# Early Chinese Manuscript Collections

SAYINGS, MEMORY, VERSE, AND KNOWLEDGE

Rens Krijgsman

BRILL

Early Chinese Manuscript Collections

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Introduction

This book discusses what happens when multiple texts are brought together on the same manuscript. It examines how texts, whether originally in oral, remembered, or written form, were gathered and integrated on manuscripts, how collections were received, and how they influenced transmission and shaped access to knowledge and text. This study asks what changed when independent sayings, stories, verse, and prayers were brought together into a single collection. How did the physical format of the manuscripts shape the texts they carried? How did recipients approach and use collections, and what did they take away from them? What extra levels of meaning and potential for interpretation were unlocked? How did qualities such as morality, causality, genre, and technique, which transcend individual texts, emerge out of the collocation of similar texts?

I use the term "collection" as a broad term to refer to single manuscripts containing multiple (originally) distinct texts.[1] These texts can be integrated as a composite or simply included side by side. Collections provided a selection of text considered useful and important by their producers and users, and transmitted these selections to later generations of users. I use "collection" to cover the whole process or life-cycle if you will, involving gathering, selecting, integrating, and, organizing, transmitting, and receiving text in manuscript form.

Two short examples from Chapter 1 show why I study such a broad range of features of gathering text through the lens of collections. The Guodian *Yucong* 語叢 4 (*Thicket of Sayings*, the asterisk indicates a title given by the editors and not present on the manuscript) manuscript presents a selection of rhymed sayings with counterparts across the early literature loosely grouped together by theme. It is a classic example of a collection in the sense of a relatively unorganized selection of texts.

> (1) 言以始[*lhəʔ]，▎ 情以久[*kwəʔ] 。▎
> 靡言不酬[*du]， 靡德亡報[*pû] 。▎

> [A relationship]
> Begins with words, [but] endures through true affections.
> There are no words left unreplied; there is no virtue left unrequited.

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1 Other, more specific terms such as "compilation," "compendium," "anthology," and "florilegium," are predominantly used to describe products of mature text cultures, involving highly conscious selection and editorial procedures, and seem less applicable to the wider, and less strictly circumscribed, range of options of gathering text that I discuss in this book.

言(2) 而苟[*kôʔ]，牆有耳[*nəʔ] 。｜
往言傷人[*nin]，來言傷己[*kəʔ] 。｜

When words are capricious, the walls have ears:
The words that go forth injure others; the words that come back injure
the self.

(4) 口不慎[*dins]，而戶之閉[*pîts]，
惡言復己[*kəʔ]，而死無日[*nit]∎

[When your] mouth is incautious and [your] door is shut,
Malicious words will come back to you, and [your] days will be numbered.[2]

The text includes a number of such blocks of rhymed sayings, but what sets
it apart, really, from a manuscript such as the Shanghai Museum *Fan wu liu
xing* 凡物流形 (*All things flow into form*)? That manuscript, while likewise
composed of rhymed sayings with parallels in other texts, integrates these to a
larger extent. The sayings are presented in a relatively consistently structured
question and answer format spanning the manuscript:

(7) [...] 祭祀奚升[*lhəŋ]， 吾如之何使飽[*prûʔ]? 順天之道[*lûʔ]， 吾
奚以為首[*lhuʔ]? 吾欲得 (8) 百姓之和，吾奚事之[*tə]? 敬天之明奚
得[*têk]? 鬼之神奚食[*m-lək]? 先王之智▬奚備[*brəkh]?

What rises up in sacrifices, and how does one satiate [the ancestors]? In
following the way of heaven, what does one take as beginning? When one
wants to obtain the compliance of the hundred surnames, how does one
serve them? How does one respect heaven's brilliance? How do the spirits
of ghosts eat? How is the wisdom of the former kings procured?

聞之曰:升 (9）高從埤[*pe]，至遠從邇[*neʔ]。十圍之木[*môk]，其始
生如蘗[*ŋat]。足將至千里[*rəʔ]，從寸始[*lhəʔ]。 ┗

I have heard it said that: "To rise high you have to start from below. To
reach far you have to start from nearby. A tree of ten arm spans is like a

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2 The edition and translation follows Cook 2012: 910–11. Phonological reconstructions follow
   Schuessler 2009 where possible, but rely on Baxter and Sagart 2014 when reconstructions are
   absent in Schuessler.

> sapling when first growing. When you are about to traverse a thousand miles on foot, you have to start with an inch."[3]

A series of questions is answered with reference to a selection of sayings. This pattern is repeated throughout the text, and additionally, there is a topical focus on the "holding on to the one" (*zhi yi* 執一) in many of the answers. All of this suggest a much more concerted attempt at integrating the materials. The *Fan wu liu xing*'s level of organization was made possible by gathering distinct materials together, but whether thematic or argumentative organization occurred after a collection had already taken shape or guided the act of collection itself, the result may be quite similar.[4]

Certain collections drew on paratextual and visual forms of organization to bring multiple texts together in an almost rhetorical statement of completeness, a classic and highly advanced case can be found in what has been called the *Four Lost Classics* from Mawangdui.[5] That silk manuscript collects several texts and carefully structured collections of sayings and narratives. It is famous for its association with the Yellow Emperor and parallels to the transmitted *Laozi* 老子.[6] The *Four Lost Classics* is the perfect example of the potential scope of an early Chinese collection in manuscript form. Nevertheless, its very size and complexity belie the often much simpler form and smaller scale of early Chinese manuscript collections.

Because levels of organization present a sliding scale from the "ragbag" sometimes referred to in the literature,[7] all the way to the profound unifying meanings sometimes discovered in collections,[8] it makes sense to treat them together. As material objects, they would have come to their users as a single unit, and these users would have a range of possible ways of finding common ground among the materials of the collection. Who is to say that

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3   The edition and translation are my own, for a discussion, see Chapter 1 below.

4   Both of these collections pale in light of the concerted levels of organization seen in the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 "Chushuo" 儲說 anecdote chapters, for instance. Du 2020 argues that the organizing paratexts in these chapters were consciously imposed on top of existing collections to manage their information and the ways to memorize it.

5   Vankeerberghen 2015. Note especially her discussion on pp. 314–15 on the processes necessary for the creation of the manuscript and the collection of its texts, to form what she calls an "inclusive text."

6   See You 2021 for a study analyzing the paratextual organization of the *Shiliu jing* 十六經, one of the collections gathered on the manuscript, comprised of narratives and technical materials associated with the Yellow Emperor.

7   De Reu 2015: 243–96.

8   For example, the "one thread" tying together the teachings of Confucius in the *Lunyu*; see Makeham 2003 and Hunter and Kern 2018: 1–2.

the reader(s) or teacher(s) of *Yucong* 4 likewise did not imbue it with more complex levels of organization? An added advantage of treating collections of different levels of integration together is that it allows us to look for shared patterns in the (re-)use of text and manuscript across genres. This way, we can explore larger questions on the role that collections in manuscript form played in (re-)distributing, (re-)integrating, and (re-)interpreting knowledge from the stream of tradition as opposed to "schools," "traditions," and "genres," for example.

I use "collections" to cover both "multiple-text manuscripts" (MTMs) and composite texts. The former term focuses on the inclusion of multiple distinct texts on a single material carrier.[9] The latter, while likewise composed at least in part of sections of previously independent text, integrates these into a single composition.[10] Multiple composite texts were also sometimes gathered on a single manuscript, forming a collection of collections in its own right. I include both of these elements of manuscript and text production to acknowledge that sometimes the lines are hard to draw. Take the Shanghai Museum *Zhuangwang ji cheng* 莊王既成 (*King Zhuang Had Completed*) as an example. This manuscript carries two historical anecdotes, clearly related in topic yet visually marked as distinct texts. Reading it as an MTM would focus on their shared materiality and the motives for bringing together individual texts on a single carrier. Read as a composite, however, historiographical claims transcending the component texts emerge.[11]

My use of "collection" in this study is meant to reflect this broad range of functions enabled when manuscripts bring together a variety of types and forms of text onto a single carrier. A fair share of these collections may not have started out in manuscript form but emerged in oral traditions, and some of them continued to grow over time, and some became organically integrated to the extent that they came to be perceived as a single text.[12] Many of the technical collections discussed in Chapter 4 are MTMs in that they contain a planned selection of multiple individually differentiated texts within the space of a single material carrier and were often expanded at later stages. Some of these

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9   See the introduction to Friedrich and Schwarke (2016: 15–16) and the definition in the follow-up volume, Bausi, Friedrich, and Mariachi (2019: vii) where MTMs are considered "made up of more than one text and have been planned and realised for a single project with one consistent intention; as a result, they are usually made of a single production unit."

10   For a discussion on composite texts, see Boltz 2005.

11   For an example of these approaches, see Krijgsman and Vogt 2019.

12   The line is not easily drawn between composite texts and MTMs: when does an arrangement of previously existing texts become a single unit? In cases, it has been shown that MTMs were instrumental in the formation of new, singular textual units, effectively forming a new text out of multiple parts. See, for instance, Xiao 2013.

feature a selection so varied that they are often referred to as miscellanies.[13] Others, such as the historiographical collection *Rongchengshi* 容成氏, examined in Chapter 2 for example, are similar to a composite in that originally independent component units were molded into a single text.

Some of the manuscript texts discussed in this book will resemble composites and others will behave more like an MTM, and it is not clear to what extent early Chinese recipients cared about such distinctions.[14] As such, while these terms are useful for clarifying the production of collections, they are less useful for understanding questions of reception. The way collections were approached by users was not solely determined by the origins of the texts or the way these were integrated in the production of the manuscript. The users and producers of collections likewise did not strictly adhere to the genre divisions that crystalized in the early empire, as evidenced by the collection of historical and divinatory, or calendrical and hemerological, materials on a single carrier, as discussed in Chapter 4.

To take an example from Chapter 4, the *Liang chen* 良臣 (*Good Ministers*) and the *Zhu ci* 祝辭 (*Words of Prayer*) texts were written by the same scribe on the same manuscript carrier.[15] Where the former text presents a list of famous ministers from antiquity, the latter collects a number of spells and prayers against drowning and to ensure success in archery. While clearly an attempt was made to format the two collections in visually similar ways by using punctuation and a similar layout (figure 1, below), the texts themselves could not be more different in terms of content.

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13   On technical miscellanies, see for example Harper 2018.

14   It should be noted that for much of the Warring States period, a single manuscript carrier appears to refer to a single roll of bamboo, silk, or bundle of wood. But this general observation comes with two major caveats. For one, the poor state of preservation of many of the manuscripts and the state of disarray that saw them emerge from the tomb or antique market—and as such often compounded with a lack of archaeological context—makes it hard to establish the existence of manuscripts composed of multiple rolls. Analysis by Staack 2018 shows that at least from the Qin dynasty onwards, such distinctions were made for administrative documents, and it is entirely likely that material forms of gathering multiple manuscript rolls (whether of similar material features or not) likewise existed during earlier periods.

As an example, the Guodian *Laozi* manuscripts discussed in Chapter One were composed of three rolls with different material characteristics and may be considered three different production units. Nevertheless, it is entirely possible that these were considered to form a single unit by a recipient, regardless of these material differences. Judging from the way texts were organized in the Han imperial library, it seems that similar concerns governed the understanding of manuscript and text; for an overview, see Fölster and Staack 2021.

15   Li Xueqin 2012: 3.156–65. For a recent overview of the manuscript and the script, including a discussion on Jin script influences on the writing, see Li Songru 2020.

五　四　三　二　一　　　　二　一〇　九　八　七　六　五　四　三　二　一
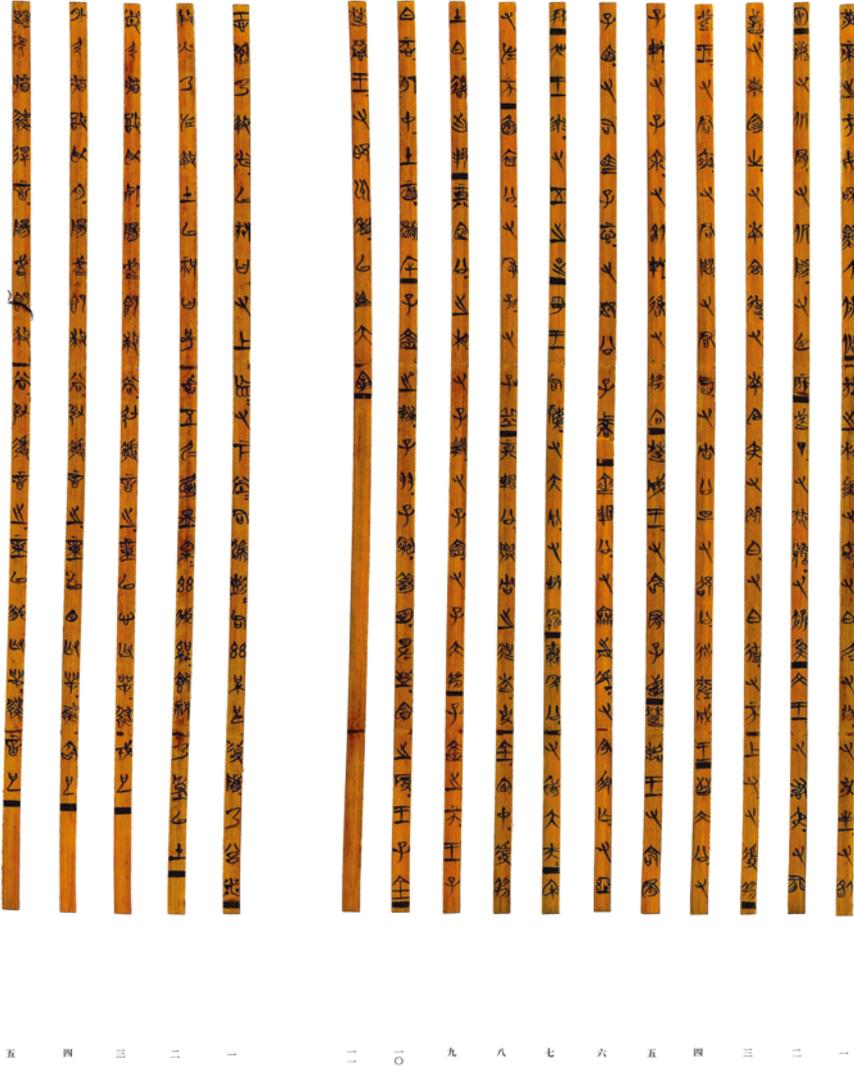
FIGURE 1   The visual layout of the *Liang chen* and *Zhu ci*

For example, on slip two of the *Liang chen* we find a list of ministers for Tang
湯, the founder of the Shang dynasty:

唐有伊尹，▬有伊陟，▬有臣扈。■

Tang had Yi Yin, Yi Zhi, and Minister Hu.

A typical example from slip 1 of the *Zhu ci* can be found in the following prayer against drowning:

> 恐溺，乃執幣━以祝曰：“有上茫茫，有下湯湯，司湍滂滂，侯茲某也發揚。”━乃舍幣。■

> When in fear of drowning, grab a bolt of silk, and say the following prayer: "Above it is brimming, below it is rushing, the manager of rapids is vast and flowing, let this person soar!" Then discard the bolt of silk.

The two texts are vastly different in genre and style, and while both present a list of collected items, knowledge of ministers of antiquity was arguably used in different contexts than prayers against drowning. As such, the reason for collecting these two collections on the same manuscript should probably not be sought primarily in the texts but rather in their material form. The use of two instead of three binding strings and the use of the full length of the slips including the fragile ends suggests that little care was taken to protect the writing on the slips. The extensive use of punctuation to divide the items in the list may point to uses for memorization or consultation as it would have helped a reader to parse the text and highlight individual items. Maybe the manuscript was used as an *aide de memoire*, and was meant to transfer a collection of text to the user's memory. This brings us to the problem of orality and memory culture.

1 A Note on Orality

The nature of orality precludes any discussion of collections before their appearance in written form. We do not have concrete evidence of the oral practices that likely informed much of the production, teaching, transmission, and reception of text in early China. In all likelihood, advanced wielders of text that did not rely on written artifacts carried a "collection" of materials in their memories.[16] Given the lack of evidence to substantiate the details and extent of these practices, this book analyses collections preserved in writing. To what extent and at which moments oral traditions fed into written collections is likewise unclear, but for the vast majority of texts, especially sayings, anecdotes, songs, and even spells and recipes, it seems clear that at some points these texts were generated and transmitted in settings that did not rely (at least extensively) on writing.

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16   Li Ling 2004: 202.

I also do not believe the evidence suggests that with the spread of writing, oral traditions simply disappeared; instead, as I have argued elsewhere, writing would need to prove its qualities and advantages over other forms of communication for an extended period.[17] Where such phenomena have been documented in greater detail, oral traditions and the written word coexisted for long periods of time.[18] Anecdotes and sayings were still remembered, retold, and changed in the telling. Songs were still sung and appreciated for their rhythm and musicality, and technical experts were still being hired—all while the manuscripts of the period increasingly circumscribed the texts that accompanied these practices as stand-alone, fixed, and organized, and with a clearer awareness of specific wording and meaning. In other words, lived traditions that continuously reshaped the cultural body of text did not just stop or become irrelevant with the use of written collections.

Nevertheless, collecting texts in manuscript form must have influenced the ways in which users interacted with the contents and communicated the materials over time and distance. Collecting text in manuscript form provides a platform to aid memorization, a central selection of texts around which oral teachings can be organized, or it ossifies in written form a snapshot of the range of texts that communities relied on in their still largely oral and memory-based text practices, all the while making a ritual and rhetorical claim to completeness of knowledge.[19] In their written form, these manuscripts would have been better suited for shaping the reception by communities and preserving continuities of selection, organization, and interpretation over distance and time, thereby influencing the access to text by later generations.[20] These selections, once put to writing, need not have been final, and Chapter 4 especially will highlight several examples in which texts were added to existing collections—collecting is an ongoing process, and in order to fully appreciate this process the whole life-cycle of a manuscript needs to be considered.[21]

In all likelihood, many of the hallmark collections of early China, say the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*) or the *Laozi*, grew out of oral teachings and communities that relied predominantly on practices other than writing. Nevertheless, recollections of such oral practice handed down by tradition tend to occur in texts originating or taking final form only in periods long after these supposed early contexts, and arguments have been made towards understanding at least

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17   Krijgsman 2019: 104–08.

18   For example, Clanchy 2013: 255, 295; Thomas 1992: 12–14.

19   Sanft (2019: 54–73) notes how access to text and interpretive frameworks was often mediated by communities and did not necessarily take written form.

20   For comparative cases, see Johnson 2010 and Stock 1983.

21   See, for example, Johnston and Van Dussen 2015: 8–10.

part of the use of oral teaching scenes as a literary conceit generating a sense of originality, authority, and veracity.[22] Traces of orality are extremely hard to pin down and reconstruct accurately, and as such I limit my discussion to the state of collections in written form—acknowledging that the gathering, integration, and appreciation of texts as collections must have continued in oral form long after we find the first examples of written collections.[23]

2 Collecting Text in a Manuscript Culture

Writing preserved from before the Warring States period occurs predominantly on ritual objects of bronze, stone, and bone, but these weighty media tend to contain single texts and appear far removed from what we comfortably recognize as collections.[24] Obviously, these media were not the sole or indeed the predominant method of transmitting text. Indeed, the transmission of ideas and cultural memory among the literate elite appears to have drawn heavily on oral, ritual, and other performative modes of communication.[25]

Written evidence for the collections central to this book appears first on bamboo, and to a lesser extent, silk and wooden, manuscripts from the Warring States period and early empires (roughly the fifth to second centuries BCE). As the evidence stands, it appears that during this period, a manuscript culture emerged, or at least gained in prominence, and there was an increase in the spread and reliance on lightweight carriers such as bamboo manuscripts for

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22 Denecke 2010: 25, 66.
23 For discussions on oral literature and collections arranged by list and corpora, see Vansina 1985 and Finnegan 1988 respectively. For theorization in relation to early text cultures, see Jan Assmann 2011.
24 While there is evidence of brush writing and the existence of bamboo manuscripts from the Shang dynasty onwards, as of yet there is no hard evidence for their widespread use (i.e., beyond ritual centers), or a broad reliance of society on these materials. For the Shang evidence, see Bagley 2004: 218.
      The use of written text on ritually significant objects gains in prominence and functionality during the Western Zhou period, but text and object still tend to be wedded into artifacts of ritually encoded meaning, whether they were boundary markers, contracts, oaths, or simply ritual vessels used in sacrifices; see for instance Kern 2009: 143–200; Li Feng 2011: 271–301.
25 Based on ritual texts and sacrificial bronzes, von Falkenhausen (1993, 139–226) argues that bamboo manuscripts played a role in many of the ritual proceedings that accompanied the bestowal of gifts and sacrifices, but he likewise notes the prominence of oral performance over text in the transmission of ideas and memory.

transmitting and communicating text and ideas.[26] Before this period, there is no hard evidence for the widespread use of collections or lightweight manuscripts, and while it seems likely that these existed they cannot be shown to have had a widespread impact.[27] The term manuscript culture used here denotes more than just the existence of manuscripts,[28] rather it points to these exerting a broad and noticeable influence in the development of written culture, whether it be significant developments in administration, literature, historiography, thought, or technology.[29]

I am therefore not claiming that the lack of bamboo or other manuscripts in tombs or other sites dated before the Warring States period suggests that they were not used at all. For one, this would simply reflect a preservation bias, on which more below.[30] I am claiming that *as of yet* there are no indications, archaeological or historical, that bamboo or other lightweight media played a *significant* role in communicating, let alone broadly *disseminating*, text and knowledge beyond small enclosed circles. Only from the Warring States period onward is physical evidence available for such an increase in reliance on manuscripts.[31] This phenomenon coincides with a marked increase in reflections on the use of written media in transmitted literature, developments in

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26   See especially Meyer 2011, Richter 2013, Nylan 2011, Galambos 2006. For developments in early medieval China, see Nugent, 2011, Tian Xiaofei 2013, Zhang Yongquan 2013.

27   *Pace* Li Feng 2012. For a critique, see Krijgsman 2012: 136–38.

28   The term manuscript culture was popularized by Marshall McLuhan (1962), who used it to distinguish a phase in media development prior to print culture.

29   Currently the term "manuscript culture" is often used in a configuration of new approaches to pre-print materials. These approaches include, for example, the "New Philology" as described by Stephen G. Nichols (1990: 1–10), a focus on "scribal culture" represented by the work of Karel van der Toorn (2007), and the notion of textual anthropology coined by Markus Hilgert (2010); or in the different forms of cultural exchange enabled and foreclosed by manuscripts as compared to print; see Johnston and Van Dussen 2015: 1. All these approaches share a sensitivity to issues of authorship, the importance of paratextual and other material features of manuscripts, the problem of critical editions, issues of intertextuality, and a consideration of larger cultural developments centering around actor network theory and other models describing the interaction between (groups of) people and artifacts, for instance.

30   Sobering are the numbers of manuscripts produced per capita in medieval to early modern Europe extrapolated in Eltjo Buringh and Jan Luiten Van Zanden (2009: 409–45). The British Isles during the sixth century produced roughly 0.9 manuscripts per million inhabitants, and front-runner Italy about 25.5 (p. 421, Table 3). What this suggests is that we should not expect to see vast numbers of manuscripts from the early stages of a manuscript culture, even when noting that early China likely had a much larger population than early European regions. See for example, Nishijima 1986: 595–96.

31   For overviews, see for instance, von Falkenhausen 2003: 439–526, Thote 2016: 11–56, and Tsien Tsuen Hsiun 2013.

the vocabulary for reading, and changes in the perception, production, use, and forms of text.[32]

Traditional narratives place the origins of the classical tradition in the early Western Zhou with texts such as the *Documents* (*Shu* 書), *Odes* (*Shi* 詩), and the *Changes* (*Yi* 易), but they also place these within the enclosed confines of the court(s), whether in the hands of kings, high aristocrats, or scribes. The next step in the traditional narrative of text, media, and transmission is usually centered on Confucius, who is credited with organizing the disarray of early text in the twilight years of his life (551–479 BCE), and becomes known as someone who *restored* a past no longer known or available to his contemporaries.[33]

At this point, there are still no claims of a widespread circulation and use of physical texts. Neither is there any claim towards significant production or reproduction of text in writing. Indeed, references to the use of written text in transmitting thought appear only in texts traditionally dated to the Warring States period.[34] If one were to subscribe to the position that an elevation in the status of written text started roughly with Confucius, is it so difficult to imagine that the widespread adoption and social effects of such practices occurred only slowly within the centuries that followed his death?

At the same time, an expansion in the user base of the manuscripts occurred. Writing moved out of the confines of the central and local courts, and as it did, it was increasingly used by persuaders, thinkers, and teachers—often grouped together as the *shi* 士 class.[35] These groups put the written word to a range of different uses and entered previously untouched areas of discourse. Crucial here is the movability of these light, relatively cheap, and easily replaced bamboo manuscripts. Even though bamboo was bulkier than its silk, and later, paper, counterparts, it was quite durable and far more suited to travel than the more resource- and labor-intensive bronze, bone, and stone. These easily transportable manuscripts enabled a rapid spread of texts over large areas.[36] Starting from the Warring States period, there is excavated evidence showing that wise sayings, historical anecdotes and legends, song and verse, prayers,

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32   Meyer 2014a: 21–38, Lewis 1999 (especially Chapter 2), Behr and Führer 2005: 1–42, Krijgsman 2019: 75–110.

33   It should be noted that for all these steps in the traditional narrative, we rely on accounts from texts hundreds of years later, and these do not make clear whether or not the use of texts in these circles relied on written text at all. Indeed, record-keeping scribes aside, it is entirely likely that the education of aristocrats in the central states took the form of oral teachings. For a balanced discussion including a review of the traditional account, see Nylan 2001: 16–31.

34   Krijgsman 2019.

35   See Lewis 1999 (especially pp. 63–83) and Hsu 1965.

36   Meyer 2014a.

and divinations were preserved on manuscripts throughout the Chinese cultural sphere.[37]

3   Collections in Manuscript Form

At a certain moment—we only have material evidence from the mid-Warring States period onwards—it appears that a critical mass was reached. Texts that were previously circulating independently, whether in oral, remembered, or written form, were brought together in the space of a single manuscript, forming collections. Archaeologically excavated tombs, whether of lowly clerks or aristocrats, and recovered looted caches of texts have revealed rather eclectic selections of manuscripts spanning the spectrum of traditional schools of thought and divisions of literature.[38] They tend to be shorter compositions, often without a title, and without any indication of authorship. Some (parts of) classical texts known from tradition have been unearthed too, but even these familiar texts tend not to be of the same length, order, or even wording as their received counterparts.[39] Comparing the unearthed to the transmitted record thus reveals significant differences in both the kind and distribution of text.

Collections occupy a surprisingly central place within this newly discovered realm of manuscript and text. Whether in Warring States tombs containing predominantly literary materials such as Guodian tomb 1; retrieved caches of looted manuscripts spanning the range of technical and literary manuscripts such as those held by Tsinghua University and the Shanghai Museum; or the early imperial tombs predominantly containing technical materials such as Zhoujiatai, they all contain several collections alongside single-text manuscripts.[40] Why are collections so prominent in the early textual landscape?

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37   For an overview in Chinese, see for example Pian Yuqian and Duan Shu'an 2006. For an early overview in English see Giele 1998–1999: 247–337. For indications of spread across states, see Zhou Bo 2012 and Venture 2009: 943–58.

38   Kalinowski 2003; Li Ling 2004.

39   See for example Shaughnessy 2021, and Kern 2002.

40   For a study and introduction of the Guodian materials, see Cook 2012. For the Tsinghua manuscripts, see Liu Guozhong 2011, and the English translation by Foster and French 2016. For a series introducing the Shanghai Museum collection, including translations in modern Chinese, see Ji Xusheng 2004–2017; Richter (2013) also has a clear introduction on the scope of the Shanghai Museum manuscripts. For the Zhoujiatai, and indeed most of the Qin dynasty manuscript finds, the introductions and annotations in Chen Wei ed. 2014 are the standard. Harper 2018 provides a good introduction to the Zhoujiatai technical materials in English.

I suggest that one of the main forces behind the formation of collections is exactly the proliferation of written text during the period. Remembered text appears to have been increasingly written down in manuscript form, and new compositions were likewise increasingly written out on bamboo. An increase in the overall presence of text presents a twofold problem: how to gather as many texts as possible in a context of limited access and how to select relevant texts from an increasing range of options.[41]

In all likelihood, there was no indexed library or reference system before Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE) and Liu Xin 劉歆 (50 BCE–23 CE) organized the imperial collections, let alone on local levels of society, and it must have been hard to know which texts were out there and where to find them. Indeed, the excavated evidence suggests that the materials encountered by early collectors were often not clearly labeled or necessarily self-contained and established textual units. As such, increased mobility of people and presence of text aside, finding relevant text would still have presented a problem for many people and communities.[42] The collection offered a format for gathering multiple texts into a single, handy carrier, in essence forming a small mobile library. Once text was gathered, whether transcribed from memory or copied from existing manuscripts, it could be accessed in a handy format even when distance proved long and memory limited. In this way, the collection provided a way to deal with the lack of direct access to texts.

Relevance presents the second problem encountered with increased availability of text. Unearthed evidence has revealed the presence of multiple copies of the same manuscript text, sometimes in different versions, even within the same cache.[43] Sections of text, whether individual sayings, songs, or stories, likewise occurred in varying versions within the same corpus and across the textual landscape as a whole.[44] These different takes on the same subject present a problem of choice. As will become clear in the chapters below, collections had different strategies for dealing with this problem. Some, such as the technical collections discussed in Chapter 4, likely in response to problems

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41   These two aspects might appear contradictory, but it should be noted that availability in the broad sense does not necessarily mean knowledge of, or access to, this range of options. For a stimulating discussion on how access to knowledge and taste through syllabi informs access to the canon, see Guillory 1993.

42   Networks and communities can be effective ways of increasing access to text, particularly revealing is a letter from Oxyrhynchus, see Thomas (1992: 1). Nevertheless, even communities would have struggled to gain knowledge of materials outside of their regional sphere or beyond the demographic make-up of their members. How would a local Chu community gain access to a Jin manuscript, for instance?

43   For studies, see for example Richter 2009; Morgan 2011; Krijgsman 2019: 83–91.

44   For examples from Guodian and the Shanghai Museum corpus, see Krijgsman 2014.

of access mentioned above, chose to embrace variance, and often collected different versions of the same recipe or spell. Others, such as the anecdote collections discussed in Chapter 2 made a selection, and chose a particular version most suited to the argument of the collection even though we know there were different versions potentially available.[45] As Bausi notes for Ethiopian manuscripts, the collection often works as a corpus organizer in that it purposefully selects a relevant subset of texts from the larger realm of texts in the ether, whether in song, memory, or written form.[46] This observation tallies well with early Chinese collections, which drew from a vast range of songs, anecdotes, sayings, and techniques preserved in the cultural memory of early China as well as more recent texts reflecting current concerns.[47]

4   The Form and Use of Collections

Most of the collections familiar to us in Chinese literary history were state-sponsored megaprojects, such as the *Zhong shu* 中書 or the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽.[48] These were the result of heavy editing, organization, and categorization by known librarians and editors, often with quite explicit goals.[49] This programmatic approach to compiling text is evidenced as early as the Han dynasty with Liu Xiang and Liu Xin's (re)ordering of the textual landscape to serve imperial needs more effectively.[50] One central problem in dealing with excavated manuscripts from the Warring States and early empires is that we often simply do not know who did the collecting and why, nor do we have a clear picture of which texts they had available to select from, whether they actively edited or otherwise reshaped these in the process, and to what extent the results influenced a later readership. To approach the production and use

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45   As shown for instance in the existence of two different versions of the *Wuwang jian-zuo* 武王踐阼 text on a single manuscript, see Krijgsman 2019: 83–90 for a discussion. Nevertheless, the concrete levels of access to multiple versions is unclear and the current state of evidence does not allow us to reconstruct how many different versions of a given text, if at all, any potential user or community would have had access to.

46   Bausi 2010.

47   Li Ling 2004: 202, Boltz 2005: 63, Fischer 2009, and Krijgsman 2014 all discuss the practice of early texts to draw from a corpus of readily available (inter)textual material and adapt it to their specific arguments.

48   For a recent collection of relevant studies on especially later collections, see Jack W. Chen 2021.

49   For a study see Kurz 2007.

50   Hunter 2018.

of collections in manuscript form, a closer look at their material and literary forms of organizing text is required.

On the material side, collections drew on the visual and physical potential of the carrier to organize texts on the manuscript. This codicological toolkit included, among others, the size, binding, and form of the manuscript, the use of punctuation, titles, and subtitles, or simply the layout and order of the texts.[51] These material characteristics of the manuscript can be fruitfully analyzed as paratextual devices mediating the reader's engagement with the materials and reveal how they were likely meant to be used.[52] Punctuation and titles, for example, guide the reading process by dividing individual texts, signaling a reader where to pause, pay attention, or differentiate sections, and in turn favor certain usages of its texts. In terms of the general production quality, some manuscripts are easily identified as rough copies or the work of scribes in training, whereas others were produced with more care, including binding and formatting that favored increased durability in use, or more legible and carefully executed writing. Given that information on the collectors and recipients themselves is largely absent, as is true for most early texts, an analysis of manuscript codicology allows us to make more reasoned predictions about the envisioned use of the manuscript.

From a literary point of view, the collections under discussion offer varying degrees of topical grouping and other forms of textual organization including, for example, chronological, narrative, or rhythmic arrangements. These structures embed the texts in the collection under a larger context or even intellectual program and in doing so reveal the function, if not the underlying rationale, of gathering a particular set of texts together. Structures such as rhyme guide the reading process, signaling what text belongs together, and frame narratives focus the envisioned interpretation of the songs or stories they embed, for example.

As a result of material and literary organization, the collection is more than just the sum of its parts. Whether planned out by a collector or perceived by a recipient, multiple texts gathered in close physical proximity will always have a greater inherent *potential* for meaning than a single unit simply by virtue of the interplay between the component parts.[53] The materiality of the manuscript collections that this book discusses is crucial. Given the high level of

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51   For an overview, see Cheng Pengwan 2017; for studies of manuscript codicology to analyze use, see Richter 2011, and Krijgsman 2018.

52   Genette 1997.

53   My understanding draws on reception theory and the study of the book, for example, Jauss 1970; Iser 1978; Fish 1982; Chartier 1994; Genette 1997; McKenzie 1999.

intertextuality of many early Chinese texts and the weight of remembered tradition brought to any reception of text, the act of gathering a selection of texts within a single volume focuses the reception experience and narrows the horizon of expectations.

Put simply, texts bound together are more easily perceived as related, and as such connections are more easily perceived within the limited space of the collection. As a result, functions or qualities emerge from perceived relations between the texts. Some of these qualities are prefigured in the text, for example in the form of genre labels or recurring structuring devices highlighting causality.[54] In other cases, the relations between the materials emerge from the recipient's discovery of areas of commonality or difference among the materials. Most recipients would recognize a topical grouping and would observe similarities among materials without these necessarily being explicitly marked, and a more daring recipient might extend such similarities to draw broader conclusions about, say, the moral, historiographical, or technological potential of a particular arrangement of texts.[55] In that sense, the collection on the one hand draws on a recipient's horizon of expectations (i.e., their existing assumptions of similarity and difference), while on the other hand it actively constructs the literary microcosm that shapes those very expectations. This brings us to the potential influence of collections on the language habits and textual preferences of recipients.

5   The Role of Collections in Early China

How did early collections contribute to the development of early Chinese literature as a whole? Consider for example the influence of the following classic collections. These examples all ended up with clear bibliographic categorizations, if only through the craft of the Han librarians, and exerted their influence over writing in the genres they shaped.

The sayings collected in texts now known as the *Laozi* and *Lunyu* were fixed in form, or, in the case of the *Laozi*, given a specific authorship attribution, only later in their life.[56] These collections influenced discursive habits for years to come, and texts such as the *Wenzi* 文子 and the *Fayan* 法言 (*Modeled Sayings*) would not have been possible without the selections and

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54   These are paratextual devices in Genette's sense in that they mediate the relationship between reader and text.

55   See Krijgsman and Vogt 2019, for an application of these ideas to historiographical MTMs.

56   Henricks 2000: 7–10; Hunter 2017: 8–12.

arrangements of such primordial collections.[57] Less clear are cases such as the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the Historian*).[58] Crafted as a programmatic narrative history in sections, as a text it could only be a product of the early empire, and it surely pushes—if not crosses—the boundaries of what is best understood as a collection. Nonetheless, the Grand Historian himself is quick to admit that his job consisted of selecting and compiling a range of materials actively sought out and collected from archives, oral history, and earlier accounts of the past.[59] The *Shijing* 詩經 (*Classic of Songs*) is *the* collection that not only shaped the genre of *shi* poetry but became a yardstick for any other poetic form that followed it.[60] Technical collections arguably present some of the best examples of recycling text, and whether legal codes or materia medica, their inheritance of selections of text from earlier collections is visible well into the late empires.[61]

The study of collections, therefore, is fundamental to a revaluation of how text and manuscript worked and were used during the Warring States period and how they shaped the texts that followed in their wake. Arguably, their contribution lay not so much in presenting new knowledge, but rather in recombining, organizing, and transmitting knowledge in ways optimized for various usage contexts and making it accessible to a wide range of audiences. Whether as school text, manual, handbook, or as *aide de memoire*, the collection was a popular and effective method of gathering the knowledge of the time and redistributing it among an increasingly growing readership. Through this process, collections shaped the access to textual knowledge of future readers and writers, and in the process, molded their perceptions and writing habits.

A recognition of the role of collections therefore provides a corrective to views on text formation and transmission overly focused on institutional forces of canonization, or narratives tracing authorship and literary influence as the driving force in the development of early Chinese literature. Accordingly, the study of collections allows us to sidestep traditional divisions by text type to find common ground between prayer and song, anecdote and saying, and appreciate fully the broad interests of Warring States and early imperial collectors, a fact often hidden by traditional understandings categorizing text and user by school and master.[62]

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57 Nylan 2013; van Els 2018.

58 For an excellent discussion of the problems of size and weight involved in writing out a text such as the *Shiji* on bamboo, see Hsing I-tien 2007.

59 Durrant 1995: 32–34.

60 Hunter 2019.

61 Elman 2007: 143–46.

62 Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan 2003; Petersen 1995.

The role of collections in shaping the literary world of the Warring States and beyond should also not be overstated, however, as the legacy of collections in shaping the literary habits and preferences of their users is far from absolute. The song collections discussed in Chapter 3 make this abundantly clear. Many of the topical groupings or even selections of material advanced by these collections did not leave a clear imprint on the shape of later collections. As with many other recently retrieved texts, many of these texts were not transmitted. In other words, the unearthed evidence reveals the range of possibilities faced by Warring States and early imperial text users but certainly does not indicate a linear path of textual formation.

Likewise, while collections were potentially open to continuous recompilation, and some of the examples discussed in this book indeed reveal additions over time, it is also clear that the collection's re-use of existing text does not fit the image of the ring binder, wherein users would freely slot in or take out materials.[63] As the evidence stands, there are no clear signs of unwanted text being removed other than the deliberate destruction characteristic of preparing goods for the grave. Likewise, adding materials often followed a program of sorts even if only by leaving space for future materials.[64] The evidence for continuous rebinding of materials is not as forthcoming, although undoubtedly such instances also occurred, but it seems likely that this process of reorganization may have occurred in the formation of a new collection.

6   Sources and Caveats

Using Warring States manuscripts, while avoiding Han and later imperial constructions, comes with a set of problems of its own. To prepare a manuscript for reading in modern orthography, scholars rely on methods from paleography, phonology, and codicology to reconstruct a text. Just as the Han librarians, modern scholars come with a set of assumptions about standards of transcription, what constitutes a valid reading of a graph, and how texts relate to the manuscript for instance. Improvements in publishing standards, an emerging methodological discussion, and most importantly access to (images of) the manuscripts themselves, however, open these assumptions to critical appraisal and necessary revision.

The question to what degree manuscript finds are representative of larger trends is significant. The majority of Warring States finds comes from tombs in

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63   *Pace* Maeder 1992. See Richter 2018 for a detailed analysis of this problem.
64   Harper 2017: 112–16.

FIGURE 2   Preserving the Tsinghua University slips in trays of distilled water
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION CENTER FOR
UNEARTHED TEXTS, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY, BEIJING

FIGURE 3   Ordering the Tsinghua University slips
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION CENTER FOR
UNEARTHED TEXTS, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY, BEIJING

the ancient Chu 楚 region, an area roughly spanning modern Hubei and Hunan provinces. This area features favorable preservation conditions because high water levels in the soil water-lock organic materials, preventing decay through oxidation. The question is therefore to what extent the materials can represent the Warring States period at large, and not just the Chu region. The presence of "northern" script influences in the materials,[65] seems to indicate that some of the material had been copied from northern base manuscripts and that the tombs in Warring States Chu just happened to preserve the materials whereas others did not.[66]

Another explanation is that placing texts in tombs was an aspect of Chu mortuary culture, which slowly spread across early China during the early empires.[67] Some of the manuscripts, such as tomb inventories and underworld narratives, were specifically produced for the grave, and others show signs of deliberate destruction in the form of erasing of characters and breaking slips, effectively rendering them into burial artifacts.[68] While this aspect needs to be taken into account when using manuscripts as source material, the lion's share of the material does not appear to have been specifically prepared for the grave and can be considered to have had a lifetime before entombment, accordingly the material can be used as a source for broader intellectual and cultural developments at the time.

This study draws from a wide range of manuscript caches from the Warring States period, including Baoshan 包山 and Geling 葛陵,[69] Guodian 郭店, Shanghai Museum 上海博物館, Tsinghua University 清華大學, and Anhui University 安徽大學,[70] up to the early empires, including Peking University

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65   For script analyses and categorizations, see Zhou Bo 2012, Venture 2009, and Feng Shengjun 2007: 250–506. Note also a contemporaneous level of awareness of potential problems in understanding script from different areas. Particularly revealing is the presence of the graph *jie* 解 on the verso of slip 36 of the Guodian **Wuxing* 五行 manuscript, which glosses in Chu script the same word written in Jin script on the recto; see Yanaka Shin'ichi 2000: 6–7.

66   Note also the massive increase in modern development in the region, resulting in a disproportionate number of sites and finds in the region compared to the rest of China. See von Falkenhausen 2003, who also discusses the championing of local identity in Chinese archaeology as partly to blame for this discrepancy in excavations. See also Giele 1998–1999, for a general overview of finds. For the Qin and Han periods, manuscripts have been uncovered from modern Sichuan to the Shandong peninsula.

67   See especially von Falkenhausen 2003.

68   For a discussion on the status of manuscripts as burial items, see Giele 2003.

69   For Baoshan, see Hubei sheng Jingsha tielu kaogudui 1991 and Chen Wei 1996. For Geling, see Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin and Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, eds. 2013 and Song Huaqiang 2010.

70   For Guodian, see Jingmenshi Bowuguan 1998 and Cook 2012. For the Shanghai Museum corpus, see Ma Chengyuan ed. 2001–2012, and Zhu Yuanqing 2002. For the Tsinghua

北京大學, Zhoujiatai 周家臺, and Yueshan 嶽山.[71] I draw on such a broad range of manuscript sources, so as to mitigate distribution biases inherent in manuscript evidence for the period, whether in terms of region, burial practice, selections of individual tombs and caches, and of course, between scientifically excavated and looted manuscripts. Especially for the mid-late Warring States period, many relevant sources stem from looted manuscripts that were retrieved from the antique market.

The material from the Shanghai Museum and Tsinghua University collections, for example, stems from tomb robberies and was purchased on the Hong Kong antique market in 1994 and 2008 respectively. As such, many vital clues from the burial context are unknown, including the status of the tomb owner, the way in which the manuscripts were buried, and the extent to which the manuscripts within the collections are complete or miss certain slips or sections.[72] The collections were dated on the basis of characteristics of the calligraphy, and a calibrated carbon dating of unwritten slips. The Shanghai collection materials were dated to 260 BCE ± 65 years, and the Tsinghua materials to 305 BCE ± 30 years.[73] In the process, paleographers, scientists, and archaeologists from several competing institutions have been involved in the process of authenticating, organizing, and transcribing the materials. The consensus is that the materials are authentic artifacts from the mid to late Warring States period.

Some concerns have been raised regarding the authenticity of looted manuscripts. With famous forgeries such as the Zhejiang University manuscripts in mind,[74] isolated scholars have asserted that some of the manuscripts are forgeries, and by extension, that the status of the sources as a whole is compromised.[75] A closer look at the arguments advanced for this doubt reveals that the main source of concern lies in (a) a perceived discrepancy between the received textual tradition and the excavated manuscripts, and (b) a lack of understanding of the scribal processes that govern manuscript cultures. For

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University manuscripts, see Li Xueqin ed. 2010–2018, Huang Dekuan 2019–2022, and Foster and French 2016. For the Anhui University slips see Anhui daxue hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin, eds. 2019 and the studies collected in a special issue of *Bamboo and Silk* 4.1 (2021).

71   The collections can be found in Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yanjiusuo, eds. 2014. For up to date text editions and overviews of the scholarship of both Zhoujiatai and Yueshan, see vol. 3 of Chen Wei 2014.

72   For a discussion on the relevance of archaeological context, see Giele 2003.

73   See Zhu Yuanqing 2002 and Foster and French 2016.

74   Cao Jinyan 2011.

75   For example, Zhu Qixiang 2015. For an early discussion focusing on provenance and provenience, see Goldin 2013. For an overview in English on the problem of forged manuscripts, see Friedrich 2020. For arguments based on the Beida manuscripts, see Foster 2017.

example, texts from the Tsinghua manuscripts that relate narratives about the early Western Zhou are accused of containing Warring States grammatical and lexical phenomena, and as such should not be considered authentic Western Zhou texts.[76] This position quickly fails in light of arguments showing that texts such as the *Zhou Wuwang youji Zhougong suo zi yi dai wang zhi zhi* 周武王有疾周公所自以代王之志 (also known as **Jinteng* 金縢) were likely Warring States products in the first place.[77] Furthermore, we note that it is common in manuscript cultures for texts to be updated in the process of copying according to contemporary linguistic and stylistic expectations, and as such even texts that formed during earlier periods will take on later linguistic features in the process of transmission.[78] Likewise, the occurrence of scribal errors and different scribal hands within the same manuscript, instead of pointing to inept modern forgers,[79] rather places the manuscripts in a long tradition of scribal practice, where often multiple scribes were responsible for a single manuscript, who made mistakes as well.[80]

Criteria in the identification of forgeries have been advanced by Hu Pingsheng and Xing Wen.[81] By now, controlled excavated discoveries have confirmed supposedly suspicious readings of graphs in looted manuscripts, while at the same time new phenomena discovered in acquired manuscripts such as the numbers and lines on the back of bamboo slips found in the Beida and Tsinghua collections have been retraced in earlier excavated collections such as Guodian or Baoshan.[82] With many of these original questions dispelled, a majority of experts is now confident in using properly tested looted manuscripts as valid source material for the period. Nevertheless, I have tried to balance discussions of retrieved manuscripts with contemporary materials as much as possible and am confident that the core argument of this book on the role and use of collections in this period does not hinge on the status of a single cache or source.

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76   For the **Baoxun* in particular see Jiang Guanghui 2009, and the rebuttal in Wang Lianlong 2009.

77   Meyer 2014b.

78   See, for example, Baxter 1992.

79   See, for example, the **Wuwang jianzuo* manuscript discussed in Krijgsman 2018: 83–90.

80   For early observations, see Chen Mengjia 1980.

81   Hu Pingsheng 2008 and Xing Wen 2012.

82   See for example, Shan Yuchen 2012; for the lines on the back of the slips, see Sun Peiyang 2011.

7   Outline of the Study

This study consists of four chapters, each focusing on one genre of writing that made up the lion's share of unearthed texts for the period: philosophical sayings, historical narrative, song and poetry, and techniques to control health and fortune. Because these genres of writing are vastly different, they each serve to highlight specific characteristics resulting from gathering multiple texts together into single collections. Taken together, the chapters of this book sketch out different phases in the life-cycle of collections, from their intertextual source materials, their inclusion or integration into collections, and the influence that collections exerted on their users, to the ways in which they shaped the future understanding and availability of their texts.

In the first chapter, "Manuscript Materiality: Organizing Sayings in a Collection," I examine the role of manuscripts in the formation of text, and the structuring and reception of knowledge. The chapter explores the role of materiality in the formation and use of collections and discusses how collections of sayings inform intertextuality, influence language habits, and instill ideas on morality. An increase in the use of visual and rhythmic structuring was formative to new ways of arranging texts into building blocks, influencing reading strategies and the reception of knowledge. These collections selected and organized the vastly increasing amounts of knowledge in circulation, and as such, could serve as bases for memorization and education. Manuscripts gained in importance in teaching practices and enabled the reproduction of proper language habits, while at the same time they provided a handy digest of apt phrases and arguments, to be used in persuasion or argumentative settings.

In the second chapter, "Collecting Stories: The Reformation and Integration of the Past," I analyze the formative role of collections in showing how anecdotes were integrated into a single narrative, and what this meant for the structuring of the past, the writing of causality, and the shaping of cultural memory. These narratives developed from isolated and local accounts predominant in the Western Zhou through the Spring and Autumn periods, which relied on contextual and memorized information. From the mid to late Warring States we see the emergence of comprehensive, universally oriented, and causally structured accounts. Having juxtaposed these two ideal types of representing the past, I analyze the development between them on the basis of a number of excavated historiographical mini-collections.

In Chapter 3, "Collection and Canon: The Formation of a Genre," I focus on the changes to the use, understanding, and genre classification of verse resulting from collections. It describes how collections shaped access and thus

influenced future understandings of verse. The chapter traces the Warring States development in conceptualization of verse from contextually situated song to poetry interpreted for its wording. The role of the collection in wedding selections of verse to interpretive frames shaped perceptions of genre, authorship, and interpretation. Their use as teaching material would be instrumental in spreading these perceptions of the material to shape the way verse was understood in later periods. In this way, written collections laid the foundations for many developments that emerged in the canonization of verse in the early empires.

The final chapter, "Collecting and Disseminating: Using Technical Knowledge," analyses the use of collections by focusing on the technical miscellanea from the early empires. It describes how expertise shifted from specialists to texts, and how collections were used didactically as handbooks, manuals, and *aides de memoire*. These collections reveal a change from the recording of proceedings by experts towards the collection of technical knowledge for a broader audience. Technical knowledge, whether of medicine, magic, divination, or hemerology, moved away from being the sole prerogative of the expert, and was presented more and more as a set of instructions to follow. Whether in materials prepared for education, handbooks, or as *aide de memoire*, collections of technical knowledge provided the tools for regular users to use technical knowledge to help them navigate the problems of daily life. Technical collections, being concerned with concrete problems, reveal intended usage and the concerns of their user-producers much more clearly than their literary counterparts. Accordingly, they provide good evidence for the access to knowledge of the literate strata of society, but even more, they offer an insight into the motivations, needs, and reasoning behind their selections of knowledge.

CHAPTER 1

Manuscript Materiality: *Organizing Sayings in a Collection*

今學者皆道書筴之頌語，不察當世之實事。

Scholars these days all just read out hymns and anecdotes from their bamboo manuscripts, and do not examine the actual affairs of the current age.

HAN FEIZI 韓非子, "The Six Contradictions" 六反

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Collections of sayings and aphorisms are often taken as the starting point in discussions of Warring States thought and text. Exemplified by works such as the *Lunyu* and the *Laozi*, they are consistently presented as embodying the earliest textual expressions of the great thinkers and the schools of thought that would shape the intellectual landscape of China up to this day.[1] Despite substantial critique of the notion of "schools of thought,"[2] and a revaluation of the status of these works as representative of the thought of specific Warring States masters,[3] the status of sayings-collections as the starting point of Warring

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1 This characterization informs even recent works such as Lewis 1999, and to an extent, Denecke (2010: 208), who, however, perceives the *Laozi* as a reactionary and deliberately archaicized work.

2 For valid critiques of the school paradigm, see Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan 2003; Petersen 1995; Sivin 1978.

3 For a critique focussing on relying on the *Lunyu* as the sole and authentic source of Confucian thought, and for strong arguments against the collection being in existence before the early Han, see Hunter 2017; for further evidence on the literary techniques used in its composition including the (re-)writing of its component materials, see Weingarten 2009. On the textual history of these collections, see Makeham 1996 and Henricks 2000. See also the recent volume of studies revaluating the *Lunyu* text based on new methodology and excavated evidence, Michael Hunter and Martin Kern, eds. 2018, in which the contribution by Csikszentmihalyi (2018: 218–40), focusing especially on Han developments, is particularly informative for the present inquiry into the status and formation of collections. Csikszentmihalyi's chapter focuses exactly on those instances where collections grouped by topic were repurposed for

States text and genre history is conspicuously unchallenged. Many maintain that collections of short sayings and aphorisms preceded the short expositions and dialogues seen in the *Mengzi* 孟子 and *Mozi* 墨子, before developing the long and complex essays that make up the *Xunzi* 荀子 and *Han Feizi*, culminating in the "encyclopedic" compilations of all the thought in the realm.[4] The underlying rationale to this chronology based on transmitted materials is an array of authors who sought increasingly new ways to outdo their contemporaries and predecessors in argumentative depth and literary skill.

While there is no question that sayings and short collections attributed to masters (mostly Confucius) were already popular by the mid-late Warring States, there is no paleographical evidence for collections of sayings before the Warring States period, let alone that they were associated with particular authors. Instead, this chapter argues that saying-collections were a response to, and thus a product of, the slow maturation of a manuscript culture during the Warring States period. Moreover, far from faithfully recording the words of a certain master, the excavated materials represent different strategies of collecting often unattributed saying and aphorism materials. To different degrees of complexity and sophistication, the materials under discussion represent acts of gathering and structurally integrating pre-circulating "traveling sayings."[5]

In these collections, material was organized around building blocks.[6] By examining the textual and material strategies used to integrate pre-circulating material into collections, I argue that these short building blocks were the product of how material was organized on bamboo manuscripts, rather than representing actual speech contexts. Finally, I aim to show that these collections reflect an attempt to organize sayings by theme in order to make them

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interlocutor texts and vice versa. For an argument on the emergence of the *Lunyu* out of multiple collections, see Crohne 2022: 296–98.

4   Lewis 1999; Graham 1989.

5   For this term see Krijgsman 2014. For composition using collage, see Schwermann 2005.

6   I understand 'building blocks'—a term popularized in sinology by Boltz's 2005 seminal article on the subject, to refer to a linguistically or codicologically distinguished textual unit. Their size and structure are relative to the scope and organization of the text as a whole. In terms of textual form, they tend to correspond to a (group of) anecdote(s), song(s) or saying(s), with the caveat that sayings especially tend to be couched in further argumentative statements introducing and interpreting the saying, much like the traditional *zhang* 章 (paragraph) division used in transmitted editions of the *Laozi* and *Lunyu*, for instance. Some texts are arranged around single anecdotes and sayings, while others group the (often short items) together to form slightly larger building blocks. As will become more clear below, there is a tendency in manuscript texts of the period to mark these blocks with either repeated linguistic cues or visual markers on the manuscript. In short, then, the *ideal* type of building block is the smallest textual unit where visual and linguistic section identifiers meet.

useful in oratory and teaching contexts, for example. The collection thus presents a way of organizing *a selection* of material from the available body of text in writing, memory, and oral forms, in a format conducive to memorization and reuse of the material in a variety of contexts.

1 The Unborn *Laozi*: of Materiality and Building Blocks

As noted above, the status of *Laozi* and *Lunyu* as starting points in Warring States textual and intellectual developments can be disputed. Since the status of the *Lunyu* as a finalized text before the Western Han is already the subject of much debate, and because we do not have any excavated evidence for such a collection in any case, the following discussion starts by addressing the excavated *Laozi materials, in particular those from Guodian. The three bundles of slips excavated from the tomb present the clearest evidence for an excavated Warring States sayings-collection that is in some form "ancestral" to a transmitted counterpart.[7] In the background of this chapter lie two simple questions: what were the processes that underlay the formation of such collections? What do their form and structure tell us about their use at the time?

Together with four short bundles of sayings also discussed in this chapter, the *Yucong 1–4, the *Laozi materials form some of the earliest excavated evidence for sayings collections and are dated around 300 BCE. The Guodian *Laozi materials were recovered in three separate manuscript bundles, A, B, and C, each of different physical characteristics (for example, bamboo slip lengths and endings, and calligraphy). Together, the three bundles contain about one third of the material that would end up in the transmitted *Laozi* versions. While about half of that material is highly similar to the transmitted texts, and it is clear that the material is in some way related to these later collections, there are significant differences.

The order and division of the individual units within the texts is radically different from all other excavated and received *Laozi* collections.[8] Henricks and Wang Bo have observed topical divisions in the Guodian *Laozi materials not present in later renditions, providing a case wherein the collector(s) sought to organize a collection of material into meaningful units, although it

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7   "*Laozi* materials" is shorthand for the variety of texts that have enough correspondence in content with transmitted *Laozi* texts to suggest that they were collected within the same broad range of traditions (in the literal sense of handing over) that would eventually produce the transmitted *Laozi* texts, regardless of whether the Guodian materials specifically were directly ancestral to these texts.

8   For an overview, see Boltz 2005: 55–56.

should be noted that understandings of the internal coherence and meaning of the *Laozi* are notoriously open to debate.[9] Likewise, as LaFargue observed early on, many of the building blocks of the *Laozi* appear to be composed of rhymed and argumentative components, with the latter steering the interpretation of the former.[10] The absence of some of these sub-units in the Guodian materials illustrates that these were likely added in later collections or spliced in from different traditions, possibly to steer the pre-existing material in ways that made it applicable to new argumentative needs.[11]

These differences suggest that a simple process of transcription of existing sayings in order to faithfully preserve old material was not the main focus of collections. Both topical clustering and the embedding of sayings in arguments illustrate two ways of dealing with the problem of meaningfully integrating pre-existing sayings material into a new collection that enabled specific textual functions. This all supports Boltz's characterization of the material, that "the Guodian material is not properly called the *Laozi* in any meaningful sense but is rather a collection of textual units some of which have subsequently been brought together by unknown editors or collectors to constitute the text that has been transmitted as the *Laozi*." Boltz's article goes on to argue that not just the *Laozi* materials, but perhaps the majority of early Chinese texts are the product of collecting relatively stable units (whatever their origins) into differently ordered texts.[12] While I agree with this general characterization, I want to deepen Boltz's argument in two aspects. First, as already mentioned, the Guodian *Laozi* texts exhibit certain significant differences on the level of the individual units when juxtaposed to later texts.[13] As Henricks and others have shown, entire lines within units are absent or truncated to an extreme,[14] and certain building blocks in the Guodian material are divided over multiple chapters in later texts and vice versa.[15] Clearly, the building blocks themselves

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9   See Henricks 2000: 7, 9–10, and Wang Bo cited therein.

10   LaFargue 1994. Whether or not the rhymed components should be seen as originally oral text, and the argumentative components as latter written explication that were later archaicized, is moot. The point is that sayings are integrated into a stylistically identifiable pattern, allowing for a variety of different appraisals.

11   See the discussion below on the variety of renditions related to chapter 64 in the received *Laozi*.

12   Boltz 2005: 59–62; the quotation is from pp. 59–60.

13   See Richter 2006: 253–55 for a lucid breakdown of the problems relating to the delineation of the range and form of building blocks (Richter refers to these as "Kleinstformen").

14   For specific differences in terms of the composition of individual units and differences in the contents, see Henricks 2000: 7–11.

15   A prime example can be found in the way both the Guodian *Laozi* A and C manuscripts contain material that in the transmitted version forms a single chapter 64. See here especially the tabulation in Cook 2012: 951–1002.

FIGURE 4
Guodian *Laozi* A
manuscript's punctuation
and use of empty
space, from Jingmen shi
bowuguan 1998: color
plate 1
IMAGE COURTESY OF
JINGMEN CITY MUSEUM

FIGURE 5
Mawangdui silk manuscript B
SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

were not fixed and should perhaps rather be seen as merely providing another layer that aided but not ensured the preservation of textual identity.

Second, Boltz's understanding of the building block applies most strongly to texts wherein such units were clearly established *on the manuscript*. That is to say, all of the manuscripts that Boltz draws on for his argument are furnished with visual demarcation of textual units such as the use of punctuation and slip blanking to delineate paragraphs or blocks, in addition to featuring literary elements such as rhyme or parallelisms that reinforce such divisions. Already in the Guodian *Laozi* manuscripts, punctuation is used to demarcate some textual units, albeit by no means as extensive as in the latter part of Mawangdui A and the Beida *Laozi* materials, which exhibit the general trend of Han manuscripts to increasingly demarcate textual divisions using visual cues, albeit not always consistently. I would therefore argue that to the copyists and presumably the readers of the material, there already was a physically reinforced understanding of the text as consisting of visually identifiable "paragraph" *zhang* 章 length units.[16] As I argue below, an absence of such visual cues would make it difficult to determine the actual demarcations and identify individual building blocks.

I therefore suggest that the formation of building blocks is closely related to the visual demarcations on the manuscript, representing a compositional choice of organizing a body of material. Whether a composer, copyist, or reader added these visual demarcations may be interesting in terms of intent, but judged from the angle of reception and long-term influence of such divisions, the important question is whether or not the manuscript could carry these divisions of text over and influence new communities of readers and copyists.[17] For materials where such physical demarcations are absent, the dynamic might very well be different. As such, while I agree with Boltz's general claim that early texts were fluid entities prone to continuous changing and updating to serve new social and intellectual functions, and that in many cases, this dynamic operates on the level of the *zhang* or building block, yet it is also true that for a great number of texts, the level at which textual coherence occurred was either smaller or larger than the *zhang*. As Meyer has argued, many argumentative texts have a fixed order of individual building blocks, as determined by the argument that ran throughout the *pian* 篇 or

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16   Krijgsman 2018: 9, 16.
17   As shown by Morgan 2011, punctuation was often carried over in copies of manuscripts, see for instance the case of the *Tianzi jian zhou* 天子建州 manuscripts.

essay as a whole.[18] Furthermore, across early literature, phrases, stories, and short sayings are often more fundamental units of composition, which could then be recomposed into different building blocks.[19]

Following this train of thought, we ought to examine the use of sayings, their formation into building blocks, and possible relations to manuscript materiality. In particular, I look into the textual and physical means that were instrumental in generating the unity and identity of different layers of a text. Such an enquiry enables us to reach a more complete understanding of the processes governing the formation of collections. In addition, it helps understanding the social needs and textual functions they could have fulfilled.[20]

The trend in which previously circulating materials, oral and written, were incorporated into new written frameworks as a result of a general increase in the use of manuscripts is not limited to specific "master texts" and occurs throughout the Warring States period (and well into the imperial period) rather than just at the start. I suggest that the different strategies of incorporating sayings material are part of general developments towards increased organization and readability of knowledge, in response to increases in availability and communication of material in writing. Users of this material, whether for

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18   Meyer 2011: 175–207.

19   Krijgsman 2014.

20   It should be noted that to rely on graph counts, slip lengths, and other *reconstructed* material features of transmitted and edited collections, such as Maeder 1992, or Boltz 2005's analysis of the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 and *Mengzi* materials, cannot be used to understand Warring States textuality. It can only reflect the practices of the Han imperial library, which among other things, presupposes a standardized practice of the physical demarcation of textual units, the length of bamboo slips, as well as scribal practices that were not yet established before the Qin dynasty. I therefore take issue with Maeder's oft-quoted image of textual formation as "the looseleaf ring binder into which miscellaneous material, including both class notes by different hands and documentary handouts, can be entered, only later to be rearranged, shortened or expanded as new material is found which is deemed pertinent, and as the collectors' concerns change." (28). The problem is that it retrojects notions of standardized building blocks and slip lengths onto material from the Warring States. The *Fan wu liu xing* analyzed below, which exists in two copies of different physical properties yet with similar building blocks demarcated by punctuation, may serve as an example. If textual re-composition occurred using bamboo slips of different lengths and containing different numbers of graphs as a means of direct textual movement, this would generate a chimera of a text. Maeder's understanding assumes bamboo slip lengths to physically segregate building blocks, and as I will show in my analysis of the *Yucong* materials below, this is a practice that occurred only rarely in the Warring States, yet as shown through the Mawangdui, and more so, Beida *Laozi* materials, was becoming increasingly common in the Han dynasty. For earlier critiques of this approach, see Kern (2002: 304, n.22) and Richter 2018.

didactic purposes or for use in persuasion, as the *Han Feizi* quotation heading this chapter suggests, increasingly relied on bamboo manuscripts as a means to select and organize material and use it as a basis for teaching and memorization. In the following, I shall discuss several strategies that facilitated the arrangement and division of texts in a collection, their legibility and memorization, and the use of these collections beyond the straightforward preservation of their contents.

2   Sound-based Organization: The *Yong yue

The *Yong yue 用曰 (*On This Account It Is Said*) manuscript from the Shanghai collection provides an excellent example of a collection that uses sound rather than visual means to organize text on the manuscript.[21] It provides a case of minimal reliance on the written and material nature of the composition while at the same time reflecting developments that are common to the organization of bodies of knowledge in general by illustrating the ways in which textual organization serves readability and therefore social functions of manuscript use.

The *Yong yue manuscript features 20 slips and appears to have been bound before writing.[22] The graphs are equally dispersed over the slips, with the first graph on each slip very close to the binding string. Reduplication (*chongwen* 重文) and ligature (*hewen* 合文) marks are expressed with two dashes (=) and the manuscript is closed on slip 20 by a thick horizontal bar, followed by four graphs and a sign in what appears to be a different hand.[23] The text of the *Yong yue manuscript is rhymed throughout and interspersed with inter-rhyming *yong yue* 用曰 ("On this account, it is said") statements.[24] These thirteen short statements separate groups of short rhymed blocks of wise sayings dealing with related themes such as speech, governance, the people, and public behavior. Below, I present an example of the first two blocks from the manuscript:[25]

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21   This section draws on work previously published in Krijgsman 2018: 21–27.
22   Ma Chengyuan 2007: 105–124 (actual size images of the slips), 285–306 (transcriptions). The text I present here follows Krijgsman 2018: 24–25.
23   善古君之 + small T-shaped sign on left; note that this last is also one of the most worn slips.
24   Some reconstructions suggest a missing fourteenth *yong yue* statement; see Zi Ju 2010. For an overview of the contents, see especially Gu Shikao 2009b.
25   A backward slash \ indicates a broken slip end, a vertical line | an intact slip end. Squares □ indicates the predicted number of missing graphs, double lines = a reduplication or ligature mark and the numbers in fat brackets the slip number followed by number of graphs. The text is directly presented in modern transcription, except where noted.

(1) ＼ 思民之初生[*srêŋ] ‚²⁶ 多險以難成[*geŋ] ‚²⁷ 視之以康樂[*râuk]，
慝之以兇刑[*gêŋ]。心目及言[*ŋjan]，是善敗之經[*kêŋ]。參節之未
得[*têk]，豫命乃縈[*ʔweŋ]。

(14) ＼用曰:毋事縈＝[莫 *mâk]。強君虐政[*teŋh]，揚武於外[*ŋwâts]。°²⁸
克獵戎事[*dzrəʔ]，以損四衛[*dzanʔ]。制法節刑，[*gêŋ] 恆民守敗
[*prâts]。設其有繼緒[者*s-laʔ]，而難其有惠 [*wî(t)s]。民□□

(05) ‖難之[*tə]，而亦弗能棄[*khits]。用曰:寧事赫＝[hrâk]

Thinking back to when the people where first born, they faced many
dangers in their arduous achievements. In seeing these, one finds peace
and happiness; in hiding these, one finds violence and punishments.
The heart, eyes, and speech are the guideline to perfection and failure.
When these three elements have not been attained, the mandate at ease
becomes entangled. On this account, it is said: Do not let your affairs be
dark and dim! Tyrannical rulers and cruel governments, they overtly dis-
play their martial prowess. Through hunting and war games, they dimin-
ish the paths in all four directions. [But if you] regulate the laws and
restrain the punishments, you give constancy to the people and protect
them against failure. Design [your rule] for it to be continued, and con-
sider it difficult to gain reward. The people … considering it difficult, it
still cannot be discarded. On this account, it is said: Rather let your affairs
be brilliant and radiant.

As evident from the notes to the text, the lines are not without intertextual-
ity. Much of the content appears rather clichéd and is perhaps best seen as a
structured rehashing of common dicta and truths used to bear out the pithy
maxims in the *yong yue* statements. Besides these statements, the text on the
manuscript is written out without signs of deliberate structuring. Slips are con-
tinuously written from the top to the bottom binding string, ensuring textual
preservation and manuscript integrity. The calligraphy is clear and highly leg-
ible, and graphs are regularly spaced on the slips. Punctuation on the manu-
script is not used for rhyme, rhythmic, or semantic divisions, but only to mark
ligature and reduplication. A title is absent, and other than a final thick bar

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26   Ma Chengyuan (2007: 286) notes a similar line in *Shijing*, "Mian" 緜 (Mao 237).

27   Zi Ju 2010 notes similarities to *Zuo zhuan*, "Xuan" 宣 12, and *Chu ci* 楚辭, "Lisao" 離騷. Ma
      Chengyuan (2007: 286) notes intertextuality with *Wenzi*, "Weiming" 微明 among others.

28   Ma Chengyuan (2007: 301) notes similarities to *Guoyu* 國語, "Jin yu" 晉語 6.
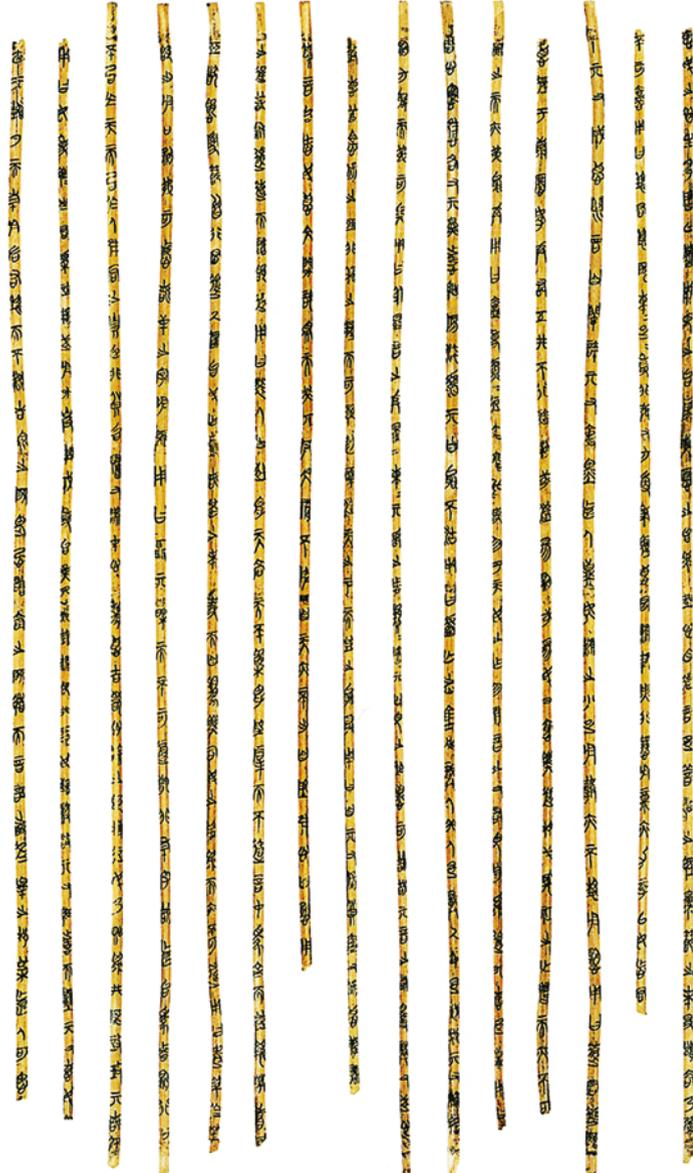
FIGURE 6   Overview of the first fifteen slips of the Shanghai Museum
             Yong yue manuscript
             SOURCE: MA CHENGYUAN 2007: 10. COURTESY OF
             SHANGHAI GUJI CHUBANSHE

followed by a single phrase after which the slip is left blank, there is no visual division into units on the manuscript.[29]

The fact that the *Yong yue* does not provide any form of visual segmentation seems to assume straightforward, continuous reading, as the manuscript provides no means for starting at a different point in the text. Such segments could of course be projected on the material, but without visual marks, that would require other forms of structuring.

In manuscript texts such as the *Yong yue* the structure of the text rather emerges from the reading itself. In giving voice to the text, sentence divisions are made based on sound, rendering rhymes and parallelisms apparent. When the auditory structure of the *Yong yue* is represented visually, therefore, the structure and the building blocks of the text reveal themselves clearly:

思民之初生 [*srêŋ] 多險以難成 [*geŋ]
視之以康樂 [*râuk] 慝之以兇刑 [*gêŋ]
心目及言 [*ŋan] 是善敗之經 [*kêŋ]
參節之未得 [*têk] 豫命乃縈 [*ʔweŋ]

　　用曰 [*loŋh wat] 毋事繓= [*mâk mâk]

強君虐政 [*teŋh] 揚武於外 [*ŋwâts]
克獵戎事 [*dzrəʔ] 以員四踐 [*dzanʔ]
制法節刑 [*gêŋ] 恆民守敗 [*prâts]
設其有繼緒 [*s-laʔ] 而難其有惠 [*wî(t)s]
民□□[…] 難之 [*tə] 而亦弗能棄 [*khits]

　　用曰 [*loŋh wat] 寧事赫= [*hrâk hrâk]

The structure of the text is clearly audible and neatly divides into blocks of rhymed lines, interspersed by inter-rhyming *yong yue* statements. The rhyme within blocks ties together an individual section, and the rhymes between the *yong yue* statements present a rudimentary ordering of the text together across sections. The main principle of organization is therefore auditory rather than visual. Different rhymes alternate and are variously broken up by the dissonant

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29   The short phrase after this mark, "Shan gu jun zhi X" (善古君之 X) is written in a distinct hand and could represent anything from a doodle to a reading note. Such notes occur on collections more often, this might reflect the user base of these manuscripts, potentially including students and junior scribes, for instance.

yet inter-rhyming *yong yue* statements. To the ear and body, this structure only emerges and becomes engrained through vocalization.

Yet because of the repetition of similar rhymes across blocks and the rather loose connections between the blocks in terms of meaning, the structural divisions are not firmly safeguarded in the text. In the absence of visual sectioning, repeated, continuous readings of the material are required to memorize the structure for an awareness of the structure to emerge. In such a reading, each section of text functions as a cue for the next. Such repeated acts of reading allow for a perception of unity in meaning to emerge across the text because each section is read through the other. The upshot of this is that the relatively common phrases build upon each other and slowly deepen in meaning as the text is read repeatedly. The optimal mode for breaking the text in its component parts is to read it out loud, bringing out the structure of the text through vocal, mantra-like means rather than visual layout. The auditory organization of the material structures the text as retrievable "gobbets" of knowledge, and while not necessarily ensuring word-perfect recall of individual lines and words, repeated readings facilitate a basic recollection of the textual structure, aiding further memorization and recollection.[30]

This auditory mnemonic is further enabled by a dynamic of rhymed dissonance between the rhymed sayings and the *yong yue* statements. The statements rhyme and some include parallelisms, so they form a higher level of textual organization. At the same time, they contrast with the rhymes of the individual building blocks, and in their dissonance, audibly break up the text into distinct units. As such, textual integrity in memorization is favored both in the individual blocks and, to an extent, in-between blocks. The text is strung together across sections, thus promoting the perception of textual unity.

The process of vocalization argued for above is instrumental to memorization, and indeed to any reading of the text. While there certainly are liturgical contexts where vocalization is a goal in itself, I suggest that in the use of the manuscript, the text was meant to be liberated from its carrier and reused in other contexts, such as debate, admonitions, or speeches for example. Rather than being referenced or read only once, this manuscript text appears to favor the transfer of its content to the memory of the user, and from then on to new compositions. The use of the *yong yue* statements indicates topical divisions within the text and serves as mnemonic pegs in order to anchor the content.

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30   On memorizing text through reading, see Rubin 1995: 66–70, and Griffiths 1999: 48; on how manuscript preparation influences styles of reading and vocalization, see also Saenger 1997.

This provides a rudimentary basis of organization, allowing easier retrieval of the content even in absence of the physical manuscript. As a result, the text could then be used for future composition and influence speech habits far removed from the context of the manuscript text itself.[31]

The extensive auditory structuring seen in the *Yong yue* is a relatively extreme case. While many Warring States manuscript texts contain rhyme and rhythmic features, only a few are rhymed throughout or completely structured on the basis of sound. The lack of visual structuring in this manuscript is however very common. Most of the philosophical materials from the Guodian and Shanghai collections, for example, come with minimal visual structuring only, featuring text terminator marks and rudimentary punctuation at best. Collections such as the *Yong yue* had their function in that they provided a physical basis for oral delivery in teaching or as an *aide de memoire*, so that its contents could be integrated in new contexts and compositions, whether written or oral.

3   Visually Enhanced Organization

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss a group of collections that illustrate the added functionality of using visual features to amplify textual divisions on the manuscript. Manuscripts used these to solidify building blocks and to highlight topical groupings useful in future argument construction.

3.1   *Creating a Building Block: Punctuation and Rhyme in the* Fan wu liu xing

The *Fan wu liu xing*, published in volume 7 of the Shanghai manuscripts, uses punctuation in addition to rhyme and textual cues to integrate sayings and form building blocks. The text is preserved in two copies, A and B. The two copies are written in different hands and on different manuscripts. Of the two,

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31   It should be stressed that repeated vocalization and auditory memorization are of course not the only possible modes of engagement. Recitation and other forms of performance and engagement are not being excluded and some are indeed enabled through the material representation of the text. It is only by taking the text internal statements and content into account that it seems likely that memorization through vocalization was an intended mode of engagement. This of course does not mean that the manuscript was indeed used as such. To take a textual analogy, the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Springs and Autumns*) is by no means textually optimized for memorization, but some people memorized it nonetheless.

A is largely intact, numbering 30 slips and featuring a title on the back of slip 3. Reconstructions collating the two copies have produced a legible copy of the text.[32] The text is generally divided into two major parts. The first section (from slip 1 to the first half of 14) is mainly composed of questions on the origins of things and the practice of government and ritual; it has been likened to *Chu ci* "Tianwen" 天問, *Zhuangzi* 莊子 "Tianyun" 天運, and the Mawangdui *Shiwen* 十問, among others.[33] The second section (second half of slip 14 to 30) is composed of affirmative statements, some of which answer questions from the first section.[34]

The text, barring some idiosyncrasies possibly indicative of the Chu dialect, is rhymed throughout. As Cao Feng has argued, the affirmative statements included in the text are introduced by "I have heard it said that" 聞之曰, and have intertextual counterparts across the literature, especially in the *Guanzi* 管子, *Wenzi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Laozi*.[35] The text thus provides a prime example of a (re-)collection of previously circulating sayings. What sets it apart from materials such as the **Yong yue* is that it explicitly marks its intertextuality using formulae such as "I have heard it said that" and "This is why" 是故. These markers function as cues to include saying material into distinct blocks of texts. Moreover, punctuation is used to demarcate these blocks of sayings as distinct units, providing a visual means of segmenting the large body of material into nine manageable units of roughly similar size.[36] At the end of each section, often before the final syntactic break, a short bar (▬) or a hook (┗) shaped mark indicates that a section is about to end:

(7) ... 祭祀奚升[*lhəŋ]，吾如之何使飽[*prûʔ]? 順天之道[*lûʔ]，吾奚 以為首[*lhuʔ]? 吾欲得 (8) 百姓之和，吾奚事之[*tə]? 敬天之明奚得 [*têk]? 鬼之神奚食[*m-lək]? 先王之智▬奚備[*brəkh]?

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32   Both manuscript A and B contain elisions and mistakes when compared, although copy B is generally considered to be more carefully executed. We should note that here too there are what appear to be practice graphs on the last slip of manuscript A. The manuscripts were originally published in Ma Chengyuan 2008: 76–132 (the images) and 220–30 (the transcription). The first major reconstruction was undertaken by FDDSH 2008, after which Li Rui (2008) and Gu Shikao (2009a) published variations and emendations that have largely been accepted. Here, I base my discussion on Scott Cook's arrangement, directly transcribing in modern orthography, except where my reading differs.

33   See particularly Cao Feng 2009.

34   Cao Feng 2009 and Gu Shikao 2009a have defended this interrelated section proposal most coherently.

35   For an overview see Cao Feng 2009.

36   In Cook's (Gu Shikao 2009a) reconstruction. Note that the place of the punctuation is the same in both copies of the manuscript.

What rises up in sacrifices, and how does one satiate [the ancestors]? In following the way of heaven, what does one take as beginning? When one wants to obtain the compliance of the hundred surnames, how does one serve them? How does one respect heaven's brilliance? How do the spirits of ghosts eat? How is the wisdom of the former kings procured?

聞之曰:升 (9) 高從埤[*pe]，至遠從邇[*neʔ]。**37**十圍之木[*môk]，其始生如蘖[*ŋat]。**38**足將至千里[*rəʔ]，必從寸始[*lhəʔ]。**39** ∟

I have heard it said that: "To rise high you have to start from below. To reach far you have to start from nearby. A tree of ten arm spans is like a sapling when first growing. When you are about to traverse a thousand miles on foot, you have to start with an inch."

日之有 (10) 耳[*nəʔ]，▁將何聽[*lhêŋ]? 月之有軍[*kwən]，▁將何征[*teŋ]? 水之東流[*ru]，▁將何盈[*leŋ]?**40** 日之始出[*k-hlut, 何故大而不炎[*lam]? 其入 (11) 中[*truŋ]，▁奚故小佳（益）暲[*taŋ]? 屢**41**問天孰高，與地孰遠[*wanʔ] 歟? 孰為天*thîn]? 孰為地 ? 孰為雷 (12A) 電[*lîns]? 孰為霆[*lêŋ]? 土奚得而平[*breŋ]? 水奚得而清[*tsheŋh]? 草木奚得而生[*sreŋ]? (13B) 禽獸奚得而鳴[*mreŋ]? (14) 夫雨之至[*tits]，▁孰雺囗之[*tə]? 夫風之至[*tits]，▁孰颮飄而迸之[*tə]?**42**

If the sun has "ears" (its halo), how does it listen with them? If the moon has an "army" (its aureole), how would it attack with it? The river keeps flowing east, how does it fill up? When the sun first comes up, how come it is big but not bright? And yet when it enters its middle point, how does it gain in brightness? Again and again, I ask, what is higher than

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37   Compare the parallel in *Liji* 禮記 (Ruan Yuan 1980), 52.1627c ("Zhong yong" 中庸): "子曰：'射有似乎君子，失諸正鵠，反求諸其身。君子之道，辟如行遠必自邇，辟如登高必自卑.'"

38   Note *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (Ho, Lau, and Chen 1992): 9.23/75/22 ("Zheng jian" 正諫)："夫十圍之木，始生如蘖."

39   Compare *Laozi jiaoshi* (Zhu Qianzhi 2000), 64.259: "合抱之木，生於毫末；九層之臺，起於累土；千里之行，始於足下," where the first and last lines can be read as variants for the text here.

40   Compare *Zhuangzi jishi* (Guo Qingfan 1985), 6B.563 ("Qiu shui" 秋水)："天下之水莫大於海，萬川歸之，不知何時止而不盈, and *Chu ci buzhu* (Song Hongxing 1983), 91 ("Tian wen")："東流不溢，孰知其故."

41   In this transcription and sentence division I follow Li Rui 2008.

42   Compare *Zhuangzi jishi* (Guo Qingfan 1985), 5C.493 ("Tian yun" 天運)："風起北方 [...] 孰嘘吸是？孰居無事而披拂是."

heaven, and what is more expansive than the earth? What is heaven, and what is the earth? What is thunder and what is lightning? How can soil be flat and how can water be clear? What makes grasses and trees grow and what makes beast and bird cry out? Regarding the coming of rain, who prayed and X for it? Regarding the arrival of the winds, who gathered them up and blew them forth?

聞之曰:守道，坐不下席[*s-lak]。⁴³端文(16)　圖不與事[*s-rəʔ]，先知四海[*hmə̂ʔ]，至聽千里[*rəʔ]，達見百里[*rəʔ]。⁴⁴是故聖人處於其所[*sraʔ]，⁴⁵邦家之　(26)　安危與存亡，賊盜之作[*task]ㄴ，可先知[*tre]。　ㄴ[...]

I have heard it said that: "In holding on to the Dao, one does not rush from one's seat. In holding culture, one does not involve oneself in the affairs of one's plan. You know the four seas beforehand, and you attain hearing of a thousand miles and reach vision of a hundred miles. This is why the sage resides in his place, and why he can know of the danger and safety, the preservation and loss of the kingdom, and the rise of thieves and brigands before they occur.

The first half of the text gains unity through the repetition of the question words "how" *xi* 奚 and "who" *shu* 孰. Both the question and affirmative units of the text are composed of rhymed phrases. Unlike the example of the *Yong yue* above, sound as such is not enough to generate clear textual divisions. While the rhymes group individual statements together into short sequences and thus allow for the stringing together of sometimes disparate sayings, the common repetition of *-əʔ rhymes across blocks for instance does not make the use of rhyme discriminatory enough to demarcate sections. Instead, the repetition of the formula "I have heard it said that" is used in combination with punctuation marks to divide the text up in sections.

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43   Compare *Wenzi shuyi* (Wang Liqi 2000), 2.95 ("Jing cheng" 精誠)："聖人不降席而匡天下 [...] 不下席而匡天下者，求諸己也."

44   Compare *Xunzi jijie* (Wang Xianqian 1988), 10.268 ("Yi bing" 議兵)："且仁人之用十里之國，則將有百里之聽，用百里之國，將有千里之聽."

45   Compare *Zhuangzi jishi* (Guo Qingfan 1985), 6A.556 ("Shan xing" 繕性)："古之行身者，不以辯飾知，不以知窮天下，不以知窮德，危然處其所而反其性，己又何為哉," and *Lunyu jijie* (Cheng Shude 1990), 3.61 ("Wei zheng" 為政): "子曰：為政以德，譬如北辰，居其所而眾星共之."

The punctuation alerts a recipient to the coming break,[46] and the new section is marked by the repetition of the quotation formula. In other words, punctuation in this manuscript is used to solidify divisions within the text and clearly mark sections from others, thereby forming individual building blocks. One of the reasons is that the internal coherence of the text is far from clear. Rather than asking a set of questions and providing directly related answers, the questions and answers often only have a tangential relation and require a measure of interpretation on account of the recipient in order to connect them. As such it seems that the questions rather present a general foil to introduce a range of sayings dealing with a particular concern without exhibiting any particular order. The majority of the questions deal with the formation of things and natural phenomena, the practice of ritual, and the exercise of government. The answers are focused on the holding of the "One" or the "Dao" as a catch-all to all these queries.

As such, while the lines, "To rise high you have to start from below. A tree of ten arm spans is like a sapling when first growing. When you are about to traverse a thousand miles on foot, you have to start with an inch," could be understood as an aphoristic set of answers to the question, "In following the way of heaven? What do I take as beginning?" its relation to the rest of the questions is tangential at best. Likewise, the relationship between the statements, "In holding on to the Dao, one does not rush from one's seat. In holding culture, one does not involve oneself in the affairs of one's plan," and the questions about the origins of natural phenomena such as rain and wind, is not clear at all. Only when one relies heavily on interpretation and an integral reading of the latter blocks do possible connections manifest themselves more clearly. For example, the grasping of the Dao and the One are further linked with an understanding of the formation of natural phenomena on slips 21–22. Such an understanding would only emerge out of repeated, and most likely, guided engagement with the text, perhaps in a teaching setting.

To all intents and purposes then, the clearest level of textual coherence occurs among the sayings within an individual building block. This coherence, other than stemming from physical proximity, is achieved by topical groupings, the most obvious example being the set of sayings focusing on small beginnings leading to large ends discussed below. In terms of reception, therefore, textual coherence is most apparent in the visually demarcated sections. While more complex relations amongst building blocks can be construed through repeated readings (just as in the *Yong yue*), such structures are not provided by the physical or textual form.

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46   For this function, see Richter 2011: 226–27.

As noted earlier, the stability of building blocks should not be overstated. The majority of the sayings in the *Fan wu liu xing* have intertextual counterparts across the early literature. But this resemblance holds predominantly at the level of the saying and does not extend to the building blocks in their entirety. The closest case of similarity on the level of the building block occurs in the passage on small beginnings. This block features topical coherence among the sayings in a similar manner to Chapter 64 from the *Laozi*, emphasized here:

FWLX 升高從埤，至遠從邇。十圍之木，其始生如蘗。足將至千里，必從寸始。

To rise high you have to start from below. To reach far you have to start from nearby. A tree of ten arm spans is like a sapling when first growing. When you are about to traverse a thousand miles on foot, you have to start with an inch.

LZ:64 其安易持，其未兆易謀。其脆易泮，其微易散。
為之於未有，治之於未亂。**合抱之木，生於毫末**；九層之臺，起於累土；**千里之行，始於足下。**
為者敗之，執者失之。是以聖人無為故無敗；無執故無失。民之從事，常於幾成而敗之。慎終如始，則無敗事。 是以聖人欲不欲，不貴難得之貨；學不學，復眾人之所過，以輔萬物之自然，而不敢為。

What remains still is easy to hold. What is not yet manifest is easy to plan for. What is brittle is easy to crack. What is minute is easy to scatter.

Deal with things before they appear. Put things in order before disorder arises. A tree as big as the combined embrace of several people grows from a tiny shoot. A tower of nine stories begins with a heap of earth. The journey of a thousand *li* starts from where one stands.

He who takes action fails. He who grasps things loses them. For this reason, the sage takes no action and therefore does not fail. He grasps nothing and therefore does not lose anything. People in their handling of affairs often fail when they are about to succeed. If one remains as careful at the end as he was at the beginning, there will be no failure.

Therefore, the sage desires to have no desire, he does not value rare commodities. He learns not to learn and returns to what the multitude has missed (Dao). Thus he supports all things in their natural state but does not take any action.[47]

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47   Translation adapted from Wing-tsit Chan 1963: 214.

While there is a common line, a partial overlap in theme, and the shared use of the travel and growth metaphors, the two are vastly dissimilar when seen as integral building blocks. The *Laozi* building block is itself a composite of statements, aphoristic sayings, and a concluding argument whereas the *Fan wu liu xing* block appears as an integral set of related sayings. When comparing the contemporary Guodian **Laozi* rendition, however, this passage on small beginnings is not followed by the large section headed by "He who takes action fails" as in the received *Laozi* and is likewise marked as an individual block with a punctuation mark directly following "journey of a thousand *li*."[48] It appears that in this case, the sayings on small beginnings travelled as a building block, forming the core for a variety of elaborations and extensions seen in different versions of the *Laozi*, for instance, where they would form building blocks in their own right.[49]

In determining the span of a building block, therefore, we cannot merely rely on how a block took shape in transmitted versions of a text but need to rely instead on material criteria such as punctuation and textual criteria such as rhyme breaks and cue words within specific collections. The process of collecting sayings material did not stop with the advent of "stable" building blocks in certain texts. Rather, the sayings themselves were used by many other texts at the same time that they formed "stable" building blocks in others. One of the reasons for this is that the sayings were not firmly associated with an individual text or author and could move freely between texts. Collections themselves are a catalyst in this development as they tend to group material around topics and questions rather than author figures and were aimed at redistributing their content to new usage contexts. From this perspective, collections are a means of organizing access to text. They operate as corpus organizers,[50] functioning as nodes between the intertextual world of possible sayings and new compositions in that they select and structure material topically and "redistribute" it to their users, whether this occurred through teaching contexts, reading, memorization, or when used as *aide de memoire* for persuasion and speeches. This aspect will be addressed more fully in the following section.

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48   See Cook 2012: 265–67.

49   Krijgsman 2014: 104ff. This is not to say that the section of small beginnings as represented in the *Fan wu liu xing* represents the earliest occurrence of the block, it is equally possible that a larger block containing this section, as in the Guodian *Laozi*, was trimmed down in the process of gathering it on this manuscript.

50   Baussi 2010.

3.2   *Clustering the "Already Said": The* *Yucong *4

The *Yucong 4 appears to be just such an *aide de memoire* for the kind of per-
suaders or strategists vilified in the *Han Feizi* quotation heading this chap-
ter. The manuscript from Guodian is written on 27 slips. Together with the
*Yucong 1–3, it stands out among early Chinese manuscripts through its use
of short bamboo slips—*Yucong 4 averaging at 15.1 cm in length—resulting in
an easily transportable format. It is bound by two binding strings and features
between 15 to 16 graphs per slip, with writing starting from the very top up to
the bottom of the manuscript. Different reconstructions have been proposed;[51]
here I follow Cook's reconstruction which comprehensively addresses the
text's themes, use of rhyme, and the manuscript's use of punctuation.[52] The
text is written in a clear and evenly spaced script, and though the graphs are
small, they are easily legible. In addition to repetition marks, the manuscript
is divided into topical sections using four black blocks ∎, after each of which
the rest of the slip is left blank. Barring one line, the text of the manuscript is
rhymed throughout and the majority of the rhymed blocks are marked with a
short mark ❙, although not consistently.

    The text is composed of rhymed blocks including sayings, aphorisms,
and general wisdom, which are in turn distributed over the topical sections.
Compared to the *Fan wu liu xing*, the *Yucong 4's use of punctuation to divide
the blocks adds another layer of manuscript structuring, as it distinguishes
small blocks from the larger topical clusters. As in the other collections dis-
cussed above, the *Yucong 4 is rife with intertext, sharing parallel passages
with the *Zhuangzi*, *Shuoyuan*, and *Huainanzi* to name but a few. The text has
been understood by some as a handbook for wandering persuaders or speech
material for strategists.[53] The first section of the text explicitly discusses the
art of persuasion; the following section addresses the theme of choosing one's
words carefully:[54]

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51   Jingmenshi bowuguan 1998: 217–19; Li Ling 2007: 56–58, and the crucial paper by Chen
      Jian 2002.

52   Cook 2012: 919–38.

53   Cook 2012: 910–11. Note here the presence of graphs at the back of slip 27, which may
      be anything from supplying missing text on the slip, a reading note, or practice graphs.
      The presence of such graphs at the end of the manuscript is common to many saying
      collections, as is the topical focus on beginnings and the importance of speech. Such self-
      reflexive comments on the status of text are quite common for educational materials.
      Compare for instance Lichtheim 1996: 243–62.

54   The edition follows Cook 2012: 926–27, directly transcribed into modern orthography.

FIGURE 7   Overview of the *Yucong* 4, slips 1–12

(1) 言以始 [*lhəʔ]，┃ 情以久 [*kwəʔ]。┃
靡言不酬[*du]，靡德亡報 [*pû]。┃⁵⁵

[A relationship] begins with words, [but] endures through true affections.
There are no words left unreplied; there is no virtue left unrequited.

言 (2) 而苟 [*kôʔ] ,⁵⁶牆有耳[*nəʔ]。┃⁵⁷
往言傷人[*nin]，來言傷己 [*kəʔ]。┃⁵⁸

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55   Compare *Mao shi zhushu* 毛詩註疏 (Ruan Yuan 1980): 18.555b ("Yi" 抑): "無言不
      讎，無德不報."

56   Compare *Xunzi jijie* (Wang Xianqian 1988): 1.12 ("Quan xue" 勸學): "君子之學也，入乎
      耳，著乎心，布乎四體，形乎動靜。端而言，蝡而動，一可以為法則."

57   Compare *Mao shi zhushu* (Ruan Yuan 1980), 12.453b ("Xiao pan" 小弁): "君子無易由
      言，耳屬于垣," and *Guanzi jiaozhu* (Li Xiangfeng 2004), 31.578 ("Junchen xia" 君臣下):
      "古者有二言：牆有耳"、"伏寇在側"。牆有耳"者，微謀外泄之謂也。伏寇
      在側"者，沈疑得民之道也."

58   Compare *Da Dai liji jiegu* (Wang Pinzhen, ed. 1983), 72.196 ("Wenwang guanren" 文王
      官人)："王曰：太師！女推其往言，以揆其來行；聽其來言，以省往行；觀其
      陽，以考其陰；察其內，以揆其外。是隱節者可知，偽飾無情者可辨，質誠
      居善者可得，忠惠守義者可見也."

When words are capricious, the walls have ears:
The words that go forth injure others; the words that come back injure
the self.

(4) 口不慎 [*dins]，⁵⁹而戶之閉[*pîts]，
惡言復己[*kəʔ]，而死無日[*nit]。 ■⁶⁰

[When your] mouth is incautious and [your] door is shut,⁶¹
Malicious words will come back to you and [your] days will be numbered.

In these two-line blocks, the first line presents an aphoristic statement, and the
second focusses its interpretation in the field of "speaking carefully." In the first
set, the statement is exemplified with a line reminiscent of the *Odes*, and in the
second and third blocks, pithy images and common expressions are the foil for
admonitions cautioning against careless speech. In all cases, common lines are
paired together to form small arguments in a manner reminiscent of building
block formation in the *Laozi*.⁶²

Collections are, by definition, highly intertextual. But in addition to gather-
ing a variety of circulating materials, many of these collections integrate them
along general topics and arguments to form clusters of related material. By
grouping blocks of topically related text passages and segmenting them visu-
ally, these clusters organize sayings from the stream of tradition around one
theme. They can thus be understood as a means of sifting through large bulks
of textual data by providing a selection of passages on a certain topic or for
a certain argument. In the section above, sayings on carelessness in speech
are linked to personal and social consequences and turned into admonish-
ments aimed at persuaders. Accordingly, intertextual phrases are turned into
a short argument that on the one hand conveniently groups related materials
for future use while at the same time self-reflexively stresses the didactic value
of using collected sayings material.

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59   Compare *Wuwang jianzuo A slip 7: 慎之□□, see Ma Chengyuan, ed. 2008: 157.
60   Compare *Liji zhushu* (Ruan Yuan 1980), 47.1599b ("Jiyi" 祭義): "壹出言而不敢忘父
      母，是故惡言不出於口，忿言不反於身。不辱其身，不羞其親，可謂孝矣,"
      and *Xunzi jijie* (Wang Xianqian, ed. 1988): 24.381 ("Yue lun" 樂論): "故君子耳不聽淫
      聲，目不視邪色，口不出惡言，此三者，君子慎之."
61   The *zhi* 之 is placed here in the text to preserve the rhyme scheme, I understand the syn-
      tax to work in parallel with the preceding clause.
62   For this point see also Krijgsman (2014: 108), building on LaFargue 1994. See also Wagner
      1999.

I suggest that this clustering seen in sayings-collections is indicative of a need to organize text into manageable and organized blocks. It points to an increase in both a reliance on, and use of, the "already said," and thus represents a text culture's response to a proliferation in preserved speech, whether in writing or through memory, while at the same time indicating a desire to manage this text in order to more effectively use it in new contexts. Collections such as these function like catalysts in the emergence of discourse. They contain what an individual or group decided to be the best phrases, most aesthetically pleasing expressions, or most profound statements of wisdom and turned them to specific purposes.

Ready parallels are found in Medieval European florilegia. These collections of fine quotes, sometimes just simple lists, other times elaborately organized, gather beautiful and useful phrases in one manuscript. Faced with ever increasing quantities of text, people culled their favored material from a wide array of sources, whether written, oral, or previously memorized, and collected them to guard the material against memory loss. They were mulled over, (re-)memorized and internalized, and later interspersed through new compositions, influencing both the selection of materials, arguments, and examples, and altering the very fabric and style of the composition.[63] The collection is thus often indicative of a tendency to gather proper speech habits in written form so that the user can reproduce these habits in speech, writing, and memory.[64] Manuscripts such as the *Yucong* 4 are instrumental because they allow visual demarcation of such topically distinct units, organizing material for future usage and providing ready-made examples of new building blocks in arguments.

While the use of rhyme allows for better memorization of the phrases themselves, the visual divisions enable different reading patterns than the linear vocalization and memorization seen in the *Yong yue*. For example, visual demarcation allows for selectively perusing an individual section and taking visually aided pauses in the reading process before picking up the next section, or focusing the reading on a particular topic. There is evidence from cognitive psychology suggesting that sectioning helps memorization, stimulating the recall of individual sections and enabling large amounts of text to

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63   On "rumination" and the range of food metaphors used to describe the memorization of text by medieval and classical readers, see Griffiths 1999: 43. Carr 2005: 5, and Carruthers 2008: 234, who have made similar observations for early scribal cultures and medieval monastic practices.

64   Compare for instance T. Morgan 2007.

be committed to memory.[65] A text visually divided in short sections enhances piecemeal memorization and aids with repetition of individual sections. Accordingly, meaningful relations are more likely to center on individual sections rather than on the text as a whole, as is corroborated by the division of themes in *Yucong* 4 across visually marked sections.[66] Other manuscript texts, such as the *Fan wu liu xing* combine these elements by featuring both visual segmentation and the repetition of key formulae between rhymed segments. These developments are parts of larger tendencies in manuscript culture towards visual amplification of textual divisions.[67]

In the second half of the Mawangdui A *Laozi* manuscript especially, visual structuring is more extensive than in the Guodian manuscripts.[68] Likewise, many of the technical manuscripts from the Warring States and especially the Qin and Han periods, such as the various manuscripts dealing with the *Changes* 易 and technical and medical manuscripts, show increasing degrees of visual structuring.[69] In other words, there is a marked increase in the visual organization of manuscripts over time, enabling easier and more varied reading strategies by structuring larger quantities of text. While technical manuscripts have generally been the first to feature extensive visual organization, by the early Han period, philosophical, historiographical, and poetic manuscripts are likewise increasingly structured visually.

Because visual structuring is instrumental in the organization of a text into sections, the history of visual structuring is integral to the developments Boltz identifies for the formation of building blocks as argumentative units. Indeed, the practice of visually demarcating topically related blocks of text seems to enhance the block's unity and stimulates its transmission as a block. In other words, the formation of sayings collections was not necessarily the result of developments in literary expression, let alone the first form in which early thinkers expressed themselves and were recorded. Rather, I have tried to show that the form of such collections, composed of topical building blocks, was as much the result of developments in manuscript materiality and an increase in intertextual wisdom. With the proliferation of this material there arose the

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65   Note the discussion in Rubin 1995: 188–89, 194–226, 257–298, especially pp. 266–67.

66   See Cook 2012: 917, who argues that the individual sections of the text conform to thematic divisions in its contents.

67   For this argument see Krijgsman 2018.

68   On the materiality and visuality of the Mawangdui *Laozi* manuscripts see especially Richter 2011. For the Beida *Laozi*, see Han Wei 2012.

69   See Krijgsman 2018. Manuscripts of the *Changes* have been unearthed with various degrees of extensive visual structuring; for a good overview, see Shaughnessy 2014.

need to group, organize, and select this material into manageable chunks that
could serve further argument construction. The collection thus conceived, is a
reaction to a proliferation of discourse, rather than its first written form. The
manuscript was the platform used to redistribute this material in organized
form across early China. In what follows I analyze two examples from Guodian
to show how grouping and organizing sayings on a manuscript opened up a
space for more advanced argument construction.

4 Building Blocks That Form Arguments

Building blocks are not just ways to group sayings together into coherent
sets—they also form a basis for philosophical arguments. In this section, I shall
review two examples from Guodian *Yucong* 2 and 3, collections that function
to bring together visually distinct building blocks into a larger argumentative
frame. As these two cases illustrate, a subset of building blocks often allows
the extrapolation of deeper principles from a previous set of building blocks.
Taken together, they form a single argument that could be used in a range of
contexts.

4.1 *Visualizing Argumentative Form: The *Yucong *2*

The Guodian *Yucong* 2 and 3 use punctuation and the interplay between
argumentative form and manuscript layout to structure (non-saying) knowl-
edge. In *Yucong* 2,[70] blocks of argument are employed to organize a range
of concepts under "Nature" 性 and "Desire" 欲, two concepts heavily debated
during the Warring States period. These blocks are linked to didactic max-
ims, and together they form a simple argument on proper behavior. This case
illustrates the use of physical characteristics of the manuscript such as slip
length, punctuation, and spacing to visually reinforce textual and argumenta-
tive structure.

The manuscript carrying the *Yucong* 2 is composed of 54 slips of 15.1 to
15.2 cm in length. Each slip is bound by three strings just off the top, in the
middle, and at the bottom end. The presence of fine notches made in the slips
to hold the strings in position and the double shading on the slips suggests
that the strings were bound around the slip, thus it is likely that the production
of the manuscript enabled maximum firmness of binding while keeping the
individual slips as strong as possible. Much care was taken to produce a sturdy

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70   Jingmenshi Bowuguan 1998: 202–06.

and durable manuscript, making it eminently suitable for carrying around. With one exception, each slip features a maximum of eight graphs evenly and broadly spaced across the slip.[71] The regular placement of graphs does not cross the binding strings and appears planned out in advance or possibly written after binding. The script is clear and uniform and appears to be written in a single hand.[72] The individual statements, principles, and sorites chains in the text are all followed by a short horizontal dash mark, represented here with an en-dash (–). Except for slips 8, 30 and, possibly, 1, which feature a dash in-between a chain,[73] the marks signal the end of the individual unit after which the rest of the slip is left empty.

The first thirty-seven slips of the manuscript consist of short chains of interlocking concepts, where concept A is "brought forth" through concept B, B through C, and so forth. The remaining seventeen slips contain short evaluative maxims reflecting on these chains and a set of four general principles introduced by "In principle" 凡. The interlocking chains form what is known as a sorites argument in Greek philosophy, where each step in the chain links a primary concept to a further development.[74] All of the concepts ultimately stem from either Nature or Desire, in ten and four of the cases respectively, with the chains stemming from Nature consistently longer at a maximum of eight four-character phrases,[75] as opposed to a maximum of three phrases for the chains on Desire, for example on slips 13–14:

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71   The exception is slip 45, which is a maxim (discussed below, paralleled with slip 46) written in nine graphs. It is interesting to note that apparently it was more important to write one maxim as a self-contained unit on the slip—hence squeezing in the final two graphs—rather than resuming it, and thus keeping even spacing, on the next slip, which is clearly related and closes the section with a mark.

72   Note that there is minor variation in the execution of individual components, most notably the *xin* 心 signific occurs in three different forms in this manuscript, sometimes even on the same slip (compare slips 30, and 3–4). Likewise, *sheng* 生 is executed with or without the middle stroke (compare slips 1–8 with 9–37). Note that these different styles are regularly differentiated in *Yucong* 3 for instance, where each occurs only in a specific sub-division of the manuscript also characterized by different punctuation, different hands, and argument structure.

73   Some of these marks, for example on slip 1 could also be ink-blobs. As Cook 2012: 847 notes, however, all these mid-text marks occur after Nature and might also be understood as a further material underscoring of argumentative primacy of Nature as the ultimate foundation of the sorites.

74   See also Unger 1994: 53–58, and, Roth 1997: 298.

75   Note that the longest chain on slips 1–4 is not closed by a mark and thus likely ran for at least one more layer. In addition, due to broken and missing slips the absolute division in terms of chains stemming from Nature or Desire is necessarily tentative.

(13) 貪⁷⁶生於欲，倍⁷⁷生於貪，
(14) 汙⁷⁸生於倍。–

Covetousness is brought forth from Desire, Betrayal is brought forth through Covetousness, Defilement is brought forth through Betrayal.

In this example, Defilement is presented as ultimately stemming from Desire, through a series of logically understandable connections. It is noteworthy that all of the chains stemming from Desire are composed of negative concepts, and even though some of the chains stemming from Nature are likewise negatively oriented, such as the one below, they also include more positive or general attributes.

The primacy of the concept of Nature is reflected in terms of both chain length and frequency, and by the statement that Desire itself is also subsumed under Nature:

(10) 欲生於性，慮生於欲，
(11) 倍⁷⁹生於慮，爭生於倍，
(12) 黨生於爭。–

Desire is brought forth from Nature, Worrying is brought forth through Desire, Betrayal is brought forth through Worrying, Fighting is brought forth through Betrayal, Ganging up is brought forth through Fighting.

Because every concept is rooted either in Desire or Nature, and because in addition, Desire itself is ultimately rooted in Nature, the logic of the sorites argument subsumes every concept, and thus all aspects of conduct and behavior under a single origin. By connecting specific concepts such as Betrayal to the much more frequently discussed concept of Nature, it places the specific concerns of the text within contemporary philosophical debates at large.

This structure of the sorites is physically underscored by the layout of the text on the bamboo manuscripts. Every block is laid out on the bamboo in

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76   Slips 13 and 14 are mired by reading issues. I follow Liu Zhao (2003: 204), and Li Ling (2007: 221), who tentatively read as *tan* 貪.

77   I follow Liu Zhao (2003: 204), who reads *pi* 伓 as *bei* 倍.

78   I tentatively follow Cook (2012: 856), who reads this graph as *wu* 汙.

79   Following Li Ling (2007: 221), but glossing as "betrayal" in line with the previous section.

FIGURE 8
Yucong 2: slips 10–12
SOURCE: JINGMEN SHI BOWUGUAN 1998: 89. IMAGE
COURTESY OF JINGMEN CITY MUSEUM

the same way, components of the sorites make up exactly half of a bamboo
slip, underscored by the binding string in the middle. On these halves, the
first and last concept in the chain respectively occupy the top and bottom
end, and the function formula of the chain (*sheng yu* 生於) is placed in the
middle. After every argument-block, the remainder of the slip is left blank,

clearly demarcating the building blocks as individual units. This highly systematic layout makes an aesthetic claim to the orderly, patterned, predictable, and thus seemingly *natural* quality of the argument. It physically performs the form of the argument, generating a powerful reading experience. This identity between physical and argumentative form is unique to the *Yucong* 1–3 and imbues the argument with persuasive force, which in other texts would be furnished through strategies such as narrative integration, authoritative attribution, or the use of aural features such as rhyme and assonance.

In addition, there are cases in which several blocks are linked together into more complex configurations. For example, a chain dealing with "Strength" 強 (slips 34–35) is diametrically paralleled with a chain on "Weakness" 弱 (slips 36–37). Further correspondences with the maxims, which follow the sorites arguments, suggests that the maxims should be read as forming general conclusions and principles deduced from the sorites arguments:[80]

(15) 諓[81]生於欲，訐[82]生於諓，
(16) 忘[83]生於訐。–

Deceit is brought forth from Desire, Craftiness is brought forth through
    Deceit,
Negligence is brought forth through Craftiness.

(25) 惡生於性，怒生於惡，
(26) 勝[84]生於怒，慭生於勝，
(27) 賊生於慭。–

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80   See also the chain on slips 20–22 which deals with delight 悅, for instance:
      (20) 智生於性，化生於智， (21) 悅生於化，好生於悅， (22) 從生於好。–
      "Wisdom is brought forth from Nature, Transformation is brought forth through
      Wisdom, Delight is brought forth through Transformation, Fondness is brought forth
      through Delight, Adherence is brought forth through Fondness."
      Slip 42 then contains its general principle:
      (42) 凡悅，作於譽 者也–
      "In general, 'Delight' is that which arises from Good Reputation."
81   I follow He Linyi 2001: 167.
82   Following Liu Zhao 2003: 204.
83   Li Ling (2007: 223) suggests read this as *huang* 慌. I do not think it is necessary to read
      wang 忘 as a loan here.
84   Following Li Ling 2007: 223 and Liu Zhao 2003: 202.

Dislike is brought forth from Nature, Anger is brought forth through
    dislike,
Besting is brought forth through Anger, Hate is brought forth through
    Besting,
Brutality is brought forth from Hate.

(43) 訐 ,[85]自安[86]也。賊，退人也。

Craftiness is pleasing oneself. Brutality is distancing oneself from others.

Craftiness 訐 stemming from Desire is juxtaposed to Brutality 賊 stemming
from Nature, and both are reduced to a didactic principle that equates favor-
ing oneself to distancing others. This combination of building blocks to form
even larger principles thus mimics the logic of the sorites chain, where small
steps can lead to larger, and possibly adverse, long-term results. These max-
ims turn the rather abstract chains of concepts into short arguments. The
didactic principles are combined with a sorites chain to construct another
building block.

In the following example, Craftiness is further connected to the term Loyalty
忠,[87] in order to form the inverse of the previous argument, i.e., extolling the
virtue of serving others as opposed to oneself:

(45) 未有善事人而不返者 ,[88]
(46) 未有訐而忠者 。[89] –

There has not yet been excellence in serving others that was not
    returned.
There has not yet been one who was Crafty and yet Loyal.

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85   I follow Li Ling (2007: 222) who reads as *xu* 訐, compare slips 15 and 46.
86   I follow Li Ling (2007: 224), and read as *an* 安.
87   See also slips 8–9:
       (8) 愛生於性，– 親生於愛，(9) 忠生於親。–
       "Fondness is brought forth from nature, congeniality is brought forth through fond-
    ness, loyalty is brought forth through congeniality."
88   Cook (2012: 861) suggests that there is a mark at the end of this statement, but I have not
    been able to see it on the image of the slip.
89   Cook (2012: 861) notes a structurally similar passage in the Shanghai Museum *Dizi Wen*
    弟子問 manuscript slip 21, reading: "吾未見華而信者，未見善事人而憂者."

Here, the harmful consequences of self-serving behavior are turned around, suggesting that loyal service is rewarded. Chains of seemingly abstract concepts specifying emotions and behaviors are thus turned into moral lessons relating a *do ut des* approach to public comportment and ethical behavior. One such maxim, which also has a parallel in the *Lunyu*, brings out the generative logic of the sorites argument by arguing that one should be steadfast every step of the way, in order to reach a favorable outcome in the end:

> (50) 毋失吾勢，此勢得矣。–

> I should not lose my Disposition, and this is how Disposition is gained.

> (51) 小不忍，敗大勢。–[90]

> When not enduring the small, grand Disposition will be lost.

The high degree of physical structuring of the argument in this manuscript is rare, but its recombination of common sayings with small blocks of argument to form moral lessons finds counterparts among didactic materials across the globe. This will be developed further in the discussion of the *Yucong 3* below.

4.2   *Wedding Principles and Sayings: The* *Yucong 3*

The *Yucong 3* consists of 72 slips, measuring 17.6–17.7 cm in length. The slips were bound, perhaps doubly, by three strings, and the graphs are equally spaced over the slips, just as in *Yucong 2*. The key difference in the materiality of *Yucong 3* is that the manuscript is written by three different hands using three different types of punctuation.[91] The hands and punctuation match with other regular divisions such as manuscript layout and argumentative structure to form three distinct textual sections on the manuscript. In

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90   Liu Zhao (2003: 207) notes a parallel with *Lunyu* 15/27: "子曰：巧言亂德，小不忍則亂大謀." Cook (2012: 862, n.98) further notes a parallel in a citation of the "Zhaigong zhi guming" 祭公之顧命 in the Guodian *Ziyi* 緇衣, slips 21–22: "毋以小謀敗大圖."

91   The three sections are comprised of the following slips, section 1: slips 1–16, 50–51; section 2: slips 17–47, 54–56, 60–63; section 3: slips 48–49, 52–53, 57–59, 64–72. Hands can be differentiated through the differences in the structure of common graphs (or components) such as 也, 者, 之, 治, 心, and 生, and stylistic criteria such as the thickness and slant of strokes, combined with the observation that the punctuation in each section is markedly different. Lastly, it should be noted that the third section matches the *Yucong 1* both in hand, theme, and argument structure, and that the first section has some definitional and thematic overlap with *Yucong 1*.

the following discussion, I shall focus on the second part of the first section, composed of two building blocks, each marked by a slanted line, here represented as |.

This section opens with two blocks prescribing the relation of a minister with his ruler, likening it and differentiating it from the relation one has with one's father. The conclusion is that a ruler-minister relation can be severed, just like friendship, whereas family relations are permanent. Thematically, the reasons for breaking off the relationship tally with the two blocks that follow, under discussion here. They focus on the need for mutual support and stress the importance of morally positive influences, a sentiment echoed in the latter blocks. Topically and structurally, the latter blocks are distinct in that they focus on learning, ability, and behavior rather than service to a ruler and do so using a recurrent formula labelling specific types of company and action as either "advantageous" (*yi* 益) or "disadvantageous" (*sun* 損):

> (9) 與為義者遊 ,[92] 益。與莊 (10) 者處 ,[93]益。起習文章，益。 (14) 自視其所不足 ,[94]益。|[95]遊   (15)   佚 ,[96]益。高志 ,[97]益。存[98]心，益。| (11) 與慢[99]者處，損。[100]與不好 (12) 學者遊，損。處而亡躐[101] (13) 習

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92   This first line tallies explicitly with one of the reasons for breaking with a ruler specified in the previous block of section 1 of *Yucong* 3, slips 4–5: "If [he] is not righteous and he forces [tasks] on you, you do not have to accept them." 不義而加諸己，弗受也|.

93   Compare *Shuoyuan* (Ho, Lau, and Chen 1992), 17.31/147/1-2 ("Za yan" 雜言): 孔子曰：" 丘死之後，商也日益，賜也日損；商也好與賢己者處，賜也好說不如己者," and *Zhuangzi jishi* (Guo Qingfan 1985), 9A.934 ("Wai wu" 外物): "嬰兒生無石師而能言，與能言者處也."

94   I follow Liu Zhao 2000: 82 and read *zu* 族 as *zu* 足. Note similar passages in *Da Dai liji jiegu* (Wang Pinzhen 1983), 72.189 ("Wenwang guanren"): "伐其所能，曰日損者也" and "見 [視] 其所不足，曰日益者也."

95   The mark here indicates a subdivision, the form of the next three "advantageous" statements continuing onto slip 15 is different and consists solely of binomes.

96   I follow Liu Zhao 2003: 213.

97   I follow He Linyi 2007: 66 and read *song* 嵩 as *gao* 高.

98   I follow Liu Zhao 2003: 213.

99   I follow Liu Zhao 2003: 212.

100   Compare a similar distinction between *zhuang* 莊 and *man* 慢 in *Yucong* 1, slips 33–35:
        禮生於莊，樂生於薄。禮繁樂零則懾，樂繁禮零則慢。–
        Ritual is brought forth from solidity; music is brought forth from sparseness. If ritual is elaborate and music minimal then one behaves dignified; when music is elaborate and ritual minimal then one becomes lax.

101   Following Liu Zhao 2000: 82 and Li Ling 2007: 195.

也 ,¹⁰²損。自視其所能，損。¹⁰³ (73) 從所小好，與所小樂，損。¹⁰⁴ (16) [有]¹⁰⁵所不行 ,¹⁰⁶益。必¹⁰⁷行，損。|¹⁰⁸

To accompany those who practice propriety is advantageous. To reside with the dignified is advantageous. To take up exercising patterned composition is advantageous. If you yourself show what you lack, it is advantageous. To be free and leisurely [in one's study] is advantageous. To be of grand intent is advantageous. To hold it in one's heart is advantageous.

To reside with the lax is disadvantageous. To accompany those who do not care for study is disadvantageous. To reside [in good company] and yet not excel in exercise, [that]¹⁰⁹ is disadvantageous. If you yourself show what you are capable of, it is disadvantageous.

To follow that which brings small pleasures and participate in that which gives small happiness is disadvantageous. Having that which you do not practice is advantageous. To practice out of necessity is disadvantageous.

Nearly all of the short items in the first block find intertextual counterparts in other texts, such as the *Recruiting Officials* 官人 texts.¹¹⁰ In particular, the structure itself, which contrasts lists of advantageous and disadvantageous behaviors, occurs across early literature and seems to be a trope specifically used for didactic texts. It features in two sayings from the *Lunyu* for example, where positive and negative forms of friendship and happiness are furnished with

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102   The particle *ye* 也 is problematic. It only occurs once in this block and does not appear to nominalize an expression. Likely its function is emphatic.

103   Compare *Da Dai liji jiegu* (Wang Pinzhen 1983), 49.78 ("Zengzi Lishi" 曾子立事): "友以立其所能，而遠其所不能，苟無失其所守，亦可與終身矣."

104   I follow Cook (2012: 881) in assigning the slip number 73 and placing it here. The slip was discovered and added to *Yucong* 3 by Long Yongfang (2002).

105   I follow Li Ling (2007: 195) and Liu Zhao (2003: 214), who both supplement *you* 有 here.

106   Compare *Lunyu jijie* (Cheng Shude 1990), 2.46–47 ("Xue'er" 學而): 有子曰："禮之用，和為貴。先王之道斯為美，小大由之。有所不行，知和而和，不以禮節之，亦不可行也."

107   Li Tianhong (2000) and Liu Zhao (2000: 89–90) have shown that this graph should be transcribed as *bi* 必. I follow Li Ling (2007: 195), who reads *bi xing* 必行 as the opposite of the preceding *you suo bu xing* 有所不行.

108   I follow Cook (2012: 879) in grouping the "advantageous" and "disadvantageous" statements together. The last line breaks the pattern, simultaneously signaling the end and main point of the list.

109   It is possible also to read this as an inversion of the nominalized predicate, hence "that."

110   For a reconstruction and study of these materials, see Richter 2005.

examples from learning and (a)moral behavior.[111] As noted in the texts above, many of the sayings in the *Yucong* 1–3 find counterparts in the *Lunyu* and the *Liji*, both with a strong didactic element as well. Lastly, the trope appears in the *Laozi*. There, the normative relation is characteristically inverted, and *sun* 損, in this case meaning "decrease," is shown to be the true learning in that it leads to *wuwei* 無為 as opposed to "worldly" action.[112]

In short, *yi* and *sun* are often used as means to categorize ways and types of learning, and often bear on how individual behavior influences, and is influenced by, that of others. The use of such basic categories, usually presented in lists in order to structure instructions, is a common element in instruction texts across cultures, where they function as placeholders for organizing related concepts.[113] They function as a building block generator, in that the list could be extended to include an ever-wider range of materials. It is thus likely that this text also would have been used for educational purposes.[114]

As I argued in the discussion on the *Yucong* 2 above, a common feature of the *Yucong* texts is that arguments are often followed (or as in the case of *Yucong* 1, preceded) by one or more sayings or generalizing statements. In the *Yucong* 1, the semantic import of the sayings is often interpreted and steered through the use of definitions,[115] while in *Yucong* 2 and 3 it is rather the reverse. Lists of terms, short arguments, and sorites chains are summarized and commented on using short maxims or sayings. In the case described above, the different aspects of learning, behavior, and conscious choice of action from the list are neatly summed up in a saying which has a parallel in the *Lunyu*:[116]

111   *Lunyu jijie* (Cheng Shude 1990), 33.1149–50, 1152 ("Ji shi" 季氏): 孔子曰："益者三友，損者三友。友直，友諒，友多聞，益矣。友便辟，友善柔，友便佞，損矣," and: 孔子曰："益者三樂，損者三樂。樂節禮樂，樂道人之善，樂多賢友，益矣。樂驕樂，樂佚遊，樂宴樂，損矣."

112   *Laozi jiaoshi* (Zhu Qianzhi 2000), 48.192–194: "為學日益，為道日損。損之又損，以至於無為。無為而無不為。取天下常以無事，及其有事，不足以取天下."

113   For cross-cultural considerations, see the overview in Grebnev 2020.

114   Compare also the wise versus the dumb man, laxity versus diligence, and wealth-poverty distinctions often employed to structure lists of moral behavior, see for example T. Morgan 2007, for early Greek and Roman examples. While the antonyms used to categorize are often culturally specific, their structural position and use in knowledge classification is remarkably similar.

115   Krijgsman 2014: 87–89.

116   Compare *Lunyu jishi*, 13.443 ("Shu'er" 述而): "志於道，據於德，依於仁，游於藝."

(50) 志於道，狎[117]於德，比[118]於
(51) 仁，遊於藝。|

Set your intent upon the way, familiarize yourself with virtue, draw near to humaneness, roam in the arts.

The verbs in this saying, "set intent" 志, "familiarize" 狎, "draw near to" 比, and "roam" 遊 all refer to the subject actively engaging and physically moving into the company of (persons with) the respective virtue. As such, this saying too can be understood as expressing a moral principle, which finds its practical application in the specific exhortations in the list. This is how the two elements link up to form the basis of a short argument.

Both the *Yucong* 2 and 3 formulate general statements that are extrapolated from the moral import of the collected sayings. They harness an arsenal of intertext to provide cultural support for the wisdom of these principles and clearly identify the subcomponents using punctuation and spacing on the manuscript. The repetition of the principles through a range of sayings, combined with the clarity of presentation using building blocks, make the texts eminently suited as primers. They were possibly meant to instill proper moral knowledge in students, a function that is attested for other sayings collections across the ancient world.

4.3   *Using Saying Collections: Comparative Evidence*

The moral didacticism underlying the *Yucong* 2 and 3 finds ready parallels in similarly formatted collections from the classical world. Similar functions have been shown to arise from both ancient Greek Gnomai and Egyptian Instruction texts, for example. Lichtheim has argued in a number of publications on Egyptian Instruction texts from the Early Kingdom to the Ptolomaic period that these texts implicitly foreground a moral code, founded on a *do ut des* principle or the Golden Rule.[119] The internal logic of the individual sayings, sorites, and maxims in the Instruction texts similarly actualize this rule by repeating it in a variety of (largely similarly structured) cases.

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117   I follow Li Ling (2007: 195) who analyzes this graph as the old script version of *jia* 甲 and reads as *xia* 狎. He suggests that it might have been corrupted to *ju* 據 in the *Lunyu* parallel.

118   I follow Li Ling (2007: 195) who reads this graph as *bi* 比.

119   Lichtheim 1996.

The Demotic Instruction texts from Ptolomaic Egypt do this in a manner strikingly similar to the *Yucong*. Single sayings (monostichs) are joined through similar sentence structures and repetition, and these are concluded with generalizing paradoxes and statements that emphatically underscore the internal logic and code of behavior emerging from the sayings. Each item takes up a single row on the papyrus and is clearly sectioned off as a distinct, but interconnected, piece of wisdom. Lichtheim notes how these instructions were used in educational contexts, and often accompanied instruction either in house by the father, or in school contexts by scribes. In addition, when familiar with the genre and its workings, many people later started collecting and composing their own collections in similar ways, as evidenced in ostraca from the period.

In early Greek and Roman collections of wise sayings, the Gnomai or Gnomologia discussed by Morgan, a similar pattern emerges.[120] She describes how they were seen as embodying and ingraining a model of morality and behavior. On the basis of changes in thematic focus, she notes that certain collections are intended for people from different classes, but the basic value of sayings and maxims in moral *Bildung* were recognized in and for all circles. Because of this formative aspect of the collections, as with Egyptian case discussed by Lichtheim, they were often used as the basis for any further education. While people from different strata would be taught using the collections, some of the elite would expand on this basis with education in other, more specified areas such as grammar, clerical skills, and so on. Both authors also note that underlying the individual collections was an ontology, a concept of the body and its interactions with the outside world, as well as a certain understanding of the social realities upon which the lessons were predicated.

What is unique to the material in the *Yucong* is that the implicit ontological structures in sections of the texts are explicitly touched upon and conceptualized in other sections.[121] This intimate correlation of ontological and ethical arguments can be observed in texts such as the *Fan wu liu xing* as well.[122] Such links between highly intertextual sayings material on the one hand, and blocks containing ontological or ethical arguments on the other, places the collections discussed here in an intermediary position between singular sayings

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120   T. Morgan 2007.

121   See, for example, the first 17 slips of *Yucong* 1 and the final section of *Yucong* 3 (slips 58–72), wherein heaven, earth, matter, and the human sphere are connected in an intricate but still not entirely understood system. For a reading of the *Yucong* 1 that draws out some of these connections based on conceptual analysis, see Harbsmeier 2011.

122   Gu Shikao 2009a.

and well-rounded essays.[123] In this sense, the texts not only function as corpus organizers, helping users to sift through text and organize it, but also provide an argumentative context within which to place these sayings. As such, they operate as an interface between different modes of argumentation and provide recipients of the texts with a well-rounded and relatively comprehensive basis for education and further argumentation.

5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have tried to reposition the status of collections in early Chinese intellectual and literary history. I have analyzed them not as faithful collections of certain masters' words or the fountainhead of early Chinese philosophy, but as creative integrations of pre-circulating materials such as traveling sayings, maxims, and aphorisms. These collections thus operate as intertextual hubs. They draw on apt phrases, then organize them around topics and short arguments, so that the material can be effectively reused in new compositions to influence the speech and writing habits of their users. I suggest that they represent a manuscript culture's response to a proliferation of textual production, the "already said," and aim to prepare and organize this material for new uses. Increased formatting, punctuation, and physical means of dividing material into sections enabled topical grouping and higher-level organization of the material into short arguments. In addition, some of these collections add an interpretative structure, whether using ethical or ontological arguments, that provide a framework within which to place and understand the sayings. The collections filter, select, and structure useful materials for their users to draw on when teaching, making persuasive arguments, and so on. The use of similar collections as teaching materials and *aides de memoire* for rhetoricians is well attested across early cultures.

Manuscripts provided a visual means to organize collections into building blocks and knowledge into manageable units. Besides reinforcing the internal divisions in the text and grouping certain material under topical headings or arguments, this allowed for different reading strategies and eased piecemeal memorization. The building blocks, as far we can identify them, are to a large extent the products of using the visual capabilities of manuscripts to highlight

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123 Krijgsman 2014: 106–107. See also Meyer 2011, who divides texts that construct intricate arguments to make a philosophical point and texts that rely on the authority of a master or tradition to convey argumentative force.

syntactic and semantic divisions.[124] Visual amplification was crucial to the
establishment of building blocks, since textual cues such as rhyme were not
always unambiguous. But the collections themselves were not an endpoint in
the story of the sayings and arguments they carried. Rather, through use in
teaching contexts they influenced speech and writing habits far beyond their
initial composition, a practice (and conviction) well attested across other early
manuscript cultures as well.

The maxims, sayings, and argument chains could be recited, memorized,
and slowly mulled over to digest and embody their wisdom. Since memory is
a fundamental aspect of textual composition, the use of these collections is
likely to have influenced later composition as their contents were recycled in
new contexts. Pithy expressions of wisdom needed to be explained and contex-
tualized before they could be useful in arguments, however, so the collections
under discussion linked the materials under short arguments and topics, or by
using a maxim to highlight a specific value embodied throughout the materi-
als. The webs of association thus formed in each collection provided a basis for
instilling guidelines of proper moral conduct in education. Likewise, the con-
ceptual associative habits foregrounded in these texts and ingrained through
memorization and education can be seen as means by which argumentative
patterns were transmitted and reinforced in their users, which would in turn
influence other texts and speeches. The fact that much of the content and the
form seen in the specific materials discussed here has counterparts across the
early literature can be taken as support, but in the absence of clear evidence on
Warring States education no definite conclusions can be drawn. What seems
clear is that in their function as corpus organizers, these collections operated
as important catalysts for the integration of early discourse.

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124   It seems likely that building blocks were used in oral discourse as well, but without con-
       temporary evidence, the visual and textual markings preserved on manuscripts are our
       only way of assessing their form. I assume that building blocks preserved in written form
       mimic in form their oral counterparts, but it is of course entirely possible that once pre-
       served in writing, the dynamic of production, reception, and transmission changed.

Collecting Stories: *The Reformation and Integration of the Past*

昔者堯、舜讓而帝，之、噲讓而絕；湯、武爭而王，白公爭
而滅。由此觀之，爭讓之禮，堯、桀之行，貴賤有時，未可以為
常也。

In times of yore, Yao abdicated to Shun and Shun ruled as emperor,
Kuai abdicated to Zhi but Zhi was cut off. Tang and Wu fought and
became kings, Bo Gong fought but was destroyed. Observing it from
these examples, the ritual correctness of fighting and abdicating
and the conduct of Yao and Jie are valued or denigrated according
to the times—one cannot take them as constants.

> *ZHUANGZI*, "Autumn Floods" 秋水

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This chapter focus on stories about the past. It asks what happens when stories
and anecdotes are integrated in a collection to form larger historical narratives.
How did an increase in collecting historical narratives on manuscripts enable
different ways of narrating, structuring, and engaging with the past? How did
the collection of narratives about the past interact with the (re-)formation of
cultural memory? This chapter describes the generative potential of collections
in shaping a larger narrative out of small blocks of text. It argues that turning
memory into text, and bringing various narratives together into collections,
helped to form a conception of the past that gradually gained in complexity
and structure. The past itself was turned into a resource that could be engaged
and experienced in new ways. Before moving to manuscript texts about the
past, I shall first give a short review of cultural memory theory and how it
reveals larger developments in the representation of the early Chinese past.

Recent scholarship on the past has fruitfully drawn on the model of cul-
tural memory, developed by Jan Assmann from Maurice Halbwachs's notion

of collective memory.[1] It addresses the ways in which societies with differing degrees of literacy and textualized heritage deal with the past as a resource. In short, Assmann argued that the way in which a society engages with its heritage is closely linked to the means it uses to remember and represent it. To develop this notion, he advances a scale between two ideal types. On the early end of the spectrum, societies generate a body of cultural memory that frames the present in light of its foundational period. Culture heroes, myths, and cosmogonies stemming from this period provide the foundation upon which societies construct a shared past that can be mined and adapted to explain the vicissitudes of life. The past is made concrete and localized through the use of figures, places, items, and events. These sites of memory tie narrative and meaning together to inform the identity of the group. Such a shared cultural memory, Assmann argues, is constantly renegotiated to meet daily needs through ritual performance and reenactment, oral instruction, and tradition, and is always placed in a time far away from individually experienced memory and even communicative memory.[2] Cultural memory provides the larger framework through which experience and memory are organized to allow stable and understandable structures of meaning to emerge. To clearly distinguish these layers of the past, the cultural memory tends to be followed by a major break, such as an apocalypse, the breakdown of the Zhou ritual order, etc., which keeps the memory of the distant past outside the vicissitudes of lived experience. Below, I shall build on previous scholarship to show that such a structure of narration holds well for early (Western Zhou onwards) sources about the past in early China.[3] As I will show, the general structures of literary representation of the past in many discovered Warring States sources still tally with those observed for bronzes and songs of the mid to late Western Zhou through the early Spring and Autumn period. Nonetheless, new forms start to appear, suggesting that the basic framework for understanding the past slowly started to change during the mid to late Warring States period.

On the other end of Assmann's model we find a society that is highly textualized. Instead of experts guiding the interpretation of communal ritual, a selective group of commentators emerge who derive their cultural authority from the interpretation of a body of sacred or canonic texts. Instead of providing

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1 Jan Assmann 2011, Halbwachs 1992. For the most recent application and an overview of the application of Cultural Memory theory in Sinology, see Kern 2022.

2 Communicative memory covers a period that can be related orally between three generations, and usually spans about 80 to 100 years, after which there is a collective blank or amnesia, preceded by the foundational age.

3 It has been used previously by Kern 2009 and Meyer 2011, among others, to explain early Chinese textuality in a manuscript culture.

oral and adaptable foundation myths set in antiquity, a set of increasingly fixed texts is used to circumscribe a shared cultural heritage. Changes that need explaining are wrought on these texts by the use of commentaries, and elaborate schemes emerge that construct a unified whole from an often-diverse textual heritage.[4] Such a situation is eminently applicable to the early empires, which saw the emergence of fixed textual editions, canons, and specialist commentators in service to the court, all helping to firmly anchor the present to an expedient historical footing.[5]

We do not have much evidence for institutionalized forms of dealing with the past for the Warring States period. While there are indications that the individual states were compiling chronicles and records, there does not yet seem to be a notion of fixed text editions, and the first concrete attempts towards scholastic methods to fix the meaning of words and graphs also had to wait until the dawn of the empire. Here it is telling that the first accusation against textual expertise for its (alleged) attempt to criticize the present using the past was leveled by China's first emperor.[6] Likewise, the commentaries and large overarching narratives about the past, used to provide precedents for the ruling dynasty, would only emerge with the first empires.

In other words, the writing and use of the past in the Warring States seems to occupy a transitionary period between the earlier commemorative tradition and the later commentarial tradition. One of the major drawbacks of Assmann's model is that it is not well-suited to describe such transitions. It features a rather static description of the two extreme ends of the spectrum without describing the changes from one mode to the other. As it stands, the model can be taken as a rather simplified rewording of the difference between mythical and historical sources, or a rephrasing of the classic oral-written dichotomy.[7] As such, in this chapter, while I draw on the analytic distinctions so useful in the basic framework developed by Assmann, I will focus on exactly those small changes and the various means of textualizing the past that characterized this transformation in Warring States China.

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4 For the role of commentators in "working-up" a textual tradition, see Henderson 1991, and Farmer, Henderson, and Witzel 2002.
5 See Nylan 2011, 2001.
6 See Kern (2000: 183–196), for a discussion.
7 Jan Assmann is aware of this problem inherent to using ideal types in theory, and does not, for instance, exclude commemorative elements persisting in a society based on writing or vice versa; personal communication, June 23, 2013. For some evaluations of Assmann's work, see Gottlieb 2013 and Spalinger 2012. For a general overview of cultural memory studies beyond sinology, see Olick and Robbins 1998.

Specifically, I examine recently discovered materials from the Warring States period and discuss how they develop different modes of describing the past in terms of time, event, structure, and reflexivity. These can be fruitfully compared with earlier commemorative materials from the mid to late Western Zhou and early Spring and Autumn periods, already well described in the literature,[8] to reveal the concrete changes that would eventually provide the tools for a more textualized approach to the past. These changes, I suggest, are due in part to the accrual of narrative material organized into larger collections on bamboo manuscripts. The length, flexibility, and structuring of narration aided by bamboo manuscripts provided a convenient medium for collecting and organizing different memories together into larger narratives. By no means do I mean to discount the undoubtedly large amassment of memory communicated in oral form. In fact, I believe it to be a major source of memory and narrative gathered in the collections discussed here. But the only traces preserved of oral communication are those fixed in writing, and thus by definition they have lost their original communicative context and frame of understanding.

As a starting point, I shall first offer a characterization of commemorative song traditionally dated to the mid to late Western Zhou to early Spring and Autumn period. While different in form to the historical narratives we see in the Warring States, they provide a revealing perspective on how the past was perceived and organized. I contrast this mode to the systematic, programmatic, and complex narration of the past seen in the *Rongchengshi* 容成氏 manuscript. I then show how this different approach to structuring and using the past can be contextualized through wider trends in historiography, visible both in retrieved and transmitted texts, focusing in particular on the *Tang Yu zhi dao* 唐虞之道 (*The Way of Tang and Yu*), *Zi Gao* 子高, *Gui shen* 鬼神 (*Ghosts and Spirits*), and the *Qiong da yi shi* 窮達以時 (*Failure and Success Appear in Their Respective Times*).

1   A Fragmented Past: Songs of Ancestors and Lords

One often noted challenge faced by researchers attempting to reconstruct the mythology and history of the period comes from the fragmented and often conflicting nature of the source material.[9] From the mid-Western Zhou through the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, it is perhaps better to speak of mythographies and historiographies in the plural. Here, I suspend the attempt

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8   See studies by Kern 2009, Pines 2002, Schaberg 2001, and von Falkenhausen 1993a.

9   Birrel 1997.

to garner from this body of material a unified and comprehensive account of the pre-imperial past. Rather, the so-called fragmented and conflicting nature of the source material should be understood as a characteristic of early textuality. Instead of a unified narrative, it reveals the diversity that is characteristic of the modes of communication, commemoration, and representation in a culture whose heritage is not yet fixed, nor centralized and modeled according to macro-narratives. Put differently, the pre-imperial past was largely a collection of narratives not yet molded into a single structure, and comprised of a wide variety of stories in different versions.

Let us start with a typical early Zhou through Spring and Autumn lineage narrative. These narratives contain local accounts placing the individual lineage onto a larger cultural or ancestral heritage. A good set of examples can be found in the commemorative songs traditionally dated around the ninth to sixth centuries BCE. These odes are found in different sections of the Mao edition of the *Odes*, and all feature a local ruler tracing back his land and lineage to the works of foundational—and often mythological—figures, to anchor his house to the Zhou ecumene. Their mode of commemoration tallies well with the accurately dateable mid to late Western Zhou narratives preserved on bronzes.[10]

A representative example can be found in the hymn (*song* 頌), "Bigong" 閟宮 (The Closed Temple; Mao 300). It presents a cultural genealogy tracing the Lord of Lu's heritage back through kings Wen and Wu and up to the culture heroes Hou Ji and the mythical ancestor Jiang Yuan. His territory was originally made habitable by the labors of Yu. In the opening section, Hou Ji's agricultural achievements, reflected in the abundant cultivation of millet throughout his country, are presented as a continuation of Yu's earlier tasks, then linked with the lord's house:

> 閟宮有侐；實實枚枚；
> 赫赫姜嫄，其德不回；
> 上帝是依；無災無害、
> 彌月不遲，是生后稷；
> 降之百福，
> 黍稷重穋、稙穉菽麥；
> 奄有下國，俾民稼穡；
> 有稷有黍、有稻有秬；
> 奄有下土，纘禹之緒。

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10   For comparisons see Kern 2009, and Behr 2008.

The Closed Temple is still; it is very solid, board upon board; majestic was Jiang Yuan, her virtue was without fault; God on High made her fruitful; without injury, without hurt, fulfilling her months but not late, she bore Hou Ji; he sent down to them (the people) a hundred blessings, the glutinous millet and the panicled millet, the slowly ripening and the quickly ripening grain, the early sown and the late sown grain, the pulse, the wheat; he extensively possessed the lands below, and caused the people to sow and reap; there was panicled millet and glutinous millet, there was rice and black millet; he extensively possessed the lands below, continuing the work of Yu.[11]

Local space is represented through commemoration of the lands, mountains, and rivers of the individual polity, and yet it is placed on the footing of a universal cultural space by linking it to the labors of culture heroes and sage kings.[12]

The time structure seen in pieces like "Bigong" is typical for early lineage commemorations. Von Falkenhausen and Kern have argued that these compositions reflect an attempt at presenting cultural unity and lineage continuity.[13] This can be seen, for example, in the vocabulary stressing the continuation of the past into the present and up to the future, and in the structure of time presented in these texts. Commonly, an idealized lineage origin is set in the foundational period of Yu and Hou Ji. It is followed by a large and temporally unspecified in-between period. This timeless period, or "floating gap" in Vansina's terms,[14] is wedged between the foundational past and the present and presents a space for inscribing the idea of continued and idealized ritual practice and lasting social and political order.[15] It represents

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11   Translation follows Karlgren 1950: 259.
12   Other possible examples include, but are not limited to, "Wenwang yousheng" 文王有聲 (King Wen Is Famous; Mao 244) and "Han yi" 韓奕 (Han's Grandeur; Mao 261) from the Major Elegantia (Daya 大雅), and "Xin Nanshan" 信南山 (Yes, the Southern Hill; Mao 210) from the Minor Elegantiae (Xiaoya 小雅).
13   Kern 2009: 153–55, von Falkenhausen 1993a: 155.
14   Vansina 1985: 23, see also Jan Assmann 2011: 34.
15   See, for example, the fourth and least historical stanza of "Bigong," which focuses on the timeless practice of ritual procedure, all in deictic terms, placing the practice in non-historical, ritual time. Other than the locale of Lu, there is no concretization of the practice, and instead the focus is on the idealized representation of the rituals of Lu that make it long-lasting and prosperous:

     秋而載嘗、夏而楅衡。白牡騂剛、犧尊將將。毛炰胾羹、籩豆大房。萬舞洋洋、孝孫有慶。俾爾熾而昌、俾爾壽而臧。保彼東方、魯邦是常。不虧不崩、不震不騰。三壽作朋、如岡如陵。

the space between what is culturally remembered about the foundational period and what is communicatively and individually remembered about the near past. In other words, it fills in blanks of memory with clichéd cultural representation upheld by ritualized institutions. In texts from the Warring States period, as I show below, this historically blank period is slowly colored in with narrative detail. As a result, the foundational period is pushed back further into the past.

This temporal structure of cultural memory is remarkably uniform across lineage narratives. Their scope is not universal but focuses only on a small segment in a larger whole. Even bronze inscriptions such as the Shi Qiang *pan* 史墙盤, while broad in scope, should rather be seen as an amplification of this same model of commemoration and not as an attempt to present any broader "history" other than the story of the lineage itself.[16] The narratives are starred by the lineage head and tied to the locale in the bulky, physical manifestation of the text on bronze. They stand metonymically for the lineage as a whole and they (or their descendants) were likely the patrons for the songs. It is only by juxtaposing a number of these local perspectives that a grander picture of the ideological structure of the early Zhou world emerges.

It is important to note, therefore, that there is not a single text from this period that provides a universal perspective, manifested from the center outwards, or from an abstracted distance (either spatially or temporally) that could describe the Zhou cultural sphere as a whole. As scholars, we can obviously reconstruct the underlying claims to universal values reflected in these texts, but the outlook of the materials are firmly anchored and rendered concrete with reference to local rulers and regions, as opposed to presenting an argument on the central states at large. While in the last example the figure of Hou Ji as lineage ancestor is rather well developed, it is only through later sources that we see more stories about the identity and labors of characters such as Yu. This body of lore is likely assumed in the poems and bronzes, and

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In autumn comes the sacrifices of the season, But in summer the bulls for it have had their horns capped. They are the white bull and the red one; [There are] the bull-figured goblet in its dignity, Roast pig, minced meat, and soups; The dishes of bamboo and wood, and the large stand; And the dancers all complete. The filial descendant will be blessed. [Your ancestors] will make you gloriously prosperous! They will make you long-lived and good, To preserve this eastern region, Long possessing the State of Lu, Unwaning, unfallen, Unshaken, undisturbed! They will make your friendship with your three aged [ministers], Like the hills, like the mountains!

16   See Shaughnessy (1991: 3), and the critique in von Falkenhausen 1993a: 169. For a more recent understanding of the bronze, see Sena 2012.

some stories had likely not yet emerged. Early sources include deictic references to such mythologies, and it was not considered necessary to fully include them in the text. The references cue an act of recollection of memories widely known and commonly held and were likely more completely articulated in a variety of other oral forms such as storytelling, song, or performance.

A bronze, by virtue of its materiality, is tied more concretely to the locale than the mobile song. Except in rare cases,[17] therefore, only the latter could transcend local origins and be used in a variety of contexts beyond their original commemorative origins. Pan-Sinicism in the *Odes* is a product of their subsequent *use* (or, re-commemoration) by recipients removed in space and time from the original act of commemoration reflected in the songs.[18]

By the Warring States period, stories of the past abound both in number and variance, and a macro-perspective is gradually emerging.[19] With it, new ways of structuring time and space begin to form that allow for larger intellectual constructs to be explicitly projected on the workings of the past. The figures populating cultural memory gain in biographical detail and complexity, and are "updated" to meet new ideological ends. The focus shifts from the individual lineage to the characters that make up the shared cultural memory. Texts emerge that single out figures such as Yao, Shun, and Yu exclusively, and furnish them with a range of attributes and actions of a philosophically and mythographically programmatic nature serving narratives beyond the individual lineage. Before going into these developments, I contrast the early commemorative mode of talking about the past with an arguably more complex collection of stories, the *Rongchengshi* 容成氏.

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17   Note Kern (2018: 55–59), who discusses the inclusion of bronze inscription text in the ode "Jiang Han," for instance.

18   Compare the discussion in Beecroft 2010: 171–204.

19   For earlier observations on the emergence of an increasingly clear and remote foundational past, see Gu Jiegang 1988: 101–08; see also Mu Chou Poo 2008, and the discussion in Brown (2013), who argues that the very concept of an abstract set of sage kings (*shengwang* 聖王) rather than the more common former kings (*xianwang* 先王) only emerged during the fourth century BCE with the *Mozi*, and insightfully ties this shift in with a change in the understanding of the foundational past pointing to the ability of these figures to "imagine a past that was more congenial to their arguments and *to bypass potential objections based on evidence from better-documented periods*" (167, my emphasis). Furthermore, "Through this trick, they could avoid acknowledging a larger problem: the fact that the past was not univocal and that the evidence of more recent dynasties worked against them" (172). In my argument below, I focus on this accumulation of evidence collected in written form that spurred such considerations.

2   The *Rongchengshi*: Forging an All-embracing Narrative about the Past

The *Rongchengshi* is a mid to late Warring States collection of stories forming a narrative about abdication, conflict and a range of other events from the pre-Yao period leading up to king Wu's conquest of the Shang.[20] In its representation of the past, the text could hardly be more different from the early lineage narratives. The text belongs to a different genre of writing and serves a philosophical point. It promotes succession by merit and abdication as the key to good rule. Its representation of time and space, depth of biographical and narrative detail, and the extent to which it renders explicit causal connections between events are vastly more complex.

The *Rongchengshi* emerged as part of a proliferation of new and historiographically more complex genres during the Warring States period.[21] Developments in historiography present a general tendency towards thicker description, increase in narrative and causal complexity, and a more explicit

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20   See Pines 2010, Allan 2010, and Guo Yongbing 2008, for studies including overviews of relevant scholarship. The manuscript stands at 53 slips roughly 44.5 cm in length and feature between 42–45 graphs each, leading to roughly 2300 graphs for the whole manuscript; see Ma Chengyuan 2002: 91–146 (images) and 249–93 (transcription). The edition used here is based on Chen Jian 2004, with changes most notably from Guo Yongbing 2008. ⧄ indicates a broken slip end, graphs in round brackets represent interpretive readings not included in Chen Jian 2004, square brackets indicate reconstructions. The translation is indebted to Allan 2010 and Pines 2010. The manuscript is neither decidedly northern (*pace* Pines 2010: 29) nor is the *text* a likely product of Chu (*pace* Allan 2015: 204–05, other than, of course, the current manuscript manifestation). Rather, the text's narrating of space and culture heroes is universalistic in scope and does not favor any particular region. Likewise, the manuscript is written in Chu script but it contains northern script influences suggesting that it might have been copied (at least in part) from earlier northern manuscripts; see Guo Yongbing 2008: 11.

21   Compare for example Allan 2015: 182 who has compared and contrasted the *Rongchengshi* to later texts such as the *Shiji* 史記. It should be noted that the text is far from a history in the modern sense of the word. While the text attempts to tie its narrative closely together to create the illusion of continuous narrative and historical development, it still elides vast stretches of the past between rulers. In that sense, the *Rongchengshi* is more properly seen as a text that combines, and to an extent, supplements, stories about the past into a narratively, rather than historically, integrated whole. In doing so, it laid part of the ground work for the development of this style of historiography that would influence later narrativized representations of the past such as the *Shiji*.

use of periodization to advance philosophical arguments. The *Rongchengshi* is characterized by an extraordinary scope of detail and textual structuring, and contains a hitherto unforeseen systematic, and universalistic description of the pre-Yao past. These textual qualities, when compared to the radically different narratives discussed above, present a phenomenon in need of explanation. What developments in the representation of the past occurred during the Warring States that enabled the occurrence of a text (genre) such as this? How do we explain the immense detail and intricacy of textual structuring, and how do we account for the radical differences in temporal and spatial representation? In the rest of this chapter, I propose that the dynamic of collecting multiple texts and then organizing them into an ordered composition accounts for many of these developments. I will also describe several trends in Warring States representations of the past that paved the way for the emergence of such advanced collections.

2.1   *Structuring a Cultural Lineage*

The *Rongchengshi* organizes its content through an elaborate system of temporal structuring. The text can be divided on the macro, meso, and micro levels. On each of these levels, the text relies heavily on formulae to signal the start and end of periods, introduce new rulers, and highlight causal connections and innovations within the narrative. On the macro level, the text is divided into four similarly structured periods:

1)   Utopic period
2)   Pre-Yao period
3)   Yao, Shun, and Yu
4)   Jie and Tang, Zhou and Kings Wen and Wu

These periods are explicitly marked within the narrative and further subdivided into individual reigns to present an orderly and well-structured account of the past. Within individual reign periods, actions and events are strung together using key phrases that specify time and causality. The *Rongchengshi*'s rigid temporal structure is quite unique among narrative historiographical texts of the period, and it betrays a particular awareness of the problem of stitching together a multitude of individual stories stretching over vast periods of historical (and mythical) time.

The text opens with a utopic period, which presents claims of a universal scope. All of the mythical clan leaders and lineage heads of the period are said to have abdicated to worthy successors, and during the period, nobody was hungry and everybody had an occupation:

[昔者容成氏 … 尊]²² (1) 盧氏、赫胥氏、喬結氏²³、倉頡氏、軒轅氏、神農氏、椲丨²⁴氏、壚{辵+畢}氏之有天下也，皆不授其子而授賢。其德酋清，而上愛 (2) 下，而一其志，而寢其兵，而官其材。 … (3) 凡民罷敝²⁵者，教而誨之，飲而食之，思役百官而月請²⁶之。故當是時也，無并 …²⁷

[*In days of yore, when Rongchengshi ... Zun*]lushi, Hexushi, Qiaojieshi, Cangjieshi, Xuanyuanshi, Shennongshi, Wei X shi, Lubishi ruled the world, they each did not pass on their rule to their sons but gave it to the worthy. Their virtue was clear and unforced, those above cared for those below, they unified their intent, rested their armies, and managed their resources ... All the lowly and deformed among the people, they taught and instructed them, nourished and fed them, they had them work the hundred offices and monthly rewarded them. This is why in this period there were no ...

The text provides a rather rigid framework introducing period, character, and event. For example, the universal character of the age is underscored by the use of the list form, and a reliance on categorical expressions such as "all [of this category]" (*fan* 凡) and "none" (*wu* 無), suggesting completeness.²⁸ The utopic and pre-Yao periods are both introduced with the formula "When clan-leader X ruled the world" (X 氏之有天下也) and concluded by a summarizing formula: "This is why in this period" (故當是時也). These formulae not only mark the period as a specific age, but as if through the authoritative judgment

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22   Ma Chengyuan (2002: 250), suggests that the first slip is probably missing, and was probably headed with "In times yore, Rongchengshi" 昔者，容成氏 ... This would explain the use of this figure for the title of the text. This arrangement of rulers finds parallels in much of the Han and post Han apocrypha and some supposedly earlier sources such as *Zhuangzi*, "Quqie" 胠篋, among others; see the suggestions in Liao Mingchun 2002.

23   For different readings for some of the names see Liao Mingchun 2002, and Huang Ren'er 2003, among others.

24   This graph has puzzled reconstructors, Liao Mingchun 2002 transcribes as *weidun* 椲屯, reading it as *hundun* 混沌, but this and other readings are phonologically and paleographically problematic and as such I leave the graph as is.

25   I follow Bai Yulan (2005: 88).

26   I follow Qiu Xigui (2005: 314–316), who understands that they were rewarded every month.

27   Ma Chengyuan (2002: 253) believes there to be a missing slip after this one; Chen Jian 2004 supplements slip 35b.

28   Ma Chengyuan 2002: 249.

of a distant commentator, evaluate the information from the preceding statements (nobody was hungry, etc.) to form a normative frame against which all later ages are compared.[29] This feature is typical for the *Rongchengshi*: descriptions of a particular age are explicitly and mechanically linked to a summarizing judgment. While short epithetic descriptions abound in Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn materials, they come without such judgments, and it is only with the various *Chunqiu* commentaries that this feature is fully explored in early historiography.[30]

Moreover, the inclusion of fragments on at least two pre-Yao monarchs after the utopic age contrasts with many Warring States accounts that start narrating only from Yao onwards. The text even goes so far as to specify the reign length of the mythical Youyu Tong 有虞迵, bringing the past under rigid historiographical control:

> (32) ⋯ 於是乎治爵而行祿，以讓於又吴迵＝[31] (有虞迵)，又吴迵(有虞迵) 曰:德速衰▨[32]▨ (4)口於是乎不賞不罰，不刑不殺，邦無飢人，道路無殤 (5) 死者。上下貴賤，各得其世。四海之外賓，四海之內定。禽獸朝，魚鼈[33]獻，有虞迵匡天下之政十有九年而王天下，三十有七 (6) 年而歿終。

> Thereupon he (ruler before Youyu Tong?) set up noble titles and exercised emoluments, so as to abdicate to Youyu Tong. Youyu Tong said: "Virtue will soon decline" ... Thereupon he did not reward or punish, he did not execute or kill, the state had no hungry people, and on the roads there were no injured or dead. High, low, honored, and lowly, each lived their allotted life span. All from outside the four seas came as guests, and those within were settled. Beasts and birds paid court, fish and turtles brought tribute. Youyu Tong exercised the government of the world for 19 years, and after 37 years he died.

By explicitly listing the rulers preceding Yao, the text formulates a pedigree for his later abdication. These rulers are described individually, albeit sparsely, and are characterized with short descriptions of their rule, for example: "In his

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29   Compare the discussion of "Utopia" in Allan 2010: 74–76. Note that the concluding formula is missing for the pre-Yao rulers due to incomplete slips but can reasonably be assumed due to parallels.

30   See Gentz 2001 and Van Auken 2016.

31   See Guo Yongbing 2006, for an overview of the Youyu Tong argument.

32   For this alignment, see Shan Yuchen 2016: 12.

33   Ma Chengyuan 2002: 254 reads this as *bie* 鼈.

rule he governed but did not reward, he gave people offices but no titles."[34]
From a text-structural perspective, the stories about these rulers operate as
building blocks that serve to bridge the period (floating gap) between the
utopic age and Yao.[35] While reminiscent of a kinship lineage in that all figures
are connected to one another, the text's universal outlook and programmatic
highlighting of abdication instead turns it into a cultural lineage, and the text
is thus eminently suited for a broader and more diverse audience.

Such differences are not just a question of genre. The accumulation and col-
lection of different remembered pasts into a single narrative provided an impe-
tus to push foundational narratives even further into the past and fill in the
blanks thus revealed in existing narratives. Through this gradual "colonizing of
the past," pristine precedent is provided for later narratives.

2.2   *Colonizing the Past*

Whereas early songs and bronzes assume a body of extratextual information,
the *Rongchengshi* can operate more independently, because it spells out bio-
graphical information explicitly and presents events in greater detail by col-
lecting a variety of commonly known accounts and integrating them into a
single sketch of the past. Yao and Shun are first introduced with a familiar
commonplace:

(6) 昔堯處於丹府與藋陵之間，堯散施而時時賽，[36]不勸而民力，不刑
殺而無盜賊，甚寬而民服。

In days of yore Yao resided between Danfu and Diaoling. He gave gener-
ously and regularly offered in thanks to the spirits; he did not encourage,
and yet the people labored; he did not punish or kill, and yet there were
no thieves and villains; he was very lenient, and yet the people adhered.

(13) 昔舜耕於歷丘，陶於河濱，漁於雷澤，孝養父母，以善其親，乃
及邦子。

In days of yore, Shun plowed at Mount Li, made pottery by the banks of
the [Yellow] river, and fished in the Lei marsh, filially supporting his par-
ents. By perfecting his congeniality, he became known among the sons
of the states.

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34   Slip 43: "其政治而不賞，官而不爵."
35   See also Guo Yongbing (2008: 27–42) on this process of filling in gaps in the narrative.
36   Following Liu Xinfang 2003: 97.

These descriptions are highly formulaic and follow a predictable pattern:

昔 (period marker) figure 處於 place + descriptive statements + results

These formulaic descriptions recur across a variety of Warring States texts and work like traveling sayings.[37] They are short, structured phrases which are easily memorable and contain the core and structure of the (biographical) claim. Shun, for example, is linked to three distinct and primary activities, known signifiers of his humble background and tied in to specific physical sites of memory. Despite variation in orthographic representation, the individual locations themselves, such as Mount Li, are remarkably stable across texts with only some minor variation. The descriptions of actions are more fluid, and the end results especially are variable as they are tailored to the philosophical program of the individual texts.

These actions and descriptions are marked as being "heard" (*wen* 聞) by other figures in the narrative. Yao heard of Shun's virtue, revealed in the formulaic description of good behavior above, before attempting to make him his successor. The *Rongchengshi* employs this device to integrate existing stories into its larger narrative. Here, Yao "hears" a textually highlighted piece of cued information: "Yao heard of it and approved of his behavior" (堯聞之而美其行). Later in the text, Tang likewise hears the verdict on the age of Jie: "His arrogance and self-aggrandizement was like this" (其驕泰如是狀). These highly intertextual nodes were likely part of a body of commonly remembered lore and are signaled as key information containing the kernel for further judgment, highlighting what the audience is supposed to remember from this event.

The *Rongchengshi* integrates these blocks of common lore into a structured framework. Each block is connected with actions and responses to usher in a new range of events. By doing so it structures the "fragmented" accounts known from many Warring States sources and subsumes them under a unified and causally connected narrative. In the process, however, the structure of the past and the way the development of time and the relations between events are conceived change fundamentally.

In the case of Yao, for example, the text's singular description of Yao occupying a populated world with predecessors and other states necessitates a much

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37 Compare for example the Tsinghua University *Baoxun* 保訓, slips 4–8:
   　　昔舜久作小人，親耕于鬲茅，恭求中。自稽厥志，(5) 不違于庶萬姓之多欲，厥有施于上下遠邇。乃易位設稽，測 (6) 陰陽之物，咸順不逆。舜既得中，言不易實變名。身茲服惟　(7) 允，翼翼不懈，用作三降之德。帝堯嘉之，用授厥緒。嗚呼！祗之 (8) 哉！

   For this and other examples see the discussion and references in Krijgsman 2017: 315, n.59.

more comprehensive description of Yao's rise to power. It describes how Yao showed his sagacity to the people and how his early claim to rule was characterized by an ability (also known from later texts such as *Mencius*) to draw people into an ever-expanding territory (first the symbolic 100, then 1000 square *li*) whereupon the people considered him the Son of Heaven. Yao again proves his sagacity by casting a wide search for worthy successors to abdicate to, in turn ensuring that the people finally established him as Son of Heaven. This narrative explains how Yao rose to power and could lift Shun from obscurity. Rather than just mentioning Yao and Shun as the historical *a priori* they appear to be in many other texts, they are placed in a populated world. Yao moves across the entire all under heaven (*tianxia* 天下) and the section describes that there were other rulers besides Yao (萬邦之君) from which he was raised to serve as the Son of Heaven.

In its complexity, the narrative could easily have stood on its own. Yao does not appear out of nowhere and has to prove his sagacity to gain power. Instead of a mythological predicative, "take it or leave it" representation of the story, Yao's actions are explained, and more detail is provided on his persona.[38] In doing so, the past is updated and adapted to meet contemporary expectations of character development. Instead of mere reference, the *Rongchengshi* spells out its claims and provides causes and reasons for the actions of its characters. The stories referred to in other texts are explicitly formulated and as a result need to be more formally integrated into the narrative. This development is part of an overall trend in narratives about the past towards an increase in complexity and detail, as well as an increase in the specification of causal relations between narratives about the past. A byproduct is that foundational figures present less of a clean slate, which drives the need to provide clean narrative precedents for rulers and events even further into the foundational past, reaching all the way back to mythical-utopic times.

To an audience of such an increasingly populated and structured past, questions on origins and causes become all the more pressing, not as a natural extension of the genealogical argument, but as a function of the increase in the systemization and structuring of the past. In the case of the *Rongchengshi*, which presents a narrative of gradual and interspersed decline over the ages, a utopic, foundational age was needed as a foil for the rest of the argument.[39]

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38   However, I do not subscribe to the notion that the complexity of these narratives proves that they are likely traces of lost factual events, *pace* Guo Yongbing 2008: 57–62. The fact that they were part of the cultural memory propagated in certain communities (as transformations of local deities, for instance) does not make it factual history.

39   Allan 2010: 80.

Precedent and the proper workings of the moralized past needed to be pushed back further in antiquity to be meaningful.[40] In order to furnish pristine precedent, it had to be placed outside of the scope of existing narratives and pushed further back in time to present an untarnished foundation that could be presented in a light favorable to the argument at hand.

This need for clean beginnings can be seen from how the reign of Yao and his abdication to Shun are problematized in other sources. In the *Han Feizi* and the *Guben zhushu jinian* 古本竹書紀年 (*Old Text Bamboo Annals*), for instance, the transfer of rule between Yao and Shun is described as usurpation rather than abdication.[41] Tension between different descriptions of these events decreased the aptness of figures such as Yao and Shun as an idealized foundation, and as a result, the past had to be colonized even further, and precedent projected further back to a time not yet riddled with conflicting accounts. Put differently, a figure of cultural memory that gains narrative weight and depth, so to speak, cannot be used as flexibly to serve a variety of argumentative goals. As a result, the ideal had to be projected further back in time onto figures not yet colored in with biographical detail. The *Rongchengshi*'s complex description of a utopic age preceding Yao, as discussed previously, is a good example of this attempt at finding earlier precedents. In its version of the cultural genealogy, rulers are presented as all abdicating in favor of the worthy. It is noteworthy that these rulers are given broad descriptions and generically characterized, and not given specific background stories like Yao's. These generic characterizations of good rule and proper conduct are reminiscent of the ways foundational figures were introduced and how the "floating gap" describing continuity between the foundational age and the near past was used in the songs of commemoration, as discussed earlier in this chapter. This baseline of mythical good rulers and culture founders is pushed back further in antiquity in order to accommodate the increasingly complex and populated past formed by a collocation of various memories, whether originating in written form or passed on through oral traditions.

2.3　　*A Formulaic Framework for the Past*

The *Rongchengshi* uses a set of fixed formulae and patterns to describe the beginnings, endings, major events, and innovations of periods, and to highlight

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40　See Gu Jiegang 1988: 126–27, 224–25, and Graham (1989: 4, 74) who argue that increasing the authority of the arguments of a specific school was the reason for presenting ever older utopic accounts or using figures further removed in time, such as the Yellow Emperor.

41　For an overview of these statements, see Allan 1981: 135–39.

the causal or temporal links between them. The *Rongchengshi* uses this textual framework to integrate the various stories it selected for collection and forge them into a continuous chain of events. Occasionally, the events lead to a major break and usher in a new reign period, or the dawn of a new age. By linking well-known events from the cultural memory of the Warring States into a causal system, the *Rongchengshi* explains the rise and fall of the ages and colors in the blanks between the utopic foundational period and the more recently remembered events resulting in the foundation of the Zhou.

One common connecting structure is the abdication formula. It is used to describe the transfer of reigns between Yao and Shun, Shun and Yu, and finally Yu and Gao Yao:

> ▨[42][堯乃老，視不明，] 聽不聰。堯有子九人，不以其子為後，見舜之賢也，而欲以爲後。(12) [舜乃五讓以天下之賢者，不得已，然後敢受之].[43]

> [Yao then grew old, his sight was no longer bright], and his hearing no longer sharp. Yao had nine sons, but he did not select them as successors. After seeing Shun's worthiness, he wanted him to be his successor. [Shun then declined five times in favor of the worthies under heaven, he had no other choice, and only after this did he dare to accept it.]

The abdication formula is rigidly structured, each iteration almost identical, with the only difference being the number of sons that the ruler passes over in favor of the worthy successor. Yao had nine, Shun had seven, and Yu five, showing a gradual decline over the ages, tallied to the general notion of decline over the ages that characterizes the argument of the *Rongchengshi*.

By presenting such a rigidly formulaic framework for memorized and widely circulating narratives, the *Rongchengshi* subsumes all these individual episodes under a new master narrative. The highly systemized presentation of time turns the individual stories from the past into a comprehensive and interlinked collection of texts—an archive if you will.[44]

This macro-structure is echoed on the level of the individual reign period. During Shun's rule for example, a meso-structure is introduced to set it apart

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42   The slip is incomplete, as indicated by the slashed square. According to Chen Jian (2004, n.9) there are still roughly 14 graphs missing in this section.

43   Chen Jian (2004, n.10), bases himself on parallel formulae to supplement the 18 missing graphs here.

44   Aleida Assmann 2008: 105–16.

slightly from Yao. In this pattern, Shun's main quality of selecting good ministers is embedded in a set pattern. This structure enables various local narratives about culture heroes such as Yu and Gao Yao to be neatly incorporated into the main narrative.[45] After three years of governance, Shun encounters problems with the mountains and waters, and he orders Yu to control the land, followed by Gao Yao managing produce, and Zhi arranging music. The motif of abdication known from the macro-structure is thus transformed into a search for worthy ministers. As with the succession, this section of the narrative is tightly structured using recurring narrative scripts.[46] The reign has a problem, after which Shun invests a minister:

> Length of reign formula + humble/hardworking background script + works + results.

> (23) 舜聽政三年，山陵不疏，水潦不湝，乃立禹以爲司工。
> 禹既已 (15) 受命，乃卉服箁箬帽，芙藜囗足囗 (24) 囗囗面乾粗，脛不生之毛。[47]囗[開][48]潰[49]湝流。

> When Shun had governed for three years, the mountains and hillocks were not in their proper position, and the waters and streams did not flow properly.
>   He then installed Yu as his overseer of works.
>   After Yu accepted his charge, he then clothed himself with grass and a hat of bamboo, [and wore X boots on his] feet … His face was dry and coarse, his legs did not grow any hair. [He opened and broke through the blockades] and the waters flowed again.

The ministers and their roles are well known from other sources, but in their integration in the *Rongchengshi*, the focus shifts towards their instatement by

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45   On local origins of narratives on Yu as a flood controller, see, for example, Eberhard 1968.

46   For this term, referring to standard function phrases, to bridge in a new character or to turn the narrative over to a new scene, see Rubin 1995: 25.

47   I follow Xu Zaiguo 2003.

48   Following Su Jianzhou 2003.

49   Su Jianzhou 2003 reads this graph as a loan for *sai* 塞 *sêk, which is phonologically invalid. Tentatively, the graph could be understood as an elaborate form for *qi* 淇 ?*gə and read as *kui* 潰 ?*gruih "break through an embankment (of water)." In any case, the phrase appears to contrast with the line "山陵不疏，水潦不湝" above and implies Yu as an acting subject ensuring the flowing of the rivers.

Shun and their specific contribution to his reign.[50] Instead of being made to function as abstract foundational characters as in the early lineage narratives, or described separately as mythical culture heroes, Yu, Hou Ji, Xie, and Zhi are now subsumed under a larger textual program. They function as ministers to the foundational rulers and have no function outside of that system. All of their biographical details are likewise tailored to meet the specific requirements of this version of the past. Shun is the textual node along which all these figures are smoothly integrated into the grand narrative of the past, and this is explicitly highlighted in the age descriptor at the end of his section:

(16) 當是時也，癘疫不至，妖祥不行，禍災去亡，禽獸肥大，草木晉[51]長。昔者天地之佐舜而 (17) 佑善，如是狀也。

During this age, malaria did not arise, evil spirits and portents did not act, calamities and disasters left and disappeared, birds and beasts were fat and large, and grass and trees grew lush.
    In times of yore, such was the character of those of heaven and earth that supported Shun and assisted excellence.

With this age descriptor, the narrative is brought back to the macro-level again. It should be noted that the past is not yet fully systemized in the *Rongchengshi*. The bad rulers, for example, are characterized as merely "arising" 作 after the reign of the previous good ruler without providing a narrative describing the cause for their emergence. In a sense they are treated as anomalies. It is only with later explicit articulations of the dynastic rise and fall model in texts such as the *Shiji* that the transformation of the past into an archive reaches its pinnacle. Here, the emergence of wicked rulers often masks major elisions in the narrative, in one case covering over sixteen generations. By marking the duration of the elisions, the text can uphold the illusion of a continuous and comprehensive narrative:

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50   The "Yaodian" 堯典 chapter of the *Shangshu* likewise includes a narrative of Shun appointing (an even larger selection of) ministers for a variety of tasks. Note however that the text is completely centered on this activity as such, instead of integrating it in a larger narrative framework as the *Rongchengshi* does. In that sense, one could argue that texts such as the *Rongchengshi* drew on narratives devoted to a single episode such as this, and collected and integrated them under a larger narrative umbrella. Of course this is not to argue that a text such as the "Yaodian" should be considered a potential source for the *Rongchengshi*, but rather that a text serving a similar program was selected in the formation of the *Rongchengshi*.

51   Ma Chengyuan, ed. 2002: 262 reads as *zhen* 蓁.

(35A) ▨[啓]　王天下十有六年<世>⁵²而桀作。桀不述其先王之道，自
爲[芭爲]⁵³ ▨ (38) 不量其力之不足，起師以伐岷山氏，取其兩女琰、
琬，囗北去其邦，囗爲桐宮，築爲璿室，飾爲瑤台，立爲玉門。其驕
(39) 泰如是狀。

[Qi] ruled the realm. After sixteen generations Jie arose. Jie did not fol-
low the way of his former kings, he himself exercised [another way of
doing]. He did not consider his lack of strength, and raised an army in
order to conquer the Minshan clan. He took their two ladies, Yan and
Wan, [and] X discarded (tore down) their capital, X [used it to] construct
the Paulownia Palace and build the Jadestone Chamber; he adorned the
Nephrite Terrace, and erected the Jade Gate. Such was the character of his
arrogance and self-aggrandizement.

Both bad rulers Jie and Zhou are explicitly described as not following the ways
of the previous kings; they are breakers of the pattern. Their introductions
highlight their depravity and include sets of memorable formulae, as in the
story above. These formulae are explicitly taken as judgmental characteriza-
tion of the period and contrast against those used for the good rulers, and end
with the formula, "such was the character [of his depravity]."

2.4　*Causality: Forging a Continuous Chain of Events*

While the *Rongchengshi* elides long spans of time between rulers, individ-
ual rule periods are carefully connected on the microlevel of the narrative.
Separate actions and events are connected in time with the phrase "thereupon"
(*yushihu* 於是乎), and continuations within events use "then" (*nai* 乃). Certain
innovations, during the reign of Yu for instance, are specifically highlighted as
temporal firsts, e.g., "after which [he] first used" (然後始以).

In linking all events into a causal chain, the *Rongchengshi* constructs a more
continuous narrative of the past compared to many contemporaneous texts. A
good example can be found in the short narrative of King Tang's rise to power.

52　Ma Chengyuan (2002: 277) argues that this section is about Tang 湯 instead, based on
different alignment of the slips. He also suggests that *nian* 年 "year" is a mistake for *shi* 世
"generation." A sixteen-year period is obviously too short, and received tradition suggests
that there are 16 generations between the rulers; see Li Rui (2004: 528–9), who also con-
vincingly argues that the section must be about Qi instead. Nevertheless, this "mistake"
also highlights another possibility wherein the scribe assumed a relatively continuous
progression of events and habitually wrote "year." If so, this would go some way towards
suggesting that the *Rongchengshi* was successful in its attempt to *present* its narrative as
continuous, even though it obviously elided large swaths of time.

53　Ma Chengyuan (2002: 277) supplements these missing graphs based on a parallel with
slip 42.

It begins with a failure to address the problems of the realm, but Tang's rule is redeemed by raising Yi Yin as worthy minister:

(41) 湯**於是乎**徵九州之師，以批四海之內，**於是乎**天下之兵大起，**於 是乎**亡宗戮族殘群焉服。(36) **當是時**，強弱不治謁[54]，衆寡不聽訟， 天地四時之事不修。湯**乃**博爲征籍，以征關市。民**乃**宜怨，虐疾**始 生，於是** (37) **乎**有喑、聾、跛、口、瘻、口、僂**始**起。湯**乃**謀戒求 賢，**乃**立伊尹以爲佐。伊尹**既已**受命，**乃**執兵禁暴，永得於民，**遂迷 而** (42) 〖〗[55]賊盜，**夫是以**得衆而王天下。

Tang **thereupon** gathered the armies of the nine states, in order to attack [Jie] all throughout the four seas. **Thereupon** the soldiers of the realm greatly arose. **Thereupon** they destroyed Jie's clan and killed his family, and the remaining groups all followed Tang. **In this period**, the outcries arising between strong and weak had not been settled, nor were the litigations of the masses and the few heard, and the affairs of heaven, earth and the four seasons were not attended to. Tang **then** extensively implemented levies and records, in order to tax the passes and markets. The people **then** started to resent him, disabilities and sicknesses arose **for the first time. Thereupon** the mute, deaf, the lame, and the X, those with goiters, the X, and the hunchbacks **first** appeared. Tang **then** deliberated and restrained himself and searched for worthies. He **then** set up Yi Yin as his left hand. **When** Yi Yin **had** accepted his duty, he **then** took up arms and restrained the violent, and gained lasting support from the people. He **finally** deceived? … villains and robbers. **This is how** he [Tang] gained the multitudes and ruled over the realm.

This short narrative explicitly presents Tang's call to arms, after he had chased Jie into the wilds of Cangwu (蒼梧之野), as the cause for all under heaven to follow him. The start of his reign, however, is characterized negatively—the strong not helping the weak, litigations going unheard, and the cosmic-ritual order not maintained. Because of his taxation policies, people became angry, and disease and handicaps first emerge. In other words, his actions on the policy level directly cause the emergence of social problems.

The main causes for subsequent events are described using either a characterization of a certain period or they are framed with "thereupon" (*yushihu*). In the example above, that the disabled first emerged directly contrasts Tang's reign against the utopic age. As a result of this event, marked with "thereupon,"

54   Following Chen Yingjie 2005.
55   The slip is broken at top and misses six to eight graphs.

Tang "then" (*nai*) looks for worthies and appoints Yi Yin, whose positive characterization then leads to Tang's successful reign. The *Rongchengshi* highlights key events and shows how they link up in the larger narrative of the demise and rise within a specific age. Rather than presenting isolated events or anecdotes as cues for a philosophical statement or an individual conclusion, they are brought in relation to form a smooth and continuous narrative wherein every event connects with and causes larger events, and wherein each age is shown to be a necessary continuation or reversal of the previous one.

Accordingly, all remembered events known from isolated or conflicting accounts are brought into a structured and understandable whole. Conflicts are smoothed over by specifying how a certain event can lead to the other. The *Rongchengshi* advances a unifying and totalizing narrative about the past, an achievement for which we normally credit texts such as the *Shiji*. Small events are related to larger recurring structures, which are in turn used to build models that describe distinctive ages. At the macro-level, these sections interrelate in a master narrative of decline over the ages, but the *Rongchengshi* lays the foundations for this master narrative in the small causal steps that lead from one event to the other.

3   Warring States Developments in Representing the Past

So far in this chapter, I have shown two radically different ways of representing the past in early China. While their differences appear to represent a mere simple difference in genre and function, in what follows I propose a number of developments in Warring States accounts of the past that foregrounded this shift so as to suggest broader developments in collecting text and historiographical writing. During this period, short historiographical texts with a philosophical slant appear. Often, they are in the form of mini-collections, where a short array of anecdotal examples is brought to bear on an overarching argument. I start my discussion with the Guodian *Tang Yu zhi dao 唐虞之道 as an example of a text that provides more information on the characters engrained in cultural memory. The increase in the availability of textualized information provided by such texts is one of the main impetuses for the changes in representing the past.

The *Tang Yu zhi dao was excavated from Jingmen Guodian in 1993 and dates to roughly 300 BCE.[56] It presents a short philosophical argument on the virtue

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56   Images of the slips and transcriptions appear in Jingmenshi Bowuguan 1998: 37–41, 155–60. The manuscript contains 29 slips of approximately 28.1–28.3 cm in length and was bound by two cords 14.3 cm apart. Seven slips are damaged at the ends, resulting in

of abdication as embodied in the model rulers of the past. It describes the respective virtues and practices of these rulers, particularly Shun, and argues that they were chosen to rule because of these qualities. The argument that texts such as this put forward for abdication and the debate they reveal have been comprehensively described in a range of articles by Pines, Defoort, Cook, and Allan,[57] and will not be further touched upon here. I shall focus on the form and the nature of the argument here, for when these texts employ exemplary rulers to shape an explicit philosophical argument, the character of textuality itself changes.[58] Instead of merely listing epithetic qualities concerning the land and harvest, a range of other biographical details are brought forward to highlight the moral qualities of the characters. This Warring States development, where politico-moral argumentation required information about the moral character of foundational figures, goes beyond the earlier requirement for basic lineage and ritual functions, and accordingly necessitates the inclusion in text of a range of other qualities that are more commonly associated with mythographies. These range from divine or common births and sagely labors to grand achievements and personal details.[59]

The *Tang Yu zhi dao*, for example, asserts, "In times of yore, when Shun resided in the wilds, he was not troubled; when he became emperor, he was not arrogant."[60] Just as in the *Rongchengshi*, virtuous biographical details such as these are explicitly linked with "this is why" (*gu* 故), and "thereby" (*nai* 乃), to Yao's ultimate recognition of Shun's quality:

(22) 古者堯之舉舜也:聞舜孝,知其能養天下 (23) 之老也;聞舜悌,知其能事天下之長也;聞舜慈乎弟,[知其能王天下而] (24) 為民主也。故其為瞽盲子也,甚孝;及其為堯臣也,甚忠;堯禪天下 (25) 而授之,南面而王天下而甚君。故堯之禪乎舜也,如此也。[61]

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difficulties of reconstruction. The final slip features a stroke across the width of the slip, signalling the end of the text.

57   See Allan 2015; Cook 2012; Pines 2009, 2005a, and 2005b; Defoort 2006.

58   By explicit argument, I refer here to a mode of discourse often including but not limited to the use of definitions, logical connectives, and other rhetorical devices aimed at persuading an audience, setting it apart from poetic, prosaic, and descriptive modes of discourse, which, while having argumentative force and ideological elements, tend not to explicitly advance them.

59   This aspect of character development in Warring States philosophical texts has been well studied from the perspective of anecdotes; see van Els 2012 on the relation with other elements of argument construction, Queen 2008 for an analysis of character creation, and Schaberg 2001 for the relation between genre, self-perception, and genre changes. On differing accounts, see especially Allan 1981.

60   Slips 15–16: 夫古者舜居于草茅之中而不憂,身為天子而不驕。

61   Edition follows Cook 2012: 555–56.

> In times of yore, when Yao elevated raised Shun and heard that he was filial, this is how he knew that Shun could take care of the elderly in the realm; when he heard that Shun was fraternal, this is how he knew that Shun could serve the seniors in the realm; when he heard that Shun was compassionate towards his brothers, this is how he knew that Shun could rule the realm and be a ruler of the people. This is why, as the son of the blind drummer, [Shun] was very filial; and as to him being a servant of Yao, he was very loyal. When Yao abdicated from the realm and bestowed it on him, he sat facing south and was very lordly. This is why Yao's abdication to Shun was like this.

Yao "heard" of Shun's filial and brotherly nature, because it had been demonstrated by Shun's behavior. Shun's exemplary behavior ties into popular anecdotes about his character, and they are alluded to or included in the text in order to make the larger argument that abdication is justified. To turn it around, without the argumentative need of the *Tang Yu zhi dao*, this information about Shun need not have been included in the first place. The inclusion of many such sources shows that, to an extent, the *Tang Yu zhi dao* is almost like a mini-collection of its own. Biographical information was remembered and selected when it served an argumentative purpose. Equally, other information was often forgotten or omitted when it no longer served a purpose, and especially when it violated argumentative expectations.[62] In other words, the abundance of often conflicting memories that accrued around a character like Shun was selectively mined and fashioned in order to fit the argument. These details were employed to shape arguments, key terms were defined, and other positions and sources were often explicitly taken up or refuted.[63]

Sites of memory, such as Shun's Mount Li 歷山, which is referred to elsewhere in the *Tang Yu zhi dao*, become fixed and highly specific nodes upon which stories accrue, but just as in the *Rongchengshi*, they are local references to a narrative universal in scope. Yao, Shun, and Yu are not presented for their lineage qualities, but as representatives of "all under heaven," the subcelestial realm. The *Tang Yu zhi dao* uses these figures as evidence of a philosophical point. For example, Yu's control of the waters and Hou Ji's control of the earth

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62 Allan 1981, see also Aleida Assmann 2008.

63 This manifests itself in the explicit reference to sources of authority such as the *Odes* for instance, or the explicit countering of positions such as seen in late Warring States philosophical texts that are overtly debating an issue, as in *Xunzi's* discussion on human nature. This is to be contrasted with inexplicit, tacit reference to debates at large through redefining or reinterpreting commonly used traveling sayings; see Krijgsman 2014.

are mentioned because they testify to Shun's ability to attract talent and successfully control and rule over the world:

(9) 禹治水，益治火，后稷治土，足民養生。

Yu controlled the waters, Yi controlled the flames, Hou Ji controlled the earth, providing enough so that the people could nourish their lives.

The *Rongchengshi*, in turn, fleshes out these references and develops the idea of Shun's moral quality being represented by his ministers as the key to his recognition by Yao. Gradually, then, the story gains in argumentative depth. The text starts with Yu and Hou Ji as the cultural bedrock of the lineage, it then describes the legendary ruler Shun, and finally it describes Yu as ruler performing concrete tasks and sagely labors. The many agricultural achievements credited to Hou Ji in texts such as "Bi gong" can be contrasted to the simple presentation in the *Tang Yu zhi dao. There is no linear development from stub to detailed description; rather, narrative requirements shape the representation of the figure in each case. But detail once accrued becomes part of the ever increasing options available in the cultural memory. This weighted any act of selective remembrance and forgetting with significance. Once fixed in writing, these different remembrances run the risk of encountering each other. I now turn to the potential for doubt these encounters generate.

3.1   *Doubt in Antiquity: The* *Tang Yu zhi dao *and* Zi Gao

During the Warring States period, texts appear with more detailed and varied character descriptions, and sometimes hitherto unknown narratives appear within the stream of tradition. Because each character is colored in to meet a specific argument, different versions of the narratives abound and disagreement is bound to occur. This may become a cause for doubt on the veracity of these accounts.[64] When a text more or less fixed in form travels, it becomes divorced from an immediate mediating context that could gloss over differences and guide interpretation.[65] When information flows increase and more text becomes available, whether in written or oral form, recipients increasingly

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64   Within a predominantly oral culture, variation on a well-known theme is generally not considered problematic, but rather lauded as creative adaptation and a vital way of engaging an audience; see Finnegan 1988.

65   As famously illustrated for sub-Saharan African king lists in Vansina 1985. When doubt emerges in an oral or teaching context, it is often worked into the transmitted result and as such does not leave many traces. On guided readings and teaching as mediating factors in interpretation, see Stock 1983, Jan Assmann 2011: 71–76, and Meyer 2011: 228.

have the opportunity to compare and contrast different narratives.[66] This last element is crucial, because without frequent encounters between varying traditions, the effect of written versions as such is probably limited.[67] When narratives that were once locally understood move around with enough frequency that they begin to encounter variations and a lack of understanding among the audience, the latter group's differing memories of similar events need to be squared in order to arrive at a shared and mutually comprehensible cultural memory.[68] Such encounters of memory show as explicit questions to received wisdom, or appear through the differences among narratives of the same events, which indirectly reflect multiple dominating models of perceiving the past.

Well-known examples from received sources come in the form of the *Mengzi* passage doubting the *shu* 書 as a whole (genre), with particular reference to the gruesome account of the battle at Mu Ye 牧野 in the Wucheng 武成.[69] Likewise, texts such as the *Han Feizi* are explicit about anecdotal material being wantonly re-appropriated and re-interpreted to fit individual arguments by Warring States debaters.[70] Where the *Rongchengshi* had to provide pristine precedent in light of accrued narrative, other texts actively challenged competing accounts of the past.

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66   Meyer 2014a; Henderson 1991; Farmer, Henderson, and Witzel 2002; Stock 1983.

67   To be sure, this is a process that does not happen overnight. Indeed, even in cultures with a long tradition of using written text such as Medieval Europe, a writing-centered, text-critical attitude manifested itself rather late; see Clanchy 2013.

68   That is not to say that variance will therefore no longer occur, but rather that *grosso modo* narratives undergo a process of harmonization, especially when this process is enforced by powerful forces of canonization, and when textual communities come into contact with each other or more powerful groups.

69   See *Mengzi* 孟子 7B:
      孟子曰：“盡信《書》，則不如無《書》。吾於《武成》，取二三策而已矣。仁人無敵於天下。以至仁伐至不仁，而何其血之流杵也？”
      Mencius said, "If one were to believe everything in the Documents, it would not be as good as not having the Documents. As for the 'Wu cheng' chapter, I accept only two or three strips and that is all. A humane man has no enemies in the world. With the most humane attacking the most inhumane, how could it be that the blood floated pestles?" (Translation follows Shaughnessy 1997: 38–39.)

70   *Han Feizi jishi* (Chen Qiyou 1974: 48–49; "Nan Yan" 難言); see also the discussion in Schaberg 2011: 410. It is in this critical spirit that passages such as the *Zhuangzi*, "Tianxia" 天下, and *Xunzi*, "Fei shi'er ru" 非十二儒 chapters gain in meaning. The critical debating spirit they manifest is the result of an emancipation of the *shi* 士 class and increased social mobility, heightened communication flows, and increased availability of conflicting source material. See also Graham 1989: 3, 236.

This increase in critical reception comes with an awareness of the process of commemoration, for example, in the Shanghai Museum *Zi Gao* 子羔 which refers to multiple versions of a narrative:

(9)   子羔問於孔子曰: "三王者之作也，皆人子也，而其父賤而不足稱也歟？抑亦成(誠)[71]天子也歟？"孔子曰: "善，爾問之也。久矣其莫 …"

Zi Gao asked Kongzi, "[Regarding] the emergence of the Three Kings, were they all sons of humans, and were their fathers lowly and not worthy of mention? Or were they truly sons of heaven?" Kongzi said, "Excellent! That you ask this, it has been long since anyone …"[72]

This opening passage manifests doubt of received wisdom in several aspects. It overtly questions whether the three kings (Yu, Hou Ji, and Xie) had mundane origins or, according to Kongzi's answer to the question, were divinely conceived and therefore literally sons of heaven. The use of "truly" (*cheng* 誠) suggests that human conception is presented as the more likely position.[73] At least for Yu, other accounts of his conception were in circulation during the Warring States period, most commonly accounts in which he is described as the son of Gun.[74]

The question over the status of the kings as "sons of heaven" is not a mere play on words, but rather reflects two different understandings, or "memories" about the ancients, one making them into divinely conceived figures, and the other keeping their conceptions human. When the text expresses this doubt by delving into the supposed truth of the matter, this is due in large part to the different textual versions of the received wisdom in circulation. Sources from the mid to late Warring States show inklings of reflection on the way in which the past was constructed. This reflexive awareness can be called a

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71   Following Allan 2009: 145.

72   The manuscript was originally published in Ma Chengyuan 2002: 31–48 (images), 181–99 (transcription). It features 14 slips, all damaged to varying degrees. The back of slip 5 features the title. The manuscript appears to be physically related to the *Kongzi shi lun* 孔子詩論 (*Kongzi's Discussion of the Odes*) and *Lu bang dahan* 魯邦大旱 (*The Great Drought in the State of Lu*) manuscripts.

73   Note here that the text explicitly questions the workings of cultural memory. By suggesting that the lowly fathers were not worthy of mention, the text shows an awareness of the possibility of "upgrading" such mundane origins to divine conception to raise the status of these figures, and by extension, their worthiness of being remembered.

74   See Allan 2009: 132–34, 137. One of the ways of dealing with this conflict of narratives was turning Gun into a failed flood controller, yet father of the successful flood controller Yu, where previously both figures probably had differing narratives.

historiographical consciousness, in that it does not question the existence of the foundational characters as such, but betrays a modicum of skepticism on the all too human transmitters and wielders of their narratives. Such tendencies would culminate with the great historians, commentators, or skeptics of the early empires such as Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 BCE) and Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 BCE–18 CE). But doubt is directed not only at the nature of the accounts, but also, as I show below, at the interpretation of the past.

3.2   *Conflict in the Master Narrative of the Past: The* *Gui shen

Within many Warring States narratives about the past a simple set of rules or "master narrative" recurs: worthy and virtuous personages are recognized by equally worthy rulers or peers. They then prevail over the bad and unjust figures, commonly assisted by heaven, worthy ministers, and the people. Because of their virtuous character and deeds, they are finally rewarded with positions, gifts, and other signs of affection.[75] As noted by many, this idealized memory of the past contrasts sharply with Spring and Autumn and Warring States reality.[76] This tension between the workings of the idealized past and the realities of the present is reflected in the textual record as well.

One of the main reasons for the destabilization of the paradigm is that during the Warring States period there was an upsurge in the spread of anecdotal narratives describing the details of the recent past. Texts began to incorporate anecdotes on a heretofore unforeseen scale,[77] and collections of dry and relatively under-embellished anecdotes such as the Tsinghua *Xinian* 繫年 started to circulate.[78] Moreover, collections of model anecdotes known from collections such as the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guoyu* were being circulated, as can be seen in their frequent inclusion, for instance, in the Shanghai manuscripts and the finds from Cili 慈利.[79] This body of anecdotes, which were filled with greater biographical and narrative detail, were now available in relatively stable written form, and they challenged the model of the past as presented in the dominant narratives.[80] The rules for the past, which had been safely projected onto the dim memories of the foundational period, could in their stabilized textual form no longer account for the influx of materials describing more recent events. The result of this increase in the presence and variety of stories about

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75   Egan 1977.
76   Allan 2015: 320; Pines 2009; Schaberg 2001; Lewis 1999.
77   Krijgsman 2017.
78   Pines 2020, 2014; Milburn 2016.
79   See Zhang Chunlong 2004, for preliminary information on the anecdote collection from Cili.
80   See van Els 2012, following Gossman 2003: 154.

the past is an emerging doubt about the master narrative itself. This is reflected in newly discovered texts such as the *Gui shen, *Tang Yu zhi dao*, and *Qiong da yi shi*, which restructure the past into new frameworks to mitigate these conflicts and doubts.

The *Gui shen*, for example, is apparently an argument about ghosts and spirits.[81] Sterckx, Brindley, and Ding Sixin, among others, who have analyzed the purported relation of this material with received Mohist texts, have rightly concluded that the text is not to be considered a previously lost part of the *Mozi* 墨子, but should rather be seen as engaging in the larger debate on the perspicuity and efficacy of ghosts and spirits.[82] In this light, its first and last lines especially have led to the debate, as they seem to express doubt about the spirits' ability to influence human affairs. For my purposes here, I shall analyze the *Gui shen* for its underlying subtext, which I argue raises fundamental doubt on the normative workings of history. The opening section presents the first clue:

(1) 今夫鬼神有所明，有所不明，[slip scraped clear][83]則以其賞善罰暴也。昔者堯舜禹湯仁義聖智，天下法之。此以貴爲天子，(2) 富有天下，長年有譽，後世遂（述）[84]之。則鬼神之賞，此明矣。[85]

As to ghosts and spirits, they have that in which they are clear and that which they are not … this can [be seen] from their rewarding of the excellent and punishing of the violent. In times of yore, Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang were humane, proper, sagacious, and wise, and the realm modelled itself upon them. Through this they were prized as Sons of Heaven, endowed with a prosperous realm, and their fame lasted for long years and later generations continued their [practice]. Hence, the rewarding by ghosts and spirits is clarified by this.

81　The original transcription can be found in Ma Chengyuan 2006: 307–20, where it is titled *Gui shen zhi ming* 鬼神之明 (*The Clarity of Ghosts and Spirits*) by the editors. Ding Sixin (2007) makes the valid point that this would suggest unwarranted affiliation with the chapter from the *Mozi*. The text takes five of a set of eight slips and is separated from another text, *Rongshi youcheng shi* 融師有成氏, with a bar of ink.

82　Sterckx 2013; Brindley 2009; Ding Sixin 2007.

83　It is unclear what happened to the manuscript, possibly, graphs have been scraped of in order to turn it into a burial item or to make a correction.

84　Following Ding Sixin 2007.

85　What follows are the classical counterexamples, Jie 桀 and Zhou 紂, You 幽 and Li 厲 who were "laughed at by the whole world even before they had passed away" 身不没為天下笑.

The text is not just engaged with ghosts and spirits but includes a mini-collection, if you will, of tales of various rulers making examples of the hardships and fortunes they encountered. It describes how the good ought to be rewarded and the bad punished. The virtuous rule of sages such as Yao, Shun, and Yu is supported by the spirits, and this is explicitly framed in terms of how they are remembered in the cultural memory of the community. Evidence for the praiseworthiness and thus the support of the sages by ghosts and spirits is presented on the basis that they were "honored" (*gui* 貴) as emperors, that they had "renown" (*yu* 譽) for many years, and their practices were "continued" (*shu* 述) by later generations. The simple assumption is that the archive of cultural memory has preserved these figures as worthy of remembrance and transmission as the very evidence for their worthiness. While this might be self-evident, the fact that it is remarked upon in these texts suggest that there was a contemporary awareness on the functioning of the archive of cultural memory. This awareness opens up a possibility for critical reflection on the very human processes that shaped the archive. Conflict is introduced as the rules that governed the ancient past do not always fit the more recent events of the Warring States:

> (3) … 及伍子胥者，天下之聖人也，鴟夷 而死。榮夷公者 ，天下之亂
> 人也，長年而沒。如以此詰之，則善者或不賞，而暴 (4) [者或不罰。]

> Coming to Wu Zixu, he was a sage of the realm, but he was stuffed in a skin and killed. Rong Yigong, he was a disturber of the realm, but he lived to a ripe age before dying. If one questions it using these [examples], then some of the excellent are not rewarded, and some of the violent are not punished.

There are many differing narratives surrounding the persona of Wu Zixu, some pointing at his virtue, others at his failures. The **Gui shen* selects the "virtuous" version and chooses to remember him as an exemplar of sagely virtue—but one who met with misfortune.[86] This unfavorable treatment does not sit well with the master narrative, in which every sagely person is treated according to their virtues. Examples of bad people who were rewarded with long life are also presented, thus opening up room for questions.

The use of *jie* 詰, i.e., "to question," suggests that the conflict needs to be examined in order to keep the master narrative working. It is in this context

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86   See Johnson 1981. This is an example of selective remembrance, suppressing negative memory in favor of the sagely memory conducive to the argument.

that the text argues that ghosts and spirits, the agents enforcing the rules of the master narrative, are questioned as to their ability and influence. Morality as the motor of the past itself cannot be questioned, and so the efficacy of the agents that are supposed to enforce the rules is questioned instead. But this does not diminish the fact that the origins of doubt stem from a failure of the system to account for remembered events from more recent periods. The subtext of the *Gui shen* presents an awareness and an attempt to deal with the fact that the idealized, normative conception of the past (and with it the present) can no longer account for anecdotal evidence. Patches, to use a software analogy, such as the problematic agency of ghosts and spirits, had to be applied to keep the paradigm of the past in place.

3.3   *Restructuring Cultural Memory: The *Qiong da yi shi

Another attempt to deal with this problem was found in reconsidering the role of time and periodization. The foundational past could still be seen as a model to be emulated, but with the caveat that in certain times it was not or could not be followed. This way of reasoning advanced a past that was not governed by a single set of rules governing all of time, but rather consisted of several breaks in time wherein the model was subverted. These breaks were represented by the reigns of bad rulers such as Zhou, Jie, and to some, Duke Huan of Qi.

Despite what many have argued on the basis of transmitted materials, the moral-historiographical crisis as it plays out in Warring States unearthed materials is emphatically not focused on a "single event" such as the fall of the Zhou.[87] The fall of the Western Zhou order was one of many (protracted) events singled out from the many breaks, which were personified, for instance, by the bad rulers commented on by Warring States historiographers. Since the perception of moral and social downfall was probably more a result of differences in the volume and quality of written memories documenting exceptions rather than an actual downfall, it thus seems more accurate to speak of a crisis of memory.

The framework stipulating that the foundational period was governed by an idealized morality and continuity was shaken by more recent events, still fresh in the memory of certain groups during the Warring States. While recent exceptions to the idealized past can be found in any period, the stabilization and wide dissemination of narratives about the past in writing formed a pool

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87   The pre-eminence accorded to this single event is a function of perceiving unity and disunity in terms of the dynastic model, a project clearly informing the agendas of the early histories such as the *Shiji*, and as has been argued, likely to suit early imperial historiographical concerns. See the discussion in Lewis (1999: 331–32, 355), *pace* Pines 2009: 18.

of knowledge that was less amenable to idealization while clearly showing its blank areas. As such, by the mid to late Warring States, texts emerge that reconceptualize the ways in which cultural memory was structured, and how precedent from the foundational period related to the present, in order to better accommodate the past to the needs of the present.

The tripartite structure of cultural memory as sketched for the Western Zhou period, wherein the foundational past was safely distant from the present by a temporally unspecified floating gap, therefore no longer stood up to argumentative needs and anecdotal evidence. Instead, the floating gap had to be colored in with narrative, and the foundational past itself was pushed further back in time. The tripartite structure itself vanished, and the past was segmented into multiple sections or epochs, each governed by slightly different rules and precedents, and each containing its unique exceptions.

One of the final key elements required for such a restructuring of the past is the notion that it is not just the action, virtue, or character of the figures of cultural memory that mattered, but also the fact that these figures lived in a time where these qualities could come to the fore and be recognized. The *Tang Yu zhi dao* and *Zi Gao*, discussed above, already include a disclaimer to this effect. It is true, the texts argue, that the ancients ruled by virtue and abdicated in favor of the worthy, but there is a subtext suggesting that this process was only possible because the worthy had the timely luck to meet a worthy connoisseur of talent, the *Tang Yu zhi dao* reads:

> (14)古者堯生為天子而有天下，聖以遇命，仁以逢時。未嘗遇[命，而]
> (15) 並於大時，神明將從，天地佑之。縱仁聖可舉，時弗可及矣。**88**

> In times of yore, Yao was born to become the Son of Heaven and possessed the world, he approached his mandate with sagacity and met his time with humaneness. Before he ever received [his mandate and] stood together with the great times, the spirits were set to favor him, and Heaven and Earth assisted him. Even if one's humanity and sagacity are worthy of elevation, the times cannot [always] be caught up with.

This passage makes a claim about the importance of the right, or "great" times, to the extent that even Yao came to his place not just by his merit, but also because the time was suitable to his elevation to power. Yao's qualities of sagacity and humaneness are glossed in temporal terms.

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88   The edition and translation are adapted from Cook 2012: 559–62.

(20) 禪也者，上德授賢之謂也。上德則天下有君而 (21) 世明

Abdication is what is referred to by exalting virtue and bestowing [ruler-ship] upon the worthy. When virtue is exalted, then the world has a ruler and the age is bright.

Just as the earlier comments in the *Zi Gao* and the **Gui shen* revealed an awareness of how rulers were remembered by posterity, the qualification of an age as "bright" reveals the work of a narrator looking back and judging the figures of the past for their relative achievements. This narrator explains to the recipient how cultural memory should be interpreted, and how the rules of the master narrative are to be understood.[89] The *Zi Gao* explicitly states that the current age does not adhere to these idealized rules from the past:

(8) 子羔曰: "如舜在今之世則何若?" 孔子曰: (7) "亦已先王之由道，不逢明王，則亦不大使。"

Zi Gao asked: "If Shun were in our generation, what would it be like?" Kongzi replied, "As none follows any longer the Way of the former kings, he would not meet an enlightened king and hence would not be employed in a great [position]."[90]

The foundational period is used as a standard to judge the present, and the narrative of abdication is used as a vehicle for showing that the rules of the past are no longer applicable. The *Zi Gao*, in the same way as early Zhou sources, contrasts the foundational age to the present without providing narrative depth between the periods. Texts such as the **Qiong da yi shi* from Guodian develop the idea of temporal difference in the past to a more complex conclusion:

(1) 有天有人，天人有分。察天人之分，而知所行矣。
有其人，無其 (2) 世，雖賢弗行矣。苟有其世，何難之有哉？[91]

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89 Similar statements can be found in the *Zi Gao*, for instance:
   (6) 子羔曰: "堯之得舜也，舜之德則誠善 (2) 與？抑堯之德則甚明與?" 孔子曰:"均也。"
   Zi Gao asked: "Regarding Yao's acquiring of Shun, was Shun's virtue truly good, or because Yao's was very clear-sighted?" Kongzi replied: "Equally so."

90 Edition and translation largely follow Pines 2005b: 164. For an alternative translation of this disputed passage, see Allan 2009: 128.

91 Text edition from Meyer 2011: 57–66.

> There is heaven and there is man—heaven and man are distinct. By investigating the distinction between heaven and man, one can know how they act. If the man is right, but not the age, then even if he is worthy he cannot exercise it. But if one has the age, what difficulties could there be?

This opening paragraph sets the basic problem of worthiness and timeliness. Only after examining the worlds of heaven and man does one know whether the age is ripe for worthy rule and service. What is different in the *Qiong da yi shi* is the very explicit nature in which the problem of temporality and service are made into the main point of inquiry.

This is reflected in the explicit use of mental state verbs to describe the means to understand the character of the times, in a way analogous to what David R. Olson observed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English texts.[92] For example, the *Qiong da yi shi* introduces a key verb, "to investigate" (*cha* 察) describing an act of analytical reflection, just as the *Gui shen* used "to question" (*jie* 詰). It is introduced to show that the times, and the past in particular, can be reflected upon. The use of "truly" (*cheng* 誠) in the *Zi Gao* can likewise be taken in this spirit of critical inquiry. These words describe the process of verification, analysis, and judgment on the basis of narrative and biographical information and point to the emergence of a stabilizing and referable archive of historical lore perceived as open to critical verification of precedent, comparison, and pattern analysis.[93] But this assumes a corpus of lore that can be contrasted for patterns, and in this respect the mini-collections formed by the texts under discussion provide exactly such a body of evidence.

These mini-collections are argumentatively integrated, and much of the material they collect are one or two lines each. They work as corpus organizers in that they select anecdotal lore suited for their larger argument, and they

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92 David R. Olson (1994), in a chapter entitled "What Writing Doesn't Represent," discusses the problems of expressing complex mental states and speech acts in written form. One of the examples listed are mental state verbs describing various processes of thought and analysis that were borrowed into English from Latin around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (pp. 108–10). I find this a stimulating comparison to what appears as an increased presence of verbs describing discovery, analysis, and verification in Warring States texts. To truly evaluate such differences, further study would be required.

93 This use of diction is of course not limited to texts discussing the past, and occurs in genres discussing natural phenomena, pathology, logic, and physiology, to name but a few. What it suggests is a different attitude towards knowledge in general. Here the discussion in Koselleck 1988 on *temporalization* and the emergence of concepts is extremely relevant.

select cases both from the foundational period and from more recent times suitable for service; they deselect unsuitable ones. Instead of reiterating the dichotomy between the foundational past and the ever-lacking present, the *Qiong da yi shi* follows the rule of temporality to its broadest possible conclusion, collecting both ancient and recent precedents under the same rule as a means to harmonize conflicting narratives:

(2) 舜耕於歷山，陶拍 (3) 於河滸。立而為天子，遇堯也。

Shun plowed at Mount Li, made pottery on the banks of the [Yellow] River. That he was established as Son of Heaven was because he met Yao
 [examples of Shao Yao, Lü Wang, Guan Zhong and Sunshu Ao follow]

(7) 百里[奚] 轉賣五羊，為伯牧牛。釋板[?] 而為朝卿，遇秦穆。 ▬

Baili [Xi] was sold for five goats and had to herd oxen for a lord. That he dropped his tablet and became court minister was because he met Mu of Qin.

All of these well-known exemplars are introduced with key signifying elements from their biography and are thereby intertextually linked to other anecdotal accounts. These figures could only succeed because they met the right person who raised or freed them from their position. What makes the *Qiong da yi shi* different from the previous narratives is that it selects both negative and positive stories of moral exemplars, yet still manages to place them under a single historiographical rule. Rather than avoiding the problem the collection of anecdotal materials presents to the workings of the past, it explicitly rephrases the rules governing the past. As the text itself states, the qualities of these people did not change, merely their opportunities for recognition, and here too the *Qiong da yi shi* is highly reflective of the ways in which cultural memory is used to judge the achievements of the past:

(9) 初韜晦，後名揚，非其德加。子胥前多功，後戮死，非其智
(10) 衰也。
(14) 窮達以時，德行一也，譽毀在旁。

That in the beginning they were hidden and obscure, and that later their names were praised is not because they increased in virtue. That [Wu] Zixu first was considered to be highly meritorious and later disgraced and killed was not because his wisdom had decreased.

> Failure and success appear at their respective times. Virtue and con-
> duct [may] be the same,[94] [and yet] fame and slander stand by their side.

In the final analysis, the use of timeliness allows the text to subsume well-
known cases such as that of Shun under its aegis, and to extend its argument
to cover more recent exemplars from Spring and Autumn history. Here, the two
competing areas of the past are thus merged in one smooth narrative. Rather
than just presenting the foundational period of Shun and Yao as an ideal, it
shows how the same process continued into the recent past and thus provides
the basis for the formation of a continuous narrative. The apparent discrepan-
cies noted earlier between the memories of these two periods are smoothed
over by updating the master narrative of the past with a concept of timeli-
ness. This use of differentiated (periodized) yet continuous time culminates
in manuscript texts such as the *Rongchengshi* where the concept of ages and
the changing of epochs as seen in the **Qiong da yi shi* is developed to such
an extent as to present a macro-overview of universal scope. Even though the
Rongchengshi did not expand into more recent anecdotal material and rather
pushed back into ancient times, it employs the same logic of subsuming the
past under one abstract structure. The **Qiong Da yi shi* thus provides a final key
element that foregrounds a transformation towards the increasingly compre-
hensive and structured representation of the past of the mid to late Warring
States period.

4   Conclusions

I have described a number of trends emerging in Warring States representa-
tions of the past that help explain the transition from the commemorative,
localized, and fragmented accounts seen in the mid to late Western Zhou and
Spring and Autumn periods, towards the comprehensive, universalistic, and
thoroughly structured collections seen in the mid to late Warring States. These
trends are closely related to the increase in the collection and exchange of
narratives in written form. While many accounts of the past from the Warring
States period are quite similar to earlier accounts in their use of temporal
structuring, during this period, isolated and fragmented narratives are gradu-
ally brought together, all the while they gained in volume, detail, and depth
of description. Because of argumentative needs, biographical information of
foundational figures gained in detail. But these descriptions, each tailored to

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94   Changed from "one" in Meyer 2011: 66, the rest follows Meyer's translation.

specific argumentative needs, were often incongruous and gave rise to explicitly formulated questions on the veracity of the accounts or why they were remembered. Differing accounts came into conflict. On another level, the master narrative of the past, wherein worthies always received what they deserved and were able to rule successfully was increasingly challenged due to an increase in mini-collections of anecdotal materials that appeared to contradict these rules.

The model function of the foundational period was thus threatened and the rules of the master narrative had to change. While certain texts focused on the agents "enforcing" the system, others introduced a concept of timeliness and historical contingency to allow for outcomes different from the expected results. By structuring the past into distinct epochs, each characterized by different rules, conflicting accounts could be subsumed under a larger system. Larger texts on bamboo subsumed individual, separate accounts under larger narrative programs. Carefully integrating single accounts using the language of causality, narrative accounts gained in depth and complexity as they smoothly encapsulated anecdotes from long periods of time under the same argument. The division of the past into related but distinct ages was crucial for this integration, since it allowed for a similarity of remembered rules and patterns through the ages, all the while acknowledging differences in how the past operated across different ages.

These changes in temporal structuring coincide with two developments. The first is an attempt to probe back ever further in time, coloring in all the blanks in the narrative and providing utopic antecedent for later developments. It is clear from this development that simply stating Yao's divine origins or not explaining his background at all were no longer adequate by the late Warring States. Every precedent had an antecedent. The second development is the explicit structuring of time on a textual level. The *Rongchengshi* is the pinnacle of this development.[95] Here, the master narrative of the past is presented in the form of a macrostructure that is imposed on to the individual periods. This macrostructure guides the transition between ages and provides a rationale for different practices and rules in each of these. On a lower level, meso- and microstructures allow for the emergence of a continuous, smooth narrative wherein each event leads to the other, thus foregrounding the bigger changes in the macrostructure of time.

This does not mean that a text like the *Rongchenshi* writes history in the modern sense of the word. Rather, in its presentation of the links between

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95   To a lesser extent, texts such as the **Xinian* come to mind. For an analysis of its different
      formats of time structuring, see Pines 2020.

events, it elides large stretches of the past. As such, while causal developments between action and result were rendered clear in this particular example, some of these connections are the function of the act of collection and the resulting narrative structure of the text rather than the interconnectedness of the events themselves. Accordingly, the text presents an attempt to subsume different memories from a range of historical periods under a single argumentative program.

The textuality of these connecting structures became gradually more explicit and operative. Previously circulating fragmented accounts are subsumed under a tight historiographical structure by explicitly formulating causality. The collected past is turned into an archive open to examination of its patterns using verbs highlighting the need for verification, veracity, and evaluation of accounts of the past. Judgment is likewise rendered more explicit, when narrator figures such as Confucius take on the role of adjudicator, and having carefully analyzed the patterns of the past, they make moral and causal claims describing why events lead to one another. This is dovetailed in the narrative constructions seen in many of the texts discussed above. The various anonymous judgments on the behavior of exemplar figures are explicitly marked as being "heard" or "seen" by other figures in the narrative and given as motivation for future actions.

In short, Warring States developments in the structuring of historiographical narrative, increases in detail, and increased specification of the relations between stories and their events present a response to organizing multiple stories in a single collection, under a single argument. When stories were gathered in (mini-)collections, their patterns of similarity and difference became open to inquiry. Meanwhile, circulation of these stories increased, aided in part by collections that opened up access to narratives for new audiences. These developments increased the need to iron out the ways in which these stories, and the understanding of the past they represented, hung together. This, in turn, informed the writing of the past well into the early empires.

Collection and Canon: *The Formation of a Genre*

或以不喪之閒，誦詩三百，弦詩三百，歌詩三百，舞詩三百。

When they are not busy mourning, some spend the time reciting the 300 odes, strumming the 300 odes, singing the 300 odes, and dancing the 300 odes.

> *MOZI*, "Gongmeng" 公孟

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This chapter addresses the problem of collected verse.[1] Traditional understandings of verse share a belief that by the late Spring and Autumn period, Confucius selected and organized around 300 songs from a much wider corpus in circulation. The assumption is that the selection was somehow preserved in writing, although the earliest references rather focus on the act of organization (*zhi* 治). Quotations of songs in early texts are seen as drawing from that collection, leaving some room for "lost odes" (*yi shi* 逸詩), i.e., those songs not selected by Confucius.[2] Any discrepancies in early verse quotations and text editions, whether in the specific wording, title, length, or interpretation, are then ascribed to gradual changes in the transmission of the collection, without

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1 I use "verse" as a general term to encompass all forms of encompassed wholes of rhythmic and rhymed composition, as juxtaposed to prose. In various periods, these forms would be referred to as "odes" (*shi* 詩)—or *Odes* (*Shi*) for the canonical collection *Shijing* 詩經—"lyric" (*ci* 辭), "songs" (*ge* 歌), "cautioning admonitions" (*jing bi* 儆㦸), and "hymns [of praise]" (*zhusong* 祝頌 or *song* 頌), for example. Many of these forms would later be relabeled as *Odes* 詩. Verse as a term does not privilege either the poetic or the melodic, and is not limited to connotations of a single usage context, as poem, ode, or song would be. It should be noted that prose and narrative in early Chinese texts are often comprised of verse sections, rhymed adages, and rhythmic parallel composition. For the purpose of examining the specific genres of verse, when they operate as standalone units, or are singled out by frame or by virtue of being in the same collection, they can be subsumed as a heuristic category similar to the broadest use of the term *shi* in early Chinese poetics, which can refer to any rhymed or rhythmic composition (or both) from the adage to lyric; see Schaberg 1999: 307–09.
2 On the term "lost odes," see the discussion in Zhang Suqing 1991: 21–24, 219–21.

essentially deviating from the "original."[3] Commentarial materials such as the
Kongzi shi lun and manuscripts such as the Anhui Warring States and Fuyang
Han bamboo slips are—incorrectly, in my view—taken as direct evidence of
this development, and seen as early editions of the *Shijing* or *Classic of Odes*.[4]

Within that framework, the lion's share of Warring States verse is seen as
derivative of a *Shijing* or proto-*Shijing* stable in writing. This model has a hard
time accounting for recently excavated small-scale collections of verse. These
collections often feature individual pieces that appear in the *Shijing*, but mostly
contain material not directly related to the canonical collection. This material
is either seen as those lost odes not selected by Confucius, or as something pro-
duced either in reaction to or within the development of the *Shijing*, but this
view neglects the possibility of continuous *shi*-production outside the scope of
a source text. This theory similarly does not adequately explain the presence of
differences in meter, phrasing, genre identifications, and structure compared
to received *Shi*-verse. Martin Kern in a recent article has advanced the idea of
repertoires.[5] In his model, a tradition of *Shi* production was alive well into the
Warring States period, producing new verse and exploring new forms, only to
be ossified during the canonization efforts of the early empires. Verse produc-
tion in this model worked along established themes, diction, and other genre
markers, to produce recognizable yet unique verse. While this model makes
inroads towards explaining the presence of various "renditions" of essentially
the same verse as it provides a way of explaining continued verse production
not hampered by the primacy of a supposed fixed, written, and widely circulat-
ing *Shijing*, it likewise does not explain the presence and role of the small-scale
collections of written verse that increasingly appear in the excavated record of
the period.

In this chapter, I ascribe a much more active role to these collections in
shaping the genre. These collections contain material that occupy the broad
genres of *shi* and Chu lyric verse. They contain anywhere between two to ten
individual verses. These small collections often contain metatextual material,
whether in the form of historicizing framing narratives or scenes of author-
ship, commentarial notes, or paratextual features such as titles, genre labels,

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3   See for example the overview of such views in Cao Jianguo 2010: 1–37. A good example of how
     these ideas inform discussions of excavated materials can be found in Chao Fulin 2014.

4   Representative is the introduction to the Anda manuscript, where similarities to the received
     Mao Odes are taken as evidence of widespread dissemination of a fixed text 定本. This con-
     clusion belies the differences in ordering of the material introduced just a page earlier, and it
     appears that the notion of fixed text is open to a variety of interpretations; see Anhui daxue
     Hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 2019: 1–7.

5   Kern 2019.

and indicators of performance. The process of collecting verse into a single manuscript opened up a space for the emergence of such qualities, whether explicitly through labels or implicitly through an appearance of self-similarity.[6] These qualities rendered in written form those elements that would otherwise have been apparent from performance or known through tradition. By attaching them to collections of verse, they allowed for the communication of developments in the genre that would prove instrumental in the reconceptualization of verse from situated performance to canonical text.

1   Developments in the Use of Verse

Kern has argued that mid-late Western Zhou usage of verse was situated around the performance of the rituals of the ancestral cult, and was part and parcel of a multi-sensory experience including not only speeches, but also dance and visual and olfactory stimulation, and that the verse gradually became more and more commemorative in character.[7] Shaughnessy sketches a similar position for the early hymns (*song* 頌) and, following Fu Sinian, suggests that some of these were performed in elaborate ritual sets, arguing that in the late Western Zhou a division between performers and audience emerges, a process turning ritual participation into commemorative observation.[8] Many have argued for a broadening, de-ritualization, and de-musicalization of verse in the period. At the same time, von Falkenhausen argues—and the quote from the *Mozi* above illustrates this—music and performance remained important aspects of courtly and classical culture well into the Warring States period.[9] Van Zoeren makes the case that the increasingly institutionalized practice of teaching verse as poetry slowly eroded the musical grounds of existence of the corpus, "leaving behind the Odes as texts and texts only."[10] As a result, verse was increasingly wielded as a culturally coded linguistic means of exchange in court settings and formed a language with a heritage encompassing the sinosphere.[11]

Recent studies have suggested that the transmission and performance of verse during the Warring States period was predominantly based on the sound

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6   For similar considerations in light of multi-text historiographical manuscripts, see Krijgsman and Vogt 2019.
7   Kern 2009 and 2000; see also von Falkenhausen 1993a.
8   Shaughnessy 1997: 186–87; Fu Sinian 2008. See also C.H. Wang 1974.
9   Von Falkenhausen 1993a; Kern 2001: 73.
10   Van Zoeren (1991: 28–51); the quotation is from p. 49.
11   Beecroft 2010, Schaberg 2001, Lewis 1999.

of the text rather than a fixed written form.[12] The picture in the *Zuo zhuan* and many philosophical texts, wherein apt lines of verse were exchanged and "quoted," suggests that a body of verse was considered part of the cultural memory of the early Chinese elite.[13] Excavated evidence further reveals that verse was often quoted from memory and adaptable to circumstances rather than tied to a fixed written form of the text.[14] At the dawn of the early empires, verse and what subsequently became known as the *Odes* in particular were increasingly seen as a fixed set of texts, i.e., the three hundred from the quotation above, which invited commentarial definition of its meanings rather than ritual actualization through performance.[15]

From this admittedly brief overview, a general trend from the ritual and performative towards the textual and commentarial emerges, a process touched upon by Van Zoeren and Ou Manjong among others.[16] Nevertheless, if we take memory and oral performance as the main mode of engagement with verse during the Warring States period, then how do we explain that verse collected in written form is extremely common among recently acquired manuscripts? What changes when verse is collected in written form? Why write an oral and memorized piece down in the first place? Did collecting contribute to changes in usage praxis and transmission? Does the act of grouping individual verse selections together open up different interpretations of the material? What was the role of collecting verse in transforming a predominantly performative practice into a fixed canonical text?

This was not a one-directional, neat development. I propose that the emergence of the *shi* as a recognized literary genre tied to a written collection, the *Shi*, was the result of a set of gradual and interrelated developments in Warring States manuscript collections of verse that provided key elements for the eventual canonical form of the *Shijing*.[17]

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12   See, especially, Kern 2005 and 2002. Note also that there are clear differences in the way texts in the "Documents" (*shu* 書) genre were transmitted, for example; see Shaughnessy 2015.

13   For an extensive discussion see Schaberg 2001: 72–78, 234–42, and Zhang Suqing 1991, 29–50.

14   Albeit as authoritative and analogical arguments integrated in compositions such as the *Wuxing* 五行 from Guodian, see Kern 2005.

15   Van Zoeren 1991: 49.

16   Van Zoeren 1991; Ou Manjong 2001. For developments in early exegesis, especially during the early Han, see studies by Saussy 1993, and Riegel 1977.

17   I take an intermediary position between, for example, Chen Shih-hsiang (1974), who places most of these developments as early as the Western Zhou period, and Kern (2015: 180), who argues that notions of genre and authorship only developed during the Han.

The process of collecting resulted in changes in the reception and framing of verse. Small-scale verse collections were likely used in teaching contexts and acted as important local catalysts informing the way verse and verse collections were perceived. The interpretive space opened up by bringing similar pieces together in a single-manuscript collection would be instrumental in redefining notions of editorship, authorship, and genre classifications.

Finally, I examine how collections and early commentaries informed changes in the perception of the formal organization of the texts, and how they influenced the teaching and early processes of canonization of verse. I take my cue from Guillory's revisionist view on the formation of the literary canon. He argues that instead of asking what the choices are that inform the inclusion or exclusion of certain texts from the canon, we should be investigating the means by which access to the texts, tastes, and interpretations that would inform the canon are generated. In particular, Guillory stresses the role of teaching and the syllabus in forming the categories and reinforcing models of literature upon future readers and writers.[18] Similarly, the teaching of verse on the basis of collections can be used to understand how, and in what form, access was generated for later collections, such as the Mao redaction of the *Shijing*, by furnishing increasingly larger selections and arrangements of text, enmeshed in specific interpretations, classifications, and renditions of the material.

1.1   *Large-scale Collections: Little Influence?*

The first physical evidence to date for collections of verse materials appears on bamboo manuscripts from the Warring States period. The image presented in the received record tells of sections of poems and individual lines that were integrated in a variety of speech and argumentative contexts, from the *Zuo zhuan* practice of "presenting verse" (*fushi* 賦詩), to the use in many Warring States texts of individual lines to cap an argument.[19] "Verse for verse's sake," or the transmission in writing of multiple complete pieces presented as distinct entities, seems to be extremely rare before the Warring States.[20] To examine

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18   Guillory 1993.

19   For an overview over the scholarship and an important account of the early history of the text, see Kern 2018. For discussions on the use in *Zuo zhuan*, see Zhang Suqing 1991; Schaberg 2001: 72–78, 234–42; Li 2014, 2007. For references in received literature, see Dong Zhi'an 1994: 35–45, 64–88.

20   If we accept the late sixth to early fifth century BCE period offered by Mattos (1988) for the Qin Stone Drums as an exceptionally early case of writing down individual verse, it should also be acknowledged that the Drum's physical presentation of material in a style, language, and grammar similar to the *shi* is not just extremely rare, but also an example

the possible influences of collections of verse as a separate phenomenon, this section examines the available physical evidence from Warring States manuscripts as opposed to taking recourse to secondary descriptions that were given definitive form only in the late Warring States or the Han period.[21]

Before turning to small-scale collections of verse, the problem presented by the Anhui University and Fuyang materials needs to be addressed. These large collections of verse have been taken as proof of the widespread circulation of an essentially stable and well-defined proto-canonical *Shijing* that can be traced back to the editorial efforts of Confucius.[22] These collections are taken as physical evidence for a tradition supposedly ruptured by the Qin burning of books and restored in the teachings of Han dynasty commentators.[23] Other early examples of verse and verse collections and the understandings of the genre that they reflect are seen as derivative or reactionary to this tradition.

I hesitate to accept that understanding for a number of reasons. First of all, even though these discoveries were hailed as unearthed *Shijing* exemplars, they are in fact quite different collections. Compared to the received canonical text, both excavated collections are far from complete. The early Han dynasty Fuyang manuscript is badly damaged, and as it stands it only contains a large portion of verse from the "Airs" (*feng* 風) and a few pieces from the "Minor Elegantiae" (*xiaoya* 小雅).[24] The recent Anda discovery, while likewise labeled as a *Shijing* by its editors, in fact only comprises a large section of the "Airs."[25]

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of a weighty medium that was not conducive to easy transmission. The same might be said for poetic materials preserved on bronzes; see notably Behr 2008. Of course, it is reasonable to assume that the textualization of such materials in a genre recognizable form of literary production presumes at the very least a limited, and likely court centered, transmission of such material in other forms and media.

21   Here I refer to statements such as in Chen Shih-hsiang (1974: 13, n.17) who assumes that the Jizha Guanyue 季札觀樂 description in *Zuo zhuan* "Xiang" 28 provides datable (544 BCE) evidence for the existence of a relatively stable collection of the *Odes*. The dating of the *Zuo zhuan*, let alone its materials, is a thorny issue. For an excellent overview of the scholarship to date see the introduction to Durrant, Li, and Schaberg (2016: xxxviii–lx), and the appendix in Schaberg 2001. The bulk of the material is the result of a fourth century BCE practice of narrativizing the historical events recorded in the *Chunqiu*, drawing on a vast body of orally transmitted lore, a process finalized around the late third century BCE. Note that Pines, otherwise a staunch defender of the documentary and written nature of the sources underlying the *Zuo*, readily acknowledges this passage to be of a late Warring States origin, see Pines 2002: 221–26.

22   See Anhui daxue Hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 2009: 1–7.

23   For a critical review, see Kern 2000: 188–90.

24   Hu Pingsheng and Han Zhiqiang 1988.

25   It includes 57 pieces from the Zhou Nan 周南, Shao Nan 邵南, Hou 侯, Yong 庸, Wei 魏, and Qin 秦 "Airs" respectively. For an overview, see Anhui daxue Hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin ed., 2009: 1–7, and Huang Dekuan 2017: 56–58.

News reports of other new finds relating to the *Shijing* on closer inspection likewise only provide small selections, especially of the "Airs."[26] As such, we have unearthed evidence for the transmission of the "Airs" in distinct collections, but not for the *Shijing* as a whole.

Even so, the manuscripts provide advanced forms of material organization. The Fuyang manuscript from the early empires featured a wide array of paratextual features and is arranged by individual punctuated *zhang* (stanzas), including counts of characters, titles for individual pieces, and sections on separate slips ("to the right is the X *feng*," etc.).[27] The Anhui University manuscript similarly features significant visual organization, but characteristically for the Warring States, is not very strict in applying the principle. At the end of subsections, the title of the section and its number of verses are noted, sometimes also including the title of the first verse. Verses themselves are not titled in the text. Lines within some but not all pieces are followed by punctuation marks, stanzas are not marked, and finally, square-shaped punctuation separates some of the verses, especially in the earlier sections. Each slip is furthermore numbered on the recto. The paratextual markup makes it all the more striking that there is no title present for the manuscript as a whole, even though the first slip is preserved. Through these paratextual markers, these collections of (mostly) "Airs" would have contributed to the perception that verse was part of an organized collection, named and divided along known lines. This does not mean, however, that the order of the content had stabilized in its entirety.

The Anhui University manuscript features a number of significant differences to the received Mao redaction of the *Shijing*.[28] For one, it is a collection of "Airs" and not of the *Shijing* as a whole. Second, after the first two subsections (Zhounan and Shaonan), the order of the Anda material is increasingly different from other preserved orders of the *Shi* (*Zuo zhuan, Shipu, Mao shi*).[29] It groups verses into different subcategories of the "Airs," and the order of stanzas

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26 Yuan Huijing and Jiang Xiao 2016.

27 Hu Pingsheng and Han Zhiqiang 1998: 90–95.

28 For overviews see the special issue in *Bamboo and Silk* 4.1, especially Shaughnessy 2021.

29 Anhui daxue Hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 2009: 1–2. Note that this seems to tally well with general observations on patterns of variation in quotation and text orders. In general, it seems that when multiple versions of a text occur, there appears more similarity at the beginning and more variation further on. Quotations also tend to draw from the early sections of texts (whether the first stanza, opening chapters, or opening lines) and decrease further in these texts. Even in the presence of stable written texts, this practice is the result of selective remembrance, where earlier sections tend to be favored in recall; see Krijgsman 2018: 48.

in individual verses also has differences.[30] In all, if these materials are taken as representative of developments in the formation of the *Shijing* as a whole, the differences to the received *Mao shi* suggest that while there is increasing stabilization of parts of the collections, this process was by no means finished during the Warring States period—many of the divisions and subdivisions of the collection were still in flux. Even the *Kongzi shi lun, discussed at the end of this chapter, while arguably one of the strongest indicators of a stabilizing collection, may still refer to a number of pieces not found in later collections, despite attempts to match all titles with the received text.[31]

In short, if not through oral transmission, Warring States recipients had access to verse in the form of stabilizing collections collected into separate subsections. That is not to say that complete texts of the *Shi* could not have existed in written form somewhere, but we simply have no evidence for it. Some have argued that the unearthed collections are excerpts from a single larger collection,[32] but even if that were true, the influence of such a larger collection on recipients was probably much smaller than previously assumed. As noted by Kern,[33] while the "Elegantiae" and "Hymns" are quoted regularly across early literature, the "Airs" are comparatively underrepresented in quotations in the *Zuo zhuan* and other transmitted sources. This should caution us against naively believing that the existence of a large collection in manuscript form is a precondition for the influence of a body of text: that influence may equally be due to other forms of transmission. When we do assume that verse was taught using written text as a basis for memorization and vocalization, the majority of such teaching texts probably would have taken the form of the smaller scale collections found in the unearthed record. It is therefore crucial to examine the ways in which these collections shaped the perception of early verse.

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30   See Huang Dekuan 2017: 56. The "Airs of Hou" of the manuscript end up in the "Airs of Wei" in the received version, and nine of the verses in the "Airs of Wei" in the Anda manuscript in turn appear in the "Airs of Tang" in the received text. Of course, there is also plenty of variation in the writing of individual graphs, for which see, for instance, Huang Dekuan 2018.

31   See the introduction in Ma Chengyuan 2001; and Ji Xusheng 2004, for attempts to match all titles in the manuscript with the received text.

32   See for instance Smith and Poli 2021: 535 and Yen 2021: 54. Yen refers to the discussion in Yu Jiaxi (2007: 266–68), on individual circulation of chapters of books and people copying selections of material for their private use. Yu Jiaxi, in turn, draws on a statement from the Han librarian Liu Xin discussing how Han erudites focused on single section such as the "Airs," "Elegantiae," or "Hymns."

33   Kern 2018: 59–68.

1.2   *Small-scale Collections of Verse*

To illustrate the rich variety of verse collections encountered by Warring States recipients, I start with a number of small-scale collections, containing two to about a dozen individual pieces. Volume four of the Shanghai corpus contains two short pieces classified as "lost odes" (*yishi*) by their modern editors.[34] Based on the first lines, they titled the pieces **Jiaojiao mingwu* 交交鳴烏 (*Chirp Chirp Cry the Birds*) and **Duoxin* 多薪 (*Gathering Firewood*), respectively. Punctuation in the two pieces follows a similar pattern with clearly marked reduplication and punctuation marks at the end of individual stanzas. Only for **Duoxin* is the end preserved, its last slip is closed by a hook shaped text terminator mark and leaves the remainder of the slip blank. While it is possible that the two texts were part of the same manuscript the evidence is not definitive.[35] Regardless, the two pieces indicate the presence of poetic materials textualized on bamboo in a "verse for verse's sake" fashion, as opposed to partial pieces subsumed under larger textual compositions.

Clearer data emerges for the four pieces, contained in volume eight of the Shanghai corpus, that their editor classifies as Chu lyrics. The first two, referred to by the editor as **Lisong* 李頌 (*Hymn to the Plum*) and **Lanfu* 蘭賦 (*Rhapsody on the Orchid*) present somewhat of an oddity in manuscript materiality. The five slips of **Lanfu* are written on the penultimate section of a manuscript followed by the first slip of **Lisong*, after which the writing continues on the back of the manuscript, starting on the back of the first slip of **Lisong* and finishing on the fifth slip of **Lanfu*. If we envision rolling out the slips in scroll fashion and reading them from right to left, the poems are arranged as follows (more slips may have preceded them):

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34   Ma Chengyuan ed., 2005: 173. The editors argue that the pieces are similar to those seen in the "Airs" and "Elegantiae" sections of the *Shijing* based on repeated sentence structure with variation in keywords, the rhyme pattern, and use of evocation (*xing* 興) in the openings.

35   See the overview in Ma Chengyuan 2005: 4. The manuscript is heavily damaged: only four and two flat-bottomed slips remain of the pieces respectively, each damaged on the top end, so the full slip length is difficult to determine. The only two criteria that could make manuscript affiliation of the slips clearer are the rough similarities in breaking patterns of the slips, but without archaeological context it is difficult to determine whether this suggests proximity in burial and therefore scroll position or is a result of the robbing process. Secondly, features of manuscript layout such as punctuation and relative graph and binding spacing are suggestive of affiliation. In light of the limited data for comparison, it is difficult to determine whether or not the same copyist was responsible for both texts, although the overall style of calligraphy is similar. For the distinction between hand and style, see Richter 2006.

Back: *LiS2   *LiS3   _____   _____   _____   _____
Front: *LiS1   *LanF5   *LanF4   *LanF3   *LanF2   *LanF1

The editor, Cao Jinyan, argues on this basis that the manuscript was first bound
and then written, a notion supported by the spacing of the graphs avoiding
the binding strings.[36] Finally, the script of the last section of the *Lisong, dis-
cussed below, is written in a different hand. This section, possibly written by a
later reader or organizer of the material, is not rhymed and contains a general
statement using a vocabulary commonly used to describe verse materials. Its
first line is again repeated in the middle of the back of *LanF5/*LiS3, and likely
functioned as a summary judgment of the verse, which concerns the *guan* 棺
tree, which grows tall and straight but restrains its outgrowths:[37]

(2) 是故聖人束此，和物以理人情。人因其情則樂其事，遠其情 ...
(3) 是故聖人束此 。[38]

For this reason, the sage restrains this, he harmonizes himself in accor-
dance with things in order to understand [the pattern of] the actual con-
dition of people.[39] When people are in accordance with actual condition
they take pleasure in their affairs, when they distance themselves from
their actual condition[40]
    For this reason, the sage restrains this.

The lines quoted above imbue the two pieces with a sense of unity while dis-
tilling a general and abstract lesson from their content. Such comments can be
seen as a simple form of larger framing narratives or commentaries. The nor-
mative function of the material is highlighted by stressing the relation of verse
and song with "understanding [the pattern of] the actual condition of people"
理人情, a well-established trope in Warring States period and later texts which
is often related to teaching and (moral) cultivation practices.[41] The recipient is

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36   In Ma Chengyuan 2011: 229. FDDSH (2011) argues that the physical characteristics and
      script of the material are congruent with the *Gui shen* and might have been part of the
      same manuscript.

37   Compare Ma Chengyuan (2011: 246), suggesting it is a poetic critique of the receiver and
      not necessarily a title. FDDSH 2011b doubts this.

38   Edition follows FDDSH 2011b.

39   My tentative reading of this enigmatic comment is that the sage restrains himself in the
      same way that the *guan* tree restrains its outgrowth.

40   This line seems to be incomplete, taken together with the repetition in the designation
      this suggests that the status of this section on the manuscript might be more complex.

41   See for example the *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出 discussed below.

invited to draw a general lesson from the metaphor embodied in the verse. By virtue of physically grouping pieces together—even if there were only two—a metatextual space was opened up, wherein a commentator felt the need to insert a reading key that would make functional (educational) sense of the pieces as a collection sharing common features.

Besides these two pieces, volume eight contains two more pieces, *You huang jiang qi* 有皇將起 (*A Sovereign Is About to Rise*) and *Liuli* 鶹鶇 (*Oriole*) thought to be in the Chu lyric form; they were likely part of a single manuscript, written in a single hand and bound in the same place.[42] While the fragmented and limited state of these manuscripts does not allow for decisive statements, they present evidence for the formation of short collections of verse from at least the mid Warring States period onwards. It is important to note that despite insistence by the editors that the latter two should be understood as Chu lyric, they have no text-internal genre labels. Although they share certain characteristics such as the use of the particle *xi* 兮 to mark pauses and breaks between lines (note that this particle likewise occurs in the Mao redaction of the *Shijing*), they also present many features different from other transmitted Chu lyrics. They are much shorter, are not presented in a standardized five-word line-length rhythm, and some feature unique double line-final particles, such as *han xi* 含兮. In many respects, therefore, the collections are more similar internally than they are to received exemplars of the genre. This is a crucial characteristic shared with *shi*-verse collections from the Tsinghua slips.

2   Emergent Properties in Verse Collections

The way collections present internal similarity and difference is crucial to the way they present qualities of the genre. In this section, I discuss two longer collections, the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* 周公之琴舞 (*The Duke of Zhou's Dance to the Zither*) and the *Qi ye* 耆夜 (*The Night after Qi*) from the Tsinghua manuscripts. Containing ten and five pieces respectively,[43] they provide elaborate framing narratives describing imagined scenes of authorship and performance, in addition to genre labels as a means of structuring the collection.[44]

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42   See the discussion between Cheng Shaoxuan and Li Rui in the comments section to Fudan Jida guwenzi zhuanye Yanjiusheng lianhe dushuhui 2011.

43   I have not included the *Ruiliang fu bi* 芮良夫毖, a collection with two verses, also from the Tsinghua manuscripts, for reasons of space. For a study, see Cao Jianguo 2016.

44   Here and below, I follow the genre classifications as provided in the frame, sometimes in contrast with what (modern) critics have judged to be the literary form of the pieces.

Where the ritual and courtly contexts described in *Zuo zhuan* and extrapolated from pieces dated to the late Western Zhou and early Eastern Zhou would have situated the material through their use in performance, a shift towards a text-oriented appreciation of verse was on its way during the Warring States. Frame narratives, for example, present a context that would otherwise be provided in performance or based on audience expectations. This process gradually transformed the perception of the genre into a textual phenomenon, and this has a number of consequences.

1) Generally speaking, turning experience into written form emphasizes and elides a number of aspects by focusing on a particular subset of elements, thus pushing the rest to the background.[45] For verse, the multisensory contexts of a performance, featuring song, music, and dance, are stripped away, turning it into a text-based phenomenon. The pieces under discussion below, while paying homage to performance in their frames, focus predominantly on the who of the performance and devote most of the text on the words of the pieces.

2) As I show below, the focus on the who of the performance indicates a move away from a situation wherein claims of authorship—in the sense of first composition and first performance, whether historically accurate or not—was generally left unspecified.[46] In the collections, more attention is given to the often-imagined historical circumstances of verse composition and performance. Such narratives give color to the Warring States idea that verse speaks to the character of the author and the times that produced the piece (*shi yan zhi* 詩言志).[47] In examples such as the *Qi ye*, we will see that it also opens the way for a focus on the literariness of the act of creation. Just as editorship was often attributed to Confucius, so literary virtuosity was often bestowed on the Duke of Zhou.

3) Finally, perceptions of genre are shaped and developed in the collections under discussion. The framing narratives describe the individual pieces variously as songs, hymns of praise, and cautioning admonitions. These pieces would in other discussions be framed as belonging to the *shi* genre, but here they are still designated as performance-context bound functional categories of text production. From a formal perspective, a process only hinted at for the former collections is now visible. Verse of similar wording and structure is collected on the same manuscript to the point of modelling the characteristics of genre. In the following section I suggest how collecting similar materials expedited their teaching and distribution in sets, which in turn could reinforce

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45   For theoretical statements, see Olson 1994; for anthropological data, see Finnegan 1988.
46   For an overview of early authorship in East Asia, see Schwermann and Steineck 2014.
47   See Van Zoeren 1991 and Saussy 1993.

genre markers such as the tetrasyllabic line, rhyme patterns, and shared diction. In short, these collections could help to enable an increase in the harmonization of verse into formally recognizable genres.

2.1   *Grouping by Genre: The* Zhougong zhi qin wu

The *Zhougong zhi qin wu* is a titled collection of ten pieces which are similar in style, form, and content to the hymns in the "Zhou Song" 周頌 section of the *Shijing*.[48] The second piece in the collection bears close similarities to the transmitted ode "Jing zhi" 敬之 from this section and may be seen as a different instantiation of the same piece.[49] As a result, much of the scholarship on this manuscript has focused on its place in the transmission of the ode "Jing zhi," often with the aim of proving the Western Zhou origins of the poem.[50] In my understanding, neither its Warring States manuscript rendition nor the presence of Western Zhou figures in its few lines of framing narrative prove any such origins. It only proves that by the Warring States period, certain communities presented, and possibly understood, the verse in this way. More productively, the manuscript has been studied together with the *Qi ye* to examine idealized ritual practices of verse exchange.[51] As I tabulate below (table 1), there is some evidence for various rhythmic patterns among the ten songs collected on the manuscript, and the pieces might have been performed to different tunes.

When this collection is approached from the angle of genre it becomes clear that poetically, there is nothing that sets the "Jing zhi" apart from the others in the collection, causing us to question the primacy generally given to it. The collection opens with a framing formula focusing on the Duke of Zhou performing what the text calls "Cautioning Admonitions to the Many Officers," stressing the act of a nine-round performance and dance to the zither:

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48   See Li Xueqin 2012: 8–11 (original size images) and 132–143 (transcription). The manuscript contains 17 slips, but the top half of slip 15 and bottom 3/4 of slip 17 are broken off. The last slip end is left blank and has a hook-shaped mark. The backs of the slips are numbered. The designation of the manuscript is written on the top of the verso of slip 1. It shares material features and script with the *Ruiliang fu bi*; which originally came with the designation "The Duke of Zhou's Hymned Intent (or: Song?)" 周公之頌志（詩?）, this was later scraped off. The manuscript features reduplication marks and has punctuation before the start of a new song. The slips are fastened with three ropes on the very top, bottom and middle, there is minimal overlap of the ropes with the writing.

49   Note that the pieces in this collection are much cleaner and more evenly structured than those in the *Shijing*; see Li Shoukui 2012, and Shen Pei 2015.

50   See, for example, Li Xueqin 2013: 58–59.

51   Chen Zhi 2015.

(1) 周公作多士儆毖，琴舞九遂。[52]

The Duke of Zhou performed[53] Cautioning Admonitions to the Many
Officers, and danced to the zither for nine rounds.

元納啟曰:
無悔享君，
罔墜其考。[54]
享惟慆帀![55]
考惟型帀!

The opening of his first contribution went:
Feast your lord without laxity,
Do not fall short of his ancestors.
Let feasting him be your pleasure!
Let his ancestors be your model!

The basic framing formula is immediately reminiscent of the "prefaces" *xu* 序
seen in both the *Shu-* and *Shijing* where a foundational figure is presented in
an act of text-creation, often, as here, with a rudimentary inclusion of audi-
ence and the circumstance of performance. These formulae are standard
means of talking about composition and performance. This in itself suggests
that recurring elements such as the Duke of Zhou as a figure of textual produc-
tion or the key verb *zuo* 作, "to make, compose, or perform," should be read as
tropes rather than hard evidence for the actual composition of a piece by the
Duke of Zhou. The nine verses that follow are furthermore divided by perfor-
mance category, each piece has a marked opening (*qi* 啟) and ending section
(*luan* 亂). The performative elements of the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* should not
be overplayed, however. The contextualization is rudimentary at best, and not

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52   Li Xueqin (2012: 135, n.2), glosses *sui* 遂 as a "round" *zhong* 終, i.e., a measure word for
      songs. The musicologist Fang Jianjun 2014a, understands it to refer to dancing while car-
      rying the instrument, and he shows other sources where other instruments like flutes are
      held in the hand while dancing, but he notes the problem of holding the large *qin* (which
      probably was placed flat on a stand) while dancing, and suggests that it was likely more an
      accompaniment. To promote legibility, I only add notes where I deviate from the editors.
53   Because of the focus on performative elements in the formula, I read it as "perform," bear-
      ing in mind that any performance in itself is an act of (re-)composition.
54   Here and in the next line I follow Li Shoukui 2012 in reading as *kao* 考 instead of loaning
      for *xiao* 孝.
55   I understand *za* 帀 here as a sentence final exclamatory particle, similar to the use of *si* 思
      in the received "Hymns of Zhou."

much space or specificity is given to the performance other than referring to categories understood by the audience. Other texts such as the *Qi ye* discussed below present much fuller descriptions of performative dimensions.

Judging from the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* as a whole, the section detailing the Duke's performance is incomplete in that it only presents the opening section of one verse, rather than the nine pieces promised in the frame. This might reflect a number of scenarios of textual production and transmission.[56] The second section of the text appears to be a fully rounded composition. The same formula is repeated with minor variation, but here King Cheng is performing instead (possibly in response to the Duke's performance) and no audience is specified:

(2) 成王作儆毖，琴舞九遂。

King Cheng performed Cautioning Admonitions, and danced to the zither for nine rounds.

What follows is the first full verse of the text, containing both an opening and ending section. Because there is a transmitted counterpart in the "Hymns of Zhou" 周頌 section of the *Shijing*, questions of authorship and differences with the received text have been the focus of the scholarship on this text. Kern in earlier work has extensively discussed the patterns of variation between the received and discovered odes.[57] Variations are highlighted in bold:[58]

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56 Li Shoukui (2012: 72) argues that the text "originally" contained eight more pieces. Li Xueqin (2013) deals with this problem by arguing that the total of ten songs can be equally divided between Duke and Kind on the basis of content. This latter option is even harder to defend and requires a great deal of speculation in order to work. There are many possible explanations to this problem, one other possibility being a reframing of the text so as to foreground the role of the Duke of Zhou in the collection or to reinforce his position as a composer *cum* performer of verse (for which see also the **Jinteng* 金縢 and the *Qi ye* for instance). This latter option is favored by the title bestowed on the manuscript in addition to the fact that the physically related (possibly forming one larger-) manuscript **Ruiliang fu bi* was likewise originally titled with reference to the Duke.

57 Kern 2005; on this particular piece and arguments that it is less strictly organized than its transmitted counterpart, see Kern 2015: 44.

58 It should be noted, however, that in any case the variation between the versions suggests that the problem of original authorship is moot, and that instead the practice of transmission shown in variation suggests a continuous re-appreciation and re-forming of the pieces under discussion.

元納啟曰:

The opening of his first contribution went:

敬=之=（敬之敬之），	敬之敬之，
天惟顯帀，	天**維**顯**思**。
文非易帀，	**命不易哉**，
毋曰高=（高高）在上，	**無**曰高高在上。
陟降其事，	陟降**厥士**，
俾[59]監 (3) 在茲。	**曰**監在茲。

Revere it revere it!
Heaven is brightly manifest,
and its patterns will not change.
Do not say it is so high above,
It ascends and descends about our duties,
Watching us down here below.

亂[60]曰:	
遹我夙夜不逸 ，[61]	**維予小子**，
敬之，	**不聰**敬止。
日就月將，	日就月將，
教其光明。	**學有緝熙**于光明。
弼持其有肩，	**佛時仔**肩，
視[62]告余顯德之行。	**示我**顯德行。

The ending went:
Lo! Day and night I am not lacking,
Revere it![63]
Daily I draw near and monthly I strive,

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59 Following Shen Pei 2015.
60 The ending section shows how the subject, in this case King Cheng, makes a case for him being a worthy subject and follower of the model laid out in the opening section; see also Li Shoukui 2012: 11–12.
61 Here I follow Li Xueqin (2012: 136, n.15) and punctuate in line with *su ye bu xie* 夙夜不解 on slip 6. Grammatically, it is a viable option, and I see no reason to favor the neater, four graphs per line arrangement in the transmitted version, which might equally have been "cleaned up" to accord to the later idealization of the tetrasyllabic form of the *Shi*.
62 Li Xueqin (2012: 136, n.19) adds a final step by attempting to harmonize *shi* 視 to *shi* 示 in the transmitted version. I do not concur.
63 I understand the object of address here and below to be heaven.

and emulate its bright splendor.
I rely on its support,
To show and proclaim to me the conduct of bright virtue.

This is followed by eight more generic pieces, each with a numbered opening and ending formula, followed by text terminator mark.

The first verse sets the tone of the remaining eight pieces in this section. Key elements, using highly similar vocabulary and phrasing, reappear throughout the remainder of the section. For example, there is a strong emphasis on the need for the young King Cheng (*ruzi wang* 孺子王, *yu yiren* 余一人, *chongren* 沖人) to model (*xing* 型) himself after his ancestors, to continue the House of Zhou's rule without deviating (*bu yi* 不易, *wang zhui* 罔墜) from the model, and to do so diligently, day and night (*suye buxie* 夙夜不懈, *buyu* 不豫, *zizi* 孜孜, *mao* 懋), in a respectful and careful manner (*shen* 慎, *jing* 敬). Doing so will make bright (*guang* 光, *ming* 明) his accomplishments so that they may be visible (*xian* 顯) to his ancestors when they come down from heaven to inspect and guard over him (*shangxia* 上下, *bao jian* 保監). Compare, for example, the third verse in the section, here with similarities in theme and phrasing marked in bold:

三啟曰：
德元惟何？曰淵亦懿。▬
嚴余不懈，業業畏 (6) 忌，不易威儀，▬
在言惟克，**敬之！**▬

The opening of the third went:
What should the primal virtue be? Deep and esteemed.
I am rigorous and do not slack, apprehensive and restrained, and do not change my dignified manner.
I only say that which I can do, **respect it!**

亂曰：
非天歆德，繄莫肯造之，▬
夙夜不懈，懋敷其有悅，▬
裕其(7) 文人，**不逸監余。**▬

The ending went:
If not the virtue delighted in by heaven, oh then it won't come down for it.
Unrelenting, day and night, I endeavor to spread the virtue it delights in.
I hope that my cultivated ancestors **do not refrain from watching over me.**

The use of similar theme and language creates a high degree of unity across the verses. The only reason for "Jing zhi" to stand out in this particular collection is a question of material organization: it is the first of King Cheng's nine verses in the section, and, unlike the pieces that follow, does not contain punctuation marks. The latter fact might suggest that the verse was so well-known that it did not require further disambiguation through the use of punctuation, but given the state of the manuscript (the Duke of Zhou's missing verses), it might also be a result of contingencies in the production of the manuscript.

The similarity across the individual pieces becomes even clearer when looking at their rhythmic patterns. As the musicologist Fang Jianjun has noted, each has a distinct rhythmic pattern and likely all were set to a different tune. The specification of "nine rounds" is best understood as designating nine different tunes.[64] Nonetheless, the pattern of differentiation in the rhythm of the opening and closing section is quite similar across the pieces. In each, the opening of the verse predominantly adopts a tetra- or pentasyllabic pattern, whereas the ending generally shows more variation:

TABLE 1   Number of Graphs per Line in *Zhougong zhi qin wu*

ZG1	QI	LUAN
	4-4-4-4	-
CW1	4-4-4-5-4-4	6/4-2/4ᵃ-4-4-5-7
2	5-4-5-5-4	4-3-4-4-5-2
3	4-4-4-4-4-4-2	4-5-4-5-4-4
4	5-5-4-5-5-4	4-4-5-5-6-3
5	2-4-4-4-4-5	5-6-5-4-4
6	4-4-4-4-5	5-4-4-2-5-4-3-6
7	3-4-5-4-4	5-5-4-3-4-4-5
8	5-5-4-4-4-5	5-4-x-4-4
9	2-4-4-4-4-4	4-4-4-4-4

Note: Expressions such as *wuhu* 嗚呼 and *jing zhi* 敬之 are counted as one line.

a   Note that these measurements depend on the reconstruction, if following Li Shoukui 2012, the pattern is 6–2; if harmonizing with the received text it would be 4–4 and thus 'neater'.

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64   Fang Jianjun (2014a: 8–9) notes the differences in number of graphs spread out across the pieces, he argues that this is a result of differences in rhythm and tune for each of the pieces. Note that the number nine is here likely a trope as well suggesting completeness.

While the rhythm would differentiate the pieces in performance, it is also clear that they share a similar type of rhythm (we do not find an opening with only two lines, or an ending where every line has three beats, for instance). Taken together, then, the pieces show generic similarity, leaving room for individual variation. All this would supposedly be clear from performing the pieces, since, other than the limited contextualization of the text as a whole, there is little else for a recipient to work with.

Linguistically, the pieces can likewise be classified as belonging to the same genre. They share common lines, have a common vocabulary, and develop similar themes, like subsets in the "Hymns of Zhou" also drawing on a similar repertoire. It makes sense to understand them together as forming a subgenre hidden under the larger umbrella of "Hymns."[65] Even though the first—and through its prime position, highlighted—verse of King Cheng's performance has a counterpart in the *Shijing*, it shares its thematic, formal, and stylistic characteristics with the other pieces and does not stand out in terms of its literary characteristics.[66] That is to say, from a literary perspective it would not have made much of a difference if, rather than the counterpart to "Jingzhi," the third or the fourth piece were included in the *Shijing* instead.[67] Its prime place in this collection may have actually increased its chances for inclusion in later collections, since pieces at the beginning of collections are generally better remembered, and therefore quoted more often.[68] It goes without saying that the reverse also holds, and that the piece could likewise have been included in this and other collections exactly because of its popularity.

The genericity of the pieces is reinforced by the use of similar formulae for both the Duke's and the King's pieces, and an absence of titles for the individual pieces. Instead of creative, individualized production, this text is framed as the execution of generic, and thus to a degree, interchangeable parts of a prescribed performance. As such, the designation "Cautioning Admonitions" in the frame should not be understood as the title of an individual piece, but as a generic label covering all the pieces that followed; it is again suggestive of a recognizable type of performance rather than the creation of individually identifiable pieces. Rather than *Shi*, individually titled and imbued with narratives explaining the specifics of their creation, it seems likely that to a Warring States audience, the ten pieces in the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* were all considered

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65   See the excellent discussion in Gu Shikao 2014; see also references in Kern 2015: 67.

66   Shen Pei 2015.

67   Ideological concerns or specific traditions of transmission could of course have accounted for this particular inclusion over the others.

68   A case in point is "Guan Ju" which occupies prime position both in the *Kongzi shi lun* and the *Mao shi*, and features more extensive commentary, and thus engagement, in both.

to be recognizable forms of a (sub-)genre of "Cautioning Admonitions."[69] As such, *pace* claims made by Li Xueqin among others who saw this text as evidence for the Duke's and the King's hand in the creation of early verse, and unlike the *Qi ye* analyzed below, this text does not present a narrative of the creation of individual songs such as "Jing zhi."[70] Rather it reflects one of those contingent acts of transmission and collection of generic pieces, all the while increasing the chances for (part of) the collection to be re-used, reinterpreted, and re-collected. Whether the songs were collected in order to provide a written selection of pieces suitable for performance, as merely a way of grouping similar pieces together, or for other reasons is unclear from the text.[71] Whatever the degree of similarity these songs had to begin with, the act of collecting these pieces together served as one of the means in which such generic similarity became increasingly articulate. The act of collection set them apart, and, thus encountered as a set, would reinforce notions of genre affiliation and self-similarity. In the larger discussion of repertoires, whether as lived tradition (Kern), an epic "Weniad" (C.H. Wang), or other understandings of sets of songs performed for the ancestral sacrifice (Fu Sinian, Cook), and whether transmitted orally or in writing, the collection would have operated as a catalyst. The collection provided an additional means of access to such materials *as sets* and reified their similarities organized under genre labels. Such a lived tradition of song (re-)production therefore did not stop with writing or collecting. Instead, the processes that informed their self-similarity (i.e., harmonization) would be further reinforced by their collection and reception in sets.

2.2   *Performing Authorship: The* Qi ye

The *Qi ye*'s presentation of genericity and performance differs sharply from that seen in the *Zhougong zhi qin wu*.[72] It features an elaborate framing

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69   Important here are considerations in Kern (2015: 68) which argues for a model of composition based on repertoires that did not stop at some point during the Western Zhou but continued on creating variant renditions in a lived tradition. Kern describes the character of this variance: "the two 'Xi shuai' texts are related through their overall theme, their images, and circumscribed sets of expressions that clearly distinguish them from any other poems: they are mutually independent instantiations of a shared repertoire, or 'poetic material'" (idem, p. 57).

70   Li Xueqin 2012: 134, n.1; compare Li Shoukui 2012: 6–7.

71   Gu Shikao (2018: 312–13) suggests that these similarities may have been the result of Musical Officers (*le guan* 樂官) preparing occasional selections of originally distinct songs for specific offering rituals and harmonizing the songs in these selections to form a consistent set.

72   Li Xueqin 2011: 10–13 (images), 149–156 (transcription). The manuscript consists of 14 slips, 45 cm in length (slips 9–11, and 13–14 are damaged). The slips contain 27–31 graphs each,

narrative detailing an idealized ritual exchange of drink and verse imagined to have occurred after the conquest of Qi in the eighth year of King Wu's reign.[73] It culminates in a scene of authorship for a single verse that decisively sets it apart from its more generic counterparts.[74]

The first line of the opening frame of the *Qi ye* resembles the commentarial lines heading *Shu* type texts.[75] In what follows, the whole foundational cast of the early Western Zhou is presented, and each figure is given a distinct role within the performance of the ritual. These range from host, guest, and assistant, to a monitor of correct procedure. This list is interspersed by punctuation marks on the manuscript and creates an image of idealized ritual completeness and order in the foundational period.[76] Together with the frame, this section takes up about a fourth of the text as a whole:

(1) 武王八年，征伐耆，大戡之。還，乃飲至于文太室。▄[77]

In the eighth year of King Wu, we attacked Qi and greatly subjugated it. On return, we then conducted the Presentation of Drink [ceremony] in the Grand Chamber of [King] Wen.[78]

畢公高爲客，（▄?[79]）召公保奭爲 (2) 介，▄ 周公叔旦爲主，▄ 辛公泉甲爲位 ,[80]作策逸爲東堂之客，▄ 呂尚父命爲(3)司正，▄ 監飲酒。

Duke Gao of Bi served as Guest; the Protector Shi, Duke of Shao served as Ritual Assistant; Duke Shudan of Zhou served as Host; Duke Quanjia of

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evenly spaced over the slips in a clear hand. Besides reduplication marks, especially the narrative sections of the text feature punctuation. The slips were originally bound by three strings, on the very top and bottom and in the middle, and may have been bound before writing. The backs of the slips are numbered 1–14 and contain black preparation lines, and slip 14 contains the title on the middle of the slip.

73 Some, such as Li Xueqin 2009, have understood this text as providing a historically accurate account of the creation of the poems included within, but as I argued for the *Zhougong zhi qin wu*, I do not think there is any basis for such a view.

74 I borrow the term "scene of authorship" from Beecroft 2010: 1–4.

75 Noteworthy here are the dating formula using the year of the King's reign, and the use of a short characterization of events that lead to the text; see Grebnev 2017.

76 Compare also similar catalogues seen in the *Shangshu* 尚書, "Gu Ming" 顧命, for instance; see Meyer 2017.

77 The edition follows the emendations by FDDSH 2011a, except where noted.

78 Li Xueqin (2011: 151) suggests that this is the central temple for ancestor King Wen, formally called the "clear temple" *qing miao* 清廟.

79 Punctuation seems to be present but is not clear on the photographs.

80 No punctuation visible but it falls at the binding rope position.

Xin served as Seater; Scribe Yi served as the Guest of the Eastern Hall;[81]
Lü Shangfu was mandated as the Officer of Correct (Procedure), oversee-
ing the drinking of beer.

Within this frame of reference, we encounter a ceremonial exchange of drink
and four songs suited to the occasion of post-battle celebration:

王舉爵酬畢公，作歌一終曰：《樂樂旨酒》：
樂樂旨酒，宴以二公；
絍（任）[82]㠯（夷）[83]兄弟，(4) 庶民和同。
方狀方武，穆穆克邦；
嘉爵速飲，後爵乃從。

The king raised his cup to toast Duke Bi, and performed one[84] song called:
"The Pleasures of Good Beer":

The pleasures of good beer, to feast you two Dukes;
Relying on you joyful brothers, all the people are compliant and in
accordance.
Both sturdy and martial, you reverently shoulder the state.
Speedily drink this fine cup, there are more to follow up.

The exchange is highly self-referential. After "The Pleasures of Good Beer" sets
the tone of the exchange, two more songs (*ge* 歌), "Light chariot" 輶乘 and
"Strong and Powerful" 贔贔, are presented to pay further homage to the mar-
tial prowess of the Duke of Zhou and Duke Bi respectively. Each song con-
cludes with the exhortation to drink. As such, the collection appears carefully
crafted to "fit the occasion" that the frame presented.[85] These first three songs
are of even length and share rhyme patterns and diction. In this sense they
are generic. It is with the contributions of the Duke of Zhou that the narrative
takes a turn. The final lines of the third piece turn the exhortation to drink into
a humorous warning against the expected hangover:

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81   There is some question whether to understand this as the Eastern Hall or a small annex to
      the main hall; see Li Xueqin 2011: 152.
82   I follow Chen Minzhen 2011: 35–36.
83   Chen Minzhen (2011: 36) suggests reading this graph as *yi* 夷, since reading as *ren* 仁 is
      unattested in Chu manuscripts.
84   Fang Jianjun (2014b) argues that *zhong* is a musical unit and refers to a single tune.
85   For an excellent discussion of this generic presentation and purportedly *in situ* composi-
      tion of situational poetry well into the Tang, see Nugent 2011.

既醉又侑，明日勿慆!⁸⁶

Already inebriated and yet I pressure you to drink one more, do not be idle tomorrow!

The Duke, using his prerogative as host, proceeds to praise the king in a different genre and changes the tenor from convivial drinking songs to a more appropriate "hymn of praise" (*zhuyong* 祝誦), "Bright is the Lord on High" 明明上帝. The piece ritually recognizes and reaffirms the status of King Wu as a rightful heir of the Lord on High 上帝. The shift in genre is explicitly named and is reflected in the archaic diction of the verse reminiscent of the "Hymns" and the proclamations (*gao* 誥).⁸⁷ It is also the first of the pieces to be set in a *-aŋ rhyme (陽部), itself often used in ritual and archaized speech.⁸⁸ This code-shifting, in addition to the ritual prerogative of praising the king, sets the Duke apart both in his ritual and literary mastery of the whole proceedings. The showcasing of the Duke's mastery does not end there, however. In the following and final song, he subverts his own ritual mastery and presents the literary apotheosis of the text as a whole, spanning the entire final third of the text:

周公秉爵未飲，蟋蟀(10)趯陞于〔堂，周〕⁸⁹公作歌一終曰:《蟋蟀》:
蟋蟀在堂，役車其行；
今夫君子，丕喜丕樂；
夫日 (11) □□，□□□忘 ;⁹⁰
毋已大樂，則終以康康；
樂而毋荒，是惟良士之方方。⁹¹

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86 Li Xueqin (2011: 154) reads this in line with the *Mao* understanding of "Xishuai" where *tao* 慆 is understood as "transgression" *guo* 過. The exact meaning here is disputed. I read it in the background of the convivial peer-pressure expressed in the previous line.

87 Note the second line for instance: "Glorious in your arrival, savoring the scent of offered goods" (丕顯來格，歆厥禋盟).

88 See Krijgsman 2021, and the references therein.

89 A small section of the bamboo is missing here.

90 In this and following sections I will not attempt to reconstruct missing sections or suggest readings for graphs that stand alone in a sentence.

91 The sentence final words in these last two lines were marked with a reduplication mark. Li Xueqin, ed. (2011: 154) notes that this use of the reduplicative is not common, and suggests that its occurrence here is to indicate repetition of the whole line, Liu Yun, in response to FDDSH 2011a, argues it might be a mark signaling the end of a stanza. I see no reason to amend so as to harmonize to the received version, rather, this reduplication might reflect a particular rhythmic distinction, serving the double purpose of both rhythmically and, through the punctuation, visually, dividing the verse into stanzas.

The Duke of Zhou grasped his cup but had not yet drunk when a cricket jumped up into the hall, [at which] the Duke of Zhou composed a song called "Cricket":

The cricket is in the hall, its movement like a war-chariot;
Oh, now my lords, you are greatly happy and greatly joyous,
For the sun ... , ... lost;
Do not be excessively joyous, then you will remain vigorous till the end, joy without abandon; this is the straightness of good ministers.[92]

Two more stanzas follow.

Instead of following ritual prescription and finishing his toast to the King, the Duke proceeds to demonstrate his literary talent by extemporizing a verse on the sudden appearance of the cricket. Where the preceding pieces were framed as generic and ritually proper, this piece is presented as an act of creation in performance in the frame. The difference between the pieces is also highlighted by the substantial increase in length and complexity of the piece performed.

From frequent quotations and references in Warring States unearthed and transmitted texts, it is clear that "Xishuai" was a commonly known piece and was likely in wide circulation at the time this manuscript was made.[93] The rendition seen in the *Qi ye* features a number of differences to the transmitted version (Mao 114) in wording, order, line length, and especially the use of double rhyme words at the end of every stanza. In general, the transmitted version is more ordered and regulated in terms of its rhyme and line lengths, suggesting that the form of its verse was standardized in the process of canonization.

The *Qi ye* provides a narrative imagining the possible origins of the verse using a skillful performance of the notion of "evocation" (*xing* 興) itself. It literally uses the emergence of the cricket to integrate it within the performance context. The piece features a number of admonitions from the Duke to his fellow officials, a role given to the Duke in the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* and the *Shangshu* Harangue *Duoshi* 多士 as well.[94] The Duke is acting in character by

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92   Compare the edition and translation in Kern 2015: 42–43.

93   See Li Rui 2014, who compares it to the transmitted version. Whether or not this rendition is in some way ancestral to the transmitted version is moot. Evidence of inter-rhyming practices suggest that the bamboo version accords with rhyme distinctions made during the Warring States period, if for a moment we sideline the irresolvable debate on the time of origin and first composition of the piece, this indicates that this manifestation of the piece was a product of the Warring States.

94   See Gentz 2017.

standing out through his literary acumen and admonishing his fellows, he is presented as skilled enough to break both ritual and generic convention. In this frame of reference, the verse is given biographical depth, and through its interpretive context gains in meaning.

The structure of the text makes such a break readily apparent. In terms of length, over a fourth sets up the idealized ritual order. This section is further amplified by the generic and occasional nature of the verses that follow. It is because the concluding third of the text is devoted to the Duke's "cricket" that the whole ritualized presentation of verse is subverted and finds its apotheosis in an individualized act of creation in performance. The other pieces and characters merely operate as a foil of convention for the Duke to break.

In my reading of the text, the *Qi ye* provides one of the earliest reflections on extemporization in early China.[95] The collection presents the Duke of Zhou as an author with the ability to create in performance.[96] This is relevant for a number of reasons. First, acts of authorship in ancient cultures are hard to pin down, let alone how they were conceptualized. They range along a spectrum of possible configurations, including but not limited to, single, collective, attributed or conventional authorship, and take form as variedly as composition, performance, the writing of a text, or some combination of these.[97] Since many author figures are constructed as such by writers and audiences from later periods operating under a different horizon of expectations, we are hard-pressed to historically verify and conceptualize many early claims of authorship, and may even have to approach them from another non-positivist perspective entirely. This is especially true because much discussion still focuses on the classic questions: who wrote what, when, and why?

Instead, following Foucault, we should focus on the type of functions expressed in claims of authorship,[98] revealing the ways in which authorship is represented in early texts. Whether or not they reflect actual instances of

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95   Beecroft 2010: 3 notes the importance of "authorship in performance and *as* performance" in generating the context for determining meaning in poetry. In doing so, he picks up a long standing discussion that seeks to resituate authorship alongside and intertwined with, performance, in much the same way we see in this text. For an early discussion see especially Finnegan 1988: 272–306.

96   See Kern 2017 on the literary form of *Shangshu* speeches and the way in which characters and audience are constructed; Schaberg 1999 on the trope of wronged authorship; Vankeerberghen 2010 on the construction of authorship in the *Shiji*; Nylan (2011: 38) and Kern 2022 on how the *Shiji* constructs Qu Yuan 屈原 as an author; and Krijgsman (2019: 103–104) and especially Nylan 2009 on the Duke of Zhou as an author.

97   For an overview see for example Schwermann and Steineck, eds. 2014.

98   Foucault 1977.

historical authorship is beside the point.[99] I do not believe the Duke of Zhou either composed or performed this piece at Qi, but that is not relevant for understanding how authorship was perceived. The focus should be on how Warring States contemporaries could imagine an act of text formation to potentially take place.[100] Seen in this way, the *Qi ye* is unique in *presenting* the Duke's performance as spur of the moment creation.[101] Such a conceptualization of authorship is qualitatively different from that seen in the "Minor" and "Major Elegantiae," which are more similar to Western Zhou practices of dedicating inscriptions.[102]

I would argue that this is not what some chose to call "true authorship" in the modern sense of the word,[103] because the attribution here is not personal but rather to a cultural icon, and therefore notions of accountability and reliability are not projected on an individual but rather on a paragon. What interests me here instead is that the use of generic verse in a collection opens up a space in which shifts in genre and a dramatized imagination of the Duke of Zhou's authorship can be inscribed. The act of collecting entails collocation, which in turn highlights differences and similarities, whether on the level of genre, or in the framing of the content. It invites the collector to render such characteristics explicit through comments, labels, and narrative, which in turn provide a powerful force in steering the interpretations of the genre, especially if the materials were used in teaching settings.

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99   As such I take issue with claims that there was no real authorship in premodern societies. "Real" authorship is a cultural construct of text production that is constantly evolving, with no end-point or ideal type, and we should not take our understanding of authorship (if there is a single one) as somehow more real or relevant.

100   Compare the discussion in Beecroft 2010: 1–4.

101   Whether or not actual production and reproduction of verse, including this one, occurred through repertoires (Kern 2015) or relied heavily on writing (Shaughnessy 2015), or, as is likely, featured a broad and complex spectrum comprised of a variety of modes of engagement, is beside the point. The question is how this particular text presents the production of this particular instantiation of a verse. That it does so through a culture hero should suggest, almost by definition, that we are discussing an *imagined* and retrojected "historical first" or innovation, i.e., an act of authorship.

102   That is to say, as a function of ancestral sacrifice, wherein the dedication of a piece inscribes the patron ritually as a worthy member of his lineage community' see Kern 2009. Compare, for example, the dedication formula in "Jienan shan" 節南山 (Lofty Is That Southern Hill; Mao no. 191): "Father Jia made this hymn" 家父作誦, and the two Ji Fu 吉甫 examples in "Song gao" 嵩高 (Grandly Lofty; Mao no. 259) and "Zheng min" 烝民 (Multitudes of people; Mao no. 260). See also the verse collection *Ruiliang fu bi*, in Li Xueqin 2012: 144–55.

103   Nylan (2001: 38) relates the development of authorship to the establishment of the imperial library, and places it in the context of a self-reflexivity of reading and writing.

In collections of similar pieces, despite gross commonalities in literary form, genre designations do not necessarily reflect a judgment on the formal properties of the text. As Schaberg has shown, many of these designations shift when the pieces are framed in a different context.[104] Pieces such as "Jingzhi" and "Xishuai" would be relabeled in collections such as the *Mao Odes* as "Hymns" and "Airs" respectively. The genre designations used in the texts under discussion were intimately related to the imagined performance contexts as they are presented in their respective frames. They are referred to and brought up for the audience to imagine, rather than recording something actually there or representing a historical event. They present a textual event resulting from the juxtaposition of verse in the collection.

3   *Shi* as a Commented Collection

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I examine how contemporary verse commentary reflects shifts in Warring States perceptions of verse. Commentarial texts increasingly classified verse as part of a stable genre of *shi* that was part of a subdivided collection. Where the small-scale collections such as the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* or *Qi ye* presented verse as a context-bound phenomenon and sought to reimagine in written form the performative contexts from which the genre had grown, the commentarial texts increasingly approached verse as a written phenomenon that could be mined for the meaning of its words. This presentation of the genre matches the way verse is presented in collections such as those from Anhui University and Fuyang, suggesting that changes in the way verse was collected were accompanied by a shift in the perception of the genre.

Verse presented as belonging to the genera of *shi* was juxtaposed with other genre traditions such as the *shu* 書 and *li* 禮. Verse was conceptually separated from the performative, in particular music and dance, reinforcing the late Warring States trend towards the de-ritualization of verse. Concomitantly, the appreciation of verse gradually turns away from the ritual and the aesthetic, and is probed for the meaning of its words. Rather than context-bound song, verse is more and more seen as written poetry. The meaning of these poems was encapsulated in the wording and could be explained through teaching and commentary by editors and teachers.

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104   Schaberg 1999: 325.

3.1　　*The Shifting Label*

In the small-scale collections above, verse is often labeled in terms of functional categories such as "admonitions" or "hymns of praise." Nevertheless, many texts of purported early origins such as the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Mozi* refer to verse generically as *shi* 詩. The same piece may be labelled *ge* 歌 in one source, and *shi* in another, suggesting that the categories themselves were in flux and that their referent was not fixed.[105] Remembered in the cultural memory of the Warring States, a line of a well-known piece did not require the specification of title or how to interpret it. The predominance of references to the tradition over other possible candidates such as the *Shu* is staggering, hence reinforcing the *Shi*'s status as the prime seat of reference for authoritative statements.

In the general commentarial frameworks that start to appear in sources of the mid to late Warring States period, however, the term *Shi* is presented in juxtaposition and in relation to other traditions, such as the *Shu*, *Yi*, *Li*, and *Yue*, and less so, the *Chunqiu*. In these sources, *Shi* is presented as a specific genre that can be related to other genres of similar status. The following list preserved in the Guodian *Yucong 1 is a case in point:

> (36) 易所以會天道人道 (37) 也。–[106]
> (38) 詩所以會古今之志[107] (39) 也者。–
> (40) 春秋所以會古今之 (41) 事也。–
> (xx) [書所以會古今之識][108] (44) 者也。–
> (42) 禮，交之行述也。–
> (43) 樂，或生或教者也。–[109]

> The *Yi* are that which bring together the ways of heaven and men.
> The *Shi* are that which bring together the intent of the past and present.

105　　Schaberg 1999: 309.

106　　The Guodian corpus contains similar lists in *Xing zi ming chu, slips 12–18 and *Liu de 六德, slips 24–25, for instance; Li Ling (2007: 217–19) discusses the ordering of the latter list. Goldin (2000: 121–23) argues that the lists already represent written traditions, but the evidence as it stands is not enough for such a conclusion.

107　　Cook (2012: 835, n.54) offers a range of opinions on the transcription and reading of this graph; I agree with Cook that it likely wrote *zhi* 志.

108　　It is very likely that there is a slip missing here before *zhe* 者 detailing the *shu* tradition; see Jingmenshi Bowuguan 1998: 200. I tentatively follow Tu Zongliu and Liu Zuxin (2001, 269), in their interpretation of how this lacuna should be filled. Though the first part of the construction seems stable enough (書所以會古今之), their choice for the penultimate graph for "understanding" (*shi* 識) is more problematic.

109　　Edition adapted from Jingmenshi Bowuguan 1998: 200; translation my own.

> The *Chunqiu* are that which bring together the deeds of the past and
>   present.
> [The *Shu* are that which bring together the understanding of past and
>   present.]
> Ritual is an exposition of behavior in interactions.
> Music is brought forth by some and taught by others.

In this list, the *Shi* are juxtaposed to other traditions that "bring together the
past and present" and the "ways of heaven and men." On the one hand, these
traditions, when taken as a set, are perceived as a complete corpus of knowl-
edge spanning the foundations of culture. Whether it be the "affairs," "intents,"
or "ways," taken together they represent the interrelated elements that make
up the historical consciousness, guidelines for conduct, social interaction,
and education. This notion of totality is an important claim with canonical
aspirations.[110] It however also implies that the *Shi* are not perceived as the pri-
mary form of reference. For Warring States authors, verse does not give privi-
leged access to the whole of culture, but only elucidates part of the picture.
Nevertheless, some overarching concerns were conceived to be part of all the
traditions. The **Liu de* 六德 from Guodian, for example, argues that the six
cardinal relations (六位: 夫婦，父子，君臣) can be found in each. After the
six virtues are paired with the six relations, the text continues:

> (20) ⋯ 既生畜之，(21) 又從而教誨之，謂之聖。聖，父德也。 ⋯ (23)
> 故夫夫，婦婦，父父，子子，君君，臣臣，六者各 (24) 行其職，讒
> 諂無由作也。觀諸詩、書則亦在矣，觀諸 (25) 禮、樂則亦在矣，觀
> 諸易、春秋則亦在矣。親此多也，欽此多 (26) [也]，美此多也，道御
> 止。|[111]

engendering and rearing them, and subsequently teaching and instruct-
ing them is what is called Sagacious. Sagacity is the virtue of the father. ...
This is why, when husband acts like husband, wife like wife, father like
father, son like son, ruler like ruler, and minister like minister, and when
these six all perform their roles, slander and flattery have no means to
arise. When you look for it in the *Shi* and *Shu*, it is also there; when you
look for it in the *Li* and *Yue*, it is also there; when you look for it in the *Yi*

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110   Henderson 1991.

111   Reconstruction from Li Ling 2007:170–71. Note that **Liu de* slip 9 also contains comments
        on teaching the people.

and *Chunqiu*, it is also there. Congeniality abounds here, respect abounds here, perfection abounds here, the Way's operation ends [in it].

The text needs to underscore that the six relations can be found in each of the traditions, suggesting that this was not taken for granted, and that a division of values was the more common interpretation.

In most cases, passages describing the traditions occur in an argument about teaching. The *Yucong* manuscripts, as I have argued in Chapter Two, were likely used in a teaching context.[112] Likewise, the *Liu de* passage is integrated in statements about education. A passage from the *Xing zi ming chu* describes a similar education setting for the sage, where the traditions are presented both as shared culture yet with specific ways of expressing this culture:

> 詩、書、禮、樂，其始出皆生 (16) 於人。詩有為，為之也；書有為，言之也；禮樂有為，舉之也。

> *Odes*, *Documents*, rites, and music—in every case their first appearance was brought forth by man. In the *Odes*, actions were acted out by them; in the *Documents*, actions were spoken out by them; in rites and music, actions were exalted by them.

The "human way" (*ren dao* 人道) brought up just before this passage, is exemplified through these four traditions, but each presents a different mode of paying homage to it. The variety in statements on the relation of *Shi* to culture and other genres reflects an emerging debate about the status, function, and delineation of the genre not seen before the Warring States. It is accompanied with changes in the *perception* of the material towards being situated in a stable, likely written, collection. Indeed, in Warring States texts statements appear on the *Shi* as a subdivided collection including variously the "Airs," "South [Airs]" 南, "Elegantiae," and the "Hymns,"[113] a proto-*Shijing* if you will, that could be quoted from and commented on. At the same time statements appear that describe Confucius organizing this collection. He is described as "ordering" (*zhi* 治) the *Shi* as part of the six arts (*liuyi* 六藝) in *Zhuangzi* "Tianxia" 天下, or together with the *Shu* in a fragment of the *Junzi wei li* 君子為禮 from the Shanghai Museum collection:

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112   See also Krijgsman 2014.

113   See overviews of quotations in Dong Zhi'an 1994: 35–45, 64–88.

(15) 禹治川, (16) ⋯ 子治詩書[114]

Yu ordered the rivers, the Master ordered the *Shi* and the *Shu*

Nylan is certainly correct in stating that this role of the Master only really took off during the early empires, and that it was during this period that the trope specifically started to denote the deletion of *Shi* from tradition to form an authoritative collection.[115] Nonetheless, the first indications for his involvement in shaping the collection already emerge during the mid-late Warring States period. With these additional elements, I would argue, the *Shi* are increasingly presented as a collection-based genre in written form.

The *Mozi* passage heading this chapter is traditionally considered one of the first instances to talk of a delineated corpus when it refers to the *Shi* as numbering three hundred, and which are strung, sung, and danced by the Ru, as are statements in the *Lunyu* which likewise make reference to a collection of three hundred *Shi*.[116] These passages of problematic dating have traditionally been understood as representing ideas current in the early Warring States. Judging from the above transmitted and excavated evidence, this development might have taken more concrete form or gained in broader currency during the mid-late Warring States period.

This is not a coincidence. When a body of tradition is increasingly considered as a genre tied to a "fixed" collection, including statements on its scope, arrangement, and division, it is common to give the responsibility of such emergent practices to culture heroes who by their authority and antiquity ratify such practices, a process that finds parallels in other early traditions such as the Hebrew Bible.[117]

3.2 *Verse and Performance Part Ways*

As summarized at the beginning of this chapter, verse was originally considered part of ritual performance inviting full-sensory experience. These performances were increasingly mimetically represented in the textual descriptions of the framing narratives surrounding many verse collections. At the same time, textual descriptions of performative elements were increasingly distinguished from the phenomenon of verse. Fu Sinian, C.H. Wang, and Shaughnessy among

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114   Ma Chengyuan, ed. 2005: 263–64.

115   Nylan 2001: 6.

116   See *Lunyu* 2/2. Note however that the content of both of these texts cannot be dated with accuracy.

117   For the processes underlying the formation of the Hebrew Bible see Carr 2005, and van der Toorn 2007.

others have argued that much of the material in the "Hymns" section of the *Shijing* was originally performed in sets.[118] Commonly cited examples are the *Dawu* 大武 performance and the *Shao* 韶 among others. While it is extremely difficult to reconstruct any "original" context of such materials, from the mid to late Warring States onwards, such set performances become a standard way to discuss music. Often, these discussions are placed close to, but separate from, discussions on verse. The **Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出, for example, provides a separate section describing the relation of sound, song, and music of the set performances immediately after its discussion of the *Shi*:

(23) ⋯ 凡聲其出於情也信，然後其入撥人之心也厚。
(24) 聞笑聲則鮮如也，斯喜。聞歌謠則舀如也，斯奮。聽琴瑟之聲
(25) 則悸如也，斯嘆。觀賚、武則齊如也，斯作。觀韶、夏則勉
如也，(26) 斯儉。詠思而動心，喟如也；其居次也久，其反善復
始也 (27) 慎，其出入也順，始其德也。鄭、衛之樂，則非其聲而從
之也。(28) 凡古樂隆心，益樂隆指；皆教其人者也。賚、武樂取，
韶、夏樂情。

In every case, sounds emanating from emotions[119] are trustworthy; when after that they enter and stimulate the heart of man, they become profound.

[Therefore,] to hear the sound of laughter is precious—and one rejoices. To hear the sound of chanted songs is highly gratifying—and one is elated. To listen to the sound of lute and zither is exciting—and one will sigh. [And likewise], to watch the [performance of the ritual dances] "Lai" and "Wu" [makes one] solemn—and one is stirred. To watch the [performance of the ritual dances] "Shao" and "Xia" is stimulating—and one is humbled. When moving, the heart is moved by giving voice to a longing—one falls to sighing. The stages of this process last a long time, and the ways in which this returns us to excellence and the start are a matter of care and attention. The way in which it emanates [from emotions] and enters [the heart] is smooth. First principles are its virtue. With the music of Zheng and Wei, you [ought to] disagree with their sounds and [yet] follow it. In every case, music of old exalts one's mind; beneficial music exalts one's ambitions. They are both a means to educating the people. The "Lai" and "Wu" music is that of grasping [ambitions]; the "Shao and "Xia" music is that of emotions.[120]

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118   Shaughnessy 1997: 186–187; Fu Sinian 2008; see also C.H. Wang 1974.

119   For a semantic analysis of *qing* 情, see Harbsmeier 2004.

120   Edition and translation modified from Meyer 2011: 316–17.

Similar discussions on music sets can be found across the literature of the late Warring States and early empires.[121] What they have in common is a focus on the antiquity of the music, the transforming influence of sound, and the didactic or pernicious results of exposure to music.[122] The singing and playing of music is highlighted rather than the words of the songs, and instead of providing a window into historical narrative or functioning as a repository of knowledge of the foundational age, the stress is on psychological and emotional responses. If my previous argument holds that verse was increasingly seen as a textual phenomenon part of a collection, it would seem that rather than eliminating the earlier performative and ritual functions of verse, the latter were instead transposed to the category of music. If, as many have argued, the "Lai" and the "Wu" were indeed performed using the words of the "Hymns of Zhou," the song and the poem, if you will, were increasingly conceptually differentiated and categorized under different labels by early commentators. In other words, an originally performance-based phenomenon was slowly being divided into a, for lack of a better term, poetic and a performative component. I do not think that these are absolute developments. Still, an overarching, albeit slow, trend towards the perception of verse as collected poetry as opposed to performed tradition can be discerned.

In the following and final section of this chapter, I examine interpretative and teaching practices that were instrumental in reinforcing the perception of verse as a textual collection, the words of which could be interpreted through commentary. I analyze the verse commentary *Kongzi shi lun* 孔子詩論 using the categories of analysis on teaching and organization practices provided in the contemporary *Xing zi ming chu* to show how the former could have been used as a teaching text and what that entailed for the perception of the genre.

4 Teaching Verse as Poetry: The *Kongzi shi lun* Read through the *Xing zi ming chu*

Ou Manjong in his analysis of *Shi* interpretation up to the *Mao Odes* makes the convincing argument that imperial modes of *Shi* commentary were indebted to pre-Han developments in using *Shi* references in argumentation. He argues that the attempt to connect lines of the *Shi* with philosophical arguments in texts such as the *Xunzi* for example gave rise to modes of interpretation on the level of word, theme, and imagery that would later be employed in the *Mao*

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121 See Dong Zhi'an 1994: 35–45, 64–88.
122 For studies on music in early China see, Cook 2020, 2004; Brindley 2012; von Falkenhausen 1993b; DeWoskin 1982.

commentaries.[123] I suggest that these nascent developments in *Shi* commentary focusing on verbal meanings were reinforced and increasingly formalized with the emergence of specialized commentarial and teaching texts in the late Warring States.

The **Kongzi shi lun* presents verse as part of a stable and subdivided collection.[124] In Staack's edition, the first eight slips deal with the "Airs" (called *bangfeng* 邦風 in the manuscript) and "Minor Elegantiae," followed by three slips dealing exclusively with the "Minor Elegantiae," four dealing with a combined discussion of the "Airs," "Major Elegantiae," and the "Hymns," including a digression on the latter, followed by four on the categories themselves and a final slip on the *Shi* in general.[125] Statements on individually titled pieces and categories are generally, but not always, followed with punctuation marks (_), and longer statements are sometimes interspersed with punctuation as well. Larger text dividing punctuation marks (■) close the sections discussing the "Airs," the discussion on the four categories, and a statement on royal virtue in the "Hymns." Because of the damaged and likely incomplete state of the manuscript it is unclear whether the other sections were similarly followed by a mark.

In this section, I analyze the sections of the **Kongzi shi lun* using categories of analysis provided in the **Xing zi ming chu*.[126] The **Xing zi ming chu* is a contemporary Chu textual witness, and therefore, the way it presents (idealized) understandings of how a sage was supposed to have organized and taught a body of knowledge ought to reflect Chu, and likely, Warring States practices,

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123   Ou Manjong 2001: 16–43.

124   Ma Chengyuan 2001: 13–41, (images), 121–68 (transcriptions). Its 31 slips are about 55.5 cm long, 0,6 cm wide and 0,11–0,13 cm thick, and they were bound together with three cords. For reconstructions, I rely on the edition provided in Staack 2010, which draws together the major scholarship and individual reconstructions up to 2008, most notably that of Li Xueqin 2002. Slips 2 to 7, which would have been positioned at the end of the manuscript and thus the first to have been visible on the scroll have the bottom and top ends scraped clear of writing and this suggests the manuscript was later modified to turn it into a burial object; see Staack (2010: 864–67) for a thorough discussion of the phenomenon. Staack further (p. 900) suggests that the manuscript is likely composed from multiple sources, as is apparent from differences in literary form between sections. For general reconstructions of the text and of its place in the tradition see Chao Fulin 2014, Chen Tongsheng 2004, and Liu Xinfang 2002. For a study on the commentarial strategies of the text, see Kern 2015.

125   Staack 2010: 883.

126   As quoted above in the discussion on teaching and genre.

more accurately than narratives handed down to us by imperial texts such as the *Shiji* and *Han shu*, or, the *Mao* commentary to the *Odes* for that matter.[127]

In the analysis below, each subsection is headed by a line from the **Xing zi ming chu*. I read the textual form and commentarial strategies of the **Kongzi shi lun* through these contemporary reflections to show that the divisions of verse collections were seen are closely related to the teaching practices associated with them. Through mediated acts of transmission such as teaching, the grouping of sets of text and of the individual pieces within them are reinforced every time they are (re-)memorized and (re-)valorized and thus gain in authority and rigidity:[128]

> (15) ⋯ 詩、書、禮、樂，其始出皆生 (16) 於人。詩有為為之也；書有為言之也；禮樂有為舉之也。聖人比其 (17) 類而論會之，觀其先後而逆順之；體其義而節文之，理 (18) 其情而出納之。然後復以教。教所以生德于中者也。

> *Odes*, *Documents*, rites, and music—in every case their first appearing was brought forth by man. The actions in the *Odes* were acted out by them; the actions in the *Documents* were spoken out by them; the actions of the rites and music were exalted by them. The sages [then] juxtaposed them according to their categories,[129] and brought them together in their discourses.[130] [They] beheld them in their sequence to arrange them in their proper order.[131] [They] shaped their meaning to regulate and pattern them.[132] [They] organized the emotions [expressed in them] and manifested and internalized them.[133] Only when this was achieved did they reinforce it through teaching. Teaching is that by which [the sage] generates moral force inside.[134]

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127   For an excellent critique of using narratives from a later stage in the development of the text culture, with in particular, different conceptions of authorship and how textuality worked, see Kern 2010: 176–81.

128   On this dynamic in teaching see Guillory 1993, for commentarial traditions, see Henderson 1991.

129   That is, they ordered them into genres.

130   That is, they subsumed them under metatextual comments.

131   That is, they organized the collection. Alternatively, this statement could also be read as a temporal order, and thus as talking about framing the pieces in terms of a historical narrative.

132   That is, they provided interpretation and commentary.

133   That is, they extrapolated from them lessons of value for teaching.

134   Edition and translation adapted from Meyer 2011: 314–15.

I read this passage as a reflection on the processes of organizing, commenting, and the teaching of genres. The figure of the sage stands in for teachers and their practice of bringing verse and other materials together to form internally coherent and meaningful bodies of knowledge. The sage groups, orders, and embodies the materials, and, reinforces them through his teaching. In like manner, texts such as the *Kongzi shi lun* reinforced genre affiliation, order, and interpretations of the materials in transmission and teaching.

聖人比其類而論會之

The sages juxtaposed them according to their categories,
and brought them together in their discourses.
        Xing zi ming chu, slips 16–17

The end of the *Kongzi shi lun* presents a discussion of four main categories of the *Shi*. Similar to the quotation above, the collection is divided up into four primary categories that are each given their own definitions and values. From "Hymns" to "Airs," it provides a summary definition of their type of virtue, their main content, sound, and effect:

(2) ⋯ 《頌》平德也。多言後，其樂安而遅，其歌紳而易，_ 其思深而
遠，至矣。_
《大雅》盛德也。多言□□□□□□□□ (3) [□□□□]□
[小雅]□□也。多言難而怨懟者也。衰矣，小矣。
《邦風》其內物也，博觀人欲焉，大斂材焉。其言文，其聲善。

The "Hymns" are of balanced virtue. They mostly speak of posterity, their music is calm and slow, their songs restrained and easy, their longing deep and far, how accomplished!
    The "Major Elegantiae" are of brimming virtue.... they mostly speak of ...
    [the "Minor Elegantiae" are ...] they mostly speak of those in difficulty and who have grudges and hatred. In decline! How small!
    The "Airs" take in things of the world. You can broadly observe human desire in them, and greatly gather material from them. Their words are patterned, their sounds excellent.

This section emphasizes the formal properties and nature of the *Shi*'s different sections. The sections have become reified, in that they themselves have turned into stable entities open to interpretation. The wording and music are

analyzed separately to distinct characteristics of these divisions. In a follow-
ing section, the order is reversed to discuss appropriate social use of the dif-
ferent sections, from dealing with common people to describing achievement
and merit:

(4) [孔子] 曰:詩其猶平門。＿
與賤民而豫之，其用心也將何如？曰:《邦風》是已。＿
民之有戚患也，上下之不和者，其用心也將何如？[曰:《小雅》
是已。
□□□] (5) □□□□[何如？曰:《大雅》] 是已。
有成功者何如？曰:《頌》是已。■

[Kongzi] said: "The *Shi* are like a level gate. What should we focus on in
order to be at ease with the company of the common people? It is the
"Airs." What should we focus on when the people have sorrow and trou-
bles, and when higher and lower are not in harmony? [It is the "Minor
Elegantiae" ... what should ...? It is the "Major Elegantiae"]. When having
achieved merit? It is the "Hymns."

As Staack has noted, the inverted repetition of the names of the categories is
a common listing practice in teaching materials, and serves to reinforce the
orders into canonical form.[135] The second section starts with the notion that
the *Shi* are like a level gate, implying that they are an easy means of access to
different social spheres and that their meaning is within reach of the com-
mentator. This emphasis on the function rather than the form of the material
was also present in collections such as the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* and the *Qi ye*.
Where in those collections the genre descriptions operate as a function of per-
formance, here the conceptualization of the genre of *Shi* is intimately related
to the division of the collection as such. The text closes, in this arrangement,
with a statement on verse as cultural expression:

(1) ⋯ 孔子曰:詩無隱志，樂無隱情，文無隱意。

Kongzi said: "*Shi* have no hidden intentions, Music has no hidden emo-
tions, pattern has no hidden meaning."

With the statement that the *Shi* have no hidden intentions, the commentarial
activity of the text is rationalized. The *Shi* as a sub-divided, collection-based

135   Staack 2010: 871.

genesis has become a textual object which can be appreciated through inter-
pretation, none of its meanings can escape the scrutiny of the careful
commentator—the sages brought them together in their discourses.

觀其先後而逆順之

[They] beheld them in their sequence to arrange them in their proper
order.

Xing zi ming chu, slip 17

The individual pieces under discussion in the *Kongzi shi lun* are meticulously
ordered. The relative order of the sixty-odd titles as a whole is close, but not
identical to that of the *Mao Odes* and in many cases groups of pieces would
later end up in different sections of the "Airs" and "Elegantiae," for instance. It
suggests that the *Kongzi shi lun* had its own particular practice of grouping, a
process reinforced in the sequencing of the individual blocks. The most strik-
ing example is the first block dealing with the "Airs":

(10) 《關雎》之改，＿《樛木》之時，＿《漢廣》之智，＿《鵲巢》之
歸，＿《甘棠》之保，＿《綠衣》之思，＿《燕燕》之情，＿曷？曰:動而
皆賢於其初者也。＿
《關雎》以色喻於禮。[□□□□□□□□] (14+12) 兩矣，＿ 其四章則喻
矣。＿ 以琴瑟之悅擬好色之願，以鐘鼓之樂[□□□□] 好，反入於禮，
不亦能改乎？＿ 《樛木》福斯在君子，不[亦□時乎？＿《漢廣》□□□
(13+15) □□] 可得，不攻不可能，不亦知恆乎？《鵲巢》出以百輛，
不亦有離乎？＿《甘[棠》□] 及其人，敬愛其樹，其保厚矣。＿ 甘棠之
愛以召公[□□□□□□□□ … 綠衣》…《燕燕》…] (16) 情愛也。＿
《關雎》之改，則其思益矣。＿《樛木》之時，則以其祿也。＿《漢
廣》之智，則知不可得也。《鵲巢》之歸，則離者[□□□□□□□□]
召公也。＿《綠衣》之憂，思古人也。＿《燕燕》之情，以其獨也。＿

The correction of "Guanju," the time of "Jiumu," the wisdom of "Hanguang,"
the return (home) of "Quechao," the protection of "Gantang," the longing
of "Lüyi," the emotions of "Yanyan": What do we mean by that? I say: in
that they move they all become more worthy than their beginnings.[136]

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136   This line can be read as containing the central interpretive premise, see Kern 2010: 34.
       Possibly the image at the beginning of each *shi* (traditionally "evocation," or *xing*") can be
       read for more than its surface meaning. I agree with Kern (2015: 184–85), who reads this
       phrase as "rhetorically introducing a teaching setting" framed in the voice of authority

"Guanju" uses sex to draw a metaphor about the rites.... two's. It is in the fourth stanza that the metaphor is formed. By likening the desire for sex to the joys of lute and zither, and the fondness for X to the pleasures of bell and drum, it returns to the rites. Is this not being capable of correction? In "Jiumu," fortune resides in the gentleman. [Is this] not ... [timeliness? In Hanguang ...] can [not] be obtained. Not to strive for what cannot be achieved, is this not understanding permanence? In "Quechao," setting forth with a hundred chariots, is this not a departure? In "Gan[tang" x] and his people, respecting and caring for his tree, his protection is solid. The care of the gantang tree uses Lord Shao [... "Lüyi" ... "Yanyan" ...] the response is care.

   With the turn of "Guanju," its longing is increased. The timeliness of "Jiumu" is [seen] in its blessings. Through the wisdom of "Hanguang," one understands what cannot be obtained. With the return of "Quechao," the parting ... Lord Shao. The yearning of "Lüyi" is about longing for the ancients. The emotions of "Yanyan" are shown in his solitude.

The same sequence of seven pieces is repeated three times. They are identified by title and this assumes a stable referent, i.e., a collection of known *shi* organized by title. In the first iteration the pieces are summed up and connected with one key concept. As Kern has shown, the grammar of the phrasing presents itself as a fixed interpretation.[137] As such the statements not only claim authority, but at the same time suggest that a stable teaching practice was associated with the text. The text itself was likely being used as an aide for the memorization of the teachings.[138] In the second iteration the connections are developed with an explanation of the content and meaning of the pieces. The comments on "Guanju" are particularly revealing, as they are explicitly about the use of metaphor to turn one description into another meaning. What is more, it is explicit about the locus of this turn residing in the fourth stanza, implying an understanding of the piece as set in a specific structure.

   In the final iteration these are connected to concise references to the wording of the poems. With each iteration the interpretation given to the piece is expanded, connected, and tightly reinforced. The triple repetition, the fixed order, in addition to the fact that seven easily memorable pieces are presented

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sanctioned by tradition as such dissolving the authorship function. In other words, the text is opened up for any teacher that asserts a place within this tradition.

137   Kern 2015: 185.
138   Kern 2015: 180.

within one section makes this text highly conducive to memorization.[139] The
Kongzi shi lun has another such repeated grouping of seven in the combined
"Airs," "Elegantiae," and "Hymns" section discussed below. The only real outlier
is a section commenting on 30 "Minor Elegantiae" pieces that are not repeated
but merely presented as one long list. As such, most of the text enabled ease of
memorization by presenting the material into discrete "gobbets" of informa-
tion, making the text conducive to teaching at the same time that it reinforces
the groupings.[140]

體其義而節文之

[They] shaped their meaning to regulate and pattern them.
          Xing zi ming chu, slip 17

The following section of the *Kongzi shi lun* connects verse to ritual propriety,
similar to the regulation and patterning mentioned in the *Xing zi ming chu*.
Meaning is derived from the *Shi* by Confucius, who takes each of the individual
pieces as paradigmatic examples describing human nature, and ties them in
with proper ritual responses:

孔子曰:吾以《葛覃》得祗初之詩。民性固然,＿見其美必欲反其本。
夫葛之見歌也,則 (24) 以囗囗之故也。＿后稷之見貴也,＿則以文武之
德也。＿ 吾以《甘棠》得宗廟之敬。＿性固然,甚貴其人,必敬其位。
悅其人,必好其所爲。惡其人者亦然。[吾以 (20)《木瓜》得] 幣帛
之不可去也。民性固然,其隱志必有以喻也。＿其言有所載而後入,
或前之而後交,人不可干也。吾以《杕杜》得爵[囗囗囗囗囗囗囗囗囗]
(27) [囗囗囗] 如此何?斯爵之矣。離其所愛,必曰:吾奚舍之?賓贈
是已。＿

Kongzi said: "Through 'Getan' I get the *Shi* that honor the origins. The
nature of the people is stable—when they see its beauty they will always
want to return to its origin. When arrowroot is sung about, this is because
of x. When Hou Ji is praised, this is because of the virtue of [Kings] Wen

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139   Compare Carruthers (2008: 98), who notes medieval European mnemonic experts reflect-
      ing on the shortness of text to be memorized as a major aide in recall. The cognitive psy-
      chologist Rubin (1995: 181–82), writing on memory in oral traditions, notes that in serial,
      unstructured memorization, students tend to recall the first seven units. He further notes
      that these short units tend to correspond to natural divisions in spoken language.

140   For this term, see Griffiths (1999: 49), who describes the practice of dividing material in
      short, easily memorable gobbets in classical, medieval, and early modern collections
      of sayings.

and Wu. Through 'Gantang' I get the respect for the ancestral temple. The nature of the people is stable—when they deeply praise his [i.e., Lord Shao's] person, they will always respect his position. When they delight in his person, they will always be fond of what he does. When they dislike him it is equally so. Through 'Mugua' I get the indispensability of fabrics and silks [as gifts]. The nature of the people is stable—they always need something which gives expression to their hidden intent. What you have to say is only accepted if you have something concrete [as a gift] that accompanies it. You cannot make people to accept it first when you only present something concrete later. Through 'Didu' I get that rank x [...] What does this mean? This is ranking them. When they take leave from somebody for whom they care, they will always say, how can we part from them? Such is the business of presenting way fare to guests."

The section is highly formulaic and is well patterned. All of the comments refer to the stability of human nature as represented through the *Shi*. The significance of the pieces is thus naturalized, and they embody the values that ought to result in patterned (ritually appropriate) behavior. In the comment on "Mugua" this is particularly clear. In the *Shijing*, the piece describes three ritual exchanges of fruits for gems, as a means to continue friendship. The comment in the **Kongzi shi lun* abstracts from this verse a general and underlying meaning. Gifts are rendered as a necessary component of ritualized human interaction. Human nature, we are told, demands the expression of hidden intents through gifts, and what one says will only be listened to when accompanied by gifts. In this way, it makes a case for the regulation and patterning of human interaction, two standard ways of describing proper ritual behavior. "Mugua" is taken as a paradigmatic example of this fundamental truth about the human condition, and the gifts described therein are elevated by the commentator as a central metaphor of not only the piece in question but of proper human interaction in general. Confucius stands in for the commentator-teacher-editor in general. He "understands" *de* 得 the fundamental truths enclosed in the *Shi* and uses them to explain his ideas on human nature. The poems are now completely transformed into an object of commentary and are now valued because, as text, they can be used to explain the world at large.

理其情而出納之

[They] arranged the emotions [expressed in them] to be manifested and to be internalized.

(**Xing zi ming chu*, slips 17–18)

In the final section of seven pieces, quoted lines from the poems are used to support Confucius' positive reception of the pieces. The correct emotions embodied by the poems are manifest in particular lines, which are to be internalized in one's understanding of the poem as a whole:

孔子曰：“《宛丘》吾善之，_《猗嗟》吾憙之，_《鳲鳩》吾信之，_《文王》吾美之，《清[廟》吾敬之，《烈文》吾悅 (22) 之，《昊天有成命》吾貴?] 之。
《宛丘》曰：“詢有情，而無望”，吾善之。《猗嗟》曰：“四矢變，以禦亂”，吾憙之。_《鳲鳩》曰：“其儀一兮，心如結也”，吾信之。“文[王] 在上，¹⁴¹於昭于天”，吾美之。(6) [《清廟》曰：“肅雝顯相，濟濟]多士，秉文之德”，吾敬之。《烈文》曰：“作競維人，丕顯維德，於乎，前王不忘”，¹⁴²吾悅之。‘昊天有成命，二后受之’，貴且顯矣。”

Kongzi said: "'Wanqiu' I find excellent; 'Yijie' I find pleasant; 'Shijiu' I trust; 'Wenwang' I find beautiful; 'Qingmiao' I respect; 'Liewen' I delight in; 'Haotian you chengming' I praise.

"When in 'Wanqiu' it says, 'I enquire after your feelings, but have nothing to admire,' I find it excellent. When in 'Yijie' it says, 'The four arrows transform, in order to quell disorder,' I find it pleasant. When in 'Shijiu' it says, 'His dignity is unified, his heart as if it is tied to it,' I trust it. 'King Wen is up high, he shines bright in heaven'—that I find beautiful. [When in 'Qingmiao' it says, 'Respectful and ordered the bright assistants, numerous the many retainers, who wielded the *de* of [King] Wen,' I respect it. When in 'Liewen' it says, 'Only men are to be competed for; only *de* is radiant. Lo! Do not forget the former kings!' I delight in it. 'Luminous heaven has a mandate accomplished, the two sovereigns received it,' that is both praiseworthy and radiant."

Responses such as respect and delight are directly tied in with quotations from the pieces. Instead of a general aesthetic response to music, the particular sentiments of a poem are expressed in a specific verbal component of each piece. As such, while in the previously discussed sections, homage is still paid to music

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141   This line does not include the quotation formula, as does the one for "Haotian you Chengming," which includes a reduplication mark after *Hao* 昊. The fact that the title of the piece is the same as the graphs first quoted suggests that the scribe did not bother to repeat himself here.

142   The transmitted version interestingly includes two additional lines, marked here in bold: 無競維人、**四方其訓之**。不顯維德、**百辟其刑之**。於乎前王不忘。

in general and to its role in the four categories, here, emotional responses are presented as directly related with the specific wording of the songs.

然後復以教。教所以生德于中者也。

When this was achieved, they reinforced it through teaching. Teaching is that by which [the sage] generates moral force in the center.
        Xing zi ming chu, slip 18

The *Kongzi shi lun* repeatedly instills its categories of analysis and division of the corpus in its users. Each poem is titled and given an appropriate sentiment and a representative quotation in consecutive repetitions. These clusters of repetitions stand *pars pro toto* for the subdivision as a whole, and their representative sentiments become qualifiers of the subdivision-as-genre. "Airs," "Elegantiae," and "Hymns" become reified as they do not just point to a literary form or social practice, but also to a specific locus and interpretation.

It is useful here to remember how other texts such as the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* presented genre as if lodged in a performative context. Each context has a genre to match, resulting in a range of different forms and labels. The *Kongzi shi lun*, to an extent, does not need such living context, and can refer to a stable collection it claims is comprised of a small number of clearly distinguished and understood genres of *Shi* that can be taught through representative example. The present form of the *Zhougong zhi qin wu* and the *Kongzi shi lun* manuscripts both date from the mid-Warring States, and with increasing numbers of *Shi* collections retrieved from (looted) graves of the period, it seems clear that a variety of ways of access to verse were potentially available to a mid-Warring States audience.

The crucial question is not whether or not there was a complete text of the of *Shi* in (likely limited) circulation at all but rather, to what extent a given recipient would have had access to such a collection and the claims towards the organization of the genre presented therein. For some, the primary means of access to verse would have been short, genre specific collections such as the *Zhougong zhi qin wu*; for others, it would have been oral transmission of the *Shi* or selections from them; for yet others, the *Shi* may have simply stood for the *Bangfeng* as presented in, say, the Anda manuscripts.

The existence of texts such as the *Kongzi shi lun* that present the *shi* in ways highly similar to received tradition does not imply that everyone shared this view or was aware of it. If anything is clear from the manuscript evidence, it is that there was a wide range of genre perceptions and modes of collection and organization through which verse could be understood, the fact that some of

these accord to the understanding that became canonical does not mean they were necessarily widely shared.

5   Conclusion

This chapter focused on the agency of collections of verse. I suggested that the influence of a proto-*Shijing* on the perceptions of verse was relatively marginal compared to the much more widely distributed collections of subsets of verse. These collections of smaller scale provided the main avenue of access to written verse during the Warring States period, and were thus crucial in shaping perceptions of genre, affiliation, and literary form, especially when used in teaching contexts or as a basis for memorization and vocalization.

Many collections framed their contents in contextualizing narratives, presenting in written form the lived experience of ritual, performative, and communicative use of verse evinced in material from the early Warring States. By grouping verse of similar form together, and framing them along functional genre designations, these collections highlighted the qualities and range of forms of the genre. Certain figures were presented as testing the limits of the genre. The Duke of Zhou, for example, came to be singled out as a persona that represented the literariness, historicity, and authorial intents behind the production of verse.

Other collections presented verse in more bookish form. Ordered by title and featuring paratextual statements on the placement of section and individual verse, these collections dispense with the elaborate framing narratives and take classifications of the material as belonging to a well-ordered collection as a given. This understanding of verse became increasingly common in commentarial texts of the mid to late Warring States period. These materials presented verse not as context-bound genres but as part of the larger genre of *Shi*, which was bound by an organized collection. The collection thus conceived is subdivided in broad subgenres, organized by editor, and contextually distinguished from the performative. Rather than song, they collect poetry. Instead of their musicality, commentarial texts of the period focus on the meaning and function of the poems. This is not to say that verse was no longer sung, or appreciated for its musical qualities, but rather that the meaning and emotional responses associated with the songs were increasingly understood by commentators as residing in their wording and organization.

Commentator-teacher figures such as Confucius are credited with organizing and explaining this collection in teaching texts of the time. Manuscript collections of verse stood at the forefront of these developments as they informed

access to specific understandings and selections of the material, and provided a base text for the memorization, vocalization, and teaching of verse.

As has become clear from the different examples of collections in this chapter the perception of the *Shi* as belonging to a fixed and organized collection, such as in the **Kongzi shi lun*, was not the only one, nor does it represent a milestone on a teleological path towards the perception of verse as presented in the canonical *Odes*. Instead, the arguably much wider landscape of early verse provided ways of conceptualizing verse that were sometimes picked up and sometimes neglected by later users in their composition of texts or organization of extant materials. While the contingency of these developments cannot be stressed enough, the modes of interpretation, grouping, and labelling reinforced through these collections and commentaries would increase their chance of transmission and wider adoption, providing future participants with access to these categories of understanding.

Collecting and Disseminating: Using Technical Knowledge

今略取其理當者，删而次比, 以著于篇。

I have selected those whose reasoning (*li*) is appropriate and, by
deletion and enumeration,
wrote them into a piece.

<div style="text-align:right">*YISI ZHAN* 乙巳占, 1.10b[1]</div>

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In this final chapter I look at the evidence on the collection of technical knowl-
edge. Pre-imperial Chinese technical knowledge resided predominantly in the
expert who through his access to occult knowledge and practices had the skills
to solve concrete problems of medical, ritual, divinatory, and magical nature.
By the late Warring States there occurs a shift in the presentation of this
knowledge, from records of divination proceedings and codified expertise into
more handily and accessible formats, in collections such as daybooks, materia
medica, demonographies, etc. These collections sidestepped the direct media-
tion of technical experts and opened access to a wider audience using formats
suited to reading without outside help. Because the object of technical knowl-
edge is clear, whether it concerns the time for the building of a house or a divi-
nation after the health of a patron, technical collections are eminently suited
to analyze their envisioned use.[2]

But these materials were not composed from scratch. Instead, they were the
result of efforts to gather useful texts for their wielders into single, bound man-
uscripts. To be sure, many of the texts that comprised these collections had an
earlier life as the teachings of an individual expert, small-scale collections of
prayers, or as notes or *aides de memoire* drafted on the backs of other manu-
scripts. Indeed, some were gathered on bamboo together with non-technical

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1 Translation from Morgan 2017: appendix item 22.
2 Keegan 1988 is an early and insightful study.

materials. Similarly, the process of collection did not stop with large-scale collections like daybooks, since useful texts were being continuously added to these miscellanea. Specialized texts were also in circulation, but these too were often composed of multiple previously independent textual units, which in turn had gathered the knowledge of experts in manuscript form.

This broad development corresponds to similar increases in collecting text across other genres. The manuscript culture of the Warring States period brought greater access to knowledge to new groups of wielders, often far removed in space and time from the compositions and oral traditions that preceded them. Access for many new users came through the medium of collections. The collection provided a comparatively accessible, pragmatic, and economical alternative to the services of an expert and had the advantage of distilling and selecting knowledge of multiple experts and traditions.[3]

1 Early Records of Divination: Baoshan, Tangweisi, and Geling

Some of the earliest examples of technical knowledge on bamboo, just as with the oracle bones, come in the form of divination records. The Baoshan manuscripts, found in the tomb of Shao Tuo 邵陀, a Minister of the Left 左尹 and member of the royal family in Chu, record the divinations and prayers of multiple specialists over a period of eight separate days spread over three years. Sometimes as many as ten divinations were recorded for a single day. Shao Tuo contracted an illness in his final years to which he would finally succumb in 318 BCE. Therefore, in addition to the recurring year divinations, these records include several specific illness divinations targeted at finding the root cause of Shao's health issues.[4]

Recent research has shown that the divination and prayer slips, originally thought to form a single manuscript, can be divided into at least two separate manuscripts based on material evidence.[5] Likewise, evidence for at least eight different scribes (for twelve different diviners, nine using scapulae and three using yarrow stalks) has been found in the material, showing that the

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3 Poo Mu-chou (1993: 238–40), for example, notes inconsistencies within the same daybook in what you can and cannot do on certain days, as well as the possibility of multiple, independent, and contradictory traditions lumped together within the same daybook; he also points out that the user was advised to select certain travel prohibitions while ignoring others.

4 For a good overview and analysis of the Baoshan divinatory materials, see Chen Wei 1996; Marc Kalinowski 2008: 374–85; Raphals 2005.

5 The evidence includes the placement of binding notches and the use of marks on the back of the slips; see Liu and Wang 2017: 91–94.

manuscripts were not copied in one setting. Importantly, there is no correlation between diviner and scribe.[6] In certain cases, the statements of multiple diviners are recorded in a single hand and for certain divinations as many as three different hands can be found on a single slip, sometimes separated by a punctuation mark or extra space on the slip. This might be due in part, Li Shoukui suggests, to preparing formulaic elements of the record in advance by one scribe, and in some cases, the presence of an extra hand is due to later corrections done by a separate scribe.[7] Some of the hands are very similar to those present in the legal documents, suggesting that the scribes were not especially assigned to the diviners but were commissioned largely for their writing skills across disciplinary expertise.[8]

Kalinowski suggests that when we take the formulaic nature of the materials is into account, they appear not to represent direct transcriptions of the divinations. Rather, they are more akin to legal documents, in that they reflect an organized and homogenized representation of the proceedings for the purpose of preserving a standardized record of an event.[9] These records could then be used to verify prognostications made during the proceedings. This is also the reason why we have records of the divinations for the last three years of Shao Tuo, as this was the common period for storing and verifying divinations. As many have noted, experts were often in direct contradiction with each other, and this has been suggested as an explanation for the appearance of multiple divinations (by scapula and yarrow) in order to get at a desired result in the Baoshan records for instance.[10]

A good example reflecting the documentary nature of the records can be found in a prayer to Shao Tuo's ancestors that had been proposed by the diviner Shi Beishang in a divination twenty months earlier:

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6   This phenomenon is also seen among the recently excavated Tangweisi 唐維寺 slips, which likewise feature a single diviner for multiple hands; see Zhao Xiaobin 2019.

7   Li Shoukui 2007. Some of the differences among the hands noted by Li Shoukui are more subjective than others, but taken together, the different characteristics support his division into eight separate hands. In some of the cases that Li notes, different scribes were responsible for recording different steps in the procedure, but there are also significant exceptions to this dynamic, wherein hands alternate within the recording of a single step.

8   Li Shoukui 2007: 65–66. This calls to mind the requirements for scribes noted in the Han dynasty Zhangjiashan manuscripts, wherein scribes are stipulated to master the writing of multiple fields of expertise, including divination *zhu* 祝.

9   This is also borne out by the fact that royal family members, such as the Lord of Pingye 平夜君, could have access to diviners from the local administration and more importantly the marginal notes and corrections on the slips; see Kalinowski 2008: 385.

10   Raphals 2005: 84.

東周之客許郢歸胙於栽郢之歲，冬夕之月，癸丑之日，翌禱於昭
王，戠牛，━ 大臧，━ 饋之。━ 邵吉為菈，既禱至福。〿(205)

The year when Xu Cheng, emissary of the Eastern Zhou, came to Cai Ying
to present his sacrificial offerings, in the tenth month, the 50th day of the
cycle, the *yi*-rite of prayer to King Zhao was carried out with the sacrifice
of an ox. The grand officer of deposits was in charge of preparing the
offerings, and Zhao Ji was in charge of the altars. The rite having been
accomplished, [a part of the offerings] was sent [to the consultant] as a
token of felicity.[11]

The focus of the record is to situate the proceedings in time and in terms of
the experts responsible, highlighting the contractual nature of the rite. Other
passages provide step-by-step records of the whole divination process, includ-
ing preface, charge, first and second prognostications, and initial and final
predictions.

The records at Baoshan present occasional texts in that they were bound
to a circumscribed set of occasions and meant for private reference within a
self-enclosed and known context.[12] They were not intended for transmission
to a wider audience but were records of the proceedings to verify the prom-
ised results of the ritual. These records are quite common across the mid-late
Warring States, with more finds surfacing on a regular basis.[13] One example,
from Tangweisi 唐維寺 tomb 126, excavated spring 2019 in Jingzhou, Hubei, near
the ancient Chu capital of Ying 郢, contains eight slips recording the prayers
and divinations made in response to the bad health of the tomb occupant. Like
the Baoshan finds, the records provide the date and include the names of the
participants, specialists, and deities involved. The find is revealing as the slips
were likely not bound together into a single manuscript. Some were bound
together in sets of two. A striking case is slip eight which was tightly wrapped
around with silk cord. This unique material feature suggests that the slip might
have been ritually prepared, if so, it could provide rare evidence for the use of
slips in the proceedings themselves.[14]

Another case is present in the Geling materials, likewise recording divina-
tions and prayers made by multiple experts on behalf of a patron, the Lord of

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11   Kalinowski 2008: 382; see also Constance Cook 2006: 165–66.
12   For occasional texts versus texts with a history, see Kern 2002: 147–48.
13   See, for example, the finds from Wangjiatai 王家臺, Tianxing guan 天星觀, Qinjiazui
      秦家咀, among others. For an overview and study, see Yan Changgui 2010.
14   Zhao Xiaobin (2019: 27), and image 7 for the silk-wrapped slip.

Pingye.[15] Some of these were executed by the patron himself, or at least in his name.[16] These materials, despite their bad state of preservation, reflect records of prayers and divinations made on several separate occasions and places. These too were not meant to be transmitted beyond the lord's own circle. There is also no indication that the proceedings themselves relied on a written text, the authority and knowledge required rested solely in the ritual expertise of the specialists themselves. There are, nonetheless, similarities between the prayers in the Geling materials to the rhymed divinatory statements in the *Yi* tradition, and it has been suggested that they reveal the processes behind the formation of the statements in the *Yijing* 易經,[17] see for example the following fragment from *Bu shi ji dao* 卜筮祭禱:

☑其繇曰:是日未兌（說）(*l̥ot)，大言絕絕（*[dz]ot)，小言惙惙 (?*tʰot, 啜)，若組若結(*kˤi[t])，終以☐☐ (A3, slip 31) ☑☐是以謂之有 言。其兆:亡咎☑ (0, slip 232).[18]

its statement says: "On this day one has not yet explained, great words are not spoken, petty words keep coming, as if knitted together, as if tied off, finally one ... This is why it is called 'having words.' Its omen: no misfortune"[19]

As such, while there is no question that versions of the *Yi* were in circulation and that there are gross similarities with divinatory statements such as these and the line statements of the *Yi*, there is no evidence to suggest that the specialists relied on some written form of the *Yi* in producing the statements. It is just as likely that they reflect those living traditions that could, but in this case, would not, be incorporated in versions of the text. This does not exclude that

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15   For notes of the multiple diviners, see Song Huaqiang 2010: 280–85.

16   See Schwartz 2015: 110–11, on the differentiation made between prayers by the person himself (including deprecatory self-address) and those made by commissioned specialists in the Geling manuscripts.

17   See Shaughnessy 2014: 22, 2000: 223–40.

18   Schuessler does not provide reconstructions for *jue* 絕 and *chuo* 惙, as such I provide the reconstructions of Baxter and Sagart here, see William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). David Prager Branner, personal communication, November 20, 2021, notes that *jie* 結 was "clearly intended" to rhyme with the preceding, as supported by contact between the *yue* 月 and *zhi* 質 rhyme-groups in the Han.

19   The edition follows Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin and Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2013: 10, 64, n.105; translation follows Krijgsman 2021: 323. For studies, see Song Huaqiang 2010 and Chen Wei 2004.

collections of written knowledge may have been one of the ways in which the specialists or the scribes themselves were trained, but these did not provide the main avenue of access the tomb occupants had to the esoteric knowledge practices they required, and the authority resided entirely in the specialist (or his competitor who did deliver the desired result). The fact that around 300 BCE certain specialists are found recurring across records surrounding Ying suggests that they may have enjoyed renown across the region.[20]

Kalinowski traces the history of divinatory practices, placing the fourth-century BCE materials discussed above in a stable tradition of aristocratic and high elite patronage for divinatory specialists that traced its origins all the way back to the Shang oracle bone inscriptions.[21] From the mid Warring States period onwards, materials increasingly appear from tombs belonging to lower strata of society. Instead of occasional records of proceedings, stating the context and experts involved, technical knowledge increasingly came to be presented in texts aimed at transmission. Often, these texts collected the knowledge of several named experts and present the methods as a systematic framework of knowledge, or as a handy set of ready-made texts to use in a variety of proceedings, thus increasingly making knowledge accessible to wielders without the mediation of an expert.

Especially in the daybook collections of the late Warring States period and the early empires, technical knowledge is often shorn of attribution to named experts and rather subsumed under hemerological and *yin-yang* frameworks. Kalinowski notes that the expense of hiring experts and the cost of elaborate sacrifices may have been of influence, and the majority of hemerological materials stems from mid to lower-level tombs.[22] Economy and mobility certainly contributed to this development, but given the larger developments in divinatory practices preserved in tombs for the higher elite as well, it seems likely that the broader development of collecting, organizing, and disseminating knowledge in written form that occurred from the Warring States period onwards contributed to these changes as well.

Before we turn to the daybook materials, I first review some of the evidence for short collections of technical knowledge. I focus on prayer and divinatory material from the mid Warring States and early imperial period. Some of these materials were gathered on individual manuscripts, and others were

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20 See Kalinowski (2008: 384), discussing the identities of the diviners, the hereditary nature of the profession, and the appearance of a single specialist Fan Huozhi in three to four different tombs.

21 Kalinowski 2008: 374–75, 383.

22 Kalinowski 2008: 388.

piggybacked on the wings of other texts, sharing multi-text manuscript carriers. Most of the texts are arranged topically, and either combine the voices of several experts or provide standardized prayers or methods for divination open to broader consumption by a non-expert audience.

2   Warring States Prayer and Divination Collections

The Shanghai Museum and Tsinghua manuscripts provide a glimpse of the different formats of prayer and divinatory collections available to a Warring States audience. These purpose-crafted collections of prayers and methods of divination were oriented towards a specific goal. Sometimes they include the names of multiple specialists, and they gather the breadth of their expertise focused on a specific problem within the space of a single text. These might have been used for educational purposes. Others collect standardized and often rhymed prayers that could be used to fulfill specific needs, such as hitting the mark in archery or drawing people to an empty city. These small prayer-books work as ritual guides, presenting the steps, words, offerings, and movements required to perform the prayer. A user could insert their name in the correct place of the text and make the prayer or spell work on their behalf.

2.1   *The Collection as Manual: The Shanghai Museum* *Bu shu

The Shanghai Museum manuscript titled **Bu shu* 卜書 (*Treatise on crack reading*) by its editor Li Ling contains a short text featuring the crack-readings of six diviners, organized by topic. Like the materials discussed above, the statements of multiple named diviners are present. The fundamental difference lies in the function of the text. Where the previous examples of divination texts were records of proceedings, the present manuscript is perhaps better understood as a handbook or manual of crack-reading in scapulimancy. To give a general idea of the outline of the text, I here quote the first two statements:[23]

> **1.1** 肥叔曰:兆仰首出趾,是謂闢,卜人無咎,將去其里,而它方焉適。▬
>
> Fei Shu said: When the crack is raising on the top and falling at the bottom, this is referred to as "opening"; the initiator of the question will have no trouble, but he will leave his hamlet and go to another place.

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23   Edition and translation follows Caboara 2017.

2.1 季曾曰:兆俯首納趾，是謂(一)陷，處宮無咎，有疾乃簪。▬

Ji Zeng said: When the top of the crack goes down and the bottom is raised, this is referred to as "sinking"; for staying in the [present] palace there will be no trouble, but if there is sickness, it will quicken.

The text divides in two, with the first three statements dealing with choosing an appropriate dwelling and the second with the fortunes of the state. The statements are predominantly rhymed, a feature it shares with many other texts dealing with decision-making.[24] One of the earliest of its kind, the manuscript is damaged, missing the bottom third of six slips. On the complete slips, numbers appear on the recto below the third binding string. This feature, in addition to the use of lines at the back of the manuscript, and punctuation to divide statements of different diviners and at the end of the text suggests that some care was taken to prepare and design the manuscript, unlike the secondary role given to many of these texts in later periods. Possibly, as Marco Caboara has suggested, the text may have been a handbook, or a part of one, on how to systematically interpret the shape of the cracks formed during divination on bone. This can be seen from generalizing statements such as the following one on the "three tips":

4.2 凡三簇有疵，三末唯吉，如白如黃, 貞邦[...](5) 夫。▬

In all cases, when the "three clusters" have flaws, even if the "three tips" are auspicious, and are both white and yellow, the divination about the state ... (?).

The text only presents negative outcomes of the divinations and likely assumed a broader, more complete, body of knowledge. Caboara has suggested this manuscript was a "subset of a larger treatise."[25] In the current physical format, however, there is no indication of a larger treatise and the manuscript is presented as a stand-alone. Absence of title aside, the presence of sequential numbering on the rectos and the text final punctuation mark followed by empty space on the remainder of the last slip does not appear to suggest, but also does not exclude, material affiliation to a larger manuscript. As such, it is equally possible that the present manuscript presents a digest of sorts,

24   Krijgsman 2021.
25   Caboara 2017: 37.

collecting purpose-specific technical information in a tightly organized format within the space of a single manuscript.

Specialized collections are far from rare in the broader landscape of technical literature. How to place an appropriate dwelling or door, for instance, is the subject of many subsections of the daybooks.[26] But where the *Bu shu* lists named diviners, most later collections come without attribution. The *Bu shu* presents the divinations in a unified style, suggesting the text is not a verbatim recording of events but rather an idealized example of best practice. As often the case with collections of the period, it is well-suited as a teaching text. Because it only focuses on negative outcomes, the text is not generally applicable and rather reads as a highly specialized sub-set of knowledge necessary for expertise in divination. Unlike the Baoshan and Geling materials, this text is no longer bound to a single occasion and was meant for transmission. Nonetheless, its specialized didactic nature made it unsuitable for broad consumption, so it was likely the purview of a more select group of specialists.

2.2   *Collections That Store: The Tsinghua* *Zhu ci *and the Back of the Beida Qin Slips*

Collections, especially for the general user, need not target a specific purpose or occasion. Certain collections gather a variety of useful texts for memorization or future reference. In this section I discuss two examples of the collection as placeholder, the *Zhu ci* 祝辭, a short collection of prayers from the Tsinghua manuscripts, and a number of technical collections from the Beida Qin slips. Rather than gathering their collections within the space of a single manuscript, these collections shared the bamboo together with other texts and collections. In a sense, they are not given prime position, and the manuscript functions as a storage container for a range of materials.

The *Zhu ci*, for example, is written after the *Liang chen* 良臣. The *Liang chen* presents a list of famous good ministers from antiquity up to the near past, and it likewise forms a short collection. The manuscript was bound by two strings and written in a single hand up to the very end of the slips. The *Liang chen* does not start its items on a new slip, and continues with the next item directly following a thick bar-shaped punctuation mark. The *Zhu ci*'s five prayers are each written on a single slip followed by a thick bar across the slip. The text itself is also interspersed with punctuation, dividing the prayers into different sections. Nonetheless, it seems likely that the two texts were put to bamboo in a single setting by the same scribe, and both probably had a life before the production of the manuscript. The manuscript does not stand out

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26   See the overview of the contents of the manuscripts in Harper and Kalinowski, eds. 2017: 455–57.

in terms of production quality. Bound with only two strings, the slips tend to be written to the very end and it appears that no specific measures were taken to ensure the preservation of its text. Absence of titles and the arbitrary collocation of two different collections suggest that the production of this manuscript was guided by economy of space and that it was likely used as an *aide de memoire* rather than more active uses.[27]

The *Zhu ci* contains two different groups of highly formulaic prayers. The first group, comprised of two prayers, are meant to protect the user from natural calamities. The user recites a rhymed prayer text while holding an object, which is then cast away. The second group has three prayers for success in archery. The steps of the procedure for each varies the details only slightly. Here, the prayer needs to be uttered while drawing the bowstring, and a successful hit of either enemy, bird, or mark, is promised as the reward:

恐溺，乃執幣━以祝曰:"有上茫茫(?*mˤaŋ)，有下湯湯(*r̥ˤaŋ)，司湍滂滂(?*[b]ˤaŋ)，侯茲某也發揚(*laŋ) 。━" 乃舍幣。■
(1) 救火，乃左執土以祝曰:"皋！詣五(武？)　夷，絕明冥冥(*mˤeŋ)，茲我贏(*[ɢ]eŋ) ━" 既祝，乃投以土。■
(2) 隨弓，"將注為死━，揚武卽求當━。"引且言之━，同以心，撫額━，射戎也。■
(3) 外弓，"將注為肉━ ‧揚武卽求當━。" 引且言之━，同以目，撫額━，射禽也。■
(4) 踵弓，"將射干函━，揚武卽求當━。" 引且言之━，同以骹，撫額━，射函也。■
(5)[28]

When in fear of drowning, grab a bolt of silk, and say the following prayer: "Above it is brimming, below it is rushing, the manager of rapids is vast and flowing, let this person soar!" Then discard the bolt of silk.

When in need of rescue from fire, grab earth in your left [hand] and say the following prayer: "Hark! I call on Wuyi,[29] block of the bright in darkness, let me overcome!" After having prayed, then throw the earth.

Following bow: "I will load [this arrow] to get a corpse, and harness my martial prowess to request a hit." Say this prayer when drawing [the bow], follow along your heart, draw unto your chin, and shoot the enemy.

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27   Similar processes have been observed for medieval European florilegia; for an overview and study, see Griffin 1999.

28   Li Xueqin 2012: 163–65. Reconstructions follow Baxter and Sagart 2014.

29   A spirit known from the Jiudian and Mawangdui materials among others, also titled Lord 君, or Prince 王, see Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo and Beijing daxue zhongwen xi 1999: 50 and 104, n.164.

> Outer bow: "I will load [this arrow] to get meat, and harness my mar-
> tial prowess to request a hit." Say this prayer when drawing [the bow],
> follow along your eyes, draw unto your chin, and shoot the bird.
>
> Pursuing bow: "I will shoot the shield and armor, and harness my mar-
> tial prowess to request a hit." Say this prayer when drawing [the bow],
> follow along your clavicle, draw unto your chin, and shoot the armor.

The prayers share similarities with prayer material across early China, espe-
cially those collected in the daybook manuscripts. The first prayer shares a
predilection with these texts to present prayers in *yang*-group rhymes, which
perhaps was considered more magically efficacious.[30] The second group of
prayers is not rhymed but phrased as a set of commands sure to give positive
results. It is unclear whether the two sets originally existed separately and were
brought together only on this manuscript. The difference in form and language
and the clear division in sets suggests that they were; the individual sections
form small purpose-oriented collections in themselves. Given the state of the
manuscript, it seems likely that a user simply brought the materials together
for storage and future reference, while economizing on the use of material and
time in the production of the manuscript.

The practice of using manuscripts as a storage container for texts and collec-
tion continues all the way up to the early empires. The Beida Qin manuscripts
feature several prayer collections for example. They include the 26-slip *Bachu*
拔除, a text written in rhymed quatrains which deals with the expulsion of bad
influences during the harvest. This was written on the back of manuscript roll
four together with other collections, such as a large, eighty-slip collection of
medical spells on the verso. The roll also includes a short twelve-slip collection
of mostly love spells, *Zazhufang* 雜祝方 (also known as, *Bainang* 白囊) writ-
ten on wooden slips.

The number four manuscript roll stands out not only because of its
length—at 318 slips it is the longest in the collection—but also because over
300 of its slips were written on both sides. At least three different hands were
involved in its writing, likely at different moments, and it is understood as a
miscellany by the editors.[31] There are places in the manuscript where texts on
the front and back do not line up, and there is a crisscrossing between differ-
ent texts on the same side. This has led the editors to suspect that it was not

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30   Krijgsman 2021: 317.

31   For details, see Zhu Fenghan 2012: 65–73, especially 65–66. For example, the manuscript
      contains texts as varied as daybooks and mathematical treatises, a list of roads and water
      routes through the Jianghan 江漢 plain, a text on making clothes, medical materials, etc.

FIGURE 9   Close-up of the *Zhu ci* manuscript

made by combining several completed texts, but rather through a process of intermittent copying by different scribes, or that it resulted from numerous additions and acts of rebinding the slips over time.

This is, of course, a case of rather messy organization, maximizing use of space, and skimping on production cost and quality, but it corresponds to a larger tendency to place spell-texts on the back of other materials. In many cases, such as in the daybook miscellanea, they were placed at the end or the back of the manuscript, as is the case with the early Qin Shuihudi 睡虎地 *Mamei* 馬媒 horse prayer.[32] In other cases, they were copied in as fillers in the planned spaces between other texts on the manuscripts.[33] The spell texts seem to occupy a sub-primal position on the manuscript. When not written as stand-alone texts, they are either used to fill up remaining space on manuscripts or are written on the backs of other materials. This suggests that not all acts of collecting useful or interesting knowledge were carefully planned out, and that the process of collection did not need to stop after an initial set had been written down. That some texts were collected in manuscript form almost as an afterthought should also alert us that not all of the gathered text may have ended up in manuscript form, and that some of it may have lived on in memory and oral discourse.

Materially speaking therefore, it seems as if the materials were given secondary status. This is commonly seen across the ancient world more broadly, and many spells but also sections of scripture have been found on sherds, or reused papyri from Greco-Egypt for example.[34] While the status of the manuscript may be a factor, it could equally well reveal a difference in the imagined use of the material. Clearly, display was not an important factor in the material representation of the texts, rather, economy and the need to record as much as possible on a given writing support was more important.

The manuscript in this form is a storage container for knowledge, formatted to different degrees of codicological sophistication. In some of the manuscripts discussed so far, care was taken through punctuation and use of space to make the content distinct and legible, suggesting active use and the ability to easily reference the material for specific information.[35] The texts display a range of formats, from simple notation and straightforward collocation of text, to

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32   For studies, see Chen Wei 2014: 1.508–09. A translation is provided in Sterckx 2002: 63.

33   Harper 2017: 112–16.

34   See Johnson 1986: lv–lvii. For other materials such as the scriptures written on the verso or on recycled materials, see Luijendijk 2010. This study alerts us that the quality of the material preservation of a given text does not necessarily translate to the status accorded to it.

35   See also Krijgsman 2018.

more advanced formatting and structuring. Possibly, these manuscript carriers functioned as one-volume libraries, to echo the title of a recent study on multi-text manuscripts,[36] and bear similarity to the daybooks discussed at the end of this chapter in their capacity to collect a range of texts that were often in themselves small collections. The daybooks, however, are more focused in their collection efforts and before turning to them I first review two purpose-oriented collections targeted at general users.

2.3 *Mobile Prayer and Spell Collections: The* ***Dao ci** *and* ***Ci zhu zhi dao**
In this section I discuss two collections designed to withstand more active use. A general user could carry the manuscripts along and use their prayers and spells on location. Both examples discussed here are purpose-oriented collections. The Tsinghua University Warring States manuscript **Dao ci* 禱辭 features eight prayers revolving around the Altars of Soil and Grain *sheji* 社稷 sacrifices to repopulate an abandoned city; the Beida Qin manuscript **Ci zhu zhi dao* 祠祝之道, in turn, is a collection of predominantly travel rituals and spells. Their texts are easily used by a non-expert: the user simply had to follow clearly indicated ritual steps on-site and insert their name in the marked spot while reading the text out loud.

Let us start with the **Dao ci*, which appears in the recently published ninth volume of the Tsinghua manuscripts.[37] While the editors describe it as a prayer text much like the **Zhu ci*, the **Dao ci* manuscript differs from the latter in terms of intended use. While the **Zhu ci* combines two general types of prayers for different purposes, and was brought together with unrelated text on the same manuscript, the **Dao ci* has a single function. It is also somewhat longer, with twenty-three slips recording eight different prayers, all revolving around the Altars of Soil and Grain sacrifice. The manuscript itself is also prepared to withstand more active use. The slips are bound with three binding strings and are not written to the very end, mitigating potential damage to the text on the vulnerable ends of the bamboo slips. The slips are also longer, around 44.5 cm, and while the manuscript is thus not easily packed, the larger size and clear writing improves legibility and adds perhaps a little touch of ritual gravitas when reading it out loud. The manuscript carries no title, but the bottom of the slips are numbered, and the eight prayer-sections are divided with section marks and blank spaces to ensure clarity of text divisions. The production

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36   Friedrich and Schwarke 2016.

37   Huang Dekuan 2019: 20–23 (images), 182–89 (transcription). For a study outlining the ritual procedures of the text, see Cheng Hao 2019.

FIGURE 10   Close-up of the *Dao ci* manuscript
SOURCE: HUANG DEKUAN 2019: 20. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE
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TEXTS, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY, BEIJING

quality of the manuscript lends itself to carrying it around and reading it out loud, say, in the context of performing the sacrificial rites.

Compared to the Baoshan and Geling materials, which focus more on the procedural context and preserve comparatively less of the prayers themselves,[38] the *Zhu ci* and *Dao ci* focus predominantly on the words of the prayers and less on the people involved, the user need only to insert their name while reading. At the end of each prayer is a short and clearly indicated description of the relevant rite. The prayers are rhymed and phrased in the voice of a great-grandson addressing the deities of the city.

A good illustration of the nature of *Dao ci* can be found in the first section of the text:

皋！告爾某邑之社:始有祏[*dak]。曾孫某邑不幸，命裼[?*krâk]，[39] 敢用五器宮之以祏[*dak]。繁邑寔始昌，大縵作君夫、君婦、(1)[40] 君高祏[*dak]。如君之神靈修正民人[*nin]，苟使四方之群明（氓）[41] 歸曾孫某之邑者，其来=（陳陳）[*drins]，[42] 其来徇徇[*s-wins]，見某乃喜 (2)，驅驅、憧憧、與與、豫豫[*lah]。如胥重諸汝[*naʔ]，▬ 如見其父[*baʔ]，▬ 如見其母[*məʔ]，如見其妻[*tshəj]，▬ 如見其子[*tsəʔ]，如百涌川之歸海[*hməʔ] ▬，如販入 (3) 市[*dəʔ]。敢獻玄纁之幣三束，皇皇之父[*baʔ]，父余茲邦。邦與大夫[*pa]，歲獻諸汝[*naʔ]。▬ 其禮:社東焉藏，其深及腋[*jak]，三日百[*prâk]。┗ (4)

Hark! I call on the altar of your X's city. At first there was the shrine, your great-grandchild X's city met with misfortune, and I ordered a rite of establishment. I dare to use the five vessels, and house them in the shrine. When the city is populated again and prosperous as in the beginning, I will cover the shrines of lord Master, lord Mistress, and lord High in great plain silks. If my lord's spirit corrects the people, then the masses from the four regions will return to the city of your great-grandchild, and their coming will be as if in formations, their coming will be as if everywhere. Seeing my [city] they will rejoice, and speed on and come unendingly, they will come forth and move at ease—as if waiting to see you again, as if seeing their father, as if seeing their mother, as if seeing

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38 See Baoshan slips 205, 206, 224 and 225, the Geling prayer, and the Tangweisi slips referred to above; Zhao Xiaobin 2019: 27.

39 In the absence of a reconstruction for 裼, I tentatively refer to the reconstruction of *ge* 格 in Schuessler 2009: 65.

40 Slip numbers present on the recto of the slips are here marked within round brackets.

41 Following Meng Pengsheng 2019.

42 Following Zi Ju 2020.

their wife, as if seeing their son, just as the hundreds of flowing streams return to the sea, as goods entering the market. I dare present three bolts of dark-red silk. O August father, please replenish this state. The state and its grandees will yearly make an offering to you. Its rite: Bury it east of the Altar, reaching up to your armpit in depth, drum the *bai* for three days.

The prayer expresses the wish to return a city to its former glory, asking the altar-deity to take up residence and draw in people to fill the city. In return, the deity will be wrapped and gifted with silks, and receive the yearly *Sui* 歲 sacrifice on behalf of the state and its grandees. The prayer is long, rhymed, and literary. It uses binomes and metaphor to signify the desired movement of people into the city. At the end of the prayer a short meta-textual note describes the rite accompanying the prayer, detailing where to place the sacrificial goods and what music to play.

Compared to other prayers found in unearthed texts, the *Dao ci features carefully crafted literary compositions, likely targeted at the aesthetic sentiments of the local elite. The supplicant of the prayer and the city it targets are left anonymous (*mou* 某), and we are presented with a model or DIY prayer that could be used for the rejuvenation of any abandoned city. The remainder of the text features more prayers to the altar, the god of millet, gods of the earth, and various related deities.

I am inclined to follow Zi Ju's suggestion that it was designed as a complete manual for performing the set of rites involved in the *sheji* 社稷 sacrifice.[43] It functions as a collection in that it gathers all required prayers together in a handy format, and filled a social need as many cities were abandoned in the vicissitudes of Warring States warfare. For earlier periods, there seems to be no indication that specialists required such texts to perform regular proceedings, and as such the idea that the text presents a manual of sorts is probably not far off the mark. The text appears targeted at an elite but non-specialized audience, tasked with reinvigorating depopulated towns without necessarily having the ritual expertise to do so. The visually clear format of the manuscript favors reading the text out loud, and the materials were likely intended to be used *in situ*, although memorization of the content is of course also not excluded. In either case, it effectively cuts out the need for ritual expertise and allowed literate elites to take charge of the proceedings themselves.

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43   Zi Ju (2020) disagrees with Cheng Hao (2020), who understands the text as a more casual collection of eight types of prayers related to the *sheji* 社稷 offerings.

2.4 *The* *Ci zhu zhi dao

The Beida Qin manuscripts contain clearer indications of their user. The cache contains texts dealing with the inspection of roads and waterways, and they likely belonged to a low-level official of the Qin empire whose career saw him on the road for long stretches of time.[44] This context goes some way in explaining the presence of the *Ci zhu zhi dao*, a labelled, short collection of travel rituals and spells.

The most striking aspect of this manuscript is not the short collection of rituals written out on six slips (27 × 0.6 cm.), but rather the broad bamboo label (34.4 × 1.7 cm.) which was once attached to it.[45] Written in a crude, large hand, it states: "These are all methods of offering and incantation, do not lose them!" (皆祠祝之道，勿亡). In a self-reflexive statement of only seven graphs, the label proclaims the content of the manuscript as a consciously designed collection meant to be preserved.[46] This act of purposely gathering materials in collections also shines through the titles given to the two collections of legal proceedings from Baoshan, titled *Ji zhu* 集著 (*Collected Records*) and *Ji zhuyan* 集著言 (*Collected Records of Words*) respectively.[47] A material advantage of the large label is that it serves to protect the slips from additional wear, as it covered and supported the fragile slips, almost like a hard-cover, albeit on one side only.

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44   For an overview of the texts in the collection, see Zhu Fenghan 2012.

45   The material arrived at the university caked in a clump of mud; for an overview of the cleaning and reconstruction process, see Beijing daxue chutu wenxian yanjiusuo 2012. Within the mud-clump were encased several manuscript rolls. Slips 1–4 of the present manuscript were preserved in their original order, and even one of the three binding strings was still attached. The roll was pressed on top of a broad bamboo board which also showed traces of three similarly-spaced binding strings. In all likelihood it was once attached to the same manuscript as the label; see Chen Kanli 2012. Finally, two remaining slips with the same material characteristics as the first four were discovered separated from the main bundle. Based on their material characteristics and the process of "indoor excavation" 室內發掘, the materials were arranged together as a single manuscript. For a study, see Tian Tian 2015.

46   Whether the label and the slips were produced in one setting as a single manuscript, or whether the label was only tied to the rest of the manuscript later is hard to establish. The similarly spaced binding strings do not rule out either possibility as the manuscript could have been rebound. Likewise, while the label is written in roughly executed large graphs, contrasting to the elegant, almost cursive hand of the slips, it is not uncommon practice for scribes to use a distinctive "title-hand" to set it apart from the rest of the text, and since structurally speaking, there are no significant differences in the execution of the graphs themselves, it is entirely possible that the differences are due to style and function rather than a different scribe. For this point, see Richter 2006.

47   Chen Wei 1996: 57–60.

Hardly legible, there are two lines of text on the back of the label as well. The visible last part of its second line reads, "Place a mat under the mulberry tree, offer towards the east" (布席桑下，東卿{嚮}), which according to Tian Tian refers to the ritual procedure required for the spells on the manuscript.[48] However, similarities with the procedural text suggest that it likewise wrote a specific instruction for a travel prayer.[49] The two lines on the back of the label are followed by blank space, indicating that the text should not be read together with that of the following slips.

The text in its current condition contains four instructions for offering and spells (including the label-text). The first prayer on the manuscript itself finds a close parallel with a travel text from Shuihudi daybook B.[50] It deals with road-travel:

> 祠道旁: 南嚮二席，席餟，合東嚮、西嚮各一席，席三餟。召曰: "大尚行主、少尚行主，合三土皇"。(06－001) 神次席，御事皆拜，乃餟。上湯饌，即餟席後，餟各如其席前。宰尊所各一餟，席一俎。 └ 龍己酉，(06－002) 用，生者皆有疢。其炊所皆有五胾，胾已祠而燔之。期一上酒，四上而潘。(06－003)

> Offering on the side of the road: Place two mats to the south, and perform a libation at each mat, place a mat both to the east and to the west, and perform three libations at the mats. The summons goes: "Major lord in charge of travel, minor lord in charge of travel, together with the three Earth Sovereigns." When the spirits have entered their seats, the one in charge of affairs pays obeisance to each, and then performs a libation. Serve soup and consume it, then perform a libation behind the mats, perform each in the same manner as in front of the mats. Place a mat at each of the places where meat is cut, and one offering table at each of the mats. Avoid using [this ceremony] on Jiyou days, or the living will meet with suffering.[51] Perform five libations at each of the fireplaces, after the libation make an offering, and burn the remains. Periodically offer alcohol, after four offerings pour out the remains.

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48   Tian Tian 2015: 38.
49   *Pace* Wang Ning 2017, who has argued that they should be read together with boards 06-004 and L-005 dealing with the silk harvest.
50   Tian Tian 2015: 39.
51   Following Chen Wei 2016: 219.

The directions stipulate a summons on the side of the road, but it is clear from the instructions involving fireplaces that an inn or waystation was the assumed context. The next spell deals with the expulsion of rodents during the silk season and the last involves a spell for travel by boat. As such, the majority of the prayers recorded on the manuscript focus on travel-related matters and, given that the same collection of manuscripts yielded materials evidencing of frequent travel in the service of the state, this manuscript may have accompanied the tomb occupant on his travels in life.[52] The material characteristics make the manuscript equally well-suited to travel. The three binding strings and the large label would have protected the slips from wear encountered during travel. It was quite common to include spells against vermin in a variety of collections, its presence in the present collections may have had vermin infested travel lodgings in mind.

Mobile, purpose-built collections made technical knowledge the purview of even low-level officials or elites who would have previously hired the services of an expert. The shape of the manuscript and the form of the texts allowed these collections to stand alone and unmediated, granting access to a wider range of users. This trend culminates in the encompassing daybook collections, presenting a range of highly technical knowledge in easily accessible formats.

3   Daybooks and Related Collections of the Early Empires

In the remainder of this chapter, the broad scope and technical depth of the daybook manuscripts will serve as a counterpoint to highlight the processes of use-oriented selection which guided the formation of many private collections. Harper notes that "the daybook manuscript signified the ideal of completeness" and "serve[d] as a substitute for the specialists," and that "each manuscript was another effort to organize—or, better, to reorganize—existing pieces of information on the delimited space of its bound slips."[53] Daybooks are therefore as much a rhetorical statement on completeness of knowledge and technical expertise as they are an actual reference. But exactly because of this breadth of specialist texts collected in the standardized daybooks, it is harder to discover a lead line on their intended use and the processes of selection that formed the collections. The focus in this section is therefore on

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52   Tian Tian (2015: 41–42) and Xin Deyong (2013) have argued that the occupant of the tomb whence these manuscripts originally came was likely a low-level official in charge of the transport of grain.

53   Harper 2017: 128.

manuscript collections related to daybooks in the broader sense of the word. Before discussing specific cases, a short review of the daybook genre is therefore necessary.

The daybook manuscripts emerged from the mid-Warring States onwards and gained in popularity by the early empires.[54] These collections tend to be long, regularly standing at well over a hundred slips, and despite variations in content, form a recognizable, and to an extent standardized, genre of technical writing.[55] Their content divides into three main types of material. The daybooks open with a number of general hemerologies relatively stable across collections, such as the "Jianchu" 建除 (Establish-Remove) and "Congchen" 叢晨 (Collected Branches) systems for determining the favorability of days for general actions. Several topical hemerologies follow, ranging from specific activities such as making clothes, building a house, or traveling. These two types of hemerologies are followed by an even more varied selection of related materials, including spells and prayers, agricultural knowledge, and divinations. The topical hemerologies and varied materials exhibit the greatest variance among the manuscripts and reveal more about the specific interests of users and the access they had to materials. They also provide good evidence for the later addition of materials, often in different hands.[56]

As far as I know, no names of individuals are present in the daybooks, and expertise is presented as divorced from the originating experts. They offer unmediated access to their users. As noted by Bujard, the hemerological sections are eminently usable, and one would only need to consult a calendar to determine the appropriate action.[57] The spell and prayer materials contained within are often presented as ready-made, and with the proper ingredients and a simple reading out of the words of a spell or prayer, one could easily take on the role of exorcist, healer, or wizened traveler.[58]

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54   For an excellent overview and a range of in-depth studies of the daybook manuscripts, see Harper and Kalinowski 2017.

55   Representative examples have been excavated from Jiudian 九店, Fangmatan 放馬灘, Shuihudi 睡虎地, Kongjiapo 孔家坡, etc.; see the overview in the appendices to Harper and Kalinowski 2017: 439–59.

56   See Liu Lexian 2017, especially pp. 64–65, on recurring sections across daybooks, the practice of filling in blank spaces, and the spread of topical general hemerologies and other materials. Note also (p. 67) that this practice of including a variety of materials is present from the earliest extant daybooks such as those from Jiudian. For an excellent case study of the Shuihudi daybook A manuscript, describing the layout and processes of addition and expansion of the manuscript, see Kalinowski 2008.

57   Bujard 2017: 332.

58   Harper 2017: 109; see also Fodde-Reguer 2014 on the standardization of technical knowledge and expertise in the manuals of the early empire as opposed to pre-imperial individual expertise.

Nonetheless, the individual texts within these collections betray their expert origins and share a family resemblance to, and find counterparts in, specialized collections.[59] The daybooks thus stand at the apex of a continuous process of (re-)collection that characterizes the *mouvance* and spread of technical knowledge in a manuscript culture.[60] But they were by no means the end of this development, and evidence for its continuation can be found well into the medieval period. The Dunhuang manuscripts provide numerous examples of textual material highly similar to the daybooks, resurfacing in collections of technical materials that were self-consciously excerpted or selected from existing collections.[61] The daybooks thus feed into new collections in similar ways that individual collections and texts fed into the daybooks, each suited to the needs of the individual user.[62]

As noted previously, there is an emerging understanding of the standard form of the daybook text-type, its variations, and the application of its different hemerologies. For the present argument about selection and collection of technical knowledge, I focus on daybook-related collections that do not fully adhere to the more standard format. In particular, I focus on three Qin dynasty collections from Zhoujiatai and Yueshan, including two daybooks in the broad sense and another closely related miscellany. These collections come packed with hemerological and related content but lack the general hemerologies such as the "Jianchu" and "Congchen" systems defining the daybooks in the narrow, standardized sense as a stable text type. The collections discussed in this section tend to be shorter than the daybooks narrowly defined while still sharing many individual texts with the type. In their shorter length and larger variance, these collections serve to highlight an even more individualized process of selection of technical knowledge and reveal the limits of the daybook type and the predilections of individual users.[63]

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59   Kalinowski (2008: 387–78) reviews studies on shared phrasing between the Jiudian Daybook and divination texts for example, see also Harper 2017: 116–21. Shaughnessy (2014: 11–12, 18) notes similarities of phrasing and constructions between line statements of the *Changes* and injunctions in the daybooks.

60   Zumthor 1972: 84–96; Cerquiglini 1989: 57.

61   Harper 2017: 123–124; 2016. See also Yu Xin 2003 which identifies many parallels between ancient excavated manuscripts (especially the *rishu*) and Dunhuang manuscripts.

62   See Harper 2017: 93, 97, 105, 111.

63   This tension in defining the genre is revealed by the Zhoujiatai manuscript editors' choice to refer to the hemerological material from bundle A as a Daybook 日書 while Harper and Kalinowski (2017: 339) classify it under daybook-related manuscripts.

3.1   *Professional and Personal Selections of Technical Knowledge: Zhoujiatai*

Based on the quality of the tomb and its objects, and the activities listed in the calendars found in the tomb, the Zhoujiatai manuscripts excavated from a late Qin dynasty tomb in Jingzhou, Hubei likely belonged to a scribe assistant 佐史 of South Commandery 南郡.[64] Three manuscripts were found in a bamboo box together with a used inkstone, ink, brush, and a book knife among other scribal tools. Because of damage to the bamboo box and the binding strings of the manuscripts having rotten away, the order of the manuscripts has been hard to establish. Where this could not be done on the basis of content and layout, such as using the images in the daybook *Rishu* 日書 manuscript, the arrangement should be seen as necessarily tentative, especially for the second manuscript *Bingfang ji qita* 病方及其他.[65]

The bamboo manuscripts were found in three bundles, A, B, and C. In addition, a single wooden board recording a calendar for the first year of the Second Emperor of Qin was found. The 244 slips of bundle A contained a *Rishu* manuscript and calendars for the 36th and 37th years of the First Emperor of Qin. These were either bound within the same manuscript roll or loosely wrapped around the outside. Bundle B stands at 75 slips and preserves a calendar for the 34th year. Finally, bundle C is comprised of the *Bingfang ji qita* manuscript.[66]

Based on the selective content of the manuscripts and the overlap between the calendar of the 36th year and a hemerological text specific to that year in the *Rishu*, Harper has argued that it is quite likely that the *Rishu* and *Bingfang ji qita* manuscripts were collected by the tomb occupant himself. Where the *Rishu* manuscript was produced with noticeable care and formatted quite consistently, the latter manuscript features multiple, rather coarse, scribal hands and exhibits some differences in the physical make-up of the slips. It was likely the product of a more stretched out and intermittent process of collecting. Nevertheless, even the carefully planned *Rishu* manuscript seems to feature the later addition of a second text on "Rongli ri" 戎歷日 hemerology.[67] Both are good examples of technical collections as "living" objects, and it seems likely they were in active use before being their interment.

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64   For an overview of the tomb and the finds, see Hubei sheng Jingmen shi Zhouliang yuqiao bowuguan 2001. Text editions for the manuscripts that follow are based on the third volume of Chen Wei 2014.

65   For a discussion and some rearrangements, see Chen Wei 2014: 3.5.

66   See Harper 2018 for an overview and study.

67   Harper (2018: 60–64) provides an explanation of this system.

As noted by Harper,[68] the *Rishu* manuscript is defined by an astro-calendrical text on correlations related to the position of the Dipper (*dou*). Much of the manuscript's other content is also astro-calendrical, with texts and diagrams correlating the lunar lodges with the months, and a text correlating the *wuzi* 五子 and *wuxing* 五行 with the 36th year of the First Emperor, corresponding in turn to the calendar which was attached to or wrapped around the manuscript.[69] The manuscript is devoid of much of the topical hemerologies often seen in other daybooks, but it does include a prediction on the fortunes of a child based on the direction faced at birth, as well as two topical texts with a clerical focus, such as the "Guxu" 孤虛 system targeted at finding robbers and the "Li" 吏, on favorable days for seeing officials.[70]

Its calendrical focus and its intimate connection to the 36th year of the First Emperor sets it apart from other daybooks not tied to a particular historical moment. Its relative lack of topical hemerologies also contrasts with most daybooks, which tend to display a more encyclopedic range of concerns, and it appears that the present manuscript is focused more on those concerns faced in professional life rather than the "broad range of human concerns," which Harper rightly notes generally constitute the mainstay of the daybooks proper.[71] That latter, more personal aspect, is much better represented in the *Bingfang ji qita* manuscript, and perhaps given the differences in production quality, it is not unreasonable to surmise that the two collections reveal different functions and contexts governing the selection of materials, one professional and one more personal. If we assume that the manuscripts reflect the selections and concerns of the tomb owner, it seems that his professional and daily life concerns, wedded in the daybooks, are divided between the two manuscripts of the *Rishu* collection.

The *Bingfang ji qita* manuscript presents a more eclectic collection of materials.[72] As the title given by the editors suggests, the lion's share of the manuscript is taken up by recipes and spells to counter a variety of ailments, from minor ones such as skin-moles and toothaches up to serious heart conditions. Another large selection of the collection has a decidedly agricultural focus, including a spell to deal with horse skittishness, a lengthy and complex prayer to the First Farmer (*Xiannong* 先農) to secure fortune in the harvest, and a number of items (some with a hemerological slant) ranging from selling

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68   Harper 2018: 60.

69   For an overview of the manuscript's contents, see Harper and Kalinowski, 2017: 456–57.

70   Both of these texts are seen more regularly in the daybooks, the latter can be found in daybooks from Shuihudi A and Fangmatan, for instance.

71   Harper 2018: 69.

72   See Liu Lexian 2017: 73 and 82.

livestock at the market, stopping rats, fattening cows, and washing silk-worms, among others. In addition, it features some purely hemerological content such as the "Wusheng" 五勝 system employing the five-phase conquest sequence to overcome travel prohibitions, and the "Guxu" 孤虛 system and its application for finding lost cattle. This suggests that the hemerological content of the manuscript is used primarily to serve agricultural concerns. As a collection, the manuscript thus comes close to the farmer's almanac analogy referred to earlier.

As Chen Wei has shown, the "Guxu" items of the *Bingfang ji qita* are closely related to the item on finding robbers in the *Rishu* manuscript. Material characteristics rule out the possibility that they belonged to the same manuscript, and Chen notes that they possibly represent different versions of the method, similar to the presence of multiple versions seen in the Shuihudi A and B manuscripts.[73] A look at the opening two lines of the "Guxu" text as presented in the *Bingfang ji qita* will suffice to show the outlines of the system. For the six periods, a direction of "entry" (*ru* 入, i.e. where the missing person or thing is coming from), is specified:

> 甲子旬，戌亥為孤，辰巳為虛，道東南入。 (355)
> 甲戌旬，申酉為孤，寅卯為虛，從西南入。 (356)[74]

> During *jiazi* periods, *xu* and *hai* are "orphan," *chen* and *si* are "empty," [it] will enter from the southeast.
> During *jiaxu* periods, *shen* and *you* are "orphan," *yin* and *mao* are "empty," [it] will enter from the southwest.

The "Guxu" system presented here provides a model for finding the direction and the location (not spelled out) of lost persons or things. As Liu Lexian notes, the locations of the earthly stems related to the "empty" days correspond to the directions of entry in the model, the "orphan" days in turn reveal the location, as can be shown through the following text on lost cattle:[75]

> ・ 甲子亡馬牛，求西北方；甲戌旬，求西方 [76](361)

> When cattle has gone missing during a *jiazi* period, search in the north-west; if during a *jiaxu* period, search in the west;

73   Chen Wei 2005.
74   Chen Wei 2014: 3.69–70.
75   Liu Lexian 2005.
76   Chen Wei 2014: 3.70.

In essence, the lost-cattle text is a direct application of the system, specified to the agricultural concerns common to the manuscript. Slip 260 from the *Rishu* manuscript: "Look for the direction of entry and hiding place of robbers using the 'Orphan-Empty' system" ([以] 孤虛循求盜所道入者及藏處), should probably be seen as a similar application of the system. Because the slip is damaged, the text might not be complete, so without this context, it may be understood as anything from a note, to a record of an actual event, or a prescription for administrators.

Whatever the case, both manuscripts actualize the "Guxu" system based on their own selection criteria, the *Bingfang ji qita* additionally providing a copy of the system for personal reference. Thus I do not think that we are dealing with two instantiations of the same system, but rather two differently focused applications of the system keyed to the different natures of the collections. While this highlights the selective nature of the contents of both manuscript collections, it should also not be forgotten that the *Bingfang ji qita* also contains two items perhaps better suited to the professional and astro-calendrical focus of the *Rishu* collection, namely a record of the dispatch of an Ordinance (*ling* 令) document, and part of a text dealing with the constellations. This overlap in concerns between the collections and the occurrence of dated records in both supports the idea that both were collected and in use by the same individual. In short, while some care has been taken in differentiating and organizing different types of content, the overlap also highlights the inherent variance to continuous collection.

Stronger indications of active selection appear when we examine the variance in the *Bingfang ji qita* manuscript. It contains a little over thirty individual items, and six passages which might or might not have constituted individual items themselves. Because of the state of preservation of the manuscript, the order and arrangement of the items cannot be established. The vast majority (twenty-nine items) feature an initiator dot marking the start of a new item. Among these, fourteen can be understood as medical recipes (relying on active ingredients) and another ten as magical recipes (relying on spells). It contains at least six agricultural items (for example, the spell on horse skittishness or the prayer to the First Farmer),[77] ten-odd more serious diseases (often marked as "ailments" or *bing* 病), and a number of general prescriptions related to growing hair and breastfeeding, for instance. This diversity is at odds with the specialized collections discussed earlier, and it is in this sense that the manuscript shares characteristics with the miscellaneous nature of the daybooks.

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77   For an overview and analysis of the recipes, see Bujard 2017: 326–28. I have counted the recipe on itchiness in women (女子蚤) in the medical recipes category.

The occurrence of several methods targeting the same condition reveals the interests of this collection most clearly. The collection contains three methods for tooth decay, for example, including one with a second opinion. It also includes two methods for dealing with skin-moles and two ways to get rid of rats. The presence of such multiple methods highlights several factors inherent to collections of technical knowledge. First, there is a good chance that a given method does not work and alternatives were considered necessary to root out the problem. Second, certain problems were more common and had multiple popular solutions. Rats are a common pest frequently encountered in Qin dynasty documents and personal collections alike. Finally, the collector likely had specific interests governing the selection of materials (tooth-ache stands out), while leaving out other common materials such as spells for dealing with ghosts and demons, or hemerologies for clothing and the placing of residences that appear in other collections.

The anonymous "second opinion" cited on a separate slip after the second method for dealing with tooth-ache in particular reveals the collector's access to multiple sources of knowledge and suggests that the sources of knowledge became increasingly irrelevant as markers of authority. The method relied on some ingredients and a ritual involving the pace of Yu, and the burial of tiles standing in for the damaged teeth.[78] It is followed by the line:

   ・ 其一曰:以米亦可。男子以米七，女子以米二七。 (331)

   One [other] says: it also works with rice. Seven repetitions with rice for men, seven repetitions with rice twice for women.

Perhaps the collector (or composer of the recipe) had seen different versions of the same method, or the second opinion reflects a successful adaptation of the recipe. In any case, the need to collect both methods reflects the pressing nature of the issue while betraying skepticism of their efficacy. Furthermore, it is striking that the collection of a government employee shows such a sustained interest in agricultural knowledge. Where rats and grain are often mentioned in granary documents, prayers for good harvest and recipes for the fattening of oxen are not. I suspect, especially given the personal nature of some of the recipes (impotency, for example), that the collection reflects a private concern of the user, likely related to the management of a farmstead beside administrative duties.

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78   For the puns, use of metaphor, and rhyme in the spells, see Harper 2017: 130.

FIGURE 11
Second opinion on a separate slip in the Zhoujiatai *Bingfang ji qita
SOURCE: CHEN WEI 2014: 3.159. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CENTRE OF
BAMBOO AND SILK MANUSCRIPTS OF WUHAN UNIVERSITY

3.2   *Sacrifice and Daily Life: Yueshan*

The Yueshan daybook shares a combination of agricultural and hemerological concerns with the Zhoujiatai materials but directs it towards sacrifice. In 1986, a Qin tomb of similar rank to that from Zhoujiatai was excavated from Yueshan, Jingzhou, Hubei Province. It revealed just two wooden tablets (19 and 23 cm long, 5 and 5.8 cm wide respectively) inscribed on both sides with hemerological content similar to the temporally close Shuihudi daybook materials. According to the editors of the *Qin jiandu heji*, the two tablets are best seen as a single collection.[79] Written in relatively equal columns over two registers, some of the texts cross over onto the next register but never span the front and back of a tablet. Tablet 1 features neat and ordered handwriting in equal columns divided into two registers on the front and the back. At 493 graphs, it is written quite densely, and its seven texts are separated by small blank spaces, except for the final three lines, which are separated with a mark. Tablet 2 is shorter, only 111 graphs front to back, is less neatly written, and contains at least four separate texts, one of which contains two separator marks. None of the texts were titled originally, so their working titles have been provisionally added by the *Qin jiandu heji* editors based on counterparts in the daybooks.

The content of the tablets is concerned with when one should and should not engage in a range of daily life activities involving sacrifice and husbandry. It additionally contains common topical hemerologies concerning the making of clothes, return-travel, and childbirth, for instance. Most of the texts find close counterparts to other daybooks from Shuihudi, Kongjiapo, and Fangmatan, for instance, often even matching the sequences of favorable and unfavorable days but with slight variations in the prohibitions for the days. Despite its short length and the lack of general hemerologies common to standardized full-fledged daybooks, the content of the Yueshan tablets makes it a recognizable member of the genre at large.

The manuscript's portability limited the amount of text it could carry. Given the size and empty space left on the boards, comprehensiveness was probably not sought. Instead, the manuscripts probably served as handy reference, perhaps during travel or the afterlife. The boards were buried along with the other grave-goods in the front section of the chamber housing the outer-coffin, distinguishing them from manuscripts linked closely to the tomb occupant such as in the case of Shuihudi, where the materials were placed near the head of the buried. These observations, combined with the generally sub-standard quality of especially the second board, suggests they might have been prepared as burial items. At this point in history, burial objects start to reflect more and

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79   Chen Wei 2014: 3.95.

FIGURE 12   Yueshan tablet 1, recto and verso

more those items considered necessary for a normal and potentially prosper-
ous afterlife, and accordingly the manuscripts might still reveal the broader
aspects of selection processes.[80]

Besides a text on the good and avoidance days related to the six elements,
*"Liu shi ri" 六事日 (Days of the Six Affairs) and two short texts on the making
and wearing of clothes, respectively *"Yi" 衣 (Clothes) and *"Wufu ji" 五服忌
(Avoidances of the Five Garments), well over half of the board is concerned
with cattle and sacrifice. The second text on the board for instance, the *"Qi
xu ri" 七畜日 (Days of the Seven Cattle), relates to the days when animals (and
slaves) are bought. Once they enter *ru* 入 the household on the right days, the
spirits will follow them and reward you after a sacrifice. The seven items take
the form:

犬良日:丁丑、[丁] 未、丙辰、己巳、亥。其忌:辛巳、未

Good days for dogs: *dingchou*, [*ding*]*wei, bingchen, jisi*, x-*hai*. Their avoid-
ances: *xinsi*, x-*wei* (tablet 1, recto, register 2 column 2)[81]

The version from Fangmatan adds specific comments for the days within each
lemma, for example, an injunction against burning dog excrement as it would
lead dogs to distance themselves from their owner (燔園中犬屎，犬弗暱).[82]
Good and avoidance days for the acquisition of objects, slaves, and animals is
a common topic in the daybooks. These texts generally tend to contain longer
lists including wells, clothes, the market, or avoidances regarding travel and
offerings.[83] They often include specific avoidances like the one against burn-
ing dog excrement, but lack a general and overarching comment on the results
of adhering to the system. The Yueshan text stands out first because it not

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80   See Guo Jue 2019 for a discussion of the "funeral economy" wherein texts and objects were
      produced for the grave, what they meant for the afterlife, and to what extents these items
      reflected the status of their owners.
81   Chen Wei 2014: 3.98. The presence of *wei* in both the good and avoidance days confirms
      that a *ganzhi* is missing here and that it does not simply cover all *wei* days. Likely the pre-
      ceding element needs to be repeated (despite lacking a repetition mark) leading to *ding-
      wei* 丁未 and *xinwei* 辛未 respectively. This is in part confirmed by Shuihudi daybook
      B, slip 74, which also contains the item *dingwei* in an otherwise similar list but includes
      guiwei (癸未) for the second item instead.
82   Chen Wei 2014: 4.33.
83   Compare, for example, the *Zaji* 雜忌 from Fangmatan; see Chen Wei 2014: 4.94–95,
      which also includes wells and clothes. Compare also *Liangri* 良日 from Shuihudi day-
      book B; see Chen Wei 2014: 1.395–96.

only concerns itself with the acquisition of living property but also because it focuses on sacrifice:

凡七畜，以五卯祠之，必有得也。其入神行，歲再祠之，吉。

For all seven cattle, sacrifice them on the five *mao* days, then you will gain from them. When brought in [on the correct day], the spirit follows along, sacrifice to them again during the *Sui* sacrifice, advantageous. (tablet 1, recto, register 2 column 5)[84]

The core hemerological issue of this text lies in determining the proper dates for acquiring cattle, slaves, and so on, because these dates determine whether the spirits will follow along with them and thus bestow fortune on the people offering them in sacrifice later on. However, I have yet to come across sacrifices involving actual slaves in these texts, so it is probably safer to assume that the slaves here were being replaced by figurines in the sacrifice.[85] Passages such as these elevate the abbreviated list-like quality of many of the items in the Yueshan tablet (and indeed much of the hemerological material in general) to more concrete evidence for religious beliefs and practice. Regular sacrifice was a necessary element both of daily life and during the afterlife, and for this reason, the text reflects selection principles regardless of how we understand the nature of the manuscripts. Notwithstanding the first tablet's inclusion of the two smaller texts on clothing, its focus on sacrifice and the spirits comes to the fore even more when considering the texts *"Sha ri" 殺日 (Days for Killing), *"Ci" 刺 (Piercing), and *"Ci ri" 祠日 (Days for Sacrifices), all of which deal with the proper days for killing animals for the sacrifice.[86]

The second board is focused more on hemerologies reflecting daily life concerns. The four texts that can be clearly identified are, in order, *"Bao ri" 報日 (Days of Requital), which deals with when to ask after the health of a sick person, *"Sheng zi" 生子 (Childbirth), *"Guixing" 歸行 (Return-travel), and, on the back of the tablet, *"Wu zhong ji" 五種忌 (Avoidance Days for the Five Crops). All of these texts find parallels with other daybooks, and the selection is particular only in that the whole tablet concerns topical hemerologies, albeit without as clear a focus as the first tablet. Both materially and in terms of topics, the

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84 Chen Wei 2014: 3.98.

85 *Pace* Harper and Kalinowski, 2017: 456. For the use of figurines in burial, see Selbitschka 2015.

86 A similar text in Kongjiapo adds a statement that one cannot kill or sacrifice animals on piercing days, Kongjiapo slip 236: "此天刺，不可祠及殺," cited from Chen Wei 2014: 3.102, n.1.

two tablets are significantly different. Where the first reads as a goal-oriented selection focused on sacrifice, with only a few unrelated texts, the latter is best characterized as a topical miscellany. They represent two types of technical collections seen throughout this chapter, one use-oriented and the other simply for storing text.

Taken together, the different functions of the manuscripts from Zhoujiatai and Yueshan reflect different concerns of the daybook collections at large. Collections were designed to provide technical knowledge specialized enough to be relevant while covering as wide a range of topics available. In the Zhoujiatai and Yueshan materials, these functions were not fulfilled by a single comprehensive daybook manuscript, but instead spread out over two smaller collections. Because technical knowledge has a clear object, be it professional achievement, management of the household, or private concerns, the selective nature of the collections is eminently suited to reconstruct envisioned contexts of use. In each of these contexts, collections of technical knowledge offered the general user a handy reference or easy manual, allowing them to overcome challenges and uncertainties in life without the mediation of an expert.

4   Conclusions

As objects in the daily lives and after-lives of their users, technical collections reflect clearly the concerns that occupied their wielders, whether it was toothache or sacrifice. Technical knowledge was circulating broadly across the early empires, and where certain collections attempted to collect as much as possible, adding new materials over time, others selected necessary knowledge from the stream of texts available. Both types divorced knowledge from experts. As with other genres discussed in previous chapters, the manuscript form of knowledge was productive and authoritative of its own and was not necessarily tied to an individual authority.

The degrees of variation and standardization, overlap and difference, displayed in technical collections, shows that the manuscript culture of the mid-Warring States through early empires increasingly explored new possibilities for collecting and selecting knowledge in manuscript form. Such selections were a function of and an attempt to circumvent the limits in access to knowledge faced by most collectors. They gathered different versions and opinions without suggesting that one was better than the other. Many of the collections likewise contain various texts not necessarily related to their main concerns and aimed to gather as much material as possible.

Nonetheless, many collectors required collections on a specific topic, whether as a manual, handbook, cheat-sheet, study materials, or an authoritative repository of knowledge to help them negotiate the challenges of life. Earlier technical collections especially fall in this variety, and often concern short, target-focused collections with a clear application. The larger, later collections would not have been possible without such advances and an accrual of knowledge in select collections such as these. As evidenced from parallels as late as the Dunhuang materials of the Tang, knowledge collected in written form tended to be transmitted and re-collected over time, each iteration shaping access to materials. It is the varied and eclectic interest in preserving as much knowledge as possible evinced in the daybooks for example that could counter these forces of access and selection and staved off a gradual thinning of knowledge in later periods.

Conclusion: *A Manuscript Culture's Response to the Proliferation of Text*

The increasing availability of text in manuscript form, whether transcribed from memory or newly composed, presented a twofold problem to the literate stratum of Warring States and early imperial China. On the one hand, distribution of manuscripts could not have been quick or equal,[1] and to gain knowledge of, let alone access to, a particular piece of text, must have taken considerable effort. On the other hand, where access was easier, one had to select from the increasing range of texts available to find exactly the ones that were useful and pertinent.

The different collections studied in this book reveal a range of levels of access and approaches to selection. Some collectors appear to have gathered whatever they could find, juxtaposing lists of ministers with spells for archery. Others wrought their collection of materials into composite texts, whether by frame narrative or complex causal structures. What all these collections have in common is that they were formed out of originally independent texts. Whether sayings or stories, songs or spells, there is clear evidence that many were transmitted independently or in different configurations elsewhere. Their occurrence in any collection is therefore revealing of the access collectors had to material and the selections they made.

Whenever a compiler gathered multiple texts on a single manuscript, whether following a careful plan or letting the collection grow in a more organic or even haphazard fashion, many possibilities of reception experience are generated for the recipient, who attempts to make sense of the variety and similarities within the collection. The collocation of materials, whether highly similar or vastly different, begs for an interpretive framework. This is true for libraries, tomb caches, syllabi, and, of course, collections. The attempt to understand the potential relations between materials in a collection is thus conducive to the perception of emergent properties, in terms of genre, morality, ideas on historiography, or technical expertise.

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1 If the distribution of roads and waystations under the Qin dynasty is anything to go by, it suggests stark differences between core and periphery in terms of the scope and speed of the transportation network. What is more, the network of waystations and couriers was reserved for official communication, and regular communication must have been even slower. For discussions of official communication, see Korolkov 2021; Sanft 2014; Barbieri-Low and Yates 2015: 729–35.

Sometimes, paratextual features of the manuscript, such as layout, punctuation, and the use of titles, give us material clues about how a collection was likely understood by a compiler, and what material clues recipients would have followed in structuring their reception experience. Likewise, ideas on the relationship between materials are often made more explicit through framing narratives or through comments and judgments within the text. Arguably, it still took a willing recipient to actualize these potential relations between the different texts of the collection, and it goes without saying that as a rule, multiple readings are possible of a given configuration and material, and literary constraints on interpretation only go so far in determining the reception experience.

Technical collections especially, with their intimate relation to the well-being of their owners, are conducive to understanding the motivations behind a particular selection and the arrangement of texts on the manuscript. But even where a recipient encountered a ready-made collection, they, too, would have tried to make sense of, or would at least be passively influenced by, a particular configuration of text on the manuscript. Put simply, it takes an obtuse recipient to ignore the *do ut des* principle inherent in a collection of stories wherein the protagonist does good and therefore receives good, whereas any single such story could be read for a larger variety of readings.

Such readings of any collection need to account for their intended usage and audience. Some were designed with the specialist in mind and others for a more general readership. Many collections functioned as *aides de memoire*, providing source materials for new compositions or for future reference. Others are clearly intended to transfer knowledge to its users. Many of the sayings collections from Chapter 1 were likely used in educational settings, and the manuals and handbooks discussed in Chapter 4 present examples of specialist knowledge rendered accessible and usable for a more general audience.

Collections distributed both textual knowledge and categories of understanding. By broadening access to knowledge and reconfiguring the understanding of their component items into more complex configurations, collections operated as catalysts in the formation of discourse. A single anecdote provides color to an argument, but a collection of stories is easily transferred into a larger narrative revealing pattern and process in the past. Likewise, a single song or poem may appear unique, but multiple similar poems reveal characteristics of genre.

This does not mean that every collection is as clear in its arrangement or program or that too much should be read into a particular configuration of texts on the manuscript. Many grew organically over time, and other manuscripts were merely placeholders to store a given number of texts that their

owner happened to come across. Collecting is after all a pragmatic activity, and for some, the process may not have been about selection and more about gaining access to text in the first place.

The above considerations suggest that collections have a form of agency, in the same sense that syllabi steer knowledge acquisition by opening access to particular selections while ignoring other materials.[2] Here, it is useful to remind ourselves that most of the foundational texts of early China are essentially collections, be they master texts such as *Lunyu* or *Laozi*, classics such as the *Shijing* or the *Yijing*, or historical narratives such as the *Zuo zhuan*, or medical texts such as the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (*Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor*). These collections were part and parcel of a complete education and are perceived as carrying the essence of Chinese culture to this very day.

While the collections studied in this book are arguably significantly shorter and did not exert such long-lasting influence, it is not inconceivable that their selections and understandings of text influenced the eventual form of those foundational collections. Liu Xiang, when discussing how he formed compilations such as the *Guanzi* and the *Guoyu*, is quite explicit about his debt to earlier collections as his source materials. For many texts formed under his supervision, he notes that several such collections were gathered before excising redundant and repetitive materials, or text he did not consider as belonging to the selection. That final value judgment was at least in part informed by perceptions of similarity foregrounded in the collections he used as source material.[3] By preselecting materials worthy of transmission, and by providing models for their organization and understanding, the unearthed collections discussed in this book indirectly helped shape the form of the canon.

Comparative Considerations

The influence of collections in manuscript form were not limited to early China; many of their characteristics find resonance across the ancient world.[4] These

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2 Guillory 1993.

3 *Han shu* 1962: 30.1701–84. For recent work on the "Treatise of Arts and Letters," see for example Hunter 2018. For an analysis of the editing undertaken by Liu and his team, see Fölster 2016. This editorial activity has been projected back in time on Confucius in his supposed editing of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the *Odes*, or on the Duke of Zhou, among others, in his purported editing of the *Changes*. As I argued in Chapter 3, I understand such retrojected statements of editorship to be reflections on the processes involved in collecting and editing selections of text, reimagined through the personae of the authorities of the past.

4 Compare also the case studies presented in Friedrich and Schwarke 2016, and in Bausi, Friedrich, and Mariachi 2019.

comparative cases have provided inspiration for some of the analyses made in this book, by offering new questions and possible contexts for understanding early Chinese collections. A prime example of the role of collections in granting access, and providing authoritative (to different degrees) selections of text and specific local understandings can be observed in the transmission history of biblical texts.[5] Whether in the independent transmission of the *Pentateuch*, or the various material forms in which the Gospels were transmitted, or in local selections of biblical texts such as those found at Nag Hammadi,[6] each presents a group's belief system centered around a particular understanding of the material.[7] The material manifestation of these selections and the textual communities associated with them have been studied extensively, and their transmission history provides an important comparative lens to understand how people negotiated problems of access and selection in a manuscript culture.[8]

From the perspective of reception, the traces of use studied in prayer books and personal collections are extremely valuable for understanding how users engaged with small-scale collections.[9] The extent to which the frequency of usage of a given text correlates with its position within a collection is highly revealing of how and for what purposes a collection was designed.[10] Furthermore, while such observations do not translate easily across manuscript cultures, they open the potential for viewing collections as more than storehouses of knowledge but as artifacts of use. Reception is contextual, and while the majority of early Chinese manuscripts are tomb finds, many Greco-Egyptian manuscripts were found *in situ*, for example.[11] Cross-referencing tomb corpora with those found in other contexts might therefore be revealing in determining the position and function of collections within a larger cache of manuscripts.[12] Such comparisons provide guidance in evaluating possible

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5   Carr 2005; van der Toorn 2007. For a convenient overview of the material forms of these manuscripts, see McKendrick and Doyle 2016.

6   For a general introduction, see M. Meyer 2007.

7   On textual communities gathered around a selection of texts, see Stock 1983.

8   See for example Luijendijk 2011: 241–68.

9   As revealed in the fat and grime left by handling, see Rudy 2010.

10 Potential sources for examining this in bamboo manuscripts would be patterns of wear on the bottoms of slips (the side that would rub against the stomach with use) and on the binding strings and especially the notches that held them in place (intense reading of particular slips puts more stress on the binds in that area). The lack of archaeological context for many manuscripts and testing of their material aspects makes such enquiries difficult at present.

11 See, for instance, Lazaridis 2010 and Haring 2003.

12 In the Chinese context, the placement and dispersal of text types across buildings from northwestern border garrisons is extremely helpful in revealing the user bases (e.g. soldier, scribe, commander) and contexts (leisure, professional, storage) of manuscripts. Given that a significant number of short fragments from a variety of classical texts (e.g.

usage contexts of collections. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Greek Gnomai and Egyptian Instruction texts are surprisingly similar in their material and textual formats to early Chinese sayings collections,[13] and the ways these were used in education are invaluable in shedding comparative light on the possible context in the life of their Chinese counterparts.[14]

In this book I have included examples such as the *Rongchengshi* in Chapter 2 that at first appearance do not resemble collections at all. As a composite, it integrates the individual anecdotes organically to the point it almost eclipses its origins as a collection. With increased attention to intertextuality in ancient manuscript-texts it has become clear, however, that reorganizing historical reference and anecdote to form composites is common practice. Plutarch's *Lives*,[15] Babylonian poetry,[16] or even the oral narratives studied by Vansina,[17] all provide different models for integrating collections of narrative material into composites. Here the collection works as a corpus organizer, imposing structures on bodies of material to make a basic argument or improve memorization, or simply a means to impose order through selection on the variety of narratives available.[18]

The common presence of collections amongst unearthed texts of the Warring States and early empires is exactly due to this versatility. It is a form easily prepared and suited to a variety of uses, and while it lends itself to practical use by a general wielder, many of the more elaborately prepared collections show the inklings of more complex argument formation and allow for the emergence of properties that transcend their individual component texts. Collections were mined for their content and influenced future composition indirectly, and as a form it was highly successful in negotiating the proliferation of text and limits of access common to emerging manuscript cultures across the ancient world. The role of collections as catalysts of discourse and providing paths of access suggests that their significance should not be underestimated.

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the *Lunyu*, *Xiao jing* 孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*), *Shijing*) have been found clustered at these sites, the possibility that access to the classics along the frontiers was made possibly through collections is tantalizing. See Ji Annuo 2017.

13   T. Morgan 2007; Lichtheim 1996.
14   One interesting overlap is the presence of notes, jottings, and doodles (brush-practice) common to school texts.
15   Stadter 2014.
16   Wisnom 2019; Chapter 7 and the Conclusion are especially relevant.
17   Vansina 1985.
18   Bausi 2010.

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Abbreviations

FDDSH	Fudan daxue chutu wenxian yu guwen zi yanjiusheng dushu hui 復旦大學出土文獻與古文字研究中心研究生讀書會.
Guwenzi	復旦大學出土文獻與古文字研究中心網站.
Jianbo yanjiu	簡帛研究網.
Jianbo wang	簡帛研究中心網站.
Kongfuzi	孔夫子 2000 網.

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