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"Patterning Meaning": A Thick Description of the Tsinghua Manuscript "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" (Tāng was at the Chì/Dì Gate) and What It Tells Us about Thought Production in Early China * **

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This paper provides a 'thick description' (using Clifford Geertz's notion) of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén", which is part of the Tsinghua Manuscripts. Exploring its communicative dimensions and analysing the interplay between text and performance, this paper reconstructs the social use of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" in the discourse of the time. The manuscript text records an imagined dialogue held at the Chì/Dì Gate between King Chéng Tāng and his famous official, Yī Yǐn, consistently introduced as 'minor minister'. The text is highly patterned and presents a conversation about the 'innately good doctrines of old and their actuality in the present'. The conversation is framed by an introductory formula commonly seen in textualised "Shū" traditions, as well as a final appraisal, which concludes the text in 'dramatic' terms (using Helmut Utzschneider's notion). The text is rhymed while the items under discussion are presented as catalogues, suggesting completeness. The well-balanced composition is at odds with the seemingly meagre content of the text, staging oddly empty phrases that leave the modern reader rather puzzled. By drawing on content-form and communication theories, and considering its performative dimensions, this paper probes the apparent conflict between the content and the form and reconstructs the strategies of Warring States communities to develop meaning through patterned text. Once contextualised, this rather peculiar text serves as a reference for meaning-construction of performance texts in the intellectual landscape of the Warring States period (ca. 453–222 BC) more globally.

Keywords: Shangshu, manuscript cultures, orality and literacy, content-form theory, philosophy

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** 編按：應作者要求，本文採用英式標點，並據歐洲漢學傳統標出拼音音調，故與其他篇章統一為美式標點不同，特此說明。又，文末中文摘要由陳子如翻譯。

1. The text and manuscript

"*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" 湯在啻門 (Tāng was at the Chì/Dì Gate) is a relatively short text in eight distinct building blocks of seven units of thought that can be organised in two parts: the philosophical core and its applications. It is recorded on 21 slips, ca. 44.5 cm long, collected in the Tsinghua (Qīnghuá) collection of Manuscripts.[1] Three cords connected the slips at their top and bottom ends, as well as their centre. Some slips show two parallel marks at their tail. As marks on the back of the slips suggest, the first 20 were all taken from the same bamboo tube; only slip 21 is from a different tube.[2] Their order as used here follows the editors of the Tsinghua Manuscripts, who based it on the order of events in the text. The slips themselves carry no sequence numbers on their back.

The head of two slips, 11 and 20, has broken off; and the tail of slip 7 is missing. It seems, however, that no graphs are missing. A number of the graphs are blurred (such as *xiàng* 相 or *dì* 地 on slip 40: ).

Each slip carries on average 28 graphs. The calligraphy is for the most part uniform, with just a few exceptions. According to Lǐ Shǒukuí, the manuscript occasionally shows Chǔ characteristics, while much of the calligraphy displays obvious characteristics of the Three Jìn.[3] The manuscript shows cases of secondary corrections where the copyist added further graphs between existing writing, which suggests a concern for text integrity. Examples include the graphs *hǎo* 好 on slip 6; *nǎi* 乃 on slip 7; *wéi* 唯 on slip 20. (See the image on the left, read from the right, with slip 6, to the left, with slip 20). The manuscript carries no title; the

1 The photographs of the slips are published in Lǐ Xuéqín 李學勤 , ed., *Qīnghuá Dàxué cáng Zhànguó zhújiǎn* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 , vol. 5 (Shànghǎi: Zhōngxī shūjú, 2011), 14–17; 71–84; with an annotated transcription, 141–148.

2 Lǐ Shǒukuí 李守奎,"'Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén' *dǎodú*"湯在啻門導讀 (paper presented at"Human Nature, Morality, and Fate in the Tsinghua University Bamboo Manuscripts, *Tang chu yu Tang qiu* 湯處於湯丘 , *Tang zai Chi men* 湯在啻門 , and *Yin Gaozong wen yu san shou* 殷高宗問于三壽 ", the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Erlangen, May 12, 2016).

3 Ibid.

current working title was assigned by the editors of the Tsinghua Manuscripts.

The manuscript shows punctuation, or 'breath', marks. They are used consistently at exclamations or questions, and repeatedly when core definitions are given.

The careful production of the manuscript is in notable tension with the content of the text on the purely lexical level of signification, which is occasionally rather wanting. The secondary corrections and the indication of breath marks suggest that the manuscript was not just produced for display purposes, but for use, that is, to be read out aloud. [4] Some features in the text suggest that it was well suited for that purpose: much of it is rhymed, and its sentences are often carefully balanced, keeping strict parallel schemes and giving a certain, smooth, rhythm. With that much care given to its formal presentation, its meagre content on the lexical level stands out. On the surface level the text contains many hackneyed statements and predictable rhetorical questions, and it features many numbers devoid of lexical explanations that are strangely disconnected from previous trains of thought, leaving the modern reader rather bewildered.

2. Patterning Meaning

How should we read "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén", this rather odd text that was produced circa two thousand five hundred years ago for a meaning community that, we must assume, had precious little in common with its twenty-first century-readers? How can we generate meaning from a piece that so obviously does not speak to us, as too many of its phrases seem so strangely clichéd and empty of meaning? Who were the groups that would make sense of the text, and how did they use it? Did it make sense at all? If it did, what are its strategies by which meaning is generated, and how should we, today, unlock them?

Laying out a reading strategy

The odd features of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" make it very clear that approaching the text in the traditional way of trawling it for content, for instance by singling out key terms and discussing them in the context of

4 For a discussion of representation texts in China, see 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*, eds. Li Feng and David Prager Branner (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2011), 206–36.

Warring States period thinking—to this day this is unfortunately still the common approach in the study of Chinese Philosophy—will bear little or no result. The text quite literally defies such a reading strategy, and its only outcome will be for us to conclude that it is a bad text, totally unsuccessful in producing meaning, and making no sense. It is quite clear that ancient communities would not have used it in that way. Given its textual features of rhyme and sentence balance, it is unlikely that they would have used it primarily in a search for its content purely on the lexical level. Instead we must assume they used it for its performative dimensions.[5]

This ought to inform our reading strategy. Giving "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" a charitable reading and assuming that it makes sense on its own terms,[6] I shall unlock its strategies to produce meaning and reconstruct how it was used in antiquity. I suggest doing so by analysing in two steps the literary form of its argument: first, by exploring the way it constructs meaning on the micro-level, that is, the single building block; second, by applying its strategies to construct meaning on the micro-level to the text as a whole, its macro-level.[7]

5 Note that the notion of 'performative dimensions' is rather broad and may include a text's performative roots. Whether there existed the experience of private reading for aesthetics during the Warring States period will be discussed in the conclusion.

6 A charitable reading is the basis for all successful communication. It requires interpreting a speaker's statements (or a text) as sound, as well as considering the best and strongest possible interpretation of an argument. See Normand Baillargeon, *A Short Course in Intellectual Self-Defense*, trans. Andréa Schmidt (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007), 78. Readers should be reminded of the enormous hermeneutical efforts that have been made in the past to save the texts of Aristotle, simply because they were too important for the history of European thought.

7 I have tested this strategy on texts as different as Guōdiàn "*Zhōng xìn zhī dào"忠信之道 (The way of trueheartedness and trustworthiness), "*Qióng dá yǐ shí" 窮達以時 (Failure and success occur at their respective times), "Wǔ xíng"五行 (Fives types of conduct), all of the above are manuscript texts from the Warring States period; as well as the"Qiūshuǐ"秋水 (Autumn floods) chapter in the *Zhuāngzǐ*; and the Tsinghua manuscript "Zhōu Wǔ Wáng yǒu jí Zhōugōng suǒ zì yǐ dài wáng zhī zhì" 周武王有疾周公所自以代王之志 (The record of the Duke of Zhōu putting himself forward in the place of the King when King Wǔ was suffering from illness). See Dirk Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo: Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Meyer, "The Art of Narrative and the Rhetoric of Persuasion in the '*Jin Teng' (Metal Bound Casket) from the Tsinghua Collection of Manuscripts", *Asiatische Studien - Études Asiatiques* 68, no. 4 (2014): 937–68; Meyer, "Truth Claim with no Claim to Truth: Text and Performance of the 'Qiushui' Chapter of the *Zhuangzi*", in *Literary Forms of Argument in Early China*, eds. Joachim Gentz and Dirk Meyer (Leiden: Brill 2015), 297–340; Meyer "'Shu' Traditions and Text Recomposition: A Re-evaluation of 'Jin teng' and 'Zhou Wuwang you ji'", in *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy: Studies in the Composition and Thought of the* Shangshu *(Classic of Documents)*, eds. Martin Kern and Dirk Meyer (Leiden: Brill 2017), 224–48.

The analysis will show that meaning in "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" was developed not primarily on the horizontal level of signification, that is, its pure lexicon, but above all through appeals to what is aesthetically pleasing. This is achieved through rhyme, meter, and regular sentence balance. The text produces a philosophically meaningful message by calling on the recipient's faculty to sense beauty and to consider it as evidence that the cosmic patterns are all pervasive, including the organising of the material universe, as well as man-made culture. By reproducing these patterns at the level of text composition, "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" becomes an extension of these patterns. It thus bridges the gap between the material universe and constructed human culture. It follows that the recitation of the text becomes a philosophically meaningful act through which the recipient actively participates in, and thus sustains these structures. In so doing it follows the logic of ritual – an act of depicting an orderly social world in a way that contributes materially to its actualisation.

Unit one

The first unit is exemplary for much of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" : it is characterised by a compelling sound texture and an elaborate compositional structure, paired with a regular use of reading, or—assuming a voiced delivery of the text—"breath" marks.[8] This sits oddly with its rather meagre, not to say

8 Championed by Guǎn Xīhuá 管錫華 , *Zhōngguó gǔdài biǎodiǎn fúhào fāzhǎn shǐ* 中國古代標點符號發展史 (Chéngdū: Bā Shǔ shūshè, 2002)—he focused in particular on transmitted literature—much has been written on punctuation in early Chinese writing. Liào Míngchūn 廖名春 , "Guōdiàn jiǎn Xìng zì mìng chū de biānlián yǔ fēnhé wèntí" 郭店簡《性自命出》的編連與分合問題 , *Zhōngguó zhéxué shǐ* 中國哲學史 , no. 4 (2000): 14–21, pointed to the importance of marks in questions of text partition in manuscript texts. Focusing exclusively on manuscripts, Matthias L. Richter introduced a previously unseen systematisation in the study of punctuation in Chinese writing. General discussions of punctuation in Chinese texts are found in Christoph Harbsmeier, *Language and Logic*, vol. 7, pt. 1 of *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Kenneth Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also 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*, forthcoming in 2018. Nikita Bichurin (1777–1853) was the first to discuss punctuation in Chinese. Imre Galambos discusses punctuation marks in medieval Chinese manuscripts. See his "Punctuation Marks in Medieval Chinese Manuscripts", in *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*, eds. Jörg B. Quenzer, Dmitry Bondarev and Jan-Ulrich Sobisch (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 342–57, esp. 341. The question of silent reading in antiquity is discussed in Wolfgang Behr and Bernhard Führer, "Einführende Notizen zum Lesen in China mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frühzeit", in *Aspekte des Lesens in China in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. Bernhard Führer (Bochum: Projekt Verlag, 2005), 1–44.

poor, construction of meaning on the horizontal, that is, the purely lexical level.

"*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" is headed by a frame commonly seen in texts of the "Shū" (Writings) traditions, an archaic speech register used by various groups during the Warring States period in an attempt to reconstitute the past in the present for sociopolitical and philosophical ends. In their mode of self-representation, these texts take on the *Gestus* of voices of the past, now extant in the present, and relevant for the future.[9] The frame further introduces the text by specifying the encounter between Chéng Tāng 成湯 (ca. 1675–1646 BC), the founding king of the Shāng dynasty (ca. 1600–1046 BC) who is recorded as Dà Yì 大乙 on Ānyáng oracle bones, and one of his advisors, notably referred to as 'minor minister'(*xiǎo chén* 小臣). It thus links "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" to a particular tradition, placing it in a sociopolitical and philosophical debate.[10] Assuming the position of an all-observing chronicler in locating the event in time and space, it presents a "dramatic" stage-like opening, making "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" well suited to oral performance.[11] Linked to the *"*Shū*"*-type frame, unit one mounts the dialogue in "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" intellectually:

9 On the "Shū" traditions during the Warring States period (ca. 453–222 BC) and their dynamic sociopolitical and philosophical dimensions, see Dirk Meyer *Traditions of Writings* 書 (Shu) *and Political Argument in Early China*, forthcoming.

10 On linking a certain text to "Shū" traditions by making use of certain framing structures, see Rens Krijgsman,"The Textualization of Cultural Memory in Early Chinese Manuscripts"(Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 2016); Dirk Meyer, "Recontextualization and Memory Production: Debates on Rulership as Reconstructed from 'Gu ming' 顧命 ", in *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy*, eds. Kern and Meyer, 106–45.

11 On 'dramatic' features in early literatures, see Helmut Utzschneider, "Ist das Drama eine universale Gattung? Erwägungen zu den 'dramatischen' Texten in der alt. Prophetie, der attischen Tragödie und im ägyptischen Kultspiel", in his *Gottes Vorstellung: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Ästhetik und ästhetischen Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), 269–90. In reference to Kern's 2009 discussion of the *Shàngshū* texts as texts for formal recitation (Martin Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou", in *Early Chinese Religion*, pt. 1, *Shang through Han [1250 BC–220 AD]*, eds. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 143–200, esp. 151), Grebnev deepens Utzschneider's notion of the 'dramatic' and applies it to the speeches in early Chinese textuality, in particular the "Shū" traditions. (see Yegor Grebnev, "The Core Chapters of the *Yi Zhou shu*" [Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 2016]). Criteria of dramatic speech include the distribution of 'first- and second-person pronouns, vocatives, and exclamations throughout the text'. One may further consider stage-like presentations in framing the speech as another important feature of dramatic texts.

1.

|[1] 貞（正）月己咳（亥），湯才（在）帝（帝）門，問於少（小）臣：

「古之先帝亦有良言 (*raŋ-*ŋan) 青（情）(*[dz]eŋ) 至於今 (*[k]r[ə]m) 虎（乎）？」

少（小）臣畬（答）|[2] 曰：

「又（有）(*ɢʷəʔ) 才（哉）(*tsˁə) [illegible]。

女（如）亡（無）又（有）良言 (*raŋ-*ŋan) 清（情）(*[dz]eŋ) 至於今 (*[k]r[ə]m),

則可（何）[illegible] 以成人 (*deŋ-*niŋ)？

可（何）以　成邦 (*deŋ-*pˁroŋ) [illegible]？

可（何）以　成地 (*deŋ-*lˁej-s) [illegible]？

可（何）以　成 |[3] 天 (*deŋ-*l̥ˁin) [illegible]？」

|[1] It was at the first month of the lunar year, *jǐhǎi*. Tāng was at the Gate of Dì and asked a minor minister [the following:]

'Of the former Dì of old, surely there are some of their innately good doctrines, with their actuality [of things] reaching [us] today?'

The minor minister responded by |[2] saying:

'Indeed there are [such doctrines]!

If there weren't any of their innately good doctrines, with their actuality [of things] reaching [us] today, then

How could we accomplish personhood?

How could we accomplish the state?

How would we accomplish the earth?

How would we accomplish |[3] Heaven?'

On the purely horizontal, that is, the lexical level of signification, the framing does rather little. Chéng Tāng asks his 'minor minister' about the substance of the doctrines of the 'former Dì of old' (*gǔ zhī xiāndì* 古之先帝) and whether it has any implications in the present. His minor minister, affirming this, responds by four rhetorical questions about particular states of affairs. To us the minister's response with its staged rhetorical questions appears rather clichéd. But there is more to it than meets the eye.

The minor minister lists matters relating to the social realm—accomplishing personhood (*chéngrén* 成人) and the state (*chéngbāng* 成邦)—with their cosmic counterparts of accomplishing Earth (*chéngdì* 成地) and Heaven (*chéngtiān* 成天) (the will of Heaven?). As is true of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" more generally, the unit produces rather trite speech and hackneyed phrases on the lexical level, both on the part of the interlocutor

and the respondent, but weaves them into a compelling sound texture, paired with strictly regular sentence patterns. I have marked up pairs of assonances in single and double underline, dissonances—they too are distributed regularly—by putting them each in a box.

Beginning with the question by King Chéng of Tāng, the text is structured as a phonetic web, organising items of relevance into meaningful units. The king's question, for instance, is difficult to parse when ignoring its phonetic texture, and one might be inclined to read the three words *liáng yán qíng* 良言情 as 'good words and feelings'. However, when reading it through its phonetic texture, it becomes obvious that they are in fact two pairs: 良言 (*raŋ-*ŋan) 'innately good doctrines' must constitute one unit, with 情今 (*[dz]eŋ-*[k]r[ə]m) '[their] actuality/substance (reaching us) today' another – organised by the texture of sound.[12]

Having revealed how the unit produces meaning beyond the mere horizontal/purely lexical level, the remainder of the passage continues in much the same manner, as the minister's answer is also structured by its sound texture, markedly framed by a brief, two-syllable affirmation (有 *ɢʷəʔ 哉 *tsˁə 'indeed there are [such doctrines]').

Interesting, then, is the following: the one item where one *would* expect rhymes to occur, the catalogue of accomplishing the social and the cosmic realms, withholds the compelling sound texture that otherwise characterises this unit. 'Accomplishing personhood, state, Heaven and earth' come in an unwieldy phonetic structure. Each component has a different main vowel, with their initials and coda having various positions of articulation (refer to the last four lines in Unit One). By violating sound expectations, the catalogue attracts the audience's attention. It is rather compelling because of its tight-fit structure of parallel phrases.

But the crass break from the smooth phonetic texture in the catalogue serves more than seizing the audience's attention. It also adds to the meaning of what is said. Just like the phonetic pairs above (the two pairs of 'innately good doctrines/words' and their impact on the present), the unit establishes meaning by fashioning a duality between, the doctrines of old, characterised by their pleasing sound texture, and their actuality in the present, given representation in all their ontological unwieldiness through the near-physical

12 Although the latter pair may not present a good rhyme—hence I speak of the phonetic texture of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén"instead—the division of related main vowels between the first and the second pair clearly present them as two separate but related groups. Thus, the text speaks about 'innately good doctrines' (*-aŋ) and their actuality in the present (*-e/ə).

bulkiness of their sound.

Despite this phonetic bulkiness, they are nonetheless presented as clearly regular and beautifully parallel. Their physical reality, although unwieldy, is shown to be harmonious.

The analysis of this unit shows that any attempt to read it on the horizontal level of signification by extracting meaning purely from its lexicon is bound to fail. It makes what is said by king and minister seem hackneyed, clichéd, and meaningless. The lexicon, which becomes clear, is secondary. Rather, the unit produces meaning primarily through sound and structure. The minister's response, hackneyed as it is on the horizontal level of signification, is thus shown to be not hollow but rhetorically abstract, with its meaning carried principally by the formal aspects of the composition.

Unit two

Many argument-based texts from the Warring States period develop in their first unit the fundamental argument patterns upheld in the text more globally. For the exegete this means that by unlocking the strategies by which meaning is developed in the texts' beginnings one may obtain the key to the ways the texts ought to be read. This also applies to "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén". We may not have learned yet what it *says*. But we have learned how it *works*.

Unit two continues with the conversation between the king and his adviser, in much the same manner. The king poses a question, and his minister responds in stylised speech.

2.
湯或（又）問於少（小）臣曰：
「幾言成人 ？ (*deŋ-*niŋ)
幾言成邦 ？ (*deŋ-*pˁroŋ)
幾言成地 ？ (*deŋ-*lˁej-s)
幾言成天 ？」 (*deŋ-*l̥ˁin)
少（小）臣畬（答）曰|[4]：
「五以成人，悳（德）以 光之 ；(*kʷˁ aŋ)
四以成 邦，五以 相之 ；(*[s]aŋ-s)
九以成地，五以 將之 ；(*[ts]aŋ-s)
九以成天，六|[5]以 行之 。」(*[g]ˁ raŋ-s)

Tāng asked again the minor minister, saying:
'How many doctrines [came down to us] that accomplish a person?
How many doctrines [came down to us] that accomplish a state?

> How many doctrines [came down to us] that accomplish the Earth?
> How many doctrines [came down to us] that accomplish Heaven?'
> The minor minister responded by saying:
> |[4] 'There are five [such doctrines] that accomplish a person – but [you need] virtue to make them bright;
> There are four that accomplish the state – but [you need] five to assist it;
> There are nine to accomplish the Earth – but there are five that lead it;
> There are nine to accomplish [the will of] Heaven – but there are six
> |[5] that enact it.'

Immediately striking to the modern reader is that in his question to the minister the king is not seeking the *content* of the doctrines but asking directly about their *numbers*. While this is opaque to us, close analysis of the following units reveals that by so doing the king is shown as already understanding — albeit implicitly — the doctrines and their implications. It is just another example confirming the prevailing idea about the contradiction of self-cultivation upheld by many texts of the time that only those who are already virtuous may further nourish their virtue.[13]

The minister's response is oddly structured by normative statements around numbers four, five, and nine, to which he adds 'virtue' and the number 'six'. But there is a clear system behind it: Five marks the human sphere (accomplishing personhood), and four the sociopolitical (accomplishing the state). Together they form the cosmic nine. Yet to become accomplished as a person also requires sufficient virtue to achieve distinction. This gives six, the number required to enact Heaven's will. Without stating so explicitly, the minor minister continues to expound how the human and the cosmic are intertwined such that one cannot do without the other, showing that only the sagacious, the accomplished virtuous person, may bring Heaven's will to fruition in the realm of humans. Thus put, the argument-*form* and its *content* comprise a singular entity where one embodies the other. In the normative statements as given by the minister they cannot be thought of separately.

13 On the contradiction of self-cultivation in Chinese discourse, see the discussion of the 'paradox of virtue' by David S. Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), 33ff.

Fig 1: The intertwining of the human and the cosmic

But it is not just the numbers that display a world in symmetry. In the minister's response to his king, the archetypal duality between the unwieldy yet well-balanced physicality of the world on the one hand, and the pleasing flow of the doctrines on the other, is also upheld, with 'making bright', 'assisting', 'leading', and 'enacting', four perfect rhymes, describing the doctrines' core in that system of balance. Nowhere in the text does it say so explicitly, but it is clear that they represent the core of doctrines of old as sought by the king, with their intertwining of the human and the cosmic spheres. Applying the global principles of meaning-construction underlying "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" to this unit, we know this because they rhyme.

By producing a world with balance between the social and the cosmic, organised by the numbers four, five and nine, with virtue, six, at their centre and thus showing, rather than explaining, the necessary ingredients of sagacity, administering, leading and enacting, this unit lays out the doctrines of old and formulates the philosophical core of the text. The remaining text (units 3 to 7) now goes into the essence of these relations one by one, showing the ontological reality behind the normative statements of the human five and virtuous sagacity; the social four and five to administer it; the cosmic nine of Earth and five to lead it; the cosmic nine of Heaven and the virtuous six to enact it. In doing so "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" not only shows that the numbers matter, but by exploring their actual correspondences it also lays out the king's predisposed, intuitive understanding of this world in balance, with the doctrines forming its glue, as he is asking the question about the numbers in the first place.

Lastly, given that virtue *dé* is key in human activity as developed through the given pairs and it is also reproduced formally in this unit, which must be read both horizontally *and* vertically: *dé* and six (i.e., the human five plus *dé*) frame the account and thus embrace the human five; five is in turn produced by the social four plus *dé*, informing the cosmic nine. See the schematic image below:

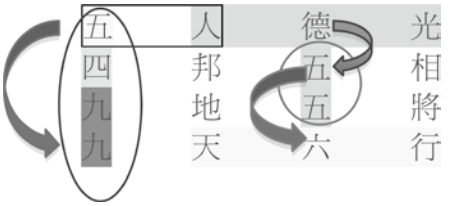


Fig2: The formal representation of *dé* in unit two

Unit three

Thus far, the argument form, manifesting a high degree of balance and symmetry, is a mimesis of the world as projected in the doctrines of old and portrayed by the minor minister. Having established the system of cosmic balance in its core essentials, the remainder of the text goes on to elaborate the content behind the numbers that tie the human and the cosmic spheres into the balanced system that is the world, combining the human with the social (i.e., the state), the Earth with Heaven, and with one another. Not unlike other argument-based texts of the time that are structured in two parts, their philosophical core and its application, there is a noticeable shift now that the text is discussing the reality behind the normative statements given above. It begins by exploring the human five, followed by the social four and the cosmic nine, closing with the sagacious six.

3.
湯或（又）問於少（小）臣曰：
「人可（何）得（德？）[14] 以生 (*sreŋ) ？ } *Phonetic pair:* 生長
可（何）多 以長 (*traŋʔ)？
孰 (*duk) 少（小）(*s.tewʔ) 而老 (*C-rˁuʔ) ？
胡 (*gˁa) 猷（猶）是人 (*niŋ) ,
而 |[6] 龍（一）亞（惡）(*ʔˁrak-s)
龍（一）好？(*qʰˁuʔ)」 } *Phonetic web:* 孰老好；胡好
少（小）臣畬（答）曰：
「唯皮（彼）五味之 （氣）, 是哉以為人。
亓（其）末 （氣）, 是胃（謂）玉 (*ŋok) 種（種）(k.toŋʔ)：
鼠（一）月台（始）|[7] 揚（孕）, [15]
二月乃裹,
三月乃刑（形） ,

14 I entertain this reading of *dé* 得 'to obtain' as *dé* 德 'virtue' as a possibility because of the previous pair of correlating *dé* (virtue) and *rén* (the person).

15 Some commentators like to read 揚 as 孕 .

四月乃胡（固）[illegible]，
五月或（又）收（裒），[16]
六月生肉，七月乃肌[illegible]，
八月乃正 |[8]，
九月纆（顯／解／繲）章[illegible]，[17]
十月乃成 (*m-[d]eŋ)[illegible]，民乃時生 (*sreŋ)。[illegible]

Tāng asked again of the minor minister, saying:

'How is it that [people] obtain something so as to live?
How is it that [they] accrue something so as to grow? In what ways do they diminish as they become old?
Why is it that all [equally] are men, yet |[6] in one case they are loathsome while in another case they are good?'

The minor minister responded by saying:

'It truly is by way of the material force (*qì*) of the five flavours that one may become a person;
its final force (*qì*) is what I call the seed of beauty:
In the first month it starts |[7] to rise; in the second month it develops a wrapping (amniotic sac?); in the third month it takes a form; in the fourth month it consolidates; in the fifth month it further gathers; in the sixth month, it grows flesh; in the seventh month muscles (skins?) [appear]; in the eighth month it is proper[ly formed]; |[8] in the ninth month the marks of separation (i.e., gender marks) are clearly distinguished (as it is evident); in the tenth month it is accomplished – the common folk are given birth according to these times.[18]

亓（其）　（氣）潛（潛）縣（歟）發紒（治）[illegible]，是亓（其）為長 (*traŋʔ) 虘（且）好才（哉）[illegible]。
亓（其）　（氣）奮（奮）|[9] 昌，是亓（其）為堂（當）(*tˁaŋ -s) 戕（壯） (*[ts]＜r＞aŋ-s)。

16 Some commentators like to read 收 as 裒 .

17 Some commentators like to read 解 as 繲 .

18 Zhāng Hànmò 張 瀚 墨 , "'Tāng zài Chìmén', shí yuè huáitāi yǔ zǎoqī zhōngguó shùshù shìjièguān" 湯在啻門 十月懷胎與早期中國術數世界觀 , *Bulletin of the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology* 4 (2017): 173–212, sees close parallels between "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" and the gestation account of the Mawangdui medical text on longevity practices, "Shí wèn" 十問 (Ten questions). The text is translated by Donald Harper in his *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998): 385–411; it is studied by Ute Engelhardt, "Longevity Techniques and Chinese Medicine", in *Daoist Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 74–108.

（氣）融交以備，是亓（其）為力 [illegible]。
（氣）戚（蹙）乃老，　（氣）徐乃猷，
（氣）逆亂以方 |[10]，是亓（其）為疾央（殃）。
（氣）屈乃冬（終），百志皆窮（窮）[illegible]。」

When their (the *mín* 民) material force (*qì*) with latent potency issues forth in an orderly manner – it is such that they (the *mín*) grow and become pleasant indeed.

When their material force is aroused and abundantly |[9] splendid – it is such that they becomes appropriate and mature.

[Their] material force merges and intersects to be completed – it is such that they develop strength;

As [their] material force fades, [they] grow old; as it disperses, they rot.

[Their] materials force meets disorder and goes against [them] |[10] – it is such that they display symptoms of being ill;

As [their] material force subsides, [they] reach their ends; all awareness thus exhausts.'

Just as the king's sudden request for numbers in unit two seems oddly disconnected from the flow of the dialogue but really manifests his pre-nurtured, intuitive understanding of the matter, this unit uses a similar, yet structurally opposite, device to show the king's grasp of the matter. Now that the numbers are shown to be central to the doctrines, the king is immediately asking about the *human*, not what is behind the relevant number five. However, the way he poses his question—he is asking about the five core elements of birth, growth, withering with age, as well as becoming either loathsome or good—demonstrates that he already understands the issues. This is reflected in the way his question is composed, where a rhyming net constructs a relatedness of the human essentials, showing that they are in fact stages of a circle. The minister's answer, moving in that same order of human essentials—he calls them the five flavours of human *qì* (五味之氣), a cross reference to his earlier remarks and showing that the king already understands—is characterised, yet again, by rhyme and parallel sentence patterns.

His answer, in a strictly parallel fashion, goes through the circle of a human being's birth in ten lunar months. It closes with a rhyme stating that the completion of the birth cycle is true for the entirety of the people:

十月乃成 (*m-[d]eŋ) [illegible]，民乃時生 (*sreŋ)。[illegible]

[I]n the tenth month it is accomplished – the common folk are given birth according to [these] times.

Rhyme continues to dominate, expressing that human developments, as they go, flow harmoniously and are never at odds with the world.

Unit four A

After the human matter has been developed in its five core essentials, unit four goes on to elaborate the statement of unit two about the four core essentials of the state, with the five necessary elements to administer it. Calling the core essentials of the state the 'four uprights', *sì zhèng* 四正 , it only names them as part of the catalogue of five that are necessary for administering the state. It becomes clear that the fifth element is the same that helps humans become a sage, that is *dé* 德 'virtue'.

4A.
湯或（又）問於少（小）臣：
「夫四以成邦，五以相之 |[11]，可（何）(*gˁaj) 也 (*lajʔ)？  」
少（小）臣畬曰：
「唯皮（彼）四神 (*Cə.li[n])，是胃（謂）四正 (*Cə.li[n])；
五以相之：悳（德）、事、役、正（政）、型（刑）。」
Tāng asked again the minor minister:
When you say "there are four [doctrines] to accomplish the state but [it takes] five to administer it", |[11] why is that?'
The minor minister responds:
'It is so: those four *numens* are what we call the "four uprights";
But the five which it takes to assist them are: virtue; deeds; corvée labour; governance; punishments'.

Unit four B

This unit is best thought of as in a matryoshka-style relation to four A in that it explores the content behind the five core essentials relevant to administer a state: virtue; deeds; corvée; governance; and punishments, each one presented in strictly parallel catalogues of binary pairs. This is the longest entry of the text and gives its most concrete guidelines. By presenting binary pairs of good and bad, it connects with the theme of unit three where the human issue was developed. Each statement in four B is notably stressed by a breath mark in the manuscript:

4B.
湯或（又）問於 |[12] 少（小）臣：

「媺（美）悳（德）奚若？　亞（惡）悳（德）奚若 [illegible]？
微（美）事奚若？　　亞（惡）事奚若 [illegible]？
微（美）役奚若？　　亞（惡）役奚若 [illegible]？
微（美）|[13] 正（政）奚若？亞（惡）正（政）奚若 [illegible]？
微（美）型（刑）奚若？　亞（惡）型（刑）奚若 [illegible]？」

Tāng asked again |[12] his minor minister:

'Praiseworthy virtue/power – what is it like? Loathsome virtue/power, what is it like?

Praiseworthy deeds – what are they like? Loathsome deeds, what are they like?

Praiseworthy corvée – what is it like? Loathsome corvée, what is it like?

Praiseworthy |[13] governance – what is it like? Loathsome governance, what is it like?

Praiseworthy punishments – what are they like? Loathsome punishments, what are they like?'

少（小）臣畬（答）[illegible]：

「悳（德）濬明，執信以義成，　　此胃（謂）|[14] 微（美）悳（德），可以保成；

悳（德）變亟，執　以亡成，　　此胃（謂）亞（惡）悳（德），唯（雖）成或（又）渝[illegible]。

The minor minister responded:

'When the *dé* is profound (*jùn* 濬) and bright, and you hold fast to the principle of trustworthiness, such that what is appropriate (*yì* 義) can be accomplished, this is what we call |[14] praiseworthy virtue; it can be accomplished through preservation;[19]

When the *dé* alters and turns to the extreme, and you hold fast to falsehood, such that perdition is accomplished, this is what we call loathsome virtue/power; although it can be accomplished, it will eventually alter.'

起事又（有）穫，民長 |[15] 萬（賴）之，　　此胃（謂）微（美）事[illegible]；

19 Rudolf G. Wagner (Heidelberg) is adamant that we should translate '此胃 (謂)X' as 'this is what I call X'. (Personal communication, Erlangen, 11 May 2016.) I consider that wrong. To translate '此胃 (謂)X' as 'this is what *I* call X' disconnects the given statement from the relevant context and presents an isolated point of view, which the recipient may either share or not. I am convinced that by using the phrase '此胃 (謂)X' the authors of the text wish to appropriate a discourse for their ends by monopolising a reading of what the recipients believe 'X' should be.

起事亡（無）穫，病民亡（無）古（故），此胃（謂）亞（惡）事  。
起役時訓（順），民備不俑，此胃（謂）|[16] 微（美）役  ；
起役不時，大 （費）於邦，此胃（謂）亞（惡）役  。
正（政）柬（簡）以成，此胃（謂）微（美）正（政）  ；
正（政）仳（華）亂以亡（無）常，民 |[17] 咸解（懈）體自卹，此胃（謂）亞（惡）正（政）  。
型（刑）情以不方，此胃（謂）微（美）型（型）  ；
型（刑）泰以亡常，此胃（謂）亞（惡）型（刑）  。”

When initiating affairs brings good results, such that the common folk mature and |15 may depend on it – affairs of this sort we may call ‘praiseworthy’;
When initiating affairs brings no result, such that the weak common folk have nothing to cling on to – affairs of this sort we may call ‘loathsome’.
When rising corvée is done in accordance with the seasons, such that the common folk are prepared and not worn out – corvée of this sort we may call |[16] ‘praiseworthy’;
When rising corvée is not done in accordance with the seasons, such that it greatly uses up the expenses of the state – corvée of this sort we may call ‘loathsome’.
When governance is pared back (strict/simple) to accomplish [its matters], we call it ‘praiseworthy’;
When governance is extravagant and chaotic such that there are no constancies, and the commonfolk |[17] all become physically indolent and self-pitying, we call it ‘loathsome’.
When punishments are light yet without transgressing, we call them ‘praiseworthy’;
When punishments are overly harsh such that they are without constancy, we call them ‘loathsome’.

Unit five

In exploring the normative statements of unit two, units five and six, both explore the cosmic nine, are structurally parallel to four (A and B). In each

case, the first number of these pairs (the number four in unit four A; nine in units five and six) is given representation by an abstract definition in rhyme, while only the latter numbers of the pairs are made explicit in the catalogues. It is nonetheless possible to know the content of these unspecified numbers. In four A, the former number is smaller and therefore fully encompassed in the catalogue. To accomplish (conquer?) a state, the text thus seems to imply, is the lesser achievement compared to administering it; adding to it *dé,* virtue, the same quality that makes an accomplished person become a sage (unit two), completes that catalogue. In units five and six the former number of its pairs is bigger and therefore not made explicit in the subsequent catalogue – but we know from the above that it contains the human five and the social four. The king's enquiries always rhyme.

5.

湯或（又）|[18] 問於少（小）臣：

「九以成地，五以將之，可（何）(*gˤaj) 也 (*lajʔ)  ？」

少（小）臣畬（答）曰：

「唯皮（彼）九神 (*Cə.li[n])，是胃（謂）地真 (*ti[n]),

五以將之 |[19]：水、火、金、木、土，以成五凸 (曲)，以植五穀  。」

Tāng again |[18] asked of [his] minor minister:

'There are nine to accomplish the earth, but five to lead it, which are they?'

The minor minister responded:

'Those nine spirits – we call them "dì zhèn" (realised [spirits] of the Earth).[20]

The five to lead it are: |[19] water; fire; metal; wood; soil. They are what is required to accomplish the five bends; they are what is required to grow the five types of grain.'

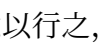
Unit six

Unit six is a reduplication of five, except that its core terms relate to the cosmic nine of Heaven.

20 It is not entirely clear what *dì zhēn* precisely means. Zhào Píng'ān 趙平安 , "'*Dì zhēn', 'nǚ zhēn', yǔ 'zhēn rén'*"「地真」、「女真」與「真人」, *Guǎnzǐ xuékān* 管子學刊 , no. 2 (2015): 104–5, reads the term in conjunction with '*zhēn rén*' 真人 (realised person; the perfected).

6.

湯或（又）問於少（小）臣：

「夫九以成天，六以行之，可（何）(*gˤaj) 也 (*laj?)  ？」

少（小）|[20] 臣畬（答）曰：

「唯皮（彼）九神 (*Cə.li[n])，是胃（謂）九宏 (*[g]w <r>əŋ)，[真 and 耕 rhyme contacts] 六以行之：晝、夜、芒（春）、夏、秋、冬，各時不解，此隹（惟）事首，亦 |[21] 隹（惟）天道  。」

Tāng asked again of his minor minister:

'You said, "there are nine [wisdoms] to accomplish Heaven, but six to enact it"; which are they?'

The minor minister |[20] responded by saying:

'Those nine spirits are what we call the "nine magnificents"; the six to enact them are: daytime; night time; spring; summer; autumn; winter — they each come at their respective time and cannot be untied. This is [every] affair's head (=beginning); and equally |[21] this is the heavenly way.'

The rhyme of the phrase 唯彼九神，是謂九宏 (those nine spirits are what we call the 'nine magnificents'); is not entirely straightforward because *shén* 神 (*Cə.lin; *zhēn* 真 -rhyme group) and *hóng* 宏 (*[g]wˤ＜r＞əŋ; *gēng* 耕 rhyme group) do not have the same main vowel, normally the crucial indicator of rhyme. However, given its exact parallel construction with the previous unit, we must assume that for the communities in question this was considered good enough to rhyme. As far as we can trust our reconstruction systems for Old Chinese,[21] there are plenty of examples in early Chinese textuality where rhyming couplets do not share the same main vowel;[22] and there are also evident rhyme contacts between the *zhēn* 真 - and *hóng*

21 I am using the system with its latest amendments by William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). See, however, the important questions raised by Christoph Harbsmeier, "Irrefutable Conjectures: A Review of William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction*", *Monumenta Serica* 64, no. 2 (2016): 445–504.

22 Jeffrey Tharsen, "Chinese Euponics: Phonetic Patterns, Phonorhetoric and Literary Artistry in Early Chinese Narrative Texts" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2015), 120, gives the following examples: in the *Odes*, "Lesser Elegantiae" (*Xiǎo yǎ* 小雅), "High-Crested Southern Hills" (節南山 ; *Máo* 191), *lǐng* 領 (*reŋʔ) forms a rhyming couplet with *chěng* 騁 (*ɾeŋʔ); in "Diminutive" (小宛 ; *Máo* 196), *lìng* 令 (*riŋ/*riŋ-s) rhymes with *míng* 鳴 (*m.reŋ), *zhēng* 征 (*teŋ) and *shēng* 生 (*sreŋ).

宏 rhyme groups, to which the words in question belong.[23] This suffices to support my assumption that for the communities in question these words did at least cross-rhyme.

In the four normative statements of unit two, the philosophical core which organises all of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén", *dé* 德 is shown to be the central quality, the glue between the human (i.e., the individual) and the social (i.e., the state), and the element that enables the human and the cosmic to embrace each other. It is the principle behind the structured world of Heaven and men, Earth and society. That the catalogue of unit six now lists day and night, spring, summer, autumn and winter as those which cannot be untied, suggests the text is arguing that the accomplished person of *dé* is one who lives in accordance with the natural patterns of the world.

Unit seven

Unit seven frames the closure of "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" with a closing remark by the king signalling finality. It is here that the text discloses the identity of the minor minister as Yī Yǐn 伊尹 (trad. in office 1600–1549 BC), founding minister of the Shāng who helped King Chéng Tāng 成湯 overthrow the Xià and consolidate the Shāng, and who allegedly wrote "Yī xùn" 伊訓 (Instructions of Yī) of the *Shàngshū* 尚書 (i.e. *Classic of Documents*) to admonish Chéng Tāng's successor Tài Jiǎ 太甲 of Shāng:

7.
湯曰：
「天尹，唯古之先帝之良言，則可（何）以改之！」
Tāng said:
'Heavenly Yǐn, such are the innately good doctrines of the former Dì of old, thus how could they be altered!'

It is not in error that right till the end the text calls one of the most celebrated figures of Chinese thinking 'minor'. For the contemporaneous recipient, the unexpected disclosure of the figure behind the 'minor minister' must come as a shock, a sudden epiphany and thus similar in effect to the king's final realisation that he has just obtained the golden rule. This strategy of bringing out, in the text recipient, the moment of insight parallel to that of the text's

23 See for example the bronze text of "Dà Yú" *dǐng* 大盂鼎 . See the discussion in Tharsen, "Chinese Euponics".

protagonist, is not uncommon in early Chinese argument construction.[24] It manifests the recipient's participation and underscores the performative nature of the text as it mimics the experience of the text recipient within the text itself through the persona of the interlocutor. In "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" it expresses, moreover, fulfilled promise. It is through the acceptance of the doctrines by the king that Yī Yǐn transformed from 'minor minister' to the Heavenly Yǐn, as who he is remembered. With this, "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" is more than just a record of an imagined dialogue between Chéng Tāng and Yī Yǐn. It embodies reduplicative patterns of the normative relation between ministers and their lords, structured by the presence of *dé*, and brought to life, time and again, through the recitation of the text in a sanctified setting.

3. Conclusion: Text Performance as seen from "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén"

Close analysis reveals that meaning-construction in "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" happens less on the horizontal, that is, purely lexical level of signification, but predominantly through phonetic webs and parallel structures on the text's micro- and macro-levels that establish grids of correspondences. That is not to say, however, the lexical level of signification is altogether unimportant. The choice of the names of the actors in "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" shows this well. To set the scene in the reign of Tāng and have him enquire about the doctrines of the 'former Dì' makes manifest the angst of disconnection of contemporaneous communities from the legitimate 'Way of high antiquity', thus giving form to their desire to reconstitute the ways of old in the present, which is common to Warring States appropriations of the "Shū" traditions. The minister's answers assert that the gap between the present day and high antiquity can be bridged by renewed access to the same cosmic models used by the sages in days of yore.

The text activates meaning in action. It does not want to be ploughed for philosophically relevant terms, for there is not much to be found if used in that way, but for meaning structures that lie beneath its horizontal level and open up, in matryoshka fashion, from the core section of the text, unit two. With

24 Take for example King Chéng's realisation of doing injustice to the Duke of Zhōu at the moment he was taking the record of the divination out of the metal-bound casket in "Zhōu Wǔ Wáng yǒu jí" that is reduplicated in the text recipient. I discuss this in detail in Meyer, "The Art of Narrative"; and Meyer, "'Shu' Traditions and Text Recomposition".

its strictly regular composition and sound texture, the repetition of phrases, parallel sentence constructions, phonetic webs, as well as the overwhelming focus on numbers, the text is reminiscent of a mantra that is activated through recitation. A number of features not only of the text but also of the manuscript are conducive to that use, in particular the markings on the slips that serve as an aid when reading the text out loud. They appear with regularity whenever an exclamation is made either by the king or minister;[25] they mark matters of importance;[26] and they structure individual items that are part of a catalogue.

Crucially and finally, and dependent on the features just mentioned, the text not only gives discernible form to its message but expresses it *in* its form, generating meaning through performance. Structured by the presence of *dé*, it embodies the dialogic patterns of the normative relation between ministers and their lords; it shares the epiphany of king and recipient; and it reduplicates the king's concern about the relevance of the doctrines of old in the present by reactivating them, time and again, by performing them through the text, and thus fulfilling the promise by Yī Yǐn.

But where does "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" sit in the intellectual landscape of the Warring States period more globally, and what does it add to our understanding of that period?

First, we note the initial frame adds nothing relevant, intellectually or otherwise contextually.

> It was at the first month of the lunar year, *jǐhǎi*. Tāng was at the Gate of Chì/Dì and asked a minor minister [the following]:
> 正月己亥，湯在啻（帝）門，問於小臣

The purpose of the frame is instead to link the text to a discourse. It has a close correspondence to contextualising statements of the kind commonly seen in the "Shū" traditions, channelled, in their imperial interpretations, in the *Shàngshū* and *Yì Zhōushū* 逸周書 , but now seen in their wider breadth through the manuscript texts in the possession of Peking Tsinghua University (Běijīng Qīnghuá Dàxué 北京清華大學). However, "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" has none of the archaising elements that we normally find in the texts of "Shū" traditions. This is probably because it would have conflicted too strongly

25 For instance in Unit One where Yī Yǐn exclaims emphatically that there are such doctrines of old whose actuality is relevant in the present (有 [*ɢʷəʔ] 哉 [*tsˁə]).

26 For instance in Unit Two where the king asks about the numbers of the various doctrines (幾言成人 ？幾言成邦 ？幾言成地 ？幾言成天 ？).

with its mantra-esque, in many ways plain, language that is so crucial for its meaning-construction. Either way, it shows that "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" occupied a rather peripheral place in that discourse, and, moreover, shows how relevant it was, socio-politically, philosophically, or otherwise, for the text to be linked to that discourse – whether successfully or not we cannot say. Although the "Shū" traditions were quoted very little in the literature of the Warring States period,[27] examples of this kind nonetheless show that they must have been of much persuasive force culturally.[28] This was partly because they purported to record the voice of the kings and ministers of antiquity. By putting the dialogue in the mouths of King Chéng Tāng and his wise minister Yī Yǐn, "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" attempts to make use of that authority too. The "Shū", we thus learn, were not static but dynamic traditions to which sub-groups, even peripheral ones, would relate so as to develop an argument that suited their needs.[29]

Second, judging purely from manuscript finds to date, during the Warring States period brief texts were the norm and long texts the exception, a picture which "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" confirms. Transmitted texts—texts that went through the hands of imperial editors—however, suggest the contrary. We must therefore assume that in the course of time many of these rather brief pronouncements were combined with other texts and incorporated in larger compilations, growing into complex texts of the sort tradition has passed down. Excavated texts such as "Wǔ xíng" 五行 and "*Xìng zì mìng chū" 性自命出 from tomb one, Guōdiàn, already hint at this development;[30] transmitted texts that fuse various items such as narrative, speech, and catalogue, into fully-grown texts and complex stories give full evidence of this.[31]

Third, the fact that short, stand-alone, mantra-esque texts of this kind circulated independently of elaborating contexts documents the complex situation of text communities and the spread of literacies at the time. It is clear that "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" was speaking to in-groups, that is, communities

27 See David Schaberg, "Speaking of Documents: *Shu* Citation in Warring States Texts", in *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy*, eds. Kern and Meyer, 320–59.

28 This point is discussed more fully in Meyer, *Traditions of Writings*.

29 Ibid.

30 See my discussion in Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, about the integration of stand-alone units of thought into the complex "Wǔ xíng". Sarah Allan, *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-slip Manuscripts* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015) uses that model too.

31 "Gù mìng" of the new text recension of the *Shàngshū* is a good example of this. A detailed account of "Gù mìng" is given in Meyer, "Recontextualization and Memory Production".

familiar to the ways in which meaning was produced in a performative setting. At the same time, its attempts to link with tradition shows that by doing so it invites these groups to acquiesce because of that association. Certain sub-groups thus emerge that would frame their cultural understanding through reference to the orthodox narrative (for instance, King Chéng Tāng and his minister Yī Yǐn) while their strategies to produce meaning were in many ways distinct from the common approach.

Fourth, although "*Tāng zài Chì/Dì mén" predominantly relies on performance to generate meaning, someone nonetheless took the trouble to produce a physical copy of it. While bamboo as writing support was certainly a commodity and therefore most likely easily accessible, producing a manuscript nevertheless did not come at no cost. To some communities, perhaps peripheral ones, producing this text was therefore a worthwhile thing to do. It further shows that the categories of orality and literacy, which some Sinologists cling to with vigour as though they were absolute, cannot be thought of as separate. When speaking of text production, and more importantly of the use of texts, it should finally dawn upon us that the texts we see more often than not result from a hybrid activity combining the oral and the written.

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格式化的意義：對清華簡〈湯在啻門〉和它關於中國早期思想生產告訴了我們甚麼的深描

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這篇論文提供了對清華簡〈湯在啻門〉部分的「深描」（使用 Geertz 的概念）。「深描」通過探索〈湯在啻門〉的交際維度，及分析文本與施行之間的互動，在時間話語中重構了〈湯在啻門〉的交際使用。手寫文本記錄了想象中的成湯帝和名臣伊尹（始終被介紹為「小臣」）在啻門的一次對話。文本是高度格式化的，並呈現了一次關於「古之良言至於今」的交談。對話由一段在文本化的「書」的傳統中常見的慣用引言，以及一段從「戲劇性」角度（Utzschneider）出發總結文本的最終評價構架而成。在討論事項以目錄的形式出現時，文本是押韻的，表示完整性。文本勻稱的構成與看起來較貧乏的內容不相一致，出現了讓現代讀者相當困惑的古怪的空話。本文通過利用內容—形式理論和信息論，以及思考文本的表述維度，探查了內容和形式之間的明顯衝突，並重構了戰國共同體通過格式化的文本闡明意義的策略。因此，被放入這樣的脈絡後，作為一個戰國時期（ca. 453–222 BC）思想景觀中表述文本的意義建構的參照物，這個相當古怪的文本起到了更全面的作用。

關鍵詞： 尚書　寫本文化　口述與筆傳　「內容—形式」理論　哲學