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A SELF-REFLEXIVE PRAXIS: CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS MANUSCRIPT AND TEXT IN EARLY CHINA

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Abstract

This article examines the attitudes of Warring States textual witnesses to the increase in presence of and reliance on bamboo manuscripts in communicating knowledge. Based on a rereading of transmitted materials and four manuscript texts (**Wuwang Jianzuo* A and B, **Baoxun*, and the *Zhou Wuwang you ji*) from the Warring States period, I analyze how contemporaries dealt with questions about the status of (manuscript) texts, their use and transmission, their trustworthiness, and their ability to preserve knowledge. These are texts that talk about themselves. They remark upon the physicality of text and the act of writing, the problem of oral and written transmission, and the differences in the ability of memory and manuscripts to store, hide, and reveal knowledge. I argue that these different reflections reveal a change in the predominant medium of communicating knowledge towards an increased reliance on bamboo manuscripts gradually and partially replacing traditional knowledge practices.

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 Opposites" 六反

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Han Feizi's annoyance with the inability of his contemporaries to look up from their manuscripts and see what is going on in the world around them hints at a perceived change in the way knowledge is acquired and communicated. What interests me here is not the fact that he argues, as is his wont, against "empty and old theories" (虛舊之學) supposedly residing in these texts, but that he frames his critique with reference to a reliance on manuscripts. Had manuscripts become a symbol of dated knowledge? Or, had they become so common that it was overreliance that prompted Han Fei's use of the image?

From the mid Warring States period (roughly fourth century B.C.E.) onwards, the first explicit reflections on the media of communication are documented in the early Chinese textual record. Reflections on and doubts about whether and how a written text can provide access to knowledge far removed in time and space appear. In this article, I argue that such reflections are the byproduct of an increased reliance on manuscripts in storing, transmitting, communicating, and acquiring knowledge. It is not their newness as such—manuscripts had been around for hundreds of years—but rather a remarkable increase in their presence in circles beyond the court and broader spheres of knowledge. This presence is the hallmark of an emerging manuscript culture.[1] Cross-culturally, the emergence of a manuscript culture is often

1. The term manuscript culture was popularized by Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), who used it to distinguish a phase in media development prior to print culture. Currently the term is used to denote a sensitivity to difference in issues of authorship, importance of paratextual and other material features of the manuscript, the problem of critical editions, issues of intertextuality, etc., in a configuration of new approaches to pre-print materials including, for instance, the new philology, Stephen G. Nichols, "Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture," *Speculum* 65.1 (1990), 1–10; scribal culture, Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and textual anthropology, Markus Hilgert, "'Text-Anthopologie': Die Erforschung von Materialität und Präsenz des Geschriebenen als hermeneutische Strategie," in *Altorientalistik im 21. Jahrhundert: Selbstverständnis, Herausforderungen, Ziele. Beiträge zur altorientalischen Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft* 1, ed. Markus Hilgert (Berlin: Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft, 2010). For its use in early China studies see especially Dirk Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo: Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Matthias L. Richter, *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Michael Nylan, *Yang Xiong and the Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in China* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2011); and Imre Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing: Evidence from Newly Excavated Manuscripts (490–221 BC)* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University, 2006). For early medieval China see Christopher Nugent, *Manifest in Words, Written on Paper: Producing and Circulating Poetry in Tang Dynasty China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Tian Xiaofei, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of

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accompanied by reflections on the preferred means of communication. These reflections involve questions of hermeneutics,[2] authority,[3] trustworthiness,[4] and the ability of the medium to (accurately) store,[5] represent, and transmit information.[6]

This article examines the attitudes of Warring States witnesses to the increasing presence of and reliance on bamboo manuscripts in communicating knowledge. Based on a rereading of transmitted materials and four manuscript texts from the period, I analyze how contemporaries dealt with questions about the status of manuscripts, their use and transmission, their trustworthiness, and their ability to preserve knowledge. They remark upon the physicality of text and the act of writing, the problem of oral and written transmission, and the differences in ability of memory and manuscripts to store, hide, and reveal knowledge.

The focus in this article lies on four looted manuscript texts that reflect on their own status as a text. A number of ethical and methodological issues of dealing with looted manuscripts have been addressed by Goldin in one of the few articles within Chinese studies to deal with this problem directly.[7] For the purposes of this article, the issue

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Washington Press, 2013); and Zhang Yongquan 張涌泉, *Dunhuang xieben wenxian xue* 敦煌寫本文獻學 (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu, 2013).

2. Zhang Longxi, *The Tao and the Logos: Literary Hermeneutics, East and West* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), chap. 1; David R. Olson, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chap. 6.

3. Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1999); van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, chap. 2.

4. Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 3rd ed. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), chap. 9; Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 22–23.

5. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, chap. 5; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*.

6. Olson, *The World on Paper*, chaps. 5, 6; Jack Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition* (Washington, DC: The Smithsonian Institute Press, 2000); Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), 93–108.

7. Paul R. Goldin, "*Heng Xian* and the Problem of Studying Looted Artifacts," *Dao* 12 (2013), 153–60. For an overview of forged manuscripts and for ways of authenticating material, see also Hu Pingsheng 胡平生, "Jianbo bianwei tongli" 簡帛辨偽通例, paper presented at the 2008 International Forum on Bamboo and Silk Documents, Chicago, 2008 (http://cccp.uchicago.edu/archive/2008_IFBSD/Hu_Pingsheng_2008_IFBSD.pdf), accessed on Feb. 25, 2016. From an ethical point of view, the discussion as it has taken place in particularly North America is rather different from the one held in China, where, as also mentioned by Goldin, the focus lies on repatriation of national treasures rather than on the issue of stimulating further looting. While I share Goldin's concerns, I also believe that not studying and preserving the materials would amount to further destruction of cultural heritage (as tomb robbery obviously entails). Another

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of provenience of the manuscripts is especially important.[8] Empty slips of both the Shanghai Museum and Qinghua University materials have been dated to the mid–late Warring States period using calibrated carbon dating.[9] The materials went through a process of physical and paleographical verification by teams of experts from competing institutions. Furthermore, the paleographical and material characteristics of the manuscripts have later been shown to conform to counterparts retrieved through controlled excavations, for example certain idiosyncratic forms of characters, and the presence of lines and numbers on the back of the Qinghua slips have shown up in material from later excavations.[10] The presence of these key features, not available to potential forgers before the acquisition of the manuscripts, reduces the possibility of forgery significantly. The manuscripts I focus on here have since been studied by the foremost paleographers and manuscript specialists in China and abroad and the consensus holds that these are authentic Warring States artifacts, most likely originated from the Chu area. From a broader perspective, the phenomena I observe in these manuscripts is supported by evidence from transmitted texts, some examples of which I cite in this article, and as such I feel comfortable in using the material as evidence.

In this article I discuss the two different **Wuwang jianzuo* 武王踐祚 manuscript texts from the Shanghai Museum collection, and the **Baoxun* 寶訓 and *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 (hereafter, *Zhou Wuwang youji*) from the Qinghua

often-heard and related complaint suggesting that the resources allocated to the study of looted artifacts could be better directed at the study of the dozens of excavated manuscripts that have been decaying in less well funded and staffed institutions, while true in spirit, sadly does not account for the actual process of the allocation of funding and people, let alone the politics of preservation and publication rights.

8. For example, the excavation context of the two **Wuwang jianzuo* manuscripts would be invaluable in assessing possible missing slips and the exact relationship between the material and other manuscripts thought to be related physically.

9. On the authentication processes of these two collections see Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清, “Ma Chengyuan xiansheng tan Shangbo jian” 馬承源先生談上博簡, in *Shangboguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu yanjiu* 上博館藏戰國楚竹書研究, ed. Zhu Yuanqing (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2002), 1–8; and Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Qinghua jian zhengli gongzuo de di yi nian” 清華簡整理工作的第一年, *Qinghua daxue xuebao* 清華大學學報 5 (2009), 5–6, respectively.

10. See for example Shan Yuchen 單育辰, “You Qinghua jian shijie guwenzi yi li” 由清華簡釋解古文字一例, *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊 3 (2012), 96–98. For lines and numbers on the back of the Qinghua manuscripts see Sun Peiyang 孫沛陽, “Jiance bei huaxian chutan” 簡冊背劃綫初探, *Chutu wenxian yu gu wenzi yanjiu* 出土文獻與古文字研究 4 (2011), 449–62. Some of the Guodian manuscripts had similar features at the time of excavation, but these were lost in preservation and had been all but forgotten.

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University collection. Each of these provides a framing narrative describing the transmission or production of a textual component enclosed within the main text. These texts provide a central message, for example the wisdom of the ancients, and wrap it in a narrative of the origins and use of that message. In short, they are texts that talk about themselves *as texts*. In their description, these texts reveal ideas about the physicality and the use of manuscript texts and therefore provide a contemporary source to examine how manuscript texts were perceived before the empires. But first, I briefly review the changes in the textual culture during the Warring States period.

Manuscript Culture

The Warring States period saw a shift towards a manuscript culture, characterized by a large increase in the reliance on lightweight manuscripts, in particular bamboo and silk, to communicate knowledge and ideas.[11] The archaeological record provides us with unprecedented numbers of manuscript finds starting from the early Warring States period. These finds originate predominantly from the Chu region but include material (and script) from other states as well.[12] While the distribution and sudden appearance of large numbers of manuscripts can in part be explained through preservation bias and changes in burial practices,[13]

11. See for example, Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo* and Richter, *The Embodied Text*.

12. For an overview in English of the finds and their geographical distribution, see Enno Giele, "Early Chinese Manuscripts: Including Addenda and Corrigenda to *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts*," *Early China*, 23–24 (1998–1999), 247–337. For the presence of non-Chu characteristics in manuscripts excavated from the Chu region, indicating a much wider spread of manuscripts during the Warring States period than is reflected in the archaeological distribution of the finds, see Zhou Bo 周波, *Zhanguo shidai gexi wenzi jian de yongzi chayi xianxiang yanjiu* 戰國時代各系文字間的用字差異現象研究 (Shanghai: Xianzhuang, 2012); and Oliver Venture, "Looking for Chu People's Writing Habits," *Asiatische Studien* 63.4 (2009), 943–58. For general considerations on writing and materiality in early China, see Tsien Tsuen Hsiun, *Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

13. The Chu region, roughly spanning modern Hubei and Hunan provinces, is marked by wet soil conditions that tend to water-lock tombs, and as a result of this oxygen-free environment manuscripts tend to be preserved more easily. On changes in mortuary culture see Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Social Ranking in Chu Tombs: The Mortuary Background of the Warring States Manuscript Finds," *Monumenta Serica* 51 (2003), 439–526; and Marc Kalinowski, "Bibliothèques et archives funéraires de la Chine ancienne," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 147.2 (2003), 880–927. For its relation to manuscripts in particular see the excellent discussion in Alain Thote, "Daybooks in Archaeological Context," in *Books of Fate and Popular Culture in Early China: The Daybook Manuscripts of the Warring States, Qin, and*

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the practice of including manuscripts in tombs itself indicates a shift in the functions, status, and availability of manuscript texts generally. Furthermore, the appearance of the material finds concur neatly with changes in the transmitted textual record. Changes in the perceptions of text use and reading are particularly significant as they show the social impact of manuscripts on the increasing user base of the medium rather than just focusing on the more selective group of producers.[14]

Behr and Fuehrer's seminal study on the development of the word field "reading" illustrates these developments by examining changes in the lexicon. Their study focuses on the unprecedented number of references to (the use of) text that appear in sources of the Warring States period. They show that in ancient and early Chinese there are six words that eventually came to mean "to read" (the corresponding graphs are *du* 讀, *song* 誦, *zhou* 籀, *nian* 念, *yue* 閱, and *yong* 詠—咏), all of which seldom or never appear in paleographical materials dating before the early empires.[15] They summarize that in the oldest material, there is no dominant term for "reading" and that the word field only slowly crystalizes from the late Warring States period onwards, and they liken this development to intermediary stages between orality and literacy observed in other cultures.[16] Research on changes in the physical preparation of

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Han, ed. Donald Harper and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 11–56. For a discussion of the status of manuscripts as burial items see Enno Giele, "Using Early Chinese Manuscripts as Historical Source Materials," *Monumenta Serica* 51 (2003), 409–38.

14. For the growing literature on scribes in early China see Armin Selbitschka, "'I Write, Therefore I Am': Scribes, Literacy and Identity in Early China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 78.2 (forthcoming); Ma Tsang Wing, "Scribes, Assistants, and the Materiality of Administrative Documents in Qin-Early Han China: Excavated Evidence from Liye, Shuihudi, and Zhangjiashan," *T'oung Pao* 103.4–5 (2017), 297–333; Anthony Barbieri-Low and Robin Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China: A Study with Critical Edition and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb No. 247* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1084–1111; Matthias L. Richter, "Textual Identity and the Role of Literacy in the Transmission of Early Chinese Literature," in *Writing and Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar*, ed. Li Feng and David Prager Branner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 206–36; and Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Handai *Cangjie*, *Jijiu*, bati he shishu wenti" 漢代《倉頡》、《急就》、八體和史書文體, in *Guwenzi yu gudai shi di er ji* 古文字與古代史第二輯, ed. Li Zongkun 李宗焜 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 2009), 429–68.

15. Wolfgang Behr and Bernhard Fuehrer, "Einführende Notizen zum Lesen in China mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frühzeit," in *Aspekte des Lesens in China in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. Bernard Fuehrer (Bochum: Projekt, 2005), 14, with the only exception of 念 in the meaning of "remembering."

16. Behr and Fuehrer, "Einführende Notizen zum Lesen," 13. Kern's study on the perception of writing in the Western Zhou slightly augments this picture. He argues that, besides meaning "document," the word *ce* 冊 refers to the act of pronouncing a

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manuscripts to enable different ways of reading confirms this trend towards the development of an increasingly active readership in the Warring States through Han periods.[17]

The use of writing itself—even on bamboo—was not new to the Warring States, of course; people had been writing with brush and inscribing with chisel from the Shang onwards.[18] Rather, as Meyer and others have shown, the use of written text as a basis for discourse significantly increased and broadened starting from the Warring States period.[19] Instead of small numbers of scribes residing in the limited court circles of the Shang and early Zhou, we now find reference to the use of writing by groups and individuals belonging to the lower ranks of the aristocracy.[20] Likewise, the use of writing expanded beyond recording divination, administration, property transactions, and ancestor worship, and increasingly spread into the realms of literary, moral, and gnostic

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written document rather than designating the verbal "to write"; see Martin Kern, "The Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China," in *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign*, ed. S. La Porta and D. Shulman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 152–57. An updated analysis of these terms, in addition to the verbal and nominal use of *shu* 書 "to write—writing" and other terms related to text use, for excavated materials published since Behr and Fuehrer's 2005 study, confirms this picture and further shows that the presence of references to written documents increased particularly in legal and administrative materials from the early empires; see Rens Krijgsman, "The Rise of a Manuscript Culture and the Textualization of Discourse in Early China" (D.Phil thesis, Oxford University, 2017,), chap. 1.

17. Rens Krijgsman, "An Inquiry into the Formation of Readership in Early China: Using and Producing the *"Yong Yue" 用曰 and *Yinshu* 引書 Manuscripts," *T'oung Pao* 104.1–3 (2018), 2–65.

18. Robert Bagley, "Anyang Writing and the Origin of the Chinese Writing System," in *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, ed. Stephen D. Houston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 218.

19. See Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, chap. 7; Dirk Meyer, "Bamboo and the Production of Philosophy: A Hypothesis about a Shift in Writing and Thought in Early China," in *History and Material Culture in Asian Religions*, ed. Benjamin J. Fleming and Richard Mann (London: Routledge, 2014), 21–38; Martin Kern, "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1–4 (2002), 143–81; and Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 89, who hints at this shift: "The *Mencius* also offers the first theory on the reading of poetry … These uses of quotation and a theory of reading indicate the increasing importance of written documents in the educational practices of the day." See also Richter, *The Embodied Text*; Michael Nylan, "Toward an Archaeology of Writing, Ritual, and Public Display in the Classical Period (475 B.C.E.–220 C.E.)," in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 3–49; and Li Ling 李零, *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu* 簡帛古書與學術源流 (Beijing: Sanlian, 2004).

20. See also Hsu Cho-yun, *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722–222 B.C.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965) for the socio-economical changes behind these shifts.

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discourse.[21] As a result, people started to reflect on the status of language and writing as a means for communicating knowledge.[22]

The emergence of reflections on the status of writing tend to appear in manuscript cultures that straddle the transition from a predominantly oral and ritual culture towards a (written) text-based culture.[23] Such shifts are not absolute, but rather focus on the degree of presence and spread of the written word. Likewise, these shifts often coincide with the spreading of writing into new genres of text (such as contracts or literature) and the emergence of new specialists or classes as keepers of the discourse.[24]

As the classicists Thomas and Havelock have shown for sixth to fourth century B.C.E. Greece, discussions on writing's authority, use, and how it compares to other modes of discourse emerge at the same time as the culture started to increasingly rely on the written word in communication and opened up areas such as philosophy and poetry to the written word.[25] Likewise, the medievalist Clanchy has argued that writing only slowly replaced oral- and memory-based forms of discourse in medieval English. Some of the ways in which this shift showed were the increase in contemporary critiques of written testimony as opposed to oral witness accounts stored in memory, and the emergence of the trope of physically storing and collecting knowledge.[26]

As Ong and Goody have argued, the written word often opens up a space of reflection on received wisdom,[27] and, as I show below, these reflections are often directed towards the media of communication itself. Such a budding self-reflection on text and scribal practice has been noted particularly for the ancient Middle East, coinciding with large increases

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21. Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 5 and chap. 2.

22. On the inadequacies of language and writing in particular, see Zhang Longxi, *The Tao and the Logos*, 17–22 and 134–35.

23. My understanding of such transitions is informed by theorists of orality and literacy such as Ruth Finnegan, *Orality and Literacy: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988); Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*; David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: the Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Olson, *The World on Paper*; and Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition*, among others.

24. Compare for instance Anthony Loprieno, ed., *Ancient Egyptian Literature, History and Forms* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) on ancient Egypt; and van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, on the Levant.

25. Thomas, *Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, 12–14; Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

26. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 255, 295.

27. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 5–10; Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition*, chap. 1, but note critiques to some of their overly teleological arguments in Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality: Studies*, 37ff.

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in the presence and status of writing in society.[28] In short, there is a tendency across developing manuscript cultures to remark on the status and use of physical text, and to juxtapose it to other media. While the content and context of these remarks appear to be culturally specific, the topics that are touched upon are relatively consistent. They focus on issues of trust and veracity of the medium, its material qualities and accounts of its use, manuscript text's capability to store and transmit knowledge accurately (or not), and an (albeit abstract) awareness of more traditional practices of communication.

In what follows, I show that in texts from the Warring States, the written word and its transmission and production are for the first time contrasted with other modes of discourse. I present a number of case studies that embody, quite literally, this transition in their form and content.

On the Brink: The Mode of Transmitting Wisdom in the **Wuwang jianzuo* 武王踐祚

The **Wuwang jianzuo* (King Wu Ascends the Throne) combines many of the themes of this article. The text occurs in four different instantiations, the two different versions that I focus on appear on the same bamboo manuscript from the Shanghai collection and can be dated to the late Warring States period. There is also a transmitted version preserved in the Western Han *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記, and an extensive quotation of the text by Zheng Xuan in his Eastern Han commentary to the *Liji* 禮記 "Xueji" 學記.[29]

The story of the **Wuwang jianzuo* revolves around the transmission of ancient knowledge to King Wu by his teacher, variously named Taigong Wang 太公望 or Shi Shangfu 師尚父.[30] The various renditions of the story diverge most in how much length they devote to particular episodes, and especially in the use of key words used to describe the act of transmission. Accordingly, it provides an excellent case to highlight differences in conceptualizations and perceptions of knowledge transmission and provides an envoy into issues such as reliability and the materiality of writing that will be addressed further below.

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28. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, chap. 1; van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, chap. 1; see also Armin Selbitschka, "'I Write, Therefore I Am'" for early China.

29. An analysis of the later editions lies outside the scope of this study, it is noteworthy that these seem to combine elements from the two **Wuwang jianzuo* texts studied here and feature a further increase in the emphasis on the written word.

30. For this character see Sarah Allan, "The Identities of Taigong Wang 太公望 in Zhou and Han Literature," *Monumenta Serica* 30 (1972–73), 57–99.

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The two unearthed renditions of the texts are untitled and were named **Wuwang jianzuo* A and B by the editor, Chen Peifen 陳佩芬.[31] The broken slips that make up the two **Wuwang jianzuo* texts range from roughly 41.6 to 43.7 cm in length. Because the slips are fully written, roughly one graph per slip is conjectured to be missing, and, judging from the mid-sentence break of the narrative on slip 10, the manuscript is not complete and a number of slips are likely missing, perhaps as many as three to four.[32] **Wuwang jianzuo* B starts on slip 11 and is concluded by a text terminator mark on slip 15, after which the slip is left blank, signaling the end of the text. Because of the missing slip(s), there is a possibility that some slips containing a secondary framing formula to **Wuwang jianzuo* B are missing too.[33] Li Songru's analysis of the different script styles and hands on this manuscript confirms my own view that both texts on the manuscript were written by at least two different hands and a possible third.[34]

Whatever the original state of the manuscript texts, it is noteworthy that two different instantiations of the text appear on the same manuscript. While the Shanghai collection as a whole contains a number of manuscripts with near identical copies,[35] the presence of two different instantiations of a text on the same manuscript is a first. This phenomenon opens up a range of questions: how did the two texts end up on the same manuscript, and for what reason? How did this influence the reception of the material?

The Story in **Wuwang jianzuo* A

The first rendition of the story opens with King Wu asking whether or not the knowledge (way) of the ancients is still preserved. Presum-

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31. Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu 7* 上海博物館藏楚竹書(7) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2008), 149–68.

32. That is, if the length of the transmitted text is considered to be a useful indication.

33. The *Da Dai Liji* rendition of the story is indeed furnished with such a double frame. Space left for a missing graph on the first slip of **Wuwang jianzuo* B before the opening "King Wu" further suggests that this might have been the case.

34. See Li Songru 李松儒, *Zhanguo jianbo ziji yanjiu—yi Shangbojian wei zhongxin* 戰國簡帛字字跡研究—以上博簡為中心 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2015), 235–42. Note that the fact that each of the 15 slips of the **Wuwang jianzuo* is broken at the top makes it difficult to assert manuscript affiliation, the overlap in script and the same position for the binding cords make it highly likely.

35. Daniel Morgan, "A Positive Case for the Visuality of Texts in Warring States Manuscript Culture," paper presented at the conference "The Rise of Writing," University of Chicago, 15–16 October 2011.

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ably, this desire for ancient knowledge in the story is related to the new establishment of the Zhou, which needed older ways of rule to legitimate itself as opposed to the Shang. Interestingly, the question assumes this knowledge to be lost and no longer *visible*. Shi Shangfu responds that the way is actually preserved in the *Cinnabar Document* 丹書, and that the king has to fast if he wishes to see the writing.

> (1)[武] [36]王問於師尚父，曰：“不知黃帝、顓頊、堯、舜之道存乎？意豈喪不可得 而[37] 睹乎？”師尚父曰：(2)[“在]丹書[38]。王如欲觀之，盍齋[39]乎？將以書見。”
>
> King Wu asked Shi Shangfu saying: “I do not know whether the way of the Yellow Emperor, Duan Xu, Yao and Shun is still preserved? I assume it is lost and it can no longer be obtained and looked at?” Shi Shangfu answered: “[it is preserved in] the *Cinnabar document*. If the king desires to see it, why don’t you fast? Then I will give you the document to see.”

The frame of the story presents ancient knowledge as something that is expected to be gradually lost over time but can be preserved through the use of writing. Knowledge is vulnerable, and the physical medium of writing is seen as protecting it in its original state. The question of King Wu assumes that if still present, this way can be *seen*, presupposing a written text. The passage also suggests that the transmission of such written knowledge from the past is a ritually charged activity. Even the king has to fast and purify himself before he is allowed to see it. The story continues with the king dressing up in formal attire, after which he is admonished by his teacher that (even) the king has to face to the

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36. This edition is based on Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 7, 149–68, and incorporates changes suggested by Fudan daxue chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin yanjiusheng dushuhui 復旦大學出土文獻與古文字研究中心研究生讀書會, “Shangbo qi Wuwang jianzuo jiaodu” 上博七·武王踐阼校讀, Dec. 30, 2008 (www.guwenzi.com/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=576), accessed on Feb. 28, 2016. I directly transcribe the text in modern orthography except where my reading differs. Reconstructions of ancient Chinese follow William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

37. The 而 is wedged in between the graphs and a later addition, see the discussion above.

38. The *Cinnabar document* refers to a legendary document that was carried by red birds 赤鳥 to a variety of rulers, including king Wen. See Fudan daxue chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin yanjiusheng dushuhui, “Shangbo qi Wuwang jianzuo jiaodu,” n. 3 for other early sources.

39. In reading *zhai* 齋, I follow Liu Hongtao 劉洪濤, “Shi Shangbo zhushu Wuwang jianzuo de “zhai” zi” 釋上博竹書武王踐阼的“齋”字, May 5, 2009 (www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=744), accessed on Feb. 28, 2016.

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east—in the position of a guest facing a host—before he can be given the writings.[40] This dynamic not only highlights the ritualized nature of knowledge transmission, it also enforces the images of Shi Shangfu as a guardian of text who has the power to tell the king how to approach the written word:

> 武王齋三日，端服、帽，逾堂階，南面而立。師尚父(3)[曰]：“夫先王之書，不與北面。”武王西面而行，曲折而南，東面而立。師尚父奉書，道書言曰：“怠(4)勝義則喪（*s-mˤaŋ），義勝怠則長（*Cə-N-traŋ）。義勝欲則從（*dzoŋ），欲勝義則兇（*qʰoŋ）。仁以得之，仁以守之，其運百(5) [世]；不仁以得之，仁以守之，其運十世；不仁以得之，不仁以守之，及於身。”武王聞之恐懼。為(6) [戒[41]]銘於席之四端，曰：“安樂必戒（*kˤrək-s）。”右端曰：“毋行可悔（*mˤəʔ）。”席後左端曰：“民之反側（*tsrək），亦不可志（*tə-s）。” [Continues with list of other sayings inscribed on various objects.]
>
> King Wu fasted for three days, donned his clothes and his cap, he ascended the steps of the hall, and faced south and positioned himself. Shi Shangfu [said]: “The writings of the former kings cannot be given facing north!” King Wu faced west and walked, turned and (faced to) the south, he faced east and positioned himself. Shi Shangfu presented the document and intoned the sayings of the document: “When laxity surpasses propriety there is loss, when propriety surpasses laxity there is growth. When propriety surpasses desire there is adherence, when desire surpasses propriety there is misfortune. If you are humane in obtaining it, and humane in preserving it, your fortune will last a hundred generations; if you are inhumane in obtaining it, but humane in preserving it, your fortune will last ten generations; if you are inhumane in obtaining it, and inhumane in preserving it, it will only reach

40. The *Liji*, “Xueji” has: “The ritual of great learning is such that even when you are summoned to the emperor you do not face north, this is to show respect for teachers.” 大學之禮，雖詔於天子，無北面，所以尊師也. Quoted from *Da Dai Liji jiegu* 大戴禮記解詁, ed. Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1963), 104. But the commentary also notes that the “Wuwang Jianzuo” places the king in the guest, and Shi Shangfu in the host position, rather than in a student–teacher configuration.

41. Fukuda Tetsuyuki 福田哲之, “Shangbo qi Wuwang jianzuo jian 6, jian 8 jianshou quezi shuo” 上博七·武王踐阼簡6、簡8簡首缺字說, Mar. 24, 2009 (www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1007), accessed on Feb. 28, 2016, argues that there is a graph missing here, and he suggests supplementing 箸（書）‘to write’ on the basis of possible parallelism with the *Da Dai Liji* version. While I agree that a graph is missing here, a choice of 戒 “to admonish” works better in this context, as it avoids the awkward collocation of two instrumental verbs. The *Da Dai Liji* version indeed splits this line into two sentences: “退而為戒書, 於席之四端為銘焉.”

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> unto your person." Upon hearing this, King Wu became terrified, and made [admonishing] inscriptions upon the four extremities of his seat, reading: "Be restrained in ease and pleasure." On the right side it read: "Don't do anything you could regret." On the rear left side, it read: "The restlessness of the people, should also not be aimed for." [42] On the rear right side it read: […]

After the king has properly positioned himself, Shi Shangfu reads the sayings of the document out to the king. The message of the text is highly oral and formulaic: the first saying is rhymed, tightly structured, and occurs across the transmitted literature in a variety of forms. Likely, it was a commonly known saying that 'travelled' from debater to debater because it contained a memorable formulation on the problem of controlling one's desires and laxity.[43] Accordingly, we can either read with the logic of the text and suppose this saying became widely shared in early China by virtue of this text (and thus, the *Cinnabar Document*), or, the insistence on preservation in the text should rather be seen as a dramatic attempt to imbue patina and authenticity to this common saying by linking it to the sages of old. As noted above, the *Cinnabar Document* as an object is couched in mythical narrative, the blood-red color and the idea it was carried by red birds in other stories add connotations of almost magical power to the object.[44] In any case, the written nature of the document is presented as instrumental to, and indeed the very embodiment of, the authority and transmission of the message.

In the saying that follows, the theme of preservation from the frame is amplified, linking the attainment and preservation of knowledge with humaneness and the endurance of one's heritage.[45] The wise admonishment by Shi Shangfu has its proposed effect, King Wu is sufficiently chastised and writes an array of admonishing sayings on the various items of his furniture. These sayings too find many intertextual counterparts across the early literature. Many of them are rhymed or are

42. Note the discussion in Fudan daxue chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu zhongxin yanjiusheng dushuhui, "Shangbo qi Wuwang jianzuo jiaodu," n. 12 on this problematic sentence. *Zhi* 志 is "corrected" to *wang* 忘 in later versions, but rhyme and paleography exclude this reading. They add a *bu* 不 which they suspect might have been lost in transmission. Despite these problems, my translation follows the bamboo.

43. For an analysis of these sayings, see Rens Krijgsman, "Traveling Sayings as Carriers of Philosophical Debate: From the Intertextuality of the *Yucong* 語叢 to the Dynamics of Cultural Memory and Authorship in Early China," *Asiatische Studien* 68.1 (2014), 83–115.

44. Compare the discussion on covenants sealed in blood in Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1990), 44–6.

45. Note that the crucial term repeated in this saying is "preservation" (*shou* 守).

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phrased in terms of simple juxtapositions of values and employ a rebus like punning effect in that the messages of the sayings embody the function of the object upon which they are supposedly inscribed.[46] The wise sayings are thus lifted from their supposed oral contexts and textualized in a narrative about their transcription. While the teaching scene thus provides a narrative on the text-based transmission of the wisdom of yore, the second half of the text presents a dramatic account of the king in the act of textual production.

The logic of the story is that wisdom can be preserved over the ages through the use of writing. Proper apprehension and preservation of this knowledge is instrumental in the education of kings, to the point that they write more wise sayings for the betterment of future generations. In this version of the story, knowledge is stored in written form, and brought out for the king to *see* in its material manifestation. The actual transmission, however, requires an oral act wherein the teacher reads out the sayings for the king to hear. As such, the immediate reason for the document's importance is its visually verifiable presence, a physical token proving and verifying the origins of the material.[47] While on its own, this stress on the visibility of the document could be easily overlooked, but it becomes all the more pointed in light of the relative focus on *hearing* the text in the other rendition of the story on the same manuscript.

**Wuwang jianzuo* B

In the second rendition of the story on this manuscript the framing and the act of transmission are presented in a different light:

> (11)□武王問於太公望曰：“亦有不盈於十言，而百世不失之道，有之乎？”太公望答曰：“有”。武王曰：“其道可得(12)[以]聞乎？”太公望答曰：“身則君之臣，道則聖人之道，君齋將道之，君不齋，則弗道。”武王齋七日，太13[公] 望奉丹書以朝–太公南面，武王北面而復問。太公答曰：“丹書之言有之曰：‘志勝欲則(14)[昌(*thaŋ)] [48]，欲勝

46. For example, admonishments on the need to look back when thinking ahead are written on a mirror, a warning not to drown in the affairs of the world are written on a washbasin, etc.

47. The materiality of knowledge is preserved in the *Da Dai Liji* text as well, in addition to amplifying the scene wherein King Wu inscribes his furniture. The transmitted text also incorporates elements from the frame and the saying from text B.

48. Following Shen Pei 沈培, “Shangbo qi canzi bianshi liang ze” 上博七殘字辨識兩則, Jan. 2, 2009 (www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=598), accessed on Feb. 28, 2016.

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> 志 ▬ 則喪 (*s-mˤaŋ)▬ 志勝欲則從 (*dzoŋ) ▬ 欲勝志則兇 (*qʰoŋ)。敬勝怠則吉 (*C.qit)▬ 怠勝敬▬則滅 (*met)▬。 不敬 (*kreŋ-s) 則不定 (*N-tˤeŋ-s)▬，弗(15)[强 (*m-kaŋʔ)]則枉 (*qʷaŋʔ)，枉者敗 (*N-pˤrat-s) ▬，而敬者萬世 (*lhats) ▬。使民不逆而順成 (*deŋ)，百姓 (*seŋ-s) 之為聽(*lreŋ)。’丹書之言有之。”■
>
> King Wu asked Taigong Wang, saying: “Is there also a way that does not fill ten sayings but is not lost for a hundred generations? Is there such a way?” Taigong Wang replied: “There is such a way.” King Wu asked: “Can I get to hear this way?” Taigong Wang replied: “My person is the subject of you, my lord, [but] my way is the way of the sages. If you fast than I will teach you, if you don’t fast, then I will not teach.” King Wu fasted for seven days, Taigong Wang presented the *Cinnabar document* to the court. Taigong faced south, King Wu faced north and asked again. Taigong replied, saying: “In the sayings of the *Cinnabar document* it is said that: ‘If your will surpasses desire then you will prosper; if your desires surpass your will, then you will mourn; if your will surpasses your desire you will adhere, if your desires surpass your will you will meet disaster. If your respect surpasses your laxity, that will be fortunate; but if your laxity surpasses your respect you will be ruined. When you are not respectful you will not be stable, if you do not strengthen [your respect] you will waver, those who waver lose, but the respectful last for ten thousand generations. Ensure that the people do not turn against you, but rather obediently support you, and the hundred surnames will listen.’” “The sayings in the *Cinnabar document* state it thus.”

The core of the message is again the preservation of one’s rule. Here however, it is presented with the rhyming couplets marked using punctuation, represented here with ▬.[49] From a material point of view, the *Wuwang jianzuo* B seems better prepared for oral delivery of its message. The accent of the frame and the description of transmission is also remarkably different. The frame likewise questions the preservation of knowledge, but the focus lies instead on the length of the message (“ten sayings” 十言). In the first description of the transmission, Taigong Wang (another name for Shi Shangfu), replies without referring

49. The exact workings of the marks here are unclear, certain rhymes are not marked and others are marked double. Possibly, it marks a specific type of presentation taking into account rhyme, breaks, and stresses. Thus, while the sayings might be presented for a specific type of oral delivery, the particular way of presentation would need to be learned separately.

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to the exact nature of the knowledge. The king for his part desires to *hear*, rather than see, the message. While Taigong likewise brings in the *Cinnabar document* as carrier of the sayings, less space is devoted to its written and physical nature, and similarly, the changing of position as a ritualized act to gain access to the written document is largely glossed over.[50] Finally, the episode wherein King Wu writes his own sayings in response to receiving the lesson is completely elided and instead a summary reference to the *Cinnabar document* is presented as conclusion of the text.

This marked difference between the narrative representations embodies two different (idealized) perceptions of the transmission of knowledge. To text B, the specific mode of transmission is not a problem worthy of reflection. For this text, the focus is on the length and age of the message, and that it was transmitted through the authority figure of Taigong Wang. Its manuscript container is an afterthought. To text A however, the mode of transmission becomes instrumental to the authority and pedigree of the message.[51] The *Cinnabar Document* is the very embodiment of the wisdom of the ancient kings, and the king has to dramatically switch his position so that he may be *given* this document. That this version also states that the king needs to *see* the document even though the message is still read out to him, again stresses the importance of the physical presence of the document to the argument. In text A, written text itself has become worthy of comment and operates as an argument to underscore the notion of preservation. This is amplified further by the king's response in inscribing knowledge upon physical media that embody the admonitions after receiving the knowledge from the document.

Both stories present a Warring States imagination of an idealized transmission of knowledge between a teacher figure and his king. I suggest that their different approaches to presenting the same basic story should be read as representing a different perspective on the role of written text in transmitting knowledge. The two texts on the manuscript could thus be seen as embodying two sides of a shift towards increased reliance on written text. Together with texts such as the **Baoxun* and

50. In this text, the shift in position is merely stated. While this presents the basic kernel of the story, it does not develop this dynamic to the extent of text A, which, by emphasizing the shift into host–guest positions highlights the ritualized dynamic of presenting a material object.

51. It is interesting to note here that the core message on the proper, enduring rule is articulated differently in both texts. Where text B focusses on the need for "respect" (*jing* 敬) in its development of the rhymed saying, text A highlights instead the need for "preservation" (*shou* 守), a quality embodied by the *Cinnabar Document*.

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Zhou Wuwang youji, which I will discuss below, they are part of a group of texts that talk about themselves. These texts are both the medium and the message,[52] they present both the circumstance and the act of transmission of a supposedly ancient text while at the same time including the text's core message. By framing their message in a narrative about its ancient pedigree and the circumstances of production and transmission, these texts provide a rationale—and in a sense, an apology—for their own existence, and thus legitimize their presence to a contemporaneous audience.[53] In doing so, they highlight their written nature, often naming the specific written document that proves the heritage of its message.

A passage from the *Mozi* illustrates a similar conviction in the use of written text as a means to preserve and approach what happened in the past:

> 何知先聖六王之親行之也？子墨子曰："吾非與之並世同時，親聞其聲，見其色也。以其所書於竹帛，鏤於金石，琢於槃盂，傳遺後世子孫者知之。"
>
> How does one know that the ancient sages and the six kings practiced it personally? Master Mozi says: "I am not of the same generation or times as them, and I did not personally hear their voices or see their countenance. I know it through what they passed on to their sons and grandsons by writing on bamboo and silk, carving on bronze and stone, and chiseling on plates and beakers."[54]

52. As coined by McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*.

53. Rens Krijgsman, "Cultural Memory and Excavated Anecdotes in 'Documentary' Narrative: Mediating Generic Tension in the *Baoxun* Manuscript," in *Between History and Philosophy: Anecdotes in Early China*, ed. Paul van Els and Sarah Queen (New York: SUNY, 2017), 313.

54. *Mozi jiangu* 墨子閒詁, ed. Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2001), 4.120–121 ("Jian'ai Xia" 兼愛下), translations of the Mozi adapted from W. P. Mei, *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1929). Note that sayings containing "written on bamboo and silk" 著於竹帛 occur across the *Mozi* and are a standard trope within the collection to talk about wisdom and folly transmitted from the past. The saying is encapsulated in different comments revealing the perceived functionality of written documents, such as the ability to approximate the ancient kings through space and time, as in this passage, or the ability to preserve material about the past such as in *Mozi jiangu*, 9.280–281 ("Feiming Xia" 非命下): 是以書之竹帛，鏤之金石，琢之盤盂，傳遺後世子孫。曰何書焉存？禹之總德有之曰： … ？仲虺之告曰："This is why they wrote it on bamboo and silk, carved it in bronze and stone, and chiseled it on plates and beakers, passing it on to their sons and grandsons. What writings are preserved thereon, you say? There is 'Yu's Comprehensive *De*', which reads … There is the 'Announcement of Zhonghui', which reads …" On this, and other recurring sayings in the Mozi text as evidence of stratified transcription, see Carine Defoort and Nicolas Standaert, eds., *The* Mozi *as an Evolving Text: Different Voices in Early Chinese Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), "Introduction." On the use of writing and

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In this passage, the physical nature of written text is used to make an argument about its ability to store, hide, and preserve knowledge. These qualities provided a means to explain a text's linkage to the events of the past.[55] This ability of the written word is here contrasted explicitly to the qualities that would traditionally have constituted the veracity of the message: the ability to see the countenance and hear the tone of the speaker. This juxtaposition acknowledges the ability of the written word to preserve ancient knowledge, but not unlike the **Wuwang jianzuo*, it nonetheless expresses an assumed preference for oral, situated communication. For the *Zhuangzi*, this was not enough however, and the image of reading a written text is used to frame a discussion on the fundamental nature of communicating knowledge:

> 桓公讀書於堂上，輪扁斲輪於堂下，釋椎鑿而上，問桓公曰："敢問公之所讀者何言邪？"公曰："聖人之言也。"曰："聖人在乎？"公曰："已死矣。"曰："然則君之所讀者，古人之糟魄已夫！"桓公曰："寡人讀書，輪人安得議乎！有說則可，無說則死。"輪扁曰："臣也，以臣之事觀之。斲輪，徐則甘而不固，疾則苦而不入。不徐不疾，得之於手而應於心，口不能言，有數存焉於其間。臣不能以喻臣之子，臣之子亦不能受之於臣，是以行年七十而老斲輪。古之人與其不可傳也死矣，然則君之所讀者，古人之糟魄已夫。"
>
> Duke Huan was in his hall reading some writings. The wheelwright Bian, who was in the yard below chiseling a wheel, laid down his mallet and chisel, stepped up into the hall, and said to Duke Huan, "These writings Your Grace is reading—may I venture to ask whose words

transmitted accounts as a means of authority and verification in *Mozi* regarding ghosts and spirits see in particular the discussion in Roel Sterckx, "Mozi 31: Explaining Ghosts, Again," in *The Mozi as an Evolving Text*, 101–3.

55. Note that in *Mozi jiangu*, 7.216–217 ("Tianzhi Xia" 天志下), for example, the same formula is used in order to present a narrative about how the sages preserved in writing the faults of rulers of the past. See here also *Mozi jiangu*, 6. 237–238 ("Minggui Xia" 明鬼下) which contains a form of the saying that presents an awareness that bamboo manuscripts tend to rot and decay as opposed to other media: 故書之竹帛，傳遺後世子孫；咸恐其腐蠹絕滅，後世子孫不得而記，故琢之盤盂，鏤之金石，以重之；有恐後世子孫不能敬莙以取羊，故先王之書，聖人一尺之帛，一篇之書，語數鬼神之有也，重有重之. "Thus when they wrote it on bamboo and silk, to pass it on to their sons and grandsons, they all feared that the [manuscripts] would rot, decay, and perish, so that their sons and grandsons would not obtain and remember them. Thus they also chiseled it on plates and beakers, and carved it into bronze and stone, to double (copy) it. They also feared that their sons and grandsons would not be able to respect in awe so as to gain favor [of the spirits]. Thus all writings of the former kings, and even a foot of silk and a bundle of writings of the sages whose words related the existence of ghosts and spirits, they doubled it and doubled it again."

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> are in it?" "The words of the sages," said the duke. "Are the sages still alive?" "Dead long ago," said the duke. "In that case, what you are reading there is nothing but the chaff and dregs of the men of old!" "Since when does a wheelwright have permission to comment on the writings I read?" said Duke Huan. "If you have some explanation, well and good. If not, it's your life!" Wheelwright Bian said, "I look at it from the point of view of my own work. When I chisel a wheel, if the blows of the mallet are too gentle, the chisel slides and won't take hold. But if they're too hard, it bites in and won't budge. Not too gentle, not too hard—you can get it in your hand and feel it in your mind. You can't put it into words, and yet there's a knack to it somehow. I can't use words to teach it to my son, and he can't learn it from me. So I've gone along for seventy years and at my age I'm still chiseling wheels. When the men of old died, they took with them the things that couldn't be handed down. So what you are reading there must be nothing but the chaff and dregs of the men of old."[56]

This passage likewise acknowledges the ability of written material to transmit the *words* of the ancients across the ages. It disputes, however, that a record of words gives access to the skills, or knacks (*shu* 數), and ways (*dao* 道) of the sages. This can only be achieved by long *practice*. The *Zhuangzi* passage goes one step further than the *Mozi*. It argues that writing is only able to preserve words, and since words cannot express the nature of things *qing* 情, full transmission cannot be entrusted to writing.[57] For my argument it is telling that this argument against language and superficial understanding is specifically articulated against bookish knowledge. This misplaced trust in books, the *Zhuangzi* notes, is endemic to the times: "Men of the world who value the Way all turn to books. But books are nothing more than words" (世所貴道者書也，書不過語).[58] This inability of (written) text to transmit beyond words was

56. *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, ed. Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961), 493–95 ("Tian dao" 天道), translations of the *Zhuangzi* modified from Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). See for example the discussions of these passages by Schwitzgebel and by Yearly in Paul Kjellberg and Philip J. Ivanhoe, eds., *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi* (New York: SUNY, 1996), 74–76, and 165 respectively, and the discussion in Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1996), and Jack Chen, "On the Act and Representation of Reading in Medieval China" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 129.1 (2009), 59.

57. In the passage preceding this anecdote the "sound" (*sheng* 聲) and "appearance" (*se* 色) referred to in the *Mozi* are likewise targeted as obstacles to true understanding, see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 492.

58. *Zhuangzi jishi*, 492.

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also reflected on in other contemporary texts such as the *Xici* 繫辭 and the *Mengzi* 孟子.[59]

As has long been understood, these passages reflect a keen understanding of the limitations of language.[60] I would take this one step further and stress that this limitation is framed specifically against the written word and can thus be understood as a reaction towards the proliferation of written text for knowledge transmission. Indeed, cross-culturally, bookish knowledge has been questioned for its inability to transmit gesture, tone, practical skills, and esoteric truths.[61]

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59. For example, *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經註疏, ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 7.82.C ("Xici Shang" 系辭上): 子曰："書不盡言，言不盡意。然則聖人之意，其不可見乎。" (The Master said: "Writing does not fully express speech, and speech does not fully express meaning. How invisible then, is the meaning of the sages?"). Also see *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏, in *Shisan jing zhushu*, 9A.2735 ("Wanzhang I" 萬章上): 咸丘蒙曰："舜之不臣堯，則吾既得聞命矣。《詩》云：'普天之下，莫非王土；率土之濱，莫非王臣。'而舜既為天子矣，敢問瞽瞍之非臣，如何？"曰："是詩也，非是之謂也；勞於王事，而不得養父母也。曰：'此莫非王事，我獨賢勞也。'故說《詩》者，不以文害辭，不以辭害志。以意逆志，是為得之。如以辭而已矣，《雲漢》之詩曰：'周餘黎民，靡有孑遺。'信斯言也，是周無遺民也。(Xian Qiumeng said: "On Shun's not treating Yao as a minister, I have received your instructions. But it is said in the Odes: 'Under the whole of heaven, Every spot is the sovereign's ground; To the borders of the land, Every individual is the sovereign's minister.'—and Shun had become sovereign. I venture to ask how it was that Gu Sou was not one of his ministers." Mencius answered: "That Ode is not to be understood in that way—it speaks of being laboriously engaged in the sovereign's business, so as not to be able to nourish one's parents, it means: 'This is all the sovereign's business, and how is it that I alone am supposed to have ability, and am made to toil in it?' Therefore, those who explain the Odes, may not insist on one term so as to do violence to a sentence, nor on a sentence so as to do violence to the general scope. They must try with their thoughts to meet that scope, and then we shall apprehend it. If we simply take single sentences, there is that in the Ode called 'The Milky Way',—'Of the black-haired people of the remnant of Zhou, There is not half a one left.' If it had been really as thus expressed, then not an individual of the people of Zhou would have been left.") Translations of *Mengzi* modified from James Legge, *The Works of Mencius* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970). For readings of this passage see, for example, Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 89; Gu Mingdong, *Chinese Theories of Reading and Writing: A Route to Hermeneutics and Open Poetics* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2005), 17–44; Zhang Longxi, *The Tao and the Logos*, 134.

60. See here Zhang Longxi, *The Tao and the Logos*, and Rudolf G. Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the* Daodejing (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2003). For my argument it is telling that in its many articulations the issue of writing is brought up as exemplifying the problem and could be seen as providing one of the main reasons for reflecting on the issue.

61. See here the discussion by the linguist Olson, *The World on Paper*, 115–42, writing on the massive increase in verbs in English describing types of speech acts. He understands this as an attempt to describe extratextual data in textual form, pointing to the inherent limitations of the medium. Olsen's main thesis is that writing can only provide limited transcription of or an approach to oral communication, in that it elides a number of crucial features, including sound, (speech) rhythm and pause, gesture and expression, all of which can only be partially approached, but never fully replicated in

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For the *Zhuangzi* and the *Han Feizi*, something was lacking in the written word. And while other texts such as the **Wuwang jianzuo* A and the *Mozi* explored not the limitations but rather the new possibilities of access enabled by written text, they likewise hint at information not transmitted through the medium.[62] To Warring States authors, the difference between the oral and the written was not simply a question of transcription, it involved a great deal of extra-textual information, whether from cultural memory or the context of articulation, that was considered crucial in understanding but could not easily be represented in writing. Writing as a means of transmitting ideas and knowledge about the past was a relative newcomer (that is to say, beyond the administrative and ritual spheres), and its merits had to be evaluated and contrasted with traditional knowledge practices in order to arrive at its proper place and use.

A similar juxtaposition between intimate, oral transmission and the passing on of a written document forms the core in the story of the **Baoxun* discussed below. The text takes great pains to argue why its transmission in writing had to be chosen over the more conventional, and it seems, more desirable oral transmission. The attention to the difference between these modes of transmission reveals an awareness on account of the authors of a shift in practice. Moreover, in their apology for the use of writing, they betray a keen awareness of the functionality of writing in introducing new material into the stream of tradition.

The Oral and the Written in the **Baoxun* 寶訓

The **Baoxun* (Treasured Instructions) is a short text (eleven slips) in the genre of *Shu* texts from the Qinghua collection, dating to the mid to late Warring States period.[63] Its title was given by the editors on the basis of

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writing. As a result, the written language has to come up with new words and signs to convey these aspects of pragmatic meaning to a reader.

62. Note here that the **Wuwang Jianzuo* does not have King Wu read the text, but rather has it orally transmitted to him by a teacher-figure, thereby harkening back to a master–disciple dynamic perceived to be more traditional.

63. Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (1)* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡(壹) (Shanghai: Zhongxi, 2010), 142–49 (transcription). For an analysis of the genre markers in this text identifying it as belonging in the broad sphere of *Shu* type texts see Sarah Allan, "On *Shu* 書 (Documents) and the Origin of the *Shang shu* 尚書 (Ancient Documents) in Light of Recently Discovered Bamboo Slip Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75.3 (2012), 547–57, and Krijgsman, "Cultural Memory and Excavated Anecdotes in 'Documentary' Narrative." The slips measure 28.5 cm in length and were bound by two threads, it is unclear whether this happened before or after writing took place. The slips are written from the very top, and at the end of each strip a space with the size of roughly one graph is left blank. Other than the usual repetition marks, the manuscript does not come with any punctuation and its

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the recurring reference to the "treasured instructions" in the text.[64] Only the second slip is broken at the top and around eleven to thirteen graphs are missing.

The **Baoxun* can be divided into three main parts. A historical frame, a narrative frame, and the body consisting of two anecdotes. These anecdotes are themselves framed similarly to the main text in an effort to harmonize the different sections of the text by thoroughly encapsulating them within the language of the *Shu*. The historical frame is similar to other *Shu* type texts and places the text at a moment just before King Wen's impending death.[65] It states that the king is afraid that he would die too soon to transmit the "treasured instructions" and hence King Wen hastens to prepare for this ritual act of transmission. Just as in the **Wuwang jianzuo* discussed above, ritual purification had to take place before transmission.[66] While a section of the text is missing here, it is clear that the king has to prepare himself before starting the transmission proper:

> (1)惟王五十年，不豫，王念日之多歷，恐墜寶訓。戊子，自靧水。己丑，昧(2)[爽]□□□□□□□□□□□[王]若曰："發，朕疾漸甚，恐不汝及(3)訓。 昔前人傳寶，必授之以誦。今朕疾允病，恐弗唸終，汝以書(4)受之。欽哉！勿淫！"[67]
>
> It was the fiftieth year of our king (Wen) and he was not well. Our king thought about the many years that had passed and feared that the

ending is marked by leaving the remainder of the last bamboo strip blank. The manuscript is written in a uniform calligraphy likely from a single hand, the style of which is markedly different from the other texts in the collection.

64. *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (1)*, 142. Another reading is *baoxun* 保訓 or the "preserved instructions."

65. For a different analysis of the structure of the **Baoxun* in light of the "Gu ming" 顧命, see Dirk Meyer, "Recontextualization and Memory Production: Debates on Rulership as Reconstructed from the Gu ming 顧命 (Testimonial Charge)," in *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy: Studies in the Composition and Thought of the Shangshu* (Classic of Documents), ed. Martin Kern and Dirk Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 106–45.

66. See also, Donald Harper, "The Sexual Arts of Ancient China as described in a Manuscript of the Second Century B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2 (1987), 563–64, for ritualized transmission in medical texts.

67. The edition in this section is based on Krijgsman, "Cultural Memory and Excavated Anecdotes in 'Documentary' Narrative." For an extensive overview of the different graph readings and reconstructions up to June 20, 2011, see Chen Minzhen 陳民鎮 and Hu Kai 胡凱, "Qinghua jian Bao xun jishi" 清華簡《保訓》集釋, in *Yantai daxue Zhongguo xueshu yanjiusuo yanjiusheng dushuhui Qinghua jian (yi) jishi 3* 煙臺大學中國學術研究所研究生讀書會《清華簡（壹）集釋》第三篇, 2011 (www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/Web/Show/1654), accessed on Apr. 12, 2013.

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> "Treasured Instructions" would be lost. On *wuzi*, he washed his face. On *jichou*, at the break of day … Our king thus said: "Fa, Our condition quickly deteriorates, and We fear We shall not have time to instruct you." In times of yore, when the early kings passed on the "Treasured" [Instructions], these were to be received through recitation. However, because Our condition is truly severe, We fear that we will not be able to intone it to the end. You will receive it in writing [instead]. Revere it! Do not defile it!"

Of interest here is the way in which transmission is presented. It juxtaposes the way of the early kings with the unfortunate circumstances of the present. Oral transmission is presented as the time-honored ideal mode of communicating the instructions, and the use of writing is presented apologetically: King Wen only uses a written document because he is forced to by his illness. The imminent death of the king conveys a sense of haste surrounding the transmission of the instructions, and the text suggests that it is this lack of time that does not allow for the usual oral transmission. King Wen laments that when using the preferred method of recitation (*song* 誦), he would not be able to finish intoning (*nian* 唸) the message. Oral transmission is thus presented as a lengthy process, hallowed by tradition, and, the mode that is considered the norm for such special instructions. This sense of what is proper presents written text as a stopgap solution. Two short anecdotes follow on the attainment of "the middle" (*zhong* 中) as a means to rule, they make up the core of the "treasured instructions" referred to in the frame. The **Baoxun*, like the **Wuwang jianzuo*, thus operates as a narrative discussing the transmission of a message and is simultaneously the embodiment of that very message.

The irony here is that the anecdotes that make up the message are only a few lines each and should be easily and quickly memorable. Perhaps the ideal act of transmission envisioned by the text includes more than just a transmission of the words of the message. This echoes the sentiments presented in the passages above. The dynamic of transmission transforms a common message into a method of rule. This could include gesture, ritual prescription, a particular way of intoning or explaining the message, or simply the ability to tailor a message to its recipient. In this case a possible reason for the duration of transmission lies in the relative vagueness of the message: the key concept of rule in the anecdotes is never concretely defined or explained in the text:[68]

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68. For a discussion, see Sarah Allan, *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-Slip Manuscripts* (New York: SUNY, 2015), 289–92.

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> (4)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！
>
> In times of yore, Shun was for a long time in the position of a petty man, he personally plowed (the slopes of) mount Li and the uncultivated plains, and reverently sought *zhong*. He examined his own intent, and did not abandon the needs of the myriad people. He implemented this from the highest to the lowest, and from the nearest to the farthest. Thereupon, he ordered the entitlements and arranged the records, gave measure to the things of Yin and Yang, all followed and none opposed. Shun accordingly attained *zhong*. When speaking, he did not alter the substance nor change the name of things, and in his person, he was faithful in following it, and reverent without laxity, and used it to make the "Three descended virtues." Emperor Yao lauded it, and therefore bestowed his charge on him. Oh! Revere it!

This first of two anecdotes describes Shun's rise from obscurity, a common story in Warring States texts. His attainment of the middle is presented as the crucial element triggering his recognition by Yao. While in this and the following anecdote *zhong* is presented as an essential element, it is unclear what it exactly entails. Possibly, the reasons for the duration envisioned for the transmission of this short anecdote included room for explanation and contextualization of its message. In any case, the recitation of even two short passages could be reasonably presented as a lengthy process to a Warring States audience. Despite critiques of the efficacy of writing in texts such as the *Zhuangzi*, here it is presented as a reasonable, and importantly, quicker alternative to oral transmission.

Moreover, the text's expression of haste and apologetic presentation of transmission in writing reveals yet another perceived quality of written text. As I have argued elsewhere, the urgency of the frame can be read as a foil to justify the text's existence in writing.[69] In order for oral transmission to take place, the king has to be alive and present. The king is the only carrier of the instructions, which are passed on from king to future king, and therefore not accessible to the general public. The selling point of the *Baoxun* is thus that it makes its readers witness to these instructions that are supposedly secret and hence treasured, and from an age far gone and hence preserved. It is the written nature of the message that provides the means to circumvent the privacy and temporal

69. Krijgsman, "Cultural Memory and Excavated Anecdotes in 'Documentary' Narrative," 312–13.

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distance of the transmission and open it up to a larger public. Written text can be hidden or lost and can resurface at any time to miraculously provide access to hidden knowledge about the past.[70] For this reason we are told again and again to "revere" and "not defile" the instructions. Once access to the text is granted beyond the immediate sphere of oral, face to face transmission, control over the mode and the content of transmission is given away and this implies the ability of later wielders of the material to distort the "proper" meaning of the text and use it for their own purposes.

Written text, from the perception of a Warring States audience is presented as a means of granting access to knowledge far removed in time, geographical location, and privilege. It allows knowledge to travel beyond the immediate context of composition and, importantly, beyond the control of the guardians of transmission. This increase in access to knowledge well beyond traditional spheres of authority tallies well with the social mobility noted for the Warring States *Shi*,[71] and provides at least a partial explanation for the quick rise of the medium despite its many critics.

For these new texts to be considered trustworthy, they included a narrative describing the context of their own composition, transmission, and reception. The trope of written text's ability to grant access and the inclusion of narratives of textual origins are articulated even stronger in the *Zhou Wuwang youji*, which will be discussed now.

The *Zhou Wuwang you ji Zhougong suo zi yi dai Wang zhi zhi* 周武王有疾周公所自以代王之志 (King Wu of Zhou has an Illness, The Intent of the Duke of Zhou to Put Himself in the King's Place)

The story of the Duke of Zhou's regency during the youth of King Cheng is widely known and referred to across early Chinese literature.[72] This foundational event forms one of the focal points for the cultural memory of the early Zhou, and because it hints at the tension between usurpation and regency, has been open to speculations about the actual

70. Compare the use of this trope in later times to justify new textual traditions, for example the range of (in certain cases, putative) discoveries of old script texts during the Han which presented a way for Wang Mang to justify his rule, or the rediscovery of written text in the story of the ascension of the sixth patriarch of Chan Buddhism among others.

71. Lewis, *Writing and Authority*; Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition*.

72. See discussions in Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1997), 101–36, and Dirk Meyer, "The Art of Narrative and the Rhetoric of Persuasion in the '*Jīnténg' (Metal Bound Casket) from the Qinghua Collection of Manuscripts," *Asiatische Studien* 68.4 (2014), 937–88.

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course of events from Warring States times onwards.[73] The most famous articulation of the story is found in the "Jinteng" chapter of the new text *Shang shu* 尚書 (Ancient Documents). It has been referred to as China's first short story,[74] and, as recently discussed by Meyer, both the acquired *Zhou Wuwang you ji* and the transmitted "Jinteng" capitalize on the tension in transfers of rule to form both a powerful argument and an enticing narrative.[75] Here, I focus on the instrumentality of writing in the unearthed *Zhou Wuwang you ji* story.

The structure of the *Zhou Wuwang you ji* narrative revolves around the denouncement and subsequent rehabilitation of the Duke of Zhou. Within this basic plot, an instrumental role is given to the written word. It is the Duke of Zhou's prayer, put into writing and hidden away in the metal-bound coffer that titles the *Shang shu* chapter, which eventually absolves him. This element is the crux of the narrative, and is consecutively paired and contrasted with ritual propriety, slander, a poem, and finally, witness testimony. As such, reading the narrative through a focus on the role and status of written text shows how its qualities are offset against oral, ritual, and mediated forms of discourse.

> (1)武王既克殷三年，王不豫有遲。二公告周公曰: "我其爲王穆卜。"周公曰："未可以(2)慼吾先王。"周公乃爲三壇同墠，爲一壇於南方▬。周公立焉，秉璧，戴珪。史乃冊(3)祝告先王曰："爾元孫發也▬，遘害虐疾。爾毋乃有丕子之責在上▬？惟爾元孫發也▬，(4)不若旦也▬。是佞若巧能，多才▬，多藝▬，能事鬼神。命于帝廷，敷有四方，以定爾子(5)孫于下地▬。爾之許我，我則進[76]璧與珪。爾不我許，我乃以璧與珪歸▬。"周公乃納其(6)所為貢自以代王之說▬于金縢之匱▬，乃命執事人曰："勿敢言▬。"
>
> It was three years since King Wu had defeated the Yin, and he was ill for some time. The two dukes addressed the Duke of Zhou saying: "We should perform a Mu divination for the king." The Duke of Zhou replied: "This is not enough to move our former kings." The Duke of Zhou then set up three altars on the same platform, and set up one on its southern side. The Duke of Zhou positioned himself on it, held a Bi disk and carried a Gui tablet. The court Scribe then read out a prayer

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73. On the historicity of the narrative see Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius*, 137–64.

74. Herrlee G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, Vol. 1: *The Western Chou Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 458.

75. For a thick description of the manuscript and an overview of different readings, see Meyer, "The Art of Narrative and the Rhetoric of Persuasion." In this article I follow Meyer's edition and translation, with minor modifications.

76. This reading is changed from Meyer, "The Art of Narrative and the Rhetoric of Persuasion," which has *yan* 厭. I read *jin* 進 for the graph *jin* 晉 instead.

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> addressed to the former kings: "Your oldest grandson Fa has met with harm and is suffering from a serious disease. Is it the case that you need him to serve up above? But actually, your oldest grandson Fa is not the equal of Dan (me). [Dan] is clever and capable, has many talents and many skills, he is capable of serving the ghosts and spirits. You have received the mandate in the court of the supreme ancestor, and spread it out over the four directions, so that your sons and grandsons are settled on the earth below. If you permit me, I will present you with the Bi and Gui; if you do not permit me, I will return them." The Duke of Zhou then placed the speech in which he presented himself as a replacement to the king in the Metal-bound Coffer. He then ordered the ritual assistants: "Do not dare speak [about this]!"

The frame of the story, like in the **Baoxun* above, presents the reader with King Wu's impending death. The Duke of Zhou presents himself as a replacement for the king to the ancestors and has the court scribe read a prayer to the ancestors extolling his virtue, arguing that they should take his life as sacrifice instead. He then has the prayer stored in the metal-bound coffer and warns the ritual aides not to speak of it. This move proves to be the crux of the story. By storing the written record of his prayer in the metal-bound coffer, the Duke removes it from circulation. The only witnesses present at the scene are silenced by the Duke and accordingly, the testimony of the Duke's intent to die instead of the king is hidden for none to see.

This section is presented as a frame for the audience to interpret all later events, which include the future King Cheng's suspicion of the Duke's intent as regent. As in the **Wuwang jianzuo* and the **Baoxun*, the *Zhou Wuwang you ji* relates both a narrative of how the text in the metal-bound coffer was produced, in addition to including the text of the prayer itself. This self-reflexive move of dramatic irony grants the audience access to this hidden prayer while at the same time providing a narrative explaining why the people within the story did not have access. In the following half of the story, the hidden prayer fixed in writing is contrasted with freer modes of discourse:

> 即後武王陟▃，成王猶(7)幼在位，管叔及其羣兄弟，乃流言于邦曰："公將不利於孺子▃。"周公乃告二公曰："我之(8)□□□□　無以復見於先王。"周公宅東三年，禍人乃斯得。於後▃，周公乃遺王詩(9)曰: "雕鴞。"王亦未迎公。是歲也▃，秋大熟▃，未穫，天疾風以雷，禾漸偃，大木漸拔。邦人(10)□□□□ 弁▃，大夫端▃，以啟金縢之匱▃。王得周公之所自以爲貢，以代武王之說▃。王問執(11)事人，曰："信。噫。公命我勿敢言▃。"王捕書以泣，曰："昔公勤勞王家▃，惟余沖人亦弗及(12)知▃。今皇天動威，以彰公德▃。惟余沖人其親逆公，我邦家禮宜之▃。"王乃出逆公(13)至郊。是夕，天反風，禾漸

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起▃。凡大木之所拔，二公命邦人盡復築之▃。歲大有年，秋(14)則大穫└。

(14B)周武王有疾周公所自以代王之志。

When afterwards King Wu had died, King Cheng was still young when he took up the throne. Guanshu and all his younger and older brothers then spread a rumor throughout the country, saying: "The Duke [of Zhou] will not be beneficial to the young heir." The Duke of Zhou then addressed the two Dukes and said: "If I […] cannot appear before the former kings again." The Duke of Zhou resided in the east for three years, and the culprits where then obtained. Afterwards, the Duke of Zhou presented the king with the poem "Eagle Owl." The king still did not receive the Duke. That year, the autumn crop was very ripe and had not yet been harvested when Heaven sent a fierce wind and lightning. It flattened all the grain and uprooted all the big trees. The people in the country […] put on the ceremonial cap and the grandees put on ceremonial clothes, in order to open up the Metal-bound Coffer. The king obtained the Duke of Zhou's speech in which he presented himself as a replacement for King Wu. The king asked the ritual assistants, and they said: "Verily, it is so. The Duke ordered us not to speak of it." The king held the document in tears, and said: "Formerly, the Duke labored for our house, but I the young one did not get to know this. Now August Heaven moves its might in order to manifest the Duke's virtue. That I the young one should personally meet him is considered proper by the ritual of our house and country." The king then went out to meet the Duke at the outskirts. That evening, Heaven turned the winds, and all the grain rose again. The two dukes ordered the people of the country to replant all of the big trees that had been uprooted. That year had a great crop, and in the autumn, there was a great harvest.

Verso: King Wu of Zhou has an illness. The intent of the Duke of Zhou to put himself in the King's place

In this section, the Duke's good intents are countermanded by Guanshu et al. who spread rumors through the state. The hidden and fixed message of the prayer is directly contrasted with the moveable, public, and adaptive nature of rumor. Where rumor is slanderous and unverifiable, the written prayer has the power to absolve and is physically and temporally tied to its location of composition. When the Duke goes into exile he attempts to absolve himself of these accusations by sending the poem "Eagle Owl" to King Cheng. Poetry as a form is moveable and closely linked to oral performance (although we are not told whether

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the Duke send it in writing or dictation) and is supposed to be capable of encapsulating the intent of its composer. The poem is however not able to persuade the king of the Duke's innocence. In response to the Duke's removal, Heaven intervenes and punishes the Zhou by flattening its crops.

This punishment is immediately followed by everybody dressing up in ritual regalia to open the metal-bound coffer. No reason is given in the text why the coffer is sought out and why ritual apparel needs to be worn, but this response to divine punishment in the story bestows a ritually significant—almost magical—power to the chest and the writings it encloses. With the opening of the chest the king obtains the written prayer. It is noteworthy that his first action is to confirm the prayer's origins with the ritual specialists. Only after oral witness confirmation provides final verification does the king dramatically take up the document, burst into tears, and absolve the Duke. The crops and the Duke's good name are restored.

The necessity for witness testimony shows that despite the central role given to the written word in this text, it cannot stand on its own. Oral testimony, and by extension, the memories of the witnesses, provide the final verification because who is to say the Duke (or someone else) did not put a different document in the coffer? This dynamic between written and oral testimony has been extensively discussed by Clanchy in his discussion of contracts and trials in medieval England. He notes that in the transitionary period towards increased reliance on documents people would often still stake their faith on witness confirmation of the events referred to in a document and would value items such as knifes for their role as mnemonic tokens of a transaction for instance.[77] This story shares that aspect in not only asking after witness testimony but also presenting the metal-bound coffer as a token of the event, the coffer metonymically standing for the protection and untarnished state of the document within.

The recognition of the Duke's intent on the basis of the written prayer turns the document into a witness itself. Because writing a text down and hiding it away makes it relatively difficult to change the wording, it is presented as the prime form for preserving the Duke's original intent. Whomever appended the summary style title to the manuscript text picked up this aspect and made a point that it was the "intent" *zhi* 志 of the Duke to take the king's unfortunate place that is key to this story. The written prayer as the vehicle of intent is thereby implicitly contrasted to the poem that the Duke presented to King Cheng. While contemporaneous and later

77. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 256–62.

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discourse repeatedly stress that poetry (*shi* 詩 *s.tə) is the prime vehicle for manifesting intent (*zhi* 志 *tə-s),[78] this understanding is subverted here. The poem does not absolve the Duke, it is a written document which presents the best representation of the Duke's intent instead.

Perhaps it is because the poem was composed after the events that made it not representative of the Duke's intent before King Wu died. In any case, the concern of the *Zhou Wuwang you ji* is not so much the oral nature of the composition or performance of text—the prayer of the Duke was read out loud to the ancestors as well. Rather, the movability and malleable nature of *transmission* by proxy (note that the Duke had the poem send) is contrasted to the fixed and stable status accorded to writing here. Writing can be transmitted without the involvement of a messenger. The text of the prayer was locked up, hidden, taken out of circulation and, supposedly, impervious to change.[79]

As a metatext, this characterization applies to the manuscript text itself as well. The story of the hidden document provides a means for the insertion of this narrative on the Duke of Zhou in the stream of tradition, and is therefore implicitly presented as the untainted, and therefore, authentic account of his intent. This logic and the metaphor of storage signifying the unchangeability of text is echoed in a passage in the *Mozi*:

> 則夫好攻伐之君，有重不知此為不仁不義也，有書之竹帛，藏之府庫。為人後子者，必且欲順其先君之行，曰：“何不當發吾府庫，視吾先君之法美。”
>
> Well these bellicose lords, were twice ignorant in that they were being inhumane and unrighteous and had it written on bamboo and silk, and stored in the archives of their office. They made it for their descendants, who necessarily wanted to follow the deeds of their former lords, so that they would say: "Why not open up our archives, and show the splendor of the model of our former lords?"[80]

Ironically, for the *Mozi* it is the fact that the inhumane deeds of bellicose lords were written down and stored away in repositories which allows their descendants to learn in surprise of their failings rather than finding proper models. Actions and motives are preserved untouched through the ages, allowing later commentators to judge them to new standards. Again, the written word is presented as a stable model to

78. Already found in the Guodian **Yucong* 語叢 1, slips 38–39.

79. Note that while the composition and storing of the document are contextualized in the story, the poem and the rumor are presented as is and are therefore not presented with a means of validating its contents.

80. *Mozi jiangu*, 7.216–217 ("Tianzhi Xia" 天志下).

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check oral, remembered, and mediated accounts. Nonetheless, many sources state that for written material to be trustworthy, its conditions of composition have to be verified. In the *Zhou Wuwang you ji*, the king calls on witnesses to provide oral testimony proving that it was indeed the Duke who hid this prayer before the death of King Wu. Just as in the case of the **Baoxun* where writing is used to present its readership with allegedly intimate knowledge, or the **Wuwang jianzuo* where writing is presented as a means to counter textual loss, we could argue that this need for verification of the source of written documents echoes an understanding of the use of writing to insert new narratives in the stream of tradition. An increase in the appearance in *writing* of narratives that were supposedly lost, is celebrated as a trope of access to textual heritage while at the same time its origins are questioned.

This tension underlies the need for these texts to provide a convincing narrative about their circumstances of production and transmission. As noted above, the physical nature of the text bearing knowledge is stressed in these accounts; accordingly they provide a tangible and immediate link to the past seemingly impervious to the powers of hearsay and memory loss.[81] These strategies help claim authenticity for the text. This claim to authenticity becomes all the more important in light of critiques leveled against such written accounts of the past as the famous *Mengzi* passage quoted below shows.

> 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？"
>
> Mengzi said, "It would be better to be without the *shu* than to give entire credit to it. In the 'Completion of the War', I select two or three slips only. The humane has no enemy under heaven. When the most humane battled the most inhumane, how could the blood of the people have flowed till it floated the pestles of the mortars?"[82]

The passage illustrates that text preserved in writing, contrary to the perception offered in the *Mozi*, does not guarantee reliability to everyone and often has to compete with remembered (and often idealized) knowledge about the past. Written text had to be read "correctly," yet the fixed, literal meaning of some texts was so far beyond dispute that the text as

81. Note also that the transmitted "Jinteng" includes a large episode on a divination conducted to verify the written text.

82. *Mengzi zhushu*, 14A.2773B ("Jinxin II" 盡心下). As becomes clear from the passage quoted at the end of this article (acknowledging access to the past through writing) and the passage on (mis-)reading Odes quoted in note 65 above, the *Mengzi*'s problem with written text centers on the room left for "correct" interpretation.

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a whole had to be refuted in order to maintain previous interpretations of past events. I have discussed the problem of competing accounts of the past elsewhere,[83] for now, it is enough to note that, for the *Mozi*, the rulers of the past would be judged on the basis of the factual and unchanged accounts handed down from the past. To other texts, such as the *Mengzi*, the written nature of documents did not automatically guarantee their veracity and instead needed to be interpreted and squared with previously held perceptions. In order for a written account to displace accepted versions of past events, it needed to provide more than just a different narrative. The four texts analyzed above tried to argue for veracity by reflecting on specific qualities of writing and by providing accounts on the transmission of the material. These texts used this as a means to convince their audience that they provide an accurate, traceable, and explainable account of the past.

On a more fundamental level, this does not just reflect a search for new strategies of argumentation. Rather, the fact that the relative merits and defects of written transmission were for the first time contrasted with other methods likely indicates an actual shift towards a broader reliance on written documents. As a consequence, the very acts of composition and transmission, and how they related to knowledge, are reflected and commented on in texts of this period. As I have shown, these reflections often commented on the character of writing, by referring to its materiality and functionality, but also often pointed to its shortcomings.

One of the problems with written text is exactly that it preserves, and accordingly, proliferates. The volume of different accounts and arguments as preserved in writing is in itself an indication of pluriformity and difference of opinion. To some, these accounts had to be squared in order to arrive at the true state of things. Even the *Mozi*, otherwise a staunch advocate of writing as a means to ensure access and verification of knowledge from the past, notes that a standard is needed to judge among the multitude of different writings:

> 子墨子言曰：“我有天志，譬若輪人之有規，匠人之有矩，輪匠執其規矩，以度天下之方圜,”曰：“中者是也，不中者非也。”“今天下之士君子之書，不可勝載，言語不可盡計，上說諸侯，下說列士，其於仁義則大相遠也。何以知之？”曰：“我得天下之明法以度之。”
>
> Master Mozi said: “My will of Heaven is like the wheelwright’s compasses and the carpenter’s square, which they use to measure out the square and straight in the world,” saying: “The accurate is to be accepted, and the inaccurate is to be dismissed.” Now the writings of

83. Krijgsman, “The Rise of a Manuscript Culture,” chap. 2.

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> the *Shi* and gentlemen in the world are too much carry, and their arguments and sayings too much to account for. Above they argue to the lords, and below to the arrayed *Shi*. But they are far removed from what is humane and what is righteous. How do I know this? Because I have obtained the clearest model in the realm to measure them against.[84]

The lack of unity in explanation is here illustrated by the volume of writings. Indeed, in other passages, such as in the "Tianxia" 天下 chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, often considered to be of later date, cartloads of writings are the object of ridicule and embody a lack of true and straightforward knowledge and critical distinction buried under sheer volume:[85]

> 惠施多方，其書五車，其道舛駁，其言也不中。[86]

> Huishi had many methods, and his writings amounted to five carts. His way was disarrayed and contradictory and his sayings did not hit the mark.

In the same way that a written document embodied the unchanged way of the ancients in the **Wuwang jianzuo*, it came to symbolize the crisis in conflicting theories and methods so often taken as the hallmark of the Warring States.[87] Possibly, this symbolic function of writing represents a later stage in the history of its perception, when writing, knowledge, and disputation were already stably associated, allowing the written word to function as a powerful symbol illustrating the disorderly state of the realm.[88] This sentiment culminates in comments illustrating idleness and absentmindedness associated with writing. A shepherd in the *Zhuangzi* loses his sheep because he was submerged in reading, notably paired with a shepherdess who is similarly lost in a game of *liubo* 六博.[89] The above suggests that the written word was not

84. *Mozi jiangu*, 7.197 ("Tianzhi Shang" 天志上). For a discussion of the role of Heaven in providing standards in the *Mozi* see Nicolas Standaert, "Heaven as Standard," in *The Mozi as an Evolving Text*, 264–65.

85. See also *Mozi jiangu*, 12.445 ("Guiyi" 貴義) for a passage ridiculing the master for carrying cartloads of books.

86. *Zhuangzi jishi*, 1102 ("Tianxia" 天下).

87. By Angus C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), for example.

88. Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 80–82. See also the *Han Feizi* which is riddled with comments deriding the reliance on (old knowledge) as preserved in books and words, for example in the quote heading this article and in the "Yulao" 喻老 and "Liu Fan" 六反 chapters.

89. *Zhuangzi jishi*, 523 ("Pianmu" 駢拇): 臧與穀，二人相與牧羊，而俱亡其羊。問臧奚事，則挾筴讀書；問穀奚事，則博塞以遊。二人者，事業不同，其於亡羊均也。"The slave boy and the slave girl were out together herding their sheep, and both

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accepted as the ideal means for transmitting knowledge straight away. Instead, its relative qualities and functionality were a concern that was reflected on and evaluated in a number of ways. It is only in the Han dynasties that "books" and the libraries that hold and categorize them become a fully accepted means to restore the culture of the past. Nevertheless, traditions that favored oral transmission persist until well into the late imperial period, and the trend towards written text is therefore by no means absolute.

Conclusion

Previous research has persuasively argued for the emergence of a manuscript culture on the basis of an increase in the availability and spread of and reliance on written text in the Warring States period. What I have shown here, is that this development was remarked upon by contemporary witnesses, who evaluated the functionality of this relatively new phenomenon in their texts and explored its role. Written text was a newcomer in many fields of discourse. Before the Warring States, the written word was intimately ingrained in the ritual and legal sphere of the old aristocracy; it was the purview of a select group of individuals who were responsible for its composition and dissemination, and who formed its audience and witnesses. Writing's prescribed role was not reflected on and did not impinge on other forms of discourse. This picture changed drastically in the Warring States period. I suggest that writing, reading, reciting, and storing written text became activities that were commented upon. Their relative merits and problems were addressed and texts emerged that played with writing as an argumentative function.

In texts from the period, distinctions appear between seeing and hearing documents, between reciting and receiving text in writing; and oral forms such as poetry and rumor are contrasted to written text. Manuscripts and other materials as a physical embodiment of knowledge become a trope in the literature of the period, and their toughness, movability, and self-referential ability to be both the message and the medium spoke to authors of the period as a powerful tool in constructing the validity and reliability of its content.

Moreover, the qualities associated with the written word are for the first time commented upon and contrasted with other forms of dis-

of them lost their flocks. Ask the slave boy how it happened: well, he had a bundle of writing slips and was reading some writings. Ask the slave girl how it happened: well, she was playing a game of *Liu Bo*. They went about their business in different ways, but in losing their sheep they were equal."

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course. The written is characterized as fixed, immutable, and lasting. It grants a text the ability to transcend its context of composition and resurface after hundreds of years. Written texts are stored, treasured, and ritually charged. Once they emerge again they provide challenging statements and text that is difficult to match with received knowledge. To some authors, this ability of writing was used as a rationale justifying a text's new emergence. By writing the context of production and transmission into the narratives of the past, they provide a text internal lineage explaining the surfacing of new material within the stream of tradition. To others, written text, and by extension, isolated words and language in general, were considered problematic. Writing stripped discourse of its contexts of articulation, including elements such as gesture, tone, facial expression and physical and ritual activity. While for some this allowed writing to stand untainted from the malleability commonly attributed to speech, to others the use of witnesses and oral testimony, verbal explanation and contextual interpretation of reified text were all considered necessary in order to properly situate the written word.

To many, writing was an inferior form of knowledge production and communication, especially when contrasted with more traditional knowledge practices. Writing was not a victor over speech and action. The multiplication of volumes was instead taken as a sign of the poverty and disorderly state of their owner's thinking, and by extension, of the realm at large. At the same time, thinkers used written texts to travel back to a better age, knowing, befriending, and seeking solace in the sages of antiquity:

> 孟子謂萬章曰：…"以友天下之善士為未足，又尚論古之人。頌其詩，讀其書，不知其人，可乎？是以論其世也。是尚友也。"
>
> Mencius said to Wan Zhang: "[…] When a scholar feels that his friendship with all the virtuous scholars of the kingdom is not sufficient to satisfy him, he proceeds to ascend to evaluate the men of antiquity. He recites their poems, and reads their writings, how could he not know their person? That is why he evaluates their times. This is ascending and making friends with the men of antiquity."[90]

90. *Mengzi zhushu*, 10B.2746B ("Wanzhang II" 萬章下).

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自我反思的實踐：論早期中國對待寫本和文本的態度轉變

武致知

提要

本文探討戰國時期文本對寫本廣泛使用的反思。基於重讀傳世文獻和四篇出土文獻（分別為：上博簡《武王踐祚》甲、乙本，清華簡《寶訓》和《周武王有疾周公所自以代王之志》），本文討論戰國時期人如何看待寫本和文本的地位、它們保存信息的功能和可信度，以及寫本的使用與流傳、傳授。這些文本的特點呈現在“自我反思”。它們的內容正是講述自己作為寫本的物質性、書寫、口頭和書寫傳授的問題，以及記憶和寫本在保存、隱藏和傳達信息能力上的區別。我認為這些“反思”呈現了傳達信息的主要媒體的轉變：從傳統意義下的知識實踐到逐漸依賴寫本載體。

Keywords: Manuscript, text, materiality, orality, transmission
寫本**,** 文本**,** 物質性**,** 口頭傳授**,** 流傳

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