

Non-Chu Characteristics in the Guodian **Wu xing* 五行 Manuscript

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談談郭店簡《五行》篇中的非楚文字因素

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Abstract

The Guodian **Wu xing* 五行 is a Chu 楚 manuscript that contains a number of non-Chu scribal characteristics. In some cases we can identify which regional script the characteristics were inherited from. The **Wu xing* manuscript provides a unique opportunity to help us better understand the process of how ancient Chinese texts were copied.

Keywords

**Wu xing* – non-Chu characteristics in Chu manuscripts – regional scripts

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摘要

郭店簡《五行》篇，總體來說是一篇楚文字抄本，但其中夾雜了一些非楚文字因素。這些因素有的能夠斷定其地域特征，有的則不能。這篇簡文為我們認識古書傳抄過程中的一些現象，提供了難得的樣本。

關鍵詞

五行、非楚文字因素、地域特征

At present the scholarly consensus is that the Guodian **Wu xing* 五行 is a Chu 楚 manuscript.¹ Yet as Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五 noted in an article entitled “The formal characteristics of the Guodian bamboo-slip manuscripts and their significance for their typology” 郭店竹簡的形式特徵及其分類意義,² there are scribal features in the manuscript that appear to have been inherited from non-Chu regional scripts. My article will attempt to supplement Zhou’s valuable insight by providing more substantial evidence and elaborating on its details.

The **Wu xing* text contains a number of graphs not written in their conventional Chu forms, and sometimes links between characters and words do not follow Chu orthographic conventions. By comparing the Guodian **Wu xing* manuscript with other paleographic materials, we can identify several instances of regional script in the manuscript and pinpoint where they came from. The examples below can demonstrate how to isolate graphs with non-Chu characteristics.

- 1 For a discussion of the term “manuscripts with characteristics of a certain regional script” 具有某系文字特點的抄本 used in studies that concern regional variation of Warring States scripts, see Feng Shengjun 馮勝君, *Lun Guodian jian Tang Yu zhi dao Zhong xin zhi dao Yu cong 1-3 yi ji Shangbo jian Ziyi wei ju you Qi xi wenzi tedian de chaoben* 論郭店簡〈唐虞之道〉、〈忠信之道〉、〈語叢〉一～三以及上博簡〈緇衣〉為具有齊系文字特點的抄本 (Postdoc report, Peking University, 2004), 4.
- 2 Zhou Fengwu 周鳳五, “Guodian zhujian de xingshi tezheng ji qi fenlei yi yi” 郭店竹簡的形式特徵及其分類意義, Wuhan daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiuyuan 武漢大學中國文化研究院 ed., *Guodian Chu jian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000), 59.

1 *Fu* 專 “widely”

Slip 37 of the **Wu xing* has the line *gong er fu jiao li ye* 共（恭）而專交豐（禮）也 “To hold humility and interact widely is ritual.” The graph 專 is written 𠄎. The examples below demonstrate that this graphic form is nearly identical to how it is written in other Guodian manuscripts such as the **Yucong* 語叢 1 and 2, and **Zhong xin zhi dao* 忠信之道:

𠄎 **Yucong* 1–28 𠄎 **Yucong* 2–5 𠄎 **Zhong xin* 8

Having collected and set out the above examples from manuscripts within the same corpus, we can compare how this graph is written in the “scripts of the six states” (*liuguo wenzi* 六國文字) and the “Three-form Stone Classics” (*santi shijing* 三體石經; hereafter *Stone Classics*):

Qi 齊: 𠄎 *Guxi huibian* 古璽彙編 0290 (component)

Chu 楚: 𠄎 **Zun deyi* 尊德義 35

Three-Jin 三晉: 𠄎 *Huobi daxi* 貨幣大系 2469

Stone Classics: 𠄎 *Yu gong* 禹貢

In Guodian **Yucong* 1–2 and **Zhong xin zhi dao*, in Qi script, and in the *guwen* (古文) version of the *Stone Classics*, *fu* 專 has a shared characteristic, namely that the lower part of the graph’s form has either a dot or a decorative short-horizontal stroke across the central vertical stroke (sometimes it is curved). On the other hand, in the Guodian **Zun deyi* and in Three-Jin script, *fu* 專 is written with *you* 又 “right hand” as its lower component, clearly different from the first type. I have previously argued that Qi script influenced the writing of several Chu manuscripts, these being Guodian **Tang Yu zhi dao* 唐虞之道, **Zhong xin zhi dao*, and **Yucong* 1–3, as well as the Shanghai Museum copy of the **Ziyi* 緇衣.³

Both ancient and modern scholars have noted that the *guwen* forms recorded in the *Stone Classics* and in the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 come from manuscripts discovered hidden in the walls of the Kong 孔 ancestral home.⁴ Given the location of the Kong family ancestral home and the regional features of

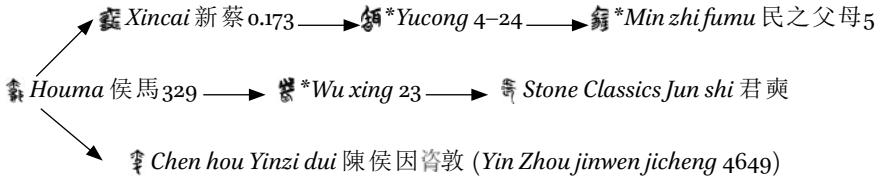
3 See Feng Shengjun, *Lun Guodian jian*, 1–52.

4 See Xu Shen’s 許慎 preface to the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963); Wang Guowei 王國維, “Shuowen suowei guwen shuo” 說文所謂古文說, and “Wei shijing kao” 魏石經考, *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), Vol. 7, 20; He Linyi

these texts,⁵ the traditional understanding that the *Shuowen's* *guwen* entries and the *Stone Classics* are Qi and Lu script is certainly plausible.⁶ These are the reasons why I take the position that the form of the *fu* 專 graph in the **Wu xing* manuscript has characteristics of Qi script.

2 Wen 聞 “to hear”

There are many variant forms used to represent the high-frequency word *wen* (聞) in Warring States scripts. The evolution of the character during the Eastern Zhou period, not including Qin 秦 script, can be illustrated as follows,



The graphic form of *wen* 聞 in the Guodian **Wu xing* manuscript is not seen in other excavated Warring States materials, but does correspond to the *guwen* form in the *Stone Classics*. This leads me to suggest that it has characteristics of Qi script.

3 Zhe 者 (a nominalizer)

In Warring States scripts, the character *zhe* 者 has a relatively large number of variant forms.⁷ Variations of *zhe* 者 in the **Wu xing* text can be classified under three types:

𠄎 slip 50, several examples 𠄎 slip 49, one example 𠄎 slip 40, two examples

何琳儀, *Zhanguo wenzi tonglun (ding bu)* 戰國文字通論 (訂補) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 41–68.

5 See Wang Guowei, “Tong xiang Xu shi yinpu xu” 桐鄉徐氏印譜序, *Guantang jilin*, Vol. 6, 298–304.; He Linyi, *Zhanguo wenzi tonglun (ding bu)*, 45; Li Jiahao 李家浩 as cited in Yang Zesheng 楊澤生, “Kong bi zhushu de wenzi guobie” 孔壁竹書的文字國別, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化 1 (2014), 76.

6 See Feng Shengjun, *Lun Guodian jian*, 50–51.

7 See Feng Shengjun, “Shuowen, santi shijing guwen yu Zhanguo wenzi duibi biao” 《說文》、三體石經古文與戰國文字對比表 No. 108, in *Lun Guodian jian*, 83–84.

I will not pursue a discussion of the second and third types listed above since they are commonly seen in Warring States Chu manuscripts.⁸ What I list here as my Type 1 also occurs in the Guodian **Tang Yu zhi dao*, **Zhong xin zhi dao*, and **Yucong* 1–3 manuscripts, and is nearly identical to the *guwen* form of *zhe* 𠄎 (者) in the *Stone Classics* (“Xi gong” 僖公). Type 1 can also be connected to the form of *zhe* 𠄎 (者) used to write the word *du* {都} on the *Zhongdu dagger-axe* 中都戈 (*Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* 10906). Although there are those who classify the *Zhongdu dagger-axe* as being from the state of Wei 魏, Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 suspects that it may actually be from the state of Lu.⁹ His evidence comes from the “Tan gong 1” 檀弓上 chapter of the *Li ji* 禮記, which gives an account of Confucius being appointed the Governor of Zhongdu: “Youzi said: The Master made an ordinance in Zhongdu that the inner coffin be four inches thick, and the outer coffin five inches thick. By this I knew that he did not wish that the dead decay quickly” 有子曰：夫子制於中都，四寸之棺，五寸之槨，以斯知不欲速朽也。¹⁰ Zheng Xuan 鄭玄’s comment on this line says, “Zhongdu is the name of a city in Lu. Confucius was once its governor, and made ordinances for people. From this position in Zhongdu, Confucius then served as Minister of Works, and from this position he then served as Minister of Crime” 中都，魯邑名也。孔子嘗爲之宰，爲民作制。孔子由中都宰爲司空，由司空爲司寇。 Based on the above information, the most commonly seen form of *zhe* 者 in the **Wu xing* appears to reflect the influence of Qi script.

4 Bu 不 “not”

The graph *bu* 不 on slip 10 of **Wu xing* is written as 𠄎, while elsewhere in the same text it is always otherwise written as 𠄎. The first form can be connected to the writing of *bu* in **Yucong* 1–3 and the Shanghai Museum’s **Zi yi*,

𠄎 Shanghai Museum **Zi yi* 2 𠄎 **Yucong* 1-60 𠄎 **Yucong* 11-45 𠄎 **Yucong* III-64

The common feature among these forms is that the component of the graph, which looks similar to the classifier *mian* 宀 “roof,” is written 𠄎 and not 𠄎.

8 See Li Shoukui 李守奎, *Chu wenzi bian* 楚文字編 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2003), 220–3.

9 Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, personal communication (4/20/2004).

10 Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 ann., Kong Yingda 孔穎達 comm., *Li Ji Zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 8.267.

This kind of evolution occurs in graphs that contain *mian* 𠂇, and graphs such as *zhong* 終 and *nei* 內 in the Shanghai Museum **Ziyi*. I have previously discussed this issue, arguing that writing 𠂇 as 𠂇 is a characteristic of Qi script.¹¹ This is the reason why I understand *bu* 𠂇 (不) on slip 10 of the **Wu xing* as reflecting features of Qi script.

5 *Xin* 心 “heart”

The form of *xin* 心 in the **Wu xing* is with one exception written either 𠂇 or 𠂇. As in the case of *bu* discussed in the previous subsection, the exception also occurs on slip 10, where it is written 𠂇. To my knowledge, this particular writing of *xin* as 𠂇 has never occurred, either as an independent graph or as a component in a composite graph, in any purely indigenous Chu bamboo manuscript.¹² In contrast, it appears quite frequently in manuscripts with non-Chu scribal characteristics such as in **Zhong xin zhi dao* (e.g. 𠂇 slip 1) and **Yucong* 1–3 (e.g. 𠂇 3, slip 26).¹³ For this reason I suggest that just like certain graphs in the **Zhong xin zhi dao* and **Yucong* 1–3, the form 𠂇 used to write the word *xin* {心} in **Wu xing* has characteristics of Qi script.

6 *Jian* 見 “to see”

Based on Warring States Chu manuscripts discovered to date,¹⁴ the character *jian* 見 is normally written 𠂇 (**Laozi C* 老子 丙 slip 5), the two strokes below the “eye” (*mu* 目) component representing a kneeling person. On the other hand, the standard Chu form for *shi* 視 is 𠂇 (ibid.), the two strokes below the “eye” representing a standing person. The distinction between these two graphs is relatively strict, and they are not easily confused for each other in Chu script.

11 See Feng Shengjun, *Lun Guodian jian*, 8–10.

12 See Li Shoukui, *Chu wenzi bian*, 600–632.

13 Of course, in many composite graphs in the **Yucong* 1–3 texts *xin* 心 is written identically to its standard Chu form. **Yucong* 1–3 were copied by Chu scribes, which is the reason the handwriting contains sporadic elements of Chu script. Nevertheless, these sporadic Chu elements do not change the fact that **Yucong* 1–3 are manuscripts that reveal characteristics of Qi script. For further discussion, see Feng Shengjun, *Lun Guodian jian*, 1–6.

14 The Guodian **Tang Yu zhi dao*, **Zhong xin zhi dao*, **Yucong* 1–3, and Shanghai Museum **Ziyi*, as well as the Guodian **Wu xing* under discussion here, are not included.

Perhaps the only example of confusion between them in a “purely” Chu-script manuscript occurs on slip 7 of the Shanghai Museum’s **Min zhi fumu*, where *jian* 見 is written as 𠄎, that is to say, with the graph usually used to write the word *shi* {視}. *Jian* 見 occurs eleven times in the **Wu xing*, of these, four instances are written in the standard Chu form, while the others are written in the following forms:

(a): 𠄎 (slip 23) (b): 𠄎 (slip 24) (c): 𠄎 (slip 25) (d): 𠄎 (slip 27) (e): 𠄎 (slip 27)

Apart from (e), which matches the standard Chu form of *shi* 視, none of these other forms are seen in Chu script. There is either a non-standard “eye” (目) component on top, as in (a) and (b), or there is the addition of decorative strokes in writing *ren* 人, as in (b), (c), and (d). A comparison between (a) and (b) can be drawn with the following form found in the Houma covenant texts 侯馬盟書:

(f). 𠄎 *Houma* 309

In the Houma texts, this graph can be read either *jian* 見, for example in “Seeing someone on the road” (見之行道) and “The one who has been seen but is not going to duel” (所見而不之死者), or as *shi* 視, for example in “Showing severe punishment” (明亟視之).¹⁵

Based on the Warring States paleographic materials now available, form (f) is used to write *jian* 見 in Qin script, Three-Jin script, and Qi script (*jian* is not seen in Yan 燕 script). However, the non-standard writing of “eye” 目 in (a) and (b) only seems to occur in Three-Jin script. I suspect that the non-conventional Chu forms of *jian* 見 in the **Wu xing* manuscript are best explained as having characteristics of Three-Jin script.

The above discussion has used related paleographic materials to identify specific regional scripts that have influenced the writing of certain graphs in the **Wu xing*. The **Wu xing* contains other graphs whose non-typical Warring States Chu forms suggest that they too have been influenced by non-Chu regional script traditions, yet a lack of comparable materials prevents us from making exact matches. Below are some examples.

15 Shanxi sheng wenwu gongzuo weiyuanhui 山西省文物工作委員會 ed., *Houma mengshu (zengding ben)* 侯馬盟書 (增訂本) (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2006), p. 288: 156:24; p. 291: 179:18; p. 293: 185:8.

7 *Jing* 敬 “respect”

Jing 敬 occurs five times in the **Wu xing*, all written as 𠄎 (slip 28). This form differs quite substantially from the commonly seen Chu form 𠄎 (e.g., Guodian **Ziyi*, slip 20).¹⁶

8 *Jia* 家 “house”

The graph *jia* 家 in Chu script is always written as 𠄎 (e.g., **Laozi C*, slip 3).¹⁷ Its composition is formed of *zhua* 爪 above *jia* 家. The forms of *jia* 家 in other Warring States regional scripts do not have the *zhua* 爪 component. The form of *jia* 𠄎 on slip 29 of **Wu xing* appears to be a combination of Chu and non-Chu forms.

9 *Shen* 深 “deep”

Shen 深 occurs twice in **Wu xing*, both times written as 𠄎 (slip 46). This form differs from its standard Chu form, 𠄎 (e.g., **Laozi A* 老子甲 slip 8), in that it does not have a *zhu* 朮 component. There are no other examples of this form in paleographic materials.

10 *Jie* 解 “untie”

In Warring States Chu script *jie* 解 is usually written as 𠄎 (e.g., **Laozi A*, slip 27). However, on slip 36 of **Wu xing* the graph 解, which the context suggests is to be read *xie* {懈}, is written as 𠄎. Yanaka Shin'ichi 谷中信一 has called attention to a graph that appears on the back of the same slip and whose form is close to its standard Chu form. Yanaka reads the graph on the back as *jie* 解 and interprets it as a gloss on the potentially unrecognizable 𠄎 on the front of the slip: “[the graph on the back of the slip] serves the same function as commentaries on Chinese classic texts from later periods.”¹⁸ Li Jiahao 李家浩 suspects that 𠄎

16 See Li Shoukui, *Chu wenzi bian*, 546–48.

17 See Li Shoukui, *Chu wenzi bian*, 448–49.

18 Yanaka Shin'ichi 谷中信一, “Guanyu Guodian Chu jian Wu xing di 36 hao jianbei suo xie 𠄎 zi” 關於《郭店楚簡·五行》第36號簡背所寫“𠄎”字, *Guoji jianbo yanjiu tongxun* 國際簡帛研究通訊 3 (2000), 6–7.

was a variant *guwen* form for *jie* 解 or *xie* 懈, since it roughly matches the *Gu Xiao jing* 古孝經 form of *xie* 懈 (𣎵) listed in the *Guwen sisheng yun* 古文四聲韻.¹⁹

11 *Mu* 目 “eye”

On slip 45 of **Wu xing*, *mu* 目 is written 𣎵. This form is not found in any other Warring States paleographic materials. The editors' annotation says, “The *guwen* form of *mu* 目 listed in the *Shuowen jiezi* is 𣎵; in the *Han jian* 汗簡 it is 𣎵. This form (in **Wu xing*) is similar to both of them.”²⁰ Some scholars analyze 𣎵 as being written with a 宀 element over 目.²¹ For the time being, I follow the editors' opinion, and understand 𣎵 as a form that may be related to the *guwen* forms found in the *Shuowen jiezi* and the *Han jian*.

Conclusion

Based on a number of features seen in the Guodian **Wu xing* manuscript, my main argument is that the Guodian version of the text was copied from a source manuscript that contained graphs with non-Chu characteristics. Most of the graphs were transcribed into their Chu equivalents during the copying process. A comparison of the calligraphy on slips 10–11 (Fig 1) makes it relatively easy to see that the graphs on slip 10 and the upper part of slip 11 were from the hand of someone other than the scribe who wrote out the rest of manuscript. For convenience sake, I refer to the person who did most of the writing as “Scribe A,” and the person who wrote slip 10 and a portion of slip 11 as “Scribe B.” As demonstrated above, the forms of the graphs *bu* 不 and *xin* 心 on slip 10 differ from their typical Chu forms. If Scribe A and Scribe B were both native to Chu, then these particular forms might have been inherited from the source manuscript. This is to say that Scribe B faithfully copied these two graphs from a source manuscript of non-Chu origin. Unlike Scribe B, Scribe A transcribed each non-Chu form into its Chu equivalent.

19 My thanks to Li Jiahao for pointing this out to me in his review of my Ph.D. thesis, *Ershi shiji gu wenxian xinzheng yanjiu* 二十世紀古文獻新證研究, and also for calling my attention to Yanaka Shin'ichi's article cited above.

20 Jingmen shi bowuguan 荆門市博物館 ed., *Guodian Chu mu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), 154, n. 59.

21 See Li Shoukui, *Chu wenzi bian*, 214.



FIGURE 1

(left): Guodian *Wu xing slips 10–11.

Source: Jingmen shi bowuguan 荆門市博物館 ed., *Guodian Chu mu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), 31.

I spoke earlier of how the form 𠄎 used to write the word *jia* {家} on slip 29 of **Wu xing* appears to be a result of combining a Chu form with a non-Chu form. From this, I infer that this instance of *jia* 家 in the source manuscript was not written with a *zhua* 爪 component. Let us imagine the following scenario: Scribe A, being influenced by the source manuscript, had unconsciously written a *mian* 𠄎 component before suddenly realizing that *jia* 家 in Chu script should first have *zhua* 爪, and not *mian* 𠄎. Since he had already written a *zhua* component, he continued to write *jia* as it was usually written in Chu script, thus creating the hybrid graph that now appears on the slip. This would have all happened accidentally since the standard scribal practice was to transcribe non-Chu forms into to Chu forms. Obviously, this reconstruction is hypothetical and only one of several possible explanations. There is really no way to know for sure if this was the case.

I mentioned at the opening of this article that Zhou Fengwu once noted that the handwriting of the Guodian manuscripts can be divided into four groups. Group 1 is the largest, and consists of nine texts: **Laozi A, B, and C*, **Taiyi sheng shui* 太一生水, **Wu xing*, **Ziyi*, **Lu Mu Gong wen Zisi* 魯穆公問子思, and **Yucong* 4. Group 1 manuscripts use graphic forms and styles commonly seen in Chu bamboo-slip manuscripts discovered to date. Zhou suggests that the **Wu xing* text “had been in circulation in the Chu region for a long time, and most of the text’s non-Chu orthography had been domesticated by Chu scribes during the copying process, thus making it a typical Chu manuscript.”²² The term “graphic form” (*ziti* 字體) used by Zhou in his article is in fact a mix of both what I would term graphic form and calligraphic style. In my opinion, it is not acceptable to argue that **Wu xing* belongs in the same group with manuscripts like **Laozi* and **Taiyi sheng shui*, unless our only criteria for typology is calligraphic style. As I have shown in this article, the Guodian **Wu xing* contains a number of non-Chu characteristics. Just in terms of its graphic forms, it differs from manuscripts like the **Laozi*, and this is why I propose not to speak of them as belonging to a same orthographic group. It is simply not accurate to follow Zhou Fengwu in calling the Guodian **Wu xing* a “typical Chu manuscript.” I would suggest that it is better to regard the Guodian **Wu xing* as a manuscript copied by Chu scribes instead of a manuscript written in typical Chu script. The reason I say this is because it contains quite a number of graphs with non-Chu characteristics.

22 Zhou Fengwu, “Guodian zhujian de xingshi tezheng,” 57, 59.

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