to possession: in the case of the former, spiritually possessed yarrow wands lead one to the hexagram appropriate to one’s current situation; in the case of the latter, the spiritually possessed tortoise shell produces cracks, which are interpreted as images. The interpretation of the crack-as-image also appears in pre-Qin literature, e.g. *Guoyu* 國語 (SKQS ed.), 7.2a-b:

獻公卜伐驪戎，史蘇占之，曰：「勝而不吉。」公曰：「何謂也？」對曰：「遇兆，挾以銜骨，齒牙為猾，戎、夏交粹。交粹，是交勝也，臣故云，且懼有口，攜民，國移心焉。」公曰：「何口之有！口在寡人，寡人弗受，誰敢興之？」對曰：「苟可以攜，其入也甘受，遲而不知，胡可壅也？」

Duke Xian of [Jin] performed crack-making on attacking the Lirong, and Scribe Su prognosticated [the crack], saying “Victorious but inauspicious.” The Duke asked, “What are you saying?” [Su] responded, saying “We have encountered a crack which is enveloped like a bone held in the mouth, infringed upon [on all sides] by teeth—the struggle between Rong and Xia. Struggle means the exchange of victories, thus your humble servant says that we must for now fear that there is a ‘mouth’ that will sow discord in the populace and to which the hearts and minds of the nation will move.” The Duke said, “What ‘mouth’ could there be? The ‘mouth’ is here with me, the solitary one, and if I do not admit it, who would dare promote it?” [Su] responded, saying “If discord can be sown its entry will be gladly admitted, content and unknowing, and how can it be stopped?”

time and space, the rarified, supernatural language of the immortals was revealed to Daoists, it was not as sounds, as with Indian *dhāraṇī*, but as *graphs*.⁴⁷

Even before the *Shuo wen jie zi*, a similar brand of graphic etymology captivated the imagination of the literate elite. In received literature this is portrayed as a common and effective rhetorical device. For example:

楚子曰：「夫文，止戈為武。」

The viscount of Chu said, “Now, in terms of the written graph, “stopping” 止 “dagger-axes” 戈 is what makes “militarism” 武. (*Zuo zhuan* 左傳, Xi 12)

天反時為災，地反物為妖，民反德為亂，亂則妖災生。故文反正為乏。
In Heaven, the inversion of the seasons makes natural disasters; on earth, the inversion (: perversion) of creatures makes goblins; amongst the populace, the inversion of virtue makes disorder—and with disorder is born natural disasters and goblins. Thus, in terms of the written graph, the inversion of “correctness” 正 makes “destitution” 乏. (*Zuo zhuan*, Xuan 15)

趙孟曰「何謂蠱？」對曰「淫溺惑亂之所生也。於文。皿蟲為蠱。」

Zhaomeng asked, “What is meant by *gu* 蠱?” [Doctor He] responded, “It is born from one’s wanton abandon in delusion and bedlam. In terms of the written graph, “bugs” 蠱 in a “bowl” 皿 makes *gu* 蠱.” (*Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 1)⁴⁸

古者蒼頡之作書也，自環謂之「公」，背公謂之「私」。公私之相背也，乃蒼頡固以知之矣。

In antiquity when Cangjie invented writing, circling (: looking out only for) oneself was called *si* 公 and turning one’s back to *si* 公 (: selfish self-circlers) was called *gong* 公 “public spirit”. (*Hanfeizi* 韓非子, “Wu du” 五蠱)⁴⁹

The *Zhou li* 周禮 tells us that “writing” 書 was one of the “six arts” 六藝 comprising the Zhou aristocrat’s basic education.⁵⁰ One can imagine that at one time, this ability would have probably been a distinction central to the aristocrat’s identity. However, by at least the time of the Zhangjiashan 張家山 *Er nian lü ling* 二年律令 (interred ca. 186 B.C.) the state demanded an impressive degree of literacy from even the lowliest of clerks:



Talisman, *Shangqing huoluo qi yuan fu* 上清豁落七元符 (CT392)

⁴⁷ For Daoist talismans, see Catherine Despeux, “Talismans and Sacred Diagrams,” in Livia Kohn, ed., *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 498-540. For *dhāraṇī*, see Paul Copp, “Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone: The Makings of Spells in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton.

⁴⁸ Here Du Yu 杜預 glosses *gu* as “dementia caused by matters of excess” 惑以淫事 (*Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhushu* 春秋左傳注疏 [SKQS ed.], 9.21a). However, *gu* is usually a poison made by trapping a collection of nasty, poisonous creatures in a container until there is only one left. There is definitely a metaphorical connection between these two senses here.

⁴⁹ In pre-Qin scripts 公 is written as a circle. According to the *Shuo wen jie zi*, “八 is ‘to separate. It looks like separating [two] things with their backs to each other’ 別也。象分別相背之” (*Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 2A.1b). This invokes the imagery of 北, which it describes as “from two 人 with their backs to each other” 从二人相背 (*Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 8A.44a).

⁵⁰ *Zhou li zhu shu* 周禮注疏 (SKQS ed.), 10.35a. The “six arts” are: rites, music, archery, chariot driving, writing and math. Curiously, oration is not one of the six arts.

[試]史學童以十五篇，能諷書五千字以上，乃得為史。又以八體試之。

The clerical students shall be tested on the Fifteen Chapters, and only when they can read and write more than five thousand graphs are they eligible to become clerks. Furthermore, they shall be tested on the eight scripts. (s476)⁵¹

All of this tells us that the educated Warring States man probably had writing on the mind. And if so, this leads me to believe that when texts were stored in memory and transmitted in speech, these texts may have been every bit as “visual” or *visualized* as their written counterparts.

One possible difficulty this supposition faces is the work of scholars like Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄, Li Feng 李峰, Matthias Richter, and Li Songru 李松儒 in identifying traces of illiteracy in excavated pre-Qin texts. Matsumaru and Li Feng both examine duplicate Western Zhou bronze inscriptions in which one inscription is textually and calligraphically inferior to another as evidence of local copying by illiterate or semi-literate craftsmen.⁵² Richter and Li Songru, on the other hand, apply a similar methodology to Chu MSs.⁵³ Richter, for example, argues that ① the scribe responsible for TZJZb was less experienced than that of TZJZa because his calligraphy is not as neat, he tends to add decorative brushstrokes to graphs, he often fails to produce “correct graphs” 正字, and he uses less reader’s marks; and that ② because TZJZa has fewer “mistakes” and a more controlled calligraphy but at the same time shares the more peculiar forms of TZJZb, it must represent a fair copy of TZJZb, done by a more competent individual due to dissatisfaction with the latter.

Such analysis must necessarily rely on a number of problematic assumptions. First, quality of penmanship is subjective and cannot be equated with literacy—otherwise, we might as well dismiss Hanfeizi’s philosophical credentials on account of his stuttering. Second, we do not know who was copying what: in the conceivable situation where students or cheap labor could have been employed to mechanically copy large amounts of texts, the manuscript itself could be a misleading indicator of the literacy of both the author and the end-user.⁵⁴

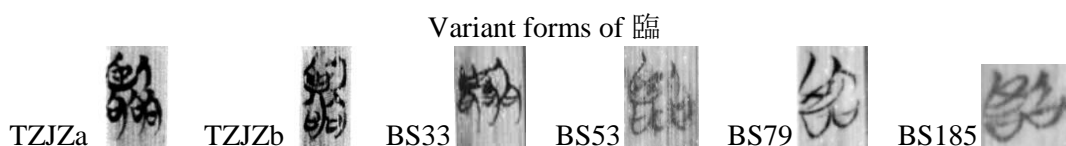
⁵¹ Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Han mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 張家山二四七號漢墓竹簡整理小組, ed., *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian (ersiqi hao mu)* 張家山漢墓竹簡 (二四七號墓) (Beijing: Wenwu, 2001). The “Fifteen Chapters” are usually identified with the *Shi Zhou pian* 史籀篇, which the *Han shu* “Yi wen zhi” 藝文志 records as being in 15 chapters (*Han shu*, 1719).

⁵² Matsumaru Michio, “Sei-shū seidōki seisaku no haikai” 西周青銅器製作の背景, *Tōkyō daigaku tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 東京大學東洋文化研究所紀要 72 (1977), 1-128; Li Feng, “Ancient Reproductions and Calligraphic Variations: Studies of Western Zhou Bronzes with ‘Identical’ Inscriptions,” *Early China* 22 (1997), 1-41.

⁵³ Richter, “Shi tan shuxiezhe de shizi nengli ji qi dui liuchuan wenben de yingxiang” and “Faithful Transmission or Creative Change: Tracing Modes of Manuscript Production from the Material Evidence;” Li Songru, “Zheng zi Jia sang jia yi ben ziji yanjiu” and “Fan wu liu xing jia yi ben ziji yanjiu.”

⁵⁴ While it is not my intent to dwell on “what ifs,” it should also be noted that any “poorly written” MS may well be writing practice, in which case it might be a similarly misleading indicator of literacy ultimately attained by the student, let alone of a text’s author or broader audience. For a study of clear cases of Han writing practice on wood, see Xing Yitian 邢義田, “Handai biansai lizu de junzhong jiaoyu” 漢代邊塞吏卒的軍中教育, in *Jianbo yanjiu* 簡帛研究, vol. 2, ed. Li Xueqin (Beijing: Falü, 1996), 273-78.

Third, and most importantly, while I agree with Richter’s insistence of standards at the level of scribal lineage, I do not share his confidence that we possess sufficient evidence to determine what those standards were. For example, Richter (2009: 904) gives the graph 臨 (below) as one of the examples where TZJZa has corrected the wrong orthography of TZJZb. It is true that TZJZb’s orthography is currently unprecedented, but at the same time, pre-Qin scripts frequently duplicate single components and *vice versa* without affecting the meaning of a graph.⁵⁵ The Baoshan materials feature a different and similarly unprecedented abbreviation (BS185) alongside the full form of TZJZa (BS33 and BS53) *in the same place name*—Linyang 臨陽. So, in this situation how do we judge which is “correct,” which is a “mistake,” and which is simply an abbreviation?⁵⁶



From all of this, the concession that the educated Warring States man would have been capable of memorizing and conveying the graphs of a given text *viva voce* seems simple. However, this simple concession turns the entire written/oral debate on its head. On the one hand, because this mode of transmission would be functionally equivalent to copying, one could no longer argue that two texts are necessarily connected through an unbroken line of copying because they are near identical. Rather, stylistic variation, errors, abbreviation patterns, and non-linguistic information would become the only effective standards of visual copying—unfortunately, all idiosyncrasies easily effaced through the repetition of that very process. On the other hand, because of its functional equivalency with copying, this “visualized” orality would for its part leave behind no distinct trace in written texts.

Let us return to the XQL and XZMC. Both feature typical Chu orthography, allowing us to eliminate the influences of translation across scripts. Recovered from different tombs, they are likely several steps removed from each other in a line of transmission. While still essentially identical, they do feature more of each category of variant—facts that could be attributed to the compounding of variation through the repeated processes of largely faithful copying *and/or* “visualized” oral transmission. Indicators of unbroken copying are few and equivocal: both texts end with a punctuation hook and share

⁵⁵ See He Linyi, *Zhanguo wenzi tonglun (ding bu)*, 213-15.

⁵⁶ Given these sorts of problems and the fact that the illegibly bizarre graphs are faithfully reproduced in both manuscripts, it seems just as easy to argue that TZJZb is instead an abbreviated copy of TZJZa.

the relatively rare orthography 青 (XQL27/XZMC62) for 靜 “still.”⁵⁷ Evidence is similarly bleak for memory and orality, where the only promising lead is phonetic variation—an exceedingly rare phenomenon currently impossible to untangle from complex issues of script and personal choice. Therefore, that the XQL and XZMC are connected by copying, oral transmission, or some combination of the two is all equally likely, and all equally indemonstrable.

Summary

In this paper I have submitted seven sets of duplicate Warring States texts to graph-by-graph, stroke-by-stroke comparison. This comparison shows that the texts recovered from the same tomb—presumably close in time and space—exhibit remarkable fidelity in terms of overall variance (av. 6.7%) and the reproduction of visual idiosyncrasies, the latter of which is unmistakable evidence of visual copying. The texts recovered from different tombs—presumably further removed—exhibit a higher rate of overall variance (av. 31%); however, in both cases the majority of differences boil down to the mundane abbreviation and elaboration of graphic forms, the simple products of different orthographic conventions and personal choice. When conscious, the rare lexical variant and omission/addition is probably also attributable to editorial decision. At the bottom of the list, phonetic variants are as statistically insignificant (av. 0.5%) as they are difficult to accredit decisively to personal editorial decision, differing orthographic conventions, or the effects of memory and orality—especially when such variants frequently involve ambiguous etymological and allographic relationships, and when we know next to nothing about the standards of different intra-regional orthographies.

In as much as these fourteen texts are representative of Warring States practices, they either demand that visual copying was the norm or they call for a new theory of orality: that the educated Warring States man was capable of remembering and communicating the sonic, semantic *and graphic* facets of a text’s language (words). When resulting in a written text preserved for us to examine, this literate or “visualized” theory of orality would function similarly to copying—reproducing the *graphs* of a text—and would thus blur the distinction between oral and written transmission in all but clear and proximate cases of copying, relegating arguments for or against one mode of transmission in other instances to the realm of pure speculation.

⁵⁷ Other than concluding with a hook, which is quite common, the punctuation of both MSs does not exhibit compelling similarity. “Still” 靜 is from 爭 in all other occurrences in the Chu MS corpus except once in the Shanghai Museum *Xiang bang zhi dao* 相邦之道 (s1) where it is also written 青.

Appendix: Textual Variants between Editions of Texts in Chu Script

My intent is to illustrate both *how* and *how much* different Chu editions of the same text vary. When using this appendix, I urge the reader to keep the following caveats in mind. First, the appendix only compares texts where they overlap and are clear enough to make out, not where they *would* overlap if not for some defect of the physical bookmat. Second, the appendix deals with *orthographic* variation only in as it informs the issue of *textual* variation. This is to say that my goal is not to explore how the graphic forms of a script vary in a time, place, or a single person's handwriting, but how *texts* vary between editions. Lastly, I have undoubtedly made a number of mistakes, omissions and arbitrary decisions in the process of collating this data from such a large sample, but the overall results speak for themselves. I welcome emendations and suggestions.

In terms of sources, I rely heavily on the analysis of Feng Shengjun 馮盛君 and Li Songru 李松儒 on three texts and will frequently refer the reader to their works with the following abbreviations:

- FSJ (2007): Feng Shengjun, *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu* 郭店簡與上博簡對比研究. Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2007.
- LSR (A): Li Songru, “*Fan wu liu xing jia yi ben ziji yanjiu*” 《凡物流形》甲乙本字跡研究, *BSM* <http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1066>, posted 6/5/2009.
- LSR (B): Li Songru, “*Zheng zi Jia sang jia yi ben ziji yanjiu*” 《鄭子家喪》甲乙本字跡研究, *BSM* <http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1062>, posted 6/2/2009.

* All percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

《君人者何必安哉》甲、乙

Overlapping graphs	234
Variants	7 3%
Stylistic	5 2.1%
Graphic	2 0.9%
Phonetic	0 0%
Lexical	0 0%
Omissions/additions	0

Stylistic variants



為. MSB prefers abbreviation, omitting =.

A6/B6



A7/B6



A6/B6

Note MSB lapses into orthography of MSA:



MSA6



必. MSB somewhat erratic.

A8/B8



A9/B9



誰. MSB adds 口.

A7/B7

Graphic variants





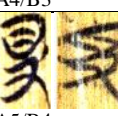







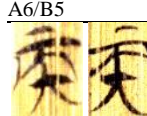
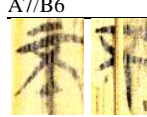


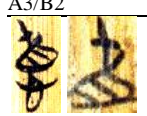



之. 先. This abbreviation occurs also in 《凡物流形》甲.


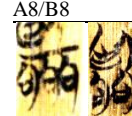




A5/B5

Overlapping graphs	344	
Variants	25	7.3%
Stylistic	16	4.7%
Graphic	8	2.3%
Phonetic	1	0.3%
Lexical	0	0%
Omissions/additions	0	

Stylistic variants

	都. MSB prefers decoration.
A1/B1	
	者. Both MSs alternate between 口 and 甘 elements.
A3/B2	
	青. MSA variant unattested. Total of 6 overlapping discrepancies.
A7/B6	
	得.
A4/B3	
	夏
A5/B4	
	夏
A5/B4	
	事. After first instance, both MSs follow MSB orthography. This is probably evidence of MSA having been copied from MSB. E.g.:
A5/B4	
	
	A9 /B8
	
	A10 /B9

	坐. MSB identical but executed poorly.
A6/B5	
	侯. MSB inverts graph in this one instance.
A7/B6	
	不. Near the beginning, MSB consistently uses the decorative orthography of MSA but begins to abbreviate at B9. Total of 12 overlapping discrepancies.
A10/B9	
	為.
A12/B11	
Graphic variants	
	兄. MSB appears to have exchanged 人 for 壬.
A3/B2	
	直 德. MSA abbreviates by omitting 心 semantic in first two cases, but provides full form later down:
A5/B4	
	
A5/B4	A8
	聞. MSB has 田 for 日, an unattested variant.
A8/B7	















	余. MSB features 口 semantic.
A8/B8	
	臨. MSA orthography is consistent with most other MSs. MSB abbreviates by omitting one of the bottom elements. This is unattested, however, Baoshan does offer an even more radical abbreviation in several places:
A11/B10	
	
A11/B10	
	
A11/B11	BS53
	
	BS79













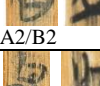

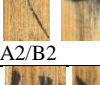



Phonetic Variants

	直 得. MSB uses 直 (* <i>drjək</i>) "straight" to represent the word * <i>tək</i> "obtain" (得). Of course, this is probably not a pure phonetic loan considering 直 could well be standing for 德 (* <i>tək</i>), which is etymologically related to 得.
A5/B5	













Overlapping graphs	216	
Variants	29	13.4%
Stylistic	17	7.9%
Graphic	12	5.6%
Phonetic	0	0%
Lexical	0	0%
Omissions/additions	1	




Stylistic variants




		<p>家. MSB 豕-component consistently 'simplified' as 豕 into 豕 twice near the beginning (B1.2, B2.19). MSA begins with the more elaborate 豕, an unprecedented variation on the other common orthographies 豕 or 豕, etc. The bottom of 豕 is simplified to 豕 from A5 to the end. Hand A appears to have either begun to emulate Hand B, or simply lapsed into a common abbreviated form.</p>
A1/B1		
A1/B1		
A2/B2		
A4/B4		
A5/B5		
A6/B6		
A7/B7		<p>豕. MSB prefers decoration.</p>
A1/B1		
A4/B4		<p>龍. MSB phonophoric 龍 (*b-rjɔŋ). Orthography same as 郭店《老子》 parallels with received graph 龍 (*hrjɔŋ?). MSA phonophoric 龔 (*kjoŋ), though both essentially from 龍 phonophoric, thus I count as graphic variant.</p>
A2/B2		
A3/B3		<p>必. MSB reflects a common orthography. MSA's unprecedented orthography divides curved stroke on left into two strokes.</p>
A4/B4		




		<p>復. MSB prefers decoration.</p>
A7/A7		
		<p>弗. Decorative dot difference, both attested. See LSR (A).</p>
A4/B4		
		<p>命. Both MSs feature both forms and coincide in 2/3 cases. LSR (A) considers this evidence that MSA was copied from MSB.</p>
A4/B4		
		<p>丁. LSR (A) shows that these are variations on the same orthography, e.g. BS121</p>
A5/B5		
		<p>晉. MSA features unprecedented abbreviation of 至.</p>
A5/B5		
		<p>至. Both common Chu orthographies.</p>
A6/B6		




Graphic variants




		<p>者. Both common Chu orthographies.</p>
A2/B2		
		<p>沒. MSA and MSB feature two graphically similar characters. Context does not appear to favor either.</p>
A2/B2		
		<p>為. Chu orthography typically from 彡. MSA is from 彡 (身) and MSB is from 彡 (壬). Both forms are rare (c.f. 《凡物流型》甲) but clear mutations of the common orthography. It is easy to see how one might have been derived from the other, and this is strong evidence of copying between MSs.</p>
A3/B3		
		<p>答. Typical Chu orthography is 答 (《東大王泊旱》13). MSA underscores with horizontal line. MSB replaces 口 with 公.</p>
A3/B3		




		<p>柄? Editors transcribe as 柄, however Chu 丙 is usually written 丙, e.g. BS183. Instead, MSA appears to be from 丙 and either 穴 or 丌. MSB appears to be from 侯 (e.g. 郭店《老子》甲 18 侯) and 厶. Both forms are unprecedented, but clear mutations of the common orthography. It is easy to see how one might have been derived from the other, and this is strong evidence of copying between MSs.</p>
A3/B3		

		<p>我. MSA features stylized vertical orthography of 我 typical of the graph 義. See LSR (A)</p>
A4/B4		

		<p>執? Editors transcribe as 執, typically written 執, e.g. 上博《周易》26 執. This shape warrants further investigation. Both MSs differ in their rendering of top and bottom elements.</p>
A5/B5		

		<p>懼. 思. Context demands 畏 "fear"—“鄭子家顛覆天下之禮，弗，鬼神之不祥”. MSA replaces 示 or 止 element of common orthography (e.g. 郭店《老子》乙 5 懼, 上博《用曰》15 懼) with 心. MSB reads 思, an apparent mistake.</p>
A4/B4		

		<p>思. 囟. MSB gives 囟 throughout for "hope that" or "compel to", as does MSA except in this, its final instance.</p>
A5/B5		



		<p>安. MSB omits 宀.</p>
A7/B7		

Omissions/additions

B2 adds “今”

Overlapping graphs	537	
Variants	28	5.2%
Stylistic	18	3.4%
Graphic	10	1.9%
Phonetic	0	0%
Lexical	0	0%
Omissions/additions	0	

Stylistic variants

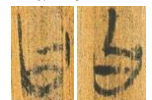
 臼. MSA prefers a flat upper stroke until near the end of the text, where it features a form similar to MSB (e.g. A20 ).

This change coincides with the change in hands identified in LSR (B).

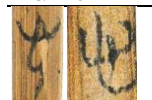
A14/B9



A26/B19



A28/B20



心. MSA and MSB curve different directions. MSA changes orientation around shift in hand.

A26/B19



A26/B19



A26/B19



A28/B20



聖. MSB abbreviation merges top stroke of 壬 with bottom of 口.


A16/B14



A16/B11



A19/B13

 并、迸. MSB vertical strokes of 并 do not protrude. Both orthographies attested, but protrusion more common.

A14/B9




A17/B12



A1/B1



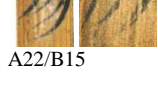
A10/B8

軍. MSA inward stroke of top component curves inward, contrary to common MS orthography, e.g. 《語叢》三 2 .

若. MSB appears to possess at least one extra stroke.



A18/B13




A22/B15


勿. Both forms are well attested. First hand of MSA favors three-stroke orthography of MSB, while second hand favors four-stroke. See LSR (B). Note that title of MSA features latter, suggesting it was added by second hand.



A17/22

地. Both MSs feature bizarre variant of 地 (c.f. 郭店《老子》甲 19 ) , however MSB combines the three left hand components. This orthographic oddity is evidence of copying.

Graphic variants


 既. Throughout the rest of the text, MSA and MSB 既 are structurally congruent, but executed quite differently, e.g.:

A4/B4



A4

B4

 之先. MSA omits the bottom of the full form of 先, leaving 之. Context favors 先 (both “~智”, “prescience”). LSR (B) suggests that this is a mistake, but one cannot ignore the possibility that it was a conscious emendation or abbreviation. Elsewhere MSA also features the full form, e.g.:

A16/B11



A26/B19



A8

天而. MSA here confuses orthographies for 天 and 而.



A17/B12



A17/B12




A4/B4





A5/B4



A5/B5

智. MSA is from 甘, while MSB is from 日. Furthermore, Both MSs are consistently from 谷 instead of 大, 去 or 矢. This orthography is not unattested (e.g. 《民之父母》2 ) , however, it is exceedingly rare. This contiguity is further evidence of copying.

 寡. MSA omits the four dots of the typical orthography, e.g. 《從政》3 .

A18/B16


















A20/B14

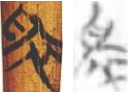
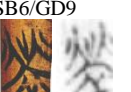





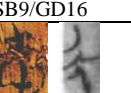







冬.




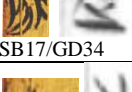


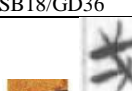


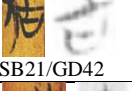



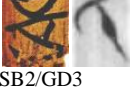



Shijing quotes from 郭店《緇衣》 & 上博《緇衣》



Overlapping graphs	161	
Variants	44	27.3%
Graphic	34	21.1%
Phonetic	3	1.9%
Lexical	6	3.7%
Unknown	1	0.6%
Omissions/additions	3	

Graphic variants

	義. SB from 土 semantic, GD from 心.
	型. SB from 刀 semantic.
	萬. SB from 土 semantic.
	靖. SB from 爭, GD from 心.
	恭. Allographs. SB from 龍.
	
	
	好. SB gives Qi orthography.
	
	
	
	
	功. Both from 工 phonorphic.
	國. GD from 宀 semantic.
	

	卒. Chu 卒 differentiated from 衣 with horizontal line, but other states <i>vice versa</i> .
	
	四. Allographs.
	
	順. GD from 心 semantic.
	式. SB is from 土 semantic.
	
	
	市. SB is typical Qi orthography, e.g.:
	瞻. FSJ (2007: 123-127) shows that these two graphs are both actually from 詹 phonorphic.
	Hong Kong strip from SB corpus here reads 容. Both are from 公 phonorphic and are interchangeable in Chu MSs.
	彼.
	
	則.
	且. GD from 又 semantic.

	Both from 僉 semantic.
	
	Apparently SB is an unmarked <i>hewen</i> containing the phonophoric of GD, 臣.
	
	止.
	廛. GD from 石 semantic.
	
	一. Allographs. GD from 戈 semantic.
	
	數. GD from 心 semantic.
	
	指. SB from 見 semantic.
	
	威儀 悵儀. 威 (*?juj) “awe” and 畏 (*?jujs) “fear” are allographs.
	龜. GD from 宀 semantic.
	
Phonetic	
	氏 是. 是 “truth” (*dje?) and 氏 “surname clan” (*tsjeŋ) are used interchangeably in Chu script as if they are phonologically viable loans in the Chu language.



  真正。真 “divine” (*trjen) and 正 (*tjen) “correct” are etymologically related homophones.



Lexical

  國方.

SB7/GD12



  A binome, SB from 各 (*), GD from 求 (*). No apparent connection.

SB10/GD19



  Binome. SB 幾 (*krjij?) vs. GD from 耳 (*tsjip). These do not appear to be phonologically viable loans, thus are likely lexical variants.

  義敬.

SB17/GD34

  砢石. GD is apparently a scribal error.

SB18/GD35

  See FSJ (2007: 180)



SB23/GD45

Omissions/additions

SB5 adds 之

GD36 adds 2x 也

Unknown



  孚 𠂔. There is considerable debate about what exactly SB1 is, and thus whether it is a lexical or phonetic variant. See FSJ (2007: 70-71).

SB1/GD2



郭店《老子》甲、丙

Overlapping graphs	61	
Variants	26	42.6%
Stylistic	7	11.5%
Graphic	9	14.8%
Phonetic	1	1.6%
Lexical	9	14.8%
Omissions/additions	20	

Stylistic variants

  者. 2 instances of divergence.

LZA10/LZC11

  不. 3 instances of divergence.

LZA12/LZC13

LZA12/LZC13



  弗.

LZA12/LZC14



Graphic variants

  終. LZA from 日 semantic.



LZA11/LZC12

  始. LZA from 心 semantic, LZC from 言.



LZA11/LZC12

  欲. LZC from 欠 semantic. 2 instances of divergence.



LZA11/LZC13

  難. LZC from 心 semantic.



LZA11/LZC13

  學. Allographs. 2 instances of divergence.

LZA12/LZC13



  過. LZA from 止; LZC from 辵. These are interchangeable components.

LZA12/LZC13

  萬. LZC from 土 semantic.

LZA12/LZC13

Phonetic variants



  專 補. LZA uses 專 (*phja) to stand for “assist” 補 (*bja?).

LZA12/LZC13



Lexical variants

  遠 失.



LZA10/LZC11

  亡 無. Synonyms. 3 instances of divergence.



LZA11/LZC11

  如 若. Synonyms.



LZA12/LZC11

  此 則. Different conjunctions.

LZA12/LZC11

  矣 壹. Both are common grammar particles in Chu script, apparently allographs.

LZA12/LZC11

  是 故 是 以. Different conjunctions.

LZA12/LZC13

  能 敢.

LZA13/LZC14

Omissions/additions

LZA11: “是以” LZA inserts conjunction.

LZA11: “也” LZA inserts final particle.

LZA11-12: “人之” LZA adds 14 graphs.

敗也，恒於其且

成也敗之。是

以”

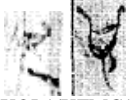
LZA12: “是以” LZA inserts conjunction.

LZC13: “聖人” LZC inserts topic.

Overlapping graphs	1177	
Variants	364	22.4%
Stylistic	206	17.5%
Graphic	132	11.2%
Phonetic	10	0.8%
Lexical	16	1.4%
Omissions/additions	43	

*Because of the enormity of this text, I provide one example and note the number of occurrences for instances where the two editions differ repeatedly in the same fashion. Furthermore, I have left alone the rather complicated issues of textual order.

Stylistic variants

 也. XZMC orthography consistent, while XQL varies in the beginning. I count a total of 79 instances of divergent orthography.


XQL1/XZMC1

XQL5/XZMC3


XQL4/XZMC9

XQL14/XZMC30

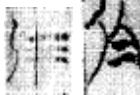
XQL14/XZMC30

 而. 35 instances of divergence. XZMC sometimes omits decorative stroke.

XQL1/XZMC1

 售. XQL is from 𠄎 (生). Bottom stroke of XZMC 𠄎 is merged with top of 目, and decorative 丿 added to vertical stroke. Both MSs are essentially consistent. I count 16 overlapping 售 graphs.


XQL1/XZMC1

 於. 7 instances of divergence


XQL1/XZMC1

及.

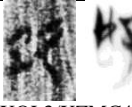
XQL1/XZMC2

 者、箸. Overlap of 28 者 graphs and 2 箸 graphs. XQL sometimes reflects the same orthography as XQL, e.g.:

XQL2/XZMC3

XQL23 

XQL/XZMC

 好. XQL orthography peculiar, inconsistent.

XQL3/XZMC4


XQL12/XZMC21

XQL36/XZMC43


XQL3/XZMC5

石.

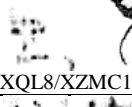
XQL3/XZMC5

 主. 2 instances of divergence.


XQL3/XZMC5

 胃. XZMC prefers to decorate 胃 with two extra strokes. 4 instances of divergence.

XQL6/XZMC12


 已. 2 instances of divergence.

XQL8/XZMC15

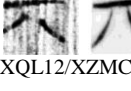
 豐、體. 2 instances of divergence for former.

XQL9/XZMC15

XQL10/XZMC17

 方. First instance, XZMC vertical stroke protrudes. Subsequent instances all the same.

XQL11/XZMC19


 𠄎. XQL consistently features horizontal decorative stroke. XZMC does as well, but begins to omit around XZMC21.

XQL12/XZMC21


11 instances of divergence.

反.


XQL16/XZMC26

 上. XQL prefers undecorated form.


XQL25/XZMC56

 正. XQL prefers undecorated form.


XQL25/XZMC57

 路. XZMC appears to have mangled 各 phonophoric.


XQL30/XZMC60

 可. 4 instances of divergence.

XQL31/XZMC61


 弗. 2 instances of divergence

XQL32/XZMC37


 志. XZMC abbreviates two graphs into a *hewen*.

XQL37/XZMC45


Graphic variants

 待. XQL consistently from 又; XZMC consistently from 止. 3 instances of divergence.


XQL1/XZMC1

 哀. 衣 (*ʔaj) is phonophoric of 哀 (*ʔaj) (SWJZ: 哀, 閔也。从口、衣聲). XQL from 口 semantic, XZMC from 心. These two components are frequently interchangeable in Chu script. Both forms well attested in Chu script. 3 instances of divergence.

XQL1/XZMC2

 作. Both MSs consistently from 又 except XQL1.

XQL1/XZMC1

 氣. Allographs. 2 instances of divergence.

XQL1/XZMC2

義 (**ɲrjajs*) “propriety” and 宜 (**ɲrjaj*) “proper” are etymologically related homophones. 宜 frequently stands in for 義 in Chu manuscripts it does here (Bai Yulan 《..通假》: 133-4).

XQL7/XZMC13 Note also that XQL omits bottom 肉 in 9 instances of divergence.

XQL24/XZMC54

情. 12 instances of divergence. XZMC does feature 心 semantic in elsewhere, e.g.:

XQL2/XZMC3

XZMC23

近. XQL omits 辶. 6 instances of divergence. Note that XZMC uses abbreviated form once:

XQL2/XZMC3

XZMC36

終. XQL from 日 semantic. This orthography does not stand for 冬 “winter” alone, but is used to signify 終 “finish” also, e.g.:

XQL2/XZMC3

郭店《老子》甲 11

觀. XQL from semantic 目. 3 instances of divergence.

XQL2/XZMC3

異. XZMC appears to be an abbreviation with =, though possibly phoneticization, replacing bottom element with 丌 (**kjə*) phonophoric for 異 (**ljə*).

XQL4/XZMC9

厲. XQL from 心 semantic. 2 instances of divergence.

XQL4/XZMC10

XQL from 心 semantic. 2 instances of divergence.

XQL4/XZMC10

教. XQL from 子; XZMC from 言. 4 instances of divergence. Both orthographies attested.

XQL4/XZMC9

快. XZMC is from 夨 phonophoric, and context suggests 快 “be happy”. XQL appears to be from 右 (**wjə*?) phonophoric. Bai Yulan argues to read it 慧 “wisdom” (**wets*) due to parallel appearance near end of MS (see below). Qiu Xigui¹ argues that the 0 of 夨 has simply migrated downwards, making it still the same graph.

XQL6/XZMC12

道. 11 instances of divergence. XQL consistent, while XZMC sometimes uses other orthography.

XQL7/XZMC14

樂. XQL is from 木, XZMC is from 矢. 14 instances of divergence.

XQL8/XZMC15

皆. In this one instance, XQL is from 井 instead of 从, e.g.:

XQL8/XZMC15

XQL18

This happens in Baoshan as well:

BS270

BS273

This appears to either be a conflation or intended exchange of semantics (并 “together” for 从 “everyone”). See FSJ (2007: 216). 三 參. These are allographs.

XQL8/XZMC15

XQL8/XZMC15

XQL34/XZMC41

XQL9/XZMC17

後. It appears that XQL is consistently from 幺 and 久, while XZMC is in the first two instances from 系, but coincides in last instance:

XQL11/XZMC19

XQL31/XZMC62

XQL9/XZMC16

XQL9/XZMC16

XQL38/XZMC46

XQL30/XZMC60

XQL11/XZMC?

XQL11/XZMC?

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL12/XZMC21

XQL33

美. XQL omits 女 signific. 2 instances of divergence.

XQL12/XZMC20

喜. XZMC mistakenly renders top portion as 豐 twice in adjoining slips.

XQL13/XZMC22

XQL15/XZMC24

XQL15/XZMC24

XQL15/XZMC24

XQL15/XZMC24

XQL15/XZMC24

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL15/XZMC25

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27

XQL16/XZMC27



XQL16/XZMC27


XQL16/XZMC27


XQL16/XZMC27


XQL16/XZMC27


¹ See FSJ p. 215.


 浸. XZMC from 戈 semantic, which is a common feature, e.g.:
 上博《周易》13
 XQL18/XZMC30


 烈. XQL is graphic mistake or allograph?²
 XQL19/XZMC31


 滂. XQL from 目 semantic; XZMC from 貝.
 XQL30/XZMC60

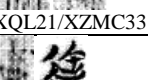
 滂. XQL from 目 semantic; XZMC from 貝.
 XQL19/XZMC31


 鬱陶. First graph: XQL19 is from 肉 and 尪; XZMC31 and XZMC44 are from 肉 and 或. While it is possible that these graphs are from different phonophorics, Xu Zaiguo and Huang Dekuan's argument that both are variations on 盛 (SW: “籀文諄从二或”) is generally accepted.³
 XQL19/XZMC31

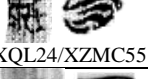
 鬱陶. First graph: XQL19 is from 肉 and 尪; XZMC31 and XZMC44 are from 肉 and 或. While it is possible that these graphs are from different phonophorics, Xu Zaiguo and Huang Dekuan's argument that both are variations on 盛 (SW: “籀文諄从二或”) is generally accepted.³
 XQL19/XZMC31

 流. XQL features 厶. Both attested forms. 2 instances of divergence.
 XQL19/XZMC31


 遊. XQL consistently omits 辵. 3 instances of divergence.
 XQL19/XZMC31


 達. XQL omits 辵 semantic.
 XQL21/XZMC33


 篤. XQL adds 心 semantic. 2 instances of divergence.
 XQL24/XZMC54


 己. XZMC from 口 semantic.
 XQL24/XZMC55


 己. XZMC from 口 semantic.
 XQL25/XZMC56


 獸. XQL from 心 semantic.
 XQL26/XZMC58

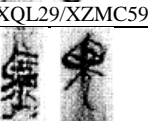

 宛. XQL from 宀; XQMC from 2.
 XQL26/XZMC58

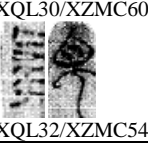
 滯. XQL from 止 semantic; XZMC from 欠 semantic.⁴
 XQL27/XZMC62


 肅. XQL from 系 semantic.
 XQL27/XZMC65


 悅. XQL from 心 semantic. In other instances, neither MS carries a semantic.
 XQL29/XZMC59


 獨. XQL from 土 semantic; XZMC from 心.
 XQL29/XZMC59


 獨. XQL appears to have substituted 亦 for 虫. Possibly a modification of more elaborate form:
 仲弓》12
 XQL30/XZMC60

 任. Both from 壬 phonorphic. See FSJ (2007: 246).
 XQL32/XZMC54

 學. Top components different. See FSJ (2007: 228-9).
 XQL31/XZMC62



 忠. XZMC from 心 semantic.
 XQL31/XZMC36



 慢. XQL features 心 semantic.
 XQL34/XZMC41

 慢. XZMC from 系 semantic.
 XQL37/XZMC44


 奮. XZMC from 心 semantic.
 XQL37/XZMC45



 奮. XZMC from 心 semantic.
 XQL38/XZMC46


 速. XQL abbreviates double 東 to single. C.f.:
 尊德義》28
 XQL39/XZMC48


 速. XQL abbreviates double 東 to single. C.f.:
 尊德義》28
 XQL39/XZMC49


Phonetic variants


 動. XQL from 童 (**doŋ*) phonorphic; first occurrence in XZMC from 重 (**drjoŋ*), all subsequent occurrences from 童. There is significant overlap between these two *xiesheng* series.
 XQL4/XZMC10

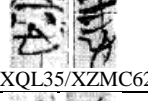
 證. XQL from 登 (**təŋ*) phonorphic; XZMC from 𠂔 (**trjəp*). Elsewhere, the latter orthography is generally used for the word “evidence”, e.g.:
 BS138
 However, the XQL graph is a viable loan.⁵
 XQL13/XZMC22


 要謠. XQL uses 要 “important” (**?jew*) as loan for 謠 (**ljaw*) “ballad”.
 XQL14/XZMC24

 喟. XQL from 畏 (**?jujs*) phonorphic; XZMC from 胃 (**wjujs*) phonorphic.
 XQL16/XZMC26

 患. XQL from 尖 (**khjons*) phonorphic; XZMC from 𠂔 (**kon*). XQL is either allograph or loan for XZMC 患 (**grons*). See FSJ (2007: 233).
 XQL31/XZMC42

 躁. XQL from 巢 (**dzraw*) phonorphic; XZMC from 鼻 (**saws*) phonorphic. Former appears to be loan for latter. See FSJ (2007: 233).
 XQL35/XZMC62

 陶. XQL from 缶 (**pju?*) phonorphic; XZMC from 𠂔 (**ljaw?*), both apparently loans for 陶 (**b-lu*). See FSJ (2007: 233-4).
 XQL35/XZMC42


 陶. XQL from 缶 (**pju?*) phonorphic; XZMC from 𠂔 (**ljaw?*), both apparently loans for 陶 (**b-lu*). See FSJ (2007: 233-4).
 XQL36/XZMC44


² Xu Zaiguo 徐在國 and Huang Dekuan 黃德寬, “Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu (yi) Ziyi, Xingqinglun shiwen buzheng” 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書(一)《緇衣》《性情論》釋文補正”, *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 古籍整理研究學刊 2002.2: 1-6.


³ Xu Zaiguo and Huang Dekuan, “Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu (yi) Ziyi, Xingqinglun shiwen buzheng”, *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 2002.2: 1-6.

⁴ Chen Jian 陳劍, “Guodian jian bushi san pian” 郭店簡補釋三篇, *Gu mu xin zhi* 古墓新知 (Hong Kong: Guoji Yan Huang chubanshe, 2003), pp. 114-131.

⁵ For examples of graphs from 𠂔 standing for graphs featuring the phonorphic 登 in the modern script, see Bai Yulan 白於藍, *Jian du boshu tongjia zidian* 簡牘帛書通假字字典 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin, 2008), p. 241.


 XQL apparently from 黍 (*tshjit) phonophoric and 人 semantic; XZMC from 即 (*tsjak) phonophoric and 是 semantic. XQL appears to be a loan for XZMC, but it is difficult to rule out the possibility that they represent two different words since they appear in a vague binome. See FSJ (2007: 235-6).


 仁. XZMC has standard Chu orthography, from 身 (*hjin) phonophoric. XQL is from 窮 (*gjuj) phonophoric. In Chu script, however, 窮 can be written from a 身 phonophoric, e.g.:


《窮達以時》 

Thus, the two are allographs and essentially from the same phonophoric. See FSJ (2007: 238-9)


Lexical variants


 生 營. In this one instance, XQL reads 生 where XZMC reads 營. Though these are both viable loans for 性 “nature” in *kaishu*, FSJ (2007: 209-211) shows that such a loan is unprecedented in Chu script and that these are mostly likely lexical variants.


 正 奠. 正 (*tjeŋ) “fix” and 奠 (*dins) “base”, “fix” are etymologically related, thus this does not appear to be phonological loan. Both orthographies occur elsewhere in both texts.


 但 殺. This graph occurs in a compound “浸 (嘍) ~” descriptive of the act of crying. Scholars have read XQL as 焊、是 and 但. XZMC is from 殺 phonophoric, 水 semantic. See FSJ (2007: 222-3).


 動 豐.


 Editors read as different words—廣廣 vs. 注注. Li Ling suggests XZMC 主 phonophoric might be mistake for the 主 phonophoric of XQL.⁶

 居 疢. Essentially homophones and synonyms. 3 instances of divergence.

 矣 壹. Both are common grammar particles in Chu script, apparently allographs. 4 instances of divergence.

 直 十. Since context does not absolutely militate against either reading, these appear to be lexical variants.⁷

 忻 怡. See FSJ (2007: 236-7).

 XZMC reads 悅 (*ljot) “happy”. Li Tianhong has identified XQL as from 卯 (*mru?) phonophoric and 糸 semantic. This orthography is unattested, but it probably has the same sense.⁸

 慧 快. (See above)

Omissions/additions
XZMC34-35 adds 40 graphs (喜斯...愠之終也)
XQL8 adds 也
XQL21 adds 也
XQL39 has punctuation vs. XZMC49 has 矣

⁶ Li Ling 李零, “Guodian Chu jian jiaodu ji” 郭店楚簡校讀記, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 17: 507; *Shangbo Chu jian san pian jiaodu ji* 上博楚簡三篇校讀記 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou, 2002), p. 78.

⁷ Li Ling does try to argue that 直 (*drjak) might be a loan for 十 (*djup) through some complicated phonology. See Li Ling, *Shangbo Chu jian san pian jiaodu ji*, p. 81; FSJ (2007: 229-230).

⁸ Li Tianhong 李天虹, *Guodian zhujian Xingzimingchu yanjiu* 郭店竹簡《性自命出》研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu, 2003), p. 145.