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# Punctuation Marks and Copyists: Rereading the *Yili* (*The Book of Etiquette and Ceremony*) of the Wuwei Han Bamboo and Wooden Slips

*Tian Tian*

School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University, Beijing  
*tiant@pku.edu.cn*

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## 符號與抄手：重讀武威漢簡《儀禮》

田天

北京·北京大學考古文博學院

### Abstract

The nine-chapter *Book of Etiquette and Ceremony* (*Yili* 儀禮) manuscripts found in the Han-dynasty Tomb 6 of the Mozuizi 磨咀子 Cemetery, Wuwei 武威 County contain three kinds of punctuation marks – dividers (*fen'ge fu* 分隔符), hooks (*goushi fu* 勾識符), and the signaling markers placed at the upper edges of the slips (*jiantou tishi fu* 簡頭提示符). These punctuation marks reveal that the text has undergone a complicated copying and transmission process. Copyists used dividers and hooks to separate the text into different layers to demonstrate their interpretations, thus making punctuation marks a medium that embodied their understanding. In addition, various ways of placing punctuation marks make it possible for classical interpretations to have great fluidity.

### Keywords

Wuwei Han bamboo and wooden slips – *Yili* – punctuation marks – manuscripts

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## 摘要

武威磨咀子6號漢墓出土的九篇《儀禮》中存有分隔符、勾識符和簡頭提示符三類符號。這些符號呈現出文本抄寫、傳播的複雜過程。分隔符、勾識符劃分文本層次，說明對《儀禮》的闡釋附著於符號流傳，且頗具流動性。

## 關鍵詞

武威漢簡、《儀禮》、符號、抄本

In July 1959, hundreds of bamboo and wooden slips were excavated from Han-dynasty Tomb 6 of the Mozuizi 磨咀子 Cemetery, Wuwei 武威 County, Gansu 甘肅 Province (i.e., present-day Mozuizi Village, Xinhua 新華 Town, Liangzhou 涼州 District, Wuwei City).<sup>1</sup> In the excavation process, archaeologists found that this earth-pit grave, where a male and female were buried together, had already been disturbed, disturbing the placement of the funeral objects. Based on traces left in the tomb, archaeologists conjectured that the bamboo and wooden slips were originally laid in order on the lid of the male's coffin.<sup>2</sup> After sorting out and rejoining the slips, they found 496 in total. Most of them were written with the *Yili*, which contains nine chapters, roughly overlapping with most parts of the received version. The handwriting of the manuscript is fine and clear.<sup>3</sup> This copy can be dated approximately to the end of the Western Han (202 BCE–8 CE).<sup>4</sup> To date, it is still the only discovery of the *Yili* among all the unearthed bamboo and silk manuscripts.

1 Gansu sheng bowuguan 甘肅省博物館, "Gansu Wuwei Mozuizi 6 hao Hanmu" 甘肅武威磨咀子6號漢墓, *Kaogu* 考古, 1960.5, 10–12.

2 "Gansu Wuwei Mozuizi 6 hao Hanmu," 10–11. Qin and Han bamboo and wooden slips are typically found in the side room (*bianxiang* 邊箱) or inner coffin. In this regard, the Mozuizi tomb might be the only case where the slips were placed on the coffin's lid.

3 Gansu sheng bowuguan 甘肅省博物館 and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所 eds., *Wuwei Hanjian* 武威漢簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), Chapter 1 "Preface" (*Xulun* 緒論), 4, 10–11. The book is a reprint of the 1964 version mentioned below. In my article, all the *Wuwei Hanjian* quotations are taken from the 2005 reprint.

4 While the preliminary report concluded that the tomb dates to the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE) ("Gansu Wuwei Mozuizi 6 hao Hanmu," 12), Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 suggested that the manuscript was produced under the reign of the late Western Han Emperor Cheng 成帝 (51–7 BCE) (*Wuwei Hanjian*, 52). Since then, scholars have held different opinions regarding this issue but generally agree that the tomb dates to a period between the late Western Han and Xin Mang 新莽 (9–23 CE). For a recent study, see Chen Songmei 陳松梅

Soon after the excavation of the Wuwei *Yili*, Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (1911–1966) conducted an admirably comprehensive collation published as *The Wuwei Han Bamboo Slips* (*Wuwei Hanjian* 武威漢簡) in 1964.<sup>5</sup> Compared with the scholarship on other unearthed Chinese classics, current studies on the Wuwei *Yili* are still limited. This is not only because the *Yili* itself is difficult to study but also due to the fact that the only version that can be compared to the Wuwei manuscripts is the received text.<sup>6</sup> Previous scholarship on the Wuwei *Yili* can be classified into two categories, representing two different approaches to the text. The collator Chen Mengjia approached it as an unearthed manuscript and emphasized issues such as the graphic form and punctuation marks, aiming at restoring the Han-dynasty conventions of writing bamboo and wooden manuscripts.<sup>7</sup> The majority of subsequent scholars, however, tended to identify the Wuwei *Yili* as a Confucian classic, thus concentrating on comparing the textual variants (*yiven* 異文) between the manuscripts and received version, using the manuscripts to elucidate the profound meaning of the classic, or exploring conventional issues lingering in Han classical studies by asking which teaching traditions (*shi fa* 師法) the manuscripts belonged to, or how to position the manuscripts into the New Text and Old Text (*Jin Gu wen* 今古文) debate.<sup>8</sup>

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and Zhang Xiancheng 張顯成, “Wuwei Hanjian *Yili* xingcheng shidai zonglun” 武威漢簡《儀禮》形成時代綜論, *Jianbo* 簡帛 17 (2018), 257–265.

- 5 Gansu sheng bowuguan 甘肅省博物館 and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所 eds., *Wuwei Hanjian* 武威漢簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964).
- 6 Undoubtedly, there is far less scholarship on the Wuwei *Yili* than that on other unearthed classics such as the *Laozi* 老子. Even among all the Wuwei manuscripts, there is little research on *Yili*. Based on the books listed in the “Bibliography” of the *Wuwei Hanjian jishi* 武威漢簡集釋, the number of studies on the Wuwei *Yili* is not far from those on the “Royal Staff” (*Wang zhang* 王杖) slips and the medical manuscripts. Considering the fact that the amount of *Yili* slips is several or even dozens of times greater than those manuscripts shows how limited relevant studies are. For studies on the Wuwei *Yili*, see Zhang Defang 張德芳 editor-in-chief, Tian He 田河 (author), *Wuwei Hanjian jishi* 武威漢簡集釋 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2020), especially “Part One” of the “Bibliography” is relevant to the text, 649–653. I will not dive into the details here, although specific research related to this article will be quoted below.
- 7 See “Part Three” of Chen’s preface “You shiwu suo jian Handai jiance zhidu” 由實物所見漢代簡冊制度, *Wuwei Hanjian*, 53–57.
- 8 Even though Chen also paid attention to these issues, the most representative scholar who studied the Wuwei *Yili* via the lens of classical studies should be Shen Wenzhuo 沈文倬. See his “*Li Hanjian yiwen shi*” 《禮》漢簡異文釋; “Hanjian ‘Shi xiangjian li’ jin’guwen zacuo bingyong shuo” 漢簡《士相見禮》今古文雜錯並用說; “Hanjian ‘Fu zhuan’ kao” 漢簡《服傳》考, in *Dao an wencun – Zongzhou liyue wenming yu Zhongguo wenhua kaolun* 荊闈文存——宗周禮樂文明與中國文化考論 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2006), 59–345. Apart from this, Zhang Huanjun 張煥君 and Diao Xiaolong 刁小龍 have

However, I suspect much progress can be achieved by continuing the first line of thought. Considering that by the end of Western Han, the status and structure of the Confucian classics had already stabilized, it is doubtful to what extent the unearthed *Yili* could provide us with new knowledge on classical studies. Facing the manuscripts of a classical text dated to that period, what kinds of further investigation can be made? Therefore, the primary goal of this article is not to deepen our understanding of Han classical studies by regarding this text as a representative of the classical tradition but to return to Chen Mengjia's line of thought, i.e., to read the Wuwei *Yili* as a set of manuscripts constructed by multiple copyists. Mainly focusing on different kinds of punctuation marks written on the manuscripts, this article will discuss their functions and ask by whom and when they were written. On this basis, I attempt to argue that one can reveal a complex copying process by investigating the punctuation marks, which makes it possible for us to understand how copyists constructed the meanings of the text.

## 1 Part One: the Wuwei *Yili* as Manuscripts

For the convenience of the discussion below, it is first necessary to briefly introduce the composition and current condition of preservation of the text. Due to technical restrictions, the *Wuwei Hanjian* published early in the 1960s only contains handwritten facsimiles of some manuscripts found in the Wuwei area and photographs of the slips' recto sides. It was not until 2020 that the editor of *The Collective Interpretations of the Wuwei Han Slips (Wuwei Hanjian jishi 武威漢簡集釋)* collected and edited all slips excavated in the Wuwei district and retook high-resolution pictures.<sup>9</sup> The facsimiles and the two sets of photographs published in 1964 and 2020 provide the foundation of my current research.

Based on the styles of the calligraphy and shapes of the slips, the nine-chapter Wuwei *Yili* can be further categorized into Manuscripts A, B, and

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also conducted a comprehensive collation of the Wuwei *Yili*; see their *Wuwei Hanjian Yili zhengli yu yanjiu 武威漢簡《儀禮》整理與研究* (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2009). Other studies are quoted in their "Wuwei Hanjian *Yili* yanjiu sishi nian zongshu" 武威漢簡《儀禮》研究四十年綜述, which serves as the "preface" for the *Wuwei Hanjian Yili zhengli yu yanjiu*, 1–12.

9 Unfortunately, the *Yili* slips had already been put into glass tubes preservation long ago, making it difficult to retake all the pictures. It also resulted in difficulties in taking photographs of the slips' verso sides and producing infrared photos. See *Wuwei Hanjian jishi*, "preface," 5; "Conventions," 2.

C. Seven chapters constitute Manuscript A, which was written on wooden slips with chapters entitled “Visit of One Ordinary Officer to Another” (*Shi xiangjian li* 士相見禮), “The Commentary on the ‘Mourning Garments’” (*Fu zhuan* 服傳), “The Single Sacrificial Animal” (*Te sheng* 特牲), “The Smaller Set of Sacrificial Animals” (*Shao lao* 少牢), “The Assistant” (*You si* 有司), “The Banquet” (*Yan li* 燕禮), and “The Great Archery” (*Tai she* 泰射), respectively. Both Manuscripts B and C contain only one chapter. While the former was written on wooden slips and entitled “Fu zhuan,” the latter was written on bamboo slips and included the text of the “Mourning Garments” (*Sangfu* 喪服).<sup>10</sup> Each chapter of the manuscript serves as an independent scroll. The first two slips of Manuscripts A and B included the title and number indicating the sequence of the chapters, and individual slip numbers were mostly written on the recto or verso sides of the slips.

Based on three points that I will mention below, it is possible to claim that the Wuwei *Yili* is similar to the received version. First, they share almost identical structure and size. Even though the Wuwei *Yili* does not include all 17 chapters of the received text, each chapter is marked by a chapter number,<sup>11</sup> which indicates that even though its order is slightly different from the 17-chapter received version, it is obviously mainly derived from it. Meanwhile, based on word counts recorded by copyists at the end of each chapter, one can tell that the text size is also generally similar to the received version. Second, the manuscript and received text share similar contents. Unlike the Confucian and “Masters” literature seen in unearthed Warring States’ Chu manuscripts, each chapter of the Wuwei *Yili*, especially those belonging to the “Classic” (*jing* 經) portion, is in general similar to the received one in both content and sentence sequence. Indeed, even though some slight textual discrepancies can be found in “Fu zhuan” and “Sangfu,” a small number of miscopied interpolations and missing graphs found in other chapters do not necessarily influence more significant issues such as chapter structure and sentence sequence. Besides, the slight differences in some writing variants between the Wuwei *Yili* and the

10 *Wuwei Hanjian*, 10.

11 Apart from the received version, Jia Gongyan’s 賈公彥 sub-commentaries also record three different sequences of the *Yili* chapters attributed to Dai the Elder (*Da Dai* 大戴), Dai the Younger (*Xiao Dai* 小戴), and Liu Xiang’s 劉向 (77–6 BCE) *Separate Listings* (*Bie lu* 別錄) version, respectively. This phenomenon suggests that the sequence of the *Yili* in the Han dynasty had not been fully settled. Meanwhile, according to Chen Mengjia’s inference of the sequence of the Wuwei version’s chapters, it differed from all other versions mentioned above. See *Wuwei Hanjian*, 10–11.

received text are due to copyists' personal writing habits as well as differences between the "new script" and "old script."<sup>12</sup>

During the past several decades, the constantly emerging unearthed manuscripts have provided concrete evidence for contemporary scholarship to deepen our understanding of how early Chinese texts were transmitted, edited, and compiled. By investigating the newly-found manuscripts related to the "Book of Documents" (*Shu* 書) and Greater and Younger Dai versions of the *Book of Rites*, contemporary scholarship has realized that Confucian texts were circulated as individual chapters and had not been integrated into "books" in the pre-Qin period. Meanwhile, we have found many "left-over" unearthed texts. Even when comparing those manuscripts that have received counterparts, numerous discrepancies, ranging from the structure to individual graphs, can still be noticed.<sup>13</sup> However, ever since the mid-Western Han, Confucian texts such as the *Yili* had been elevated to "Classics," and the whole canonization process had basically come to an end.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, to explore how classical texts were constructed, paying too much attention to the sentences'

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- 12 Many scholars have summarized the textual variants of the manuscript version. As far as I know, Chen Mengjia's summary is the earliest and still seems to be the clearest; see *Wuwei Hanjian*, 40–52. Besides, Shen Wenzhuo wrote a long article to analyze each textual variant in the manuscripts, concluding that the manuscripts were transcribed from the "old script" version of *Yili*. See Shen Wenzhuo, "Li Hanjian yiwen shi," 59–271.
- 13 Numerous studies, too numerous to list here, have compared early Confucian texts and their received counterparts. For the Shanghai Museum manuscripts, see Gu Shikao 顧史考 (Scott Cook), "Shangbo Chujian Kongzi yulu wenxian yu Lunyu duidu (dai daoyan)" 上博楚簡孔子語錄文獻與《論語》對讀 (代導言), *Shangbo zhushu Kongzi yulu wenxian yanjiu* 上博竹書孔子語錄文獻研究 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2021), 1–75; and Liang Jing 梁靜, *Shangbo Chujian ruji kaolun* 上博楚簡儒籍考論 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2022). Regarding studies on *Shu*-related texts, see Cheng Hao 程浩, *You wei yan zhi: Xianqin "Shu" lei wenxian de yuan yu liu* 有為言之：先秦“書”類文獻的源與流 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2021); and Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allan), "Shangshu de qiyuan – jiyu xinjin chutu wenxian de shijiao" 尚書的起源——基於新進出土文獻的視角, *Chutu wenxian yu guwenzi yanjiu (di liu ji)* 出土文獻與古文字研究 (第六輯) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015). See also Feng Shengjun's 馮勝君 comprehensive collection of the *Shu*-related materials: Feng Shengjun 馮勝君, *Qinghua jian Shangshu lei wenxian jianshi* 清華簡《尚書》類文獻箋釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2022).
- 14 Li Ling 李零 proposes that it was during the Han dynasty that the "big picture" of ancient Chinese classics had generally been determined. For him, the problems of "which texts should be selected" and "how these texts should be presented" were solved in this period, thus bringing the so-called "canonization" process to an end. Han Dynasty canonization not only revised the contents of individual books but also brought structural changes to the whole knowledge system. For a discussion of canonization, see Li Ling, *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu (xiuding ben)* 簡帛古書與學術源流 (修訂本) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2008), 468–487.

sequence or chapters' structure between the unearthed and received versions seems unnecessary. Since these texts were produced in that period, a more crucial task worth studying might be how they were copied and transmitted.

Instead of merely focusing on graphic forms, punctuation marks can be used as an essential clue to approach this issue. Large or small dots, circles, and other marks are scattered throughout every chapter of the *Wuwei Yili*. Chen Mengjia astutely noticed that how these marks were used would influence the interpretation of individual paragraphs. Therefore, he read them as traces of dividing the writing into passages and verses (*zhangju* 章句). Since Chen succinctly categorized the punctuation marks that appear in the manuscripts,<sup>15</sup> which lays the foundation for the present study, it is necessary to summarize Chen's line of thought before starting our own discussion.

Three chapters of the *Wuwei Yili* – Manuscripts A and B, “Fu zhuan” and Manuscript C, “Sangfu,” reveal their connections with the received “Sangfu.” Among all the manuscripts, “Fu zhuan” B is incomplete and shares similar sentence patterns with “Sangfu,” making it quite challenging to rejoin its pieces together. During his collation, Chen found that even though punctuation marks appearing in the manuscripts were not identical, those marks of similar shapes were placed at the same locations. For him, the phenomenon further suggested that marks of different shapes were utilized to divide the text into different units. By comparing their placement, Chen successfully restored Manuscript B and concluded that the text had been divided by three different punctuation marks into several units – the chapters (*pian* 篇), passages (*zhang* 章), and verses (*ju* 句). The largest unit is the “chapter,” each containing a title (*pian ti* 篇題). Regarding the “passages,” Chen first found large dots were placed at the very beginning of some slips, higher than the upper binding straps. Second, he noticed that a complete paragraph was usually brought to an end before a dot, leaving the remainder of a slip blank. (In a very few cases, the paragraph ended precisely at the end of a slip.) Third, he observed that in these manuscripts, eleven dots placed above the upper binding straps had divided the text into twelve parts, among which eleven were categorized as “classic,” and the last part was classified as a “note” (*ji* 記). Moreover, he noted that similar dots also appeared in the Han and Tang dynasties *Stone Classics* (*Shi jing* 石經). In *The Sub-commentaries of Yili*, Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 wrote under the title of the “Sangfu” chapter that “The ‘Sangfu’ consists of Parts A and B, and there are eleven passages in total.” Based on this evidence, Chen inferred that

15 *Wuwei Hanjian*, 70–71. Chen enumerated all punctuation marks written in different shapes. Some share similar functions, making classifying them into individual categories unnecessary.



FIGURE 1 The *zhang* and *ju/jie* marks identified by Chen Mengjia  
 Note: In this article, while all the original black-and-white photographs are quoted from the *Wuwei Hanjian*, all enlarged photos are taken from the *Wuwei Hanjian Jishi*

the textual units divided by these large dots corresponded with the “passages” mentioned in Jia’s *Sub-commentaries*. Second, how the Tang-dynasty “Sangfu” passages were divided could be traced back to Han, when these manuscripts were produced. Regarding the “verses,” Chen noticed that relatively smaller dots can be found in every passage. Unlike the large dots placed at the beginning of slips, these small dots are always positioned in the middle, and the remainder of the slips are never left blank. Thus, Chen suggested that these small dots marked an even smaller textual unit – “verse” (*ju* 句), also known as “section” (*jie* 節). “Passages” and “verses” together constitute the so-called “passages and verses” (*zhangju* 章句). Based on these judgments, Chen further suggested that each passage of the “Sangfu” contained three verses (Fig. 1).<sup>16</sup>

After Chen’s death, the punctuation marks he paid attention to were repeatedly found in newly unearthed bamboo and silk manuscripts.<sup>17</sup> What is unique about his understanding is that he built a connection between these marks and the Western-Han “Study of the Passages and Verses” (*zhangju xue* 章句學), which had been further defined in “broader” and “narrower” senses. To be more specific, while Chen admitted that the study of passages and verses mainly referred to classical interpretations,<sup>18</sup> he also insisted on the existence of a “narrow sense” *zhangju xue*, which, as the *Wuwei Yili* manuscripts revealed, included no interpretations but only punctuation. Based on this judgment, Chen deduced that the manuscripts belonged to the Qing Clan Rites (*Qingshi li* 慶氏禮).<sup>19</sup>

16 *Wuwei Hanjian*, 36–40.

17 Ever since the excavation of the Guodian manuscripts, scholars have been exploring the rules for using these marks. For a relatively comprehensive summary in recent scholarship, see Cheng Pengwan 程鵬萬, *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu* 簡牘帛書格式研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2017), 178–230.

18 *Wuwei Hanjian*, 36.

19 Chen Mengjia used records of the *Yi*-related texts in the “Treatise on Arts and Letters” (*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志) as evidence to support his argument. According to the Treatise, “*The Classic of Change* (*Yi jing* 易經) has twelve chapters. Three schools are famous for studying the *Changes* – the schools of Shi 施, Meng 孟, and Liangqiu 梁丘.” Moreover, “[For] the Shi, Meng, and Liangqiu schools, each of them has transmitted two chapters of the *Passages and Verses*, respectively.” Chen believed the two-chapter *Passages and Verses* referred to the “upper and lower canons” (*shang xia jing* 上下經) of the *Changes*, and the phenomenon that it only has two chapters, just as with the canon itself, might further indicate that it did not include any exegetical interpretations but simply contained punctuation based on the original scriptural text. If so, the existence of three different schools of the *Passages and Verses* suggested that these schools had different ways of dividing and punctuating the classic. I should add that Chen’s effort of linking the “narrow sense *zhangju xue*” with punctuation marks might be too clever. On the contrary, current evidence shows that the *Zhangju* recorded in the historical records should be closer to exegetical practices concerning classical interpretations.

When the Wuwei *Yili* was discovered, archaeologists had only excavated a very limited number of ancient manuscripts written on bamboo and wooden slips. This limitation resulted in scholars' lack of experience in editing and collating unearthed manuscripts. However, facing these restrictions, Chen not only arranged the sequence of slips in order but also edited and collated the graphic forms, thoroughly distinguished all punctuation marks, and gave several constructive explanations of their functions. Even though his works are indeed full of remarkable insights, later scholars seldom paid attention to his insights on the punctuation marks.<sup>20</sup> Instead, they mainly focused on criticizing Chen's identification of the Wuwei *Yili* as the Qing Clan *Rites*.<sup>21</sup> Shen Wenzhuo 沈文倬 even believed that "these punctuation marks have nothing to do with classical interpretations."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, with the benefit of hindsight, some opinions on punctuation marks given by Chen do need further consideration. First, Chen only studied the three manuscripts concerning the *Sangfu* chapter, leaving nearly all the rest of the chapters aside, thus neglecting the fact that each chapter of the Wuwei *Yili* varies from one another. Second, the punctuation marks identified as "dividers" cannot be studied as a closed entity: the only way to recognize their significance is to read them with other indicators such as slip numbers, graphic forms, and hooks. Third, even though the placement of the dividers influences the text's interpretation, I hesitate to read them as the products of the "Study of the Passages and Verses." On the contrary, they might represent traces of a fluid copying process contributed by multiple hands.

20 As far as I am concerned, Wang Guanshi 王關仕 has paid the most attention to the interaction between punctuation marks and the meaning of the text. See Wang Guanshi 王關仕, *Yili Hanjianben kaozheng* 《儀禮》漢簡本考證 (Taiwan: Xuesheng shuju, 1975). Recently, Du Yiheng 杜以恆 has conducted a comprehensive survey of all punctuation marks in the Wuwei *Yili* manuscripts, and has given a detailed classification and categorization of the dot marks (hereafter referred to as "dividers"). His study on how dividers influence classical interpretations is outstandingly systematic. Since Du's article summarizes Wang's arguments, I will not repeat them here. See Du Yiheng 杜以恆, "Wuwei Hanjian *Yili* jingxue jiazhi fafu – cong jianben *Yili* de fuhao tanqi" 武威漢簡《儀禮》經學價值發覆——從簡本《儀禮》的符號談起, presented at the conference "Lixue wenben de chengli, jingdianhua yu quanshi yantaohui" 禮學文本的成立、經典化與詮釋研討會 (Beijing: Peking University, 2022). I am grateful to Dr. Du for sharing his unpublished paper. Translator's note: Du's article was later published as Du Yiheng 杜以恆, "Lun Wuwei Hanjian *Yili* fenjie fuhao beihou de jingxue neihan" 論武威漢簡《儀禮》分節符號背後的經學內涵, *Wen shi zhe* 文史哲, 2023.6, 121–130.

21 Shen Wenzhuo, "Li Hanjian yiwen shi," 59–61.

22 Shen Wenzhuo, "Hanjian 'Shi xiangjian li' jinguwen zacao bingyong shuo," 275. We can see that Shen drew this conclusion based on his understanding of what "classical interpretations" should be. Apart from this, he gave no further demonstration. However, since these punctuation marks are scattered almost everywhere in each chapter, it seems unreasonable that they were used randomly without following any conventions.

Since Chen already conducted a detailed study on the *Sangfu*-related manuscripts, I will mainly discuss chapters other than *Sangfu*, especially those that are comparatively complete, i.e., the “Visit of One Ordinary Officer to Another,” “The Single Sacrificial Animal,” “The Smaller Set of Sacrificial Animals,” and “The Assistant” to demonstrate my arguments. “The Banquet” and “The Great Archery” will also be discussed as examples to strengthen my argument, if necessary.

## 2 Part Two: Punctuation Marks on the *Wuwei Yili* and the Structure of the Text

### 2.1 *The Function of Dividers*

The punctuation marks that show up most frequently in the manuscripts are the dots, which Chen Mengjia referred to as “sentence dividers” (*fenju fu* 分句符) or “section dividers” (*fenjie fu* 分節符); they are found throughout the texts, and will be collectively referred to as “dividers” below for convenience. Even though small dots frequently represent dividers, sometimes they are presented as squares, and their sizes also differ slightly. However, since their functions are the same, in this article I will classify all of them as “dividers.”

One can sense how copyists understood the classic by observing where dividers are positioned. Specifically, where these dividers are placed directly relates to how one splits the ritual routine into different proceedings.<sup>23</sup> To understand this point, we should first introduce a unique notion of “section” (*jie* 節) in traditional *Yili* scholarship. Among various ways of reading *Yili*, one of the most influential ways is to break down a ritual process into multiple sections (*fenjie* 分節). To be more specific, unlike other classics, each chapter of the *Yili* narrates a complete ritual process, which is further divided into multiple accounts of individual proceedings referred to as “sections” to make the whole process easier to understand. It is believed that this method of reading *Yili* began already with Jia Gongyan’s *sub-commentaries*.<sup>24</sup> From the Han to

23 Du Yiheng’s article cited above has pointed out this connection. Moreover, Du has comprehensively compared the differences between the *Wuwei* manuscripts and later scholarship on how rituals recorded in the *Yili* are divided into different sections. See Du Yiheng, “*Wuwei Hanjian Yili jingxue jiazhi fafu*.” I should add that I discuss the punctuation marks from a different angle.

24 Du Yiheng summarized how Jia Gongyan divided the *Yili* into multiple sections in his *sub-commentaries*. For this point, my conclusion is based on Du Yiheng, “Jia Gongyan *Yili fenjie tanwei*” 賈公彥《儀禮》分節探微, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua luncong (di ershiyi ji)* 中國典籍與文化論叢(第二十一輯) (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe), 2019, 49–76.

Qing dynasties, scholars tended to separate the text in an increasingly detailed and subtle manner. Below, I will take the “Ritual of the Visit of an Ordinary Officer to Another” (*Shi xiangjian li* 士相見禮), a short manuscript containing sixteen slips and nine dividers,<sup>25</sup> as an example to demonstrate the relationship between dividers and the ritual routine. In this text, some dividers are positioned in places exactly where later scholars thought a section should end. Among Qing-dynasty studies of the *Yili*, Zhang Erqi’s 張爾岐 (1612–1678) *Zheng Xuan’s Yili Annotations with Punctuations* (*Yili Zhengzhu judou* 儀禮鄭注句讀) is a representative work.<sup>26</sup> Below, I will draw a table to demonstrate to what extent the sentences ending with a divider in the manuscripts should be regarded as the last sentence of a section, as suggested by Zhang:<sup>27</sup>

TABLE 1 Comparison between passages ended with dividers in the Wuwei manuscripts and ritual “sections” broken down by the *Yili Zhengzhu judou*

| Sentence  | Slip number | Zhang’s explanation of the section that the sentence belonged to   | Whether the sentence should be regarded as the end of a section |
|---|-------------|--|---|
| 主人送于門外，再拜。•<br>“Then the host goes to meet him outside the gate, and there bows twice.” • | #6          | 右士相見禮。•<br>“[The section on the] right depicts how ordinary officers should perform while visiting one another.” | Yes   |

25 Apart from the last slip, the slip numbers are always written at the bottom of the recto side of the slips. The sequence of this chapter in the *Yili*, i.e., “• The third,” (• *Di san* 第三) and the title of this chapter, i.e., “• Visit of One Ordinary Officer to Another” (• *Shi xiangjian li* 士相見禮) are written on the verso sides of slips #1 and #2, respectively. At the bottom of the recto side of the last slip is written “• 1020 words in total” (• *fan qian ershi zi* 凡千二十字). Since the dots here should be understood as “signaling markers” for the title or word count, I have not included them in calculating the dividers.

26 For how the sections are divided in the *Yili Zhengzhu judou*, see Zhang Erqi 張爾岐, *Yili Zhengzhu judou* 儀禮鄭注句讀 (Gaoxiong: Xuehai chubanshe), 2011, 109–159.

27 In this article, all manuscript texts are taken from the *Jishi*. While quoting the text, I will also attach the slip number. Any revision or placement for which I do not follow the *Jishi* will be explained separately in the footnotes. Translator’s note: For all translations of the *Yili*, the translator has consulted John Steele, *The I-Li or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* (London: Probsthain), 1917.

TABLE 1 Comparison between passages ended with dividers (*cont.*)

| Sentence   | Slip number | Zhang's explanation of the section that the sentence belonged to   | Whether the sentence should be regarded as the end of a section |
|--|-------------|--|---|
| <p>【“不得命，敢不從。再拜受。” ㄣ】</p> <p>“I have not received his honor's permission to do so; how then dare I not obey? And then bows twice.”</p>   | #8          | <p>右士見於大夫。</p> <p>“[The section on the] right depicts how an ordinary officer should perform when visiting a great officer.”</p> | No  |
| <p>飭之以布，維之以索，如執雉。•</p> <p>“Wrapping the living wild goose in a colored cloth with its feet bound with a cord, and carried as one holds a pheasant.” •</p>  | #8          | N/A  | No  |
| <p>如士相見之禮。•</p> <p>“The ceremonial is the same as that observed in visits exchanged between ordinary officers.” •</p>  | #9          | <p>右大夫相見。</p> <p>“[The section on the] right depicts how great officers should perform when visiting each other.”</p>            | Yes   |
| <p>見于君，執紼，至下，容送俶。•</p> <p>“At their interview with the prince, ordinary officers and others above these in rank carry with them a gift, holding it on a level with the girdle and deporting themselves so as to show a respectful uneasiness.” •</p> | #9          | N/A  | No  |

TABLE 1 Comparison between passages ended with dividers (*cont.*)

| Sentence   | Slip number | Zhang's explanation of the section that the sentence belonged to                                   | Whether the sentence should be regarded as the end of a section |
|--|-------------|--|---|
| 再拜稽首。荅壹拜。・<br>“[Ordinary and great officers] lay down their present and bow down twice. [To this, the prince] responds with one bow.”・                     | #9          | N/A  | No  |
| 再拜稽首，受。・<br>“Then, bowing down twice, as if he were in the prince's presence, he receives the present back.”・  | #10         | 右臣見於君。<br>“[The section on the] right depicts how ministers visit a prince.”                       | Yes   |
| 【升見無方階，辨君所在。】<br>“If the prince is in the hall, the minister, without regard to the distinction between the steps, goes up those nearest the prince.”      | #11         | 右燕見於君。<br>“[The section on the] right depicts how ministers visit their prince privately.”         | No  |
| 【立則視足，坐則視膝。】<br>“If one is not speaking, then, when the other is standing, one looks at his feet, and, if he sits, one looks at his knees.”                | #12         | 右進言之法。<br>“[The section on the] right depicts the way of speaking [to someone superior].”          | No  |
| 膳儀（葷），請退可也。・<br>“When starting to eat pungent things (as leeks or garlic, as a preventative of sleepiness), it is allowable to ask permission to retire.”・ | #13         | 右侍坐於君子之法。<br>“[The section on the] right depicts the way of sitting in attendance on a gentleman.” | Yes   |

TABLE 1 Comparison between passages ended with dividers (*cont.*)

| Sentence   | Slip number | Zhang's explanation of the section that the sentence belonged to  | Whether the sentence should be regarded as the end of a section |
|--|-------------|---|---|
| 大夫則辭，下，比及門，三辭。•<br>“If a great officer, he declines the honor of being escorted; and when he gets down the steps, and the prince comes down also, he declines again; and when he reaches the door, being escorted, he declines for a third time.”• | #14         | 右臣侍坐賜食賜飲及退去之儀。<br>“[The section on the] right depicts how a minister should act when sitting in attendance on a prince, receiving eating and drinking, and retiring.” | Yes   |
| 辭不得命，將走見。先見之。•<br>“Not being able to secure permission to decline the honor, I hurry to wait on his honor. So he anticipates the visitor by going out and bowing to him first.”•   | #15         | 右尊爵者來見士。<br>“[The section on the] right depicts how a superior official calls on an ordinary officer.”  | Yes   |
| (to the end of the chapter)  | N/A         | 右博記稱謂與執贄之容。<br>“[The section on the] right extensively records the mode of speaking oneself and the deportment when carrying presents [to a superior].”               | No  |

Among the nine dividers shown in the manuscripts, six are placed next to sentences regarded by the Yili *Zhengzhu judou* as the end of a section. This phenomenon sufficiently demonstrates that passages separated by dividers do have some connection with the ritual proceedings, which largely correspond

with the “sections” as divided by traditional scholarship.<sup>28</sup> Apart from the correspondence discussed in the “Shi xiangjian li,” it would be safe to conclude that in general, the correlation between dividers and the sections is also shown in other chapters.<sup>29</sup>

However, do the dividers mentioned above only function as markers that separate the text? Or does each passage of the Wuwei *Yili* manuscripts contain three sentences, as Chen Mengjia suggested? Slips #9 and #10, which were written with many dividers, could be the perfect example to resolve these questions. The content related to our topic is quoted below:

見于君，執摯（摯），至下，容送俶。• 庶人見于君，不爲容，進退走。士大夫則鄭（奠）摯（摯）。再拜稽首。荅壹拜。• 如也（他）國之人，則擯者<sub>9</sub>還其摯（摯）。賓對曰：“君不有其外臣，臣不敢辭。”再拜稽首，受。• 10

[At their] interview with the prince, [ordinary officers and others above these in rank] carry with them a gift, holding it on a level with the girdle and deporting themselves so as to show a respectful uneasiness. • When commoners have an interview with their prince, they do not assume any ceremonial carriage but hurry along both in advancing and retreating. Ordinary and great officers lay down their present and bow down twice. [To this prince] responds with one bow. • If the visitor is from another state, the usher <sub>9</sub> is sent to hand him back his gift. The visitor replies: “A prince has no ministers beyond his own borders, and so I dare not decline to do as he commands.” Then, bowing twice, as if he were in the prince’s presence, he receives it. • 10

The quoted text depicts how ministers of different statuses should behave while visiting the prince. While *Yili Zhengzhu judou* reads them as an integrated section, the manuscript uses three dividers to break the text into three different sections. Although the second divider is much smaller, based on the content, one can tell that the text concerns the interviews of great officers, ordinary officers, and commoners with the prince, respectively. Therefore, the

28 Compared with the manuscript version of *Yili*, Jia Gongyan’s *Sub-commentaries* only roughly divided the chapter into two sections. See Du Yiheng, “Jia Gongyan *Yili fenjie tanwei*,” 57.

29 For a detailed discussion, see Du Yiheng, “Wuwei Hanjian *Yili jingxue jiazhi fafu*,” 13.

second divider seems to share a similar function with the others.<sup>30</sup> And so, even though dividers were used by following a pattern on slips #9 and #10, they were employed in a principle that is not consistent with those in other places, let alone equating them with markers used to divide “sections,” since the parts separated by the dividers are not as consistent as those sections divided by Qing classicists, who split the text into parts identical to one another.

It is also necessary to discuss the placement of the dividers. Are they positioned at the beginning of a new paragraph to indicate a fresh start, as contemporary scholarship often suggests? Or are they meant to be written at the end of paragraphs to mark the end of a theme? Based on an observation of their usage in “Shi xiangjian li,” the latter suggestion might be closer to the truth. In this chapter, although most dividers were written the same size as a character, they did not take up the same space. Instead of maintaining an even character spacing, these dots seem to be “interposed” between two individual characters, giving readers the impression that compared with the average character spacing, the one between the punctuation marks and the character next to them is much denser. On slip #6, the trace of a binding strap has crossed through the “writing cluster” constituted by a divider and two characters on its left and right, thus segregating the cluster into two seemingly disconnected parts (see Table 2 below). Here, the divider was written above the binding strap, clinging to the last character of the last sentence. If the divider indicates a new beginning, it is more likely to be written below than above the binding strap. Moreover, similar divider placement could also be found in other chapters of the Wuwei *Yili* manuscripts.<sup>31</sup> In my opinion, the relative position between dividers and binding straps and their distance from adjacent characters could help us understand where dividers should be placed. Moreover, unearthed and received texts often use the phrase “the section on the right

30 The character spacing between “*da yi bai*” (荅壹拜, responds with one bow) right before the small dot is relatively denser. Other traces show that characters written there initially had been scraped off. Thus, it is possible that someone else later added the dot during the revision process. Other evidence seems to support this suggestion. For example, although the scribe did not strictly use the standard forms, thus making it possible that one character might be written in many different forms, it should be noted that apart from here, where *da* 荅 is written as 荅, the manuscript writes all *da* 荅 appearing in the received version as 合. The phenomenon seems to suggest these that three characters, together with the small dot, might have been written by a different copyist.

31 See, for example, slip #7 of “Te sheng” 特牲, in which the first divider was written above the binding strap right after the last character of the previous sentence. See also slips #12 and #16 of the “Shao lao” 少牢 and slips #71 and #73 of the “You si” 有司, etc. In these cases, even though the dividers were not written next to binding straps, they adhered to the last character of the previous sentence.

TABLE 2 Placements of the dividers and hooks in the “Shi xiangjian li”

| Slip #6   | Slip #8-1   | Slip #8-2   | Slip #9-1   | Slip #9-2   | Slip #9-3   | Slip #10  | Slip #12  | Slip #14  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

[depicts] ...” (*you moumou* 右某某) to conclude a paragraph. Therefore, based on traditional Chinese writing habits, it seems more appropriate to suggest that a divider should be placed at the end of a paragraph to indicate the section has been brought to an end. In addition, it is common to find in unearthed texts that black squares were used to indicate the end of a passage. For example, in “Black Robes” (“Ziyi” 緇衣) and “Laozi” A and B of the Guodian manuscripts, small black squares were utilized to indicate the passage had come to an end.<sup>32</sup> However, both “Ziyi” and “Laozi” were possibly initially composed by passages that did not necessarily have logical connections, while the Wuwei *Yili* is an integrated entity, in which passages demonstrate logical, solid relationships. In this regard, dividers in the *Yili* manuscripts are not merely paragraph dividers – they were intentionally used to break up different ritual proceedings and thus reflect a certain interpretation of the text.

By analyzing the dividers in “Shi xiangjian li,” one can conclude that they were often written at the end of a paragraph to indicate a ritual theme had come to an end. Dividers were largely used to dissect a ritual into different proceedings, which, to a certain degree, aligned with the traditional way of reading *Yili* – to divide the text into multiple “sections.” And so, where dividers were placed reflects how one understood the ritual contents. However, the placement of dividers does not consistently follow a set pattern. Neither was it used to shape a text in which “each passage contains three verses,” as Chen Mengjia argued, nor should the place where a divider appears always be merely regarded as the end of a section, as some traditional Chinese scholars have said.

32 Cheng Pengwan, *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu*, 194–195. For the details, see Jingmen shi bowuguan 荊門市博物館, *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe), 1998, 111–113, 118, 129–131.

## 2.2 *Dividers and Hooks*

If the placement of dividers reflects a certain interpretation of the text, the next question is by whom were they written. Ever since Chen Mengjia, scholars have generally agreed that they were marked by copyists instead of readers. If so, their placement did not represent readers' personal understanding of the text.<sup>33</sup> However, copyists' interpretation might also be derived from somewhere else. If so, where did they acquire their knowledge? Who influenced their choices in interpreting the ritual text? Agreeing with the traditional view that dividers were written by copyists, I further argue that these copyists, when dividing the text, did not follow a particular tradition of classical interpretation. Instead, their thought on breaking down the ritual into multiple proceedings was possibly derived from various complex heterogeneous sources.

The space occupied by dividers varies from chapter to chapter. Compared with "Te sheng," "Shao lao," and "Tai she," where a divider typically takes up one character space, dividers were often written much closer to the adjacent character in "Shi Xiangjian li" and "You si." The former indicates that dividers were not added by reader(s) during the reading process, at least for these chapters. Instead, it is the copyists who wrote down dividers in the process of copying.

Meanwhile, noticeable mistakes regarding punctuation marks could be made while making a copy, which makes it possible to consider by whom these mistakes were made. For example, slip #18 of "Shao lao" (Fig. 2) has:

祝澆于洗，升自西階。主人澆，升自作（阼）・階。祝先入，南面。  
主人從，戶內西面。一八

The liturgist washes his hands at the water jar and goes up by the western steps. The host also washes his hands and goes up by the eastern • steps. Then the liturgist enters the room first and stands facing south, while the host inside the door faces west.<sup>18</sup>

Here, the divider mistakenly split the term *zuojie* (eastern steps) into two individual characters. This punctuation should not be taken as a unique interpretation but a mere mistake. Since it is extremely common to encounter the term *zuojie*, the place where hosts often stand during a ceremony, in the *Yili*, one obviously should only place the divider before the character *zhu* 祝, the first character of the following sentence. It is almost impossible for those who studied the text, even if they only had some basic knowledge, to make such a mistake. Moreover, rather than being abruptly inserted into the text and making the character spacing denser, the divider also takes up one character space,

33 Wuwei Hanjian, 71.



FIGURE 2  
The divider on slip #18 of “Shao lao”

which suggests that it was not added after copying – the copyist had probably made the mistake while copying the text.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, it would be helpful to gain a deeper understanding of how dividers were used if we further take hooks “ㄣ” into consideration. These hooks are commonly believed to function as marking proper nouns (i.e., personal or place names) or indicating that a passage or chapter has come to an end.<sup>35</sup> The only hook in “Shi xiangjian li” is found on slip #8, where it was utilized to distinguish certain ritual proceedings:

擯者對曰：“某使某，非敢爲儀，固以請。”賓對曰：“某固辭，不得命，敢不從。”再拜受。ㄣ下大夫相見以鴈，飭之以布，維之以索。如執雉。• 上大夫相見以羴（羔） 8

The usher replies: “The host sent me to convey that he does not deserve the honor, and so he insisted on returning [the present].” Then the visitor replies: “I have firmly declined, and have not received his honor’s permission to do so; I dare not agree.” Whereupon he bows twice and receives it. ㄣ The lower order of great officers, in visiting one another, use a living wild goose [as a present], wrapping it in a colored cloth with its feet bound with a cord, and carried as one holds a pheasant. • In visits among the upper grades of officers, a living lamb is presented. 8

34 Both Cheng Mengjia and Wang Guanshi have noticed some misplacements of dividers. Wang also points out that slip #50 of “Yan li” and slip #18 of “Shao lao” share a similar type of mistake. See Wang Guanshi, *Yili Hanjianben kaozheng*, 151. Based on a perspective of classical studies, Du Yiheng criticizes the misuse of dividers in the manuscripts. However, it is hard to verify how valid his criticism is. See, Du Yiheng, “Wuwei Hanjian *Yili* jingxue jiazhi fafu,” 18–20.

35 Cheng Pengwan, *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu*, 188–194.

In “Shi Xiangjian li,” slips #1 to #6 recount the ritual practiced when ordinary officers exchange visits, and the narrative ends with a divider placed at the bottom of slip #6. From then on, the text begins to narrate the ritual that should be adhered to when ordinary and great officers visit one another. After the line “The lower order of great officers, in visiting one another, use a living wild goose [as a present]” (*Xia dafu xiangjian yi yan* 下大夫相見以鴈), the text portrays how great officers should behave while meeting one another. Therefore, if one intends to differentiate the visiting rituals from one another based on the ranks of the ritual performers, one should position the divider immediately after the line “Whereupon he bows twice and receives it” (*zaibai shou* 再拜受), as suggested by the above-mentioned *Yili Zhengzhu judou* (See Table 2). However, the divider’s placement seems to confuse the ritual between great officers with the one between ordinary and great officers. And so, it divides great officers’ visits to one another into two separate parts, making the punctuation deviate from the standard interpretation suggested by traditional commentators. At this point, the only hook that appears in this chapter catches our attention: The hook was placed immediately before lines concerning rituals between great officers, which makes it possible that it was applied to clarify the confusion on ritual division and suggest a more reasonable split. Therefore, it might be legitimate for us to claim that hooks and dividers function differently in constructing the meaning of the ritual text.

It is worth noting that in the *Yili* manuscripts, especially “Te sheng,” there is more than one case where a divider and hook appear in the same place. I attach all of the examples below (Fig. 3):

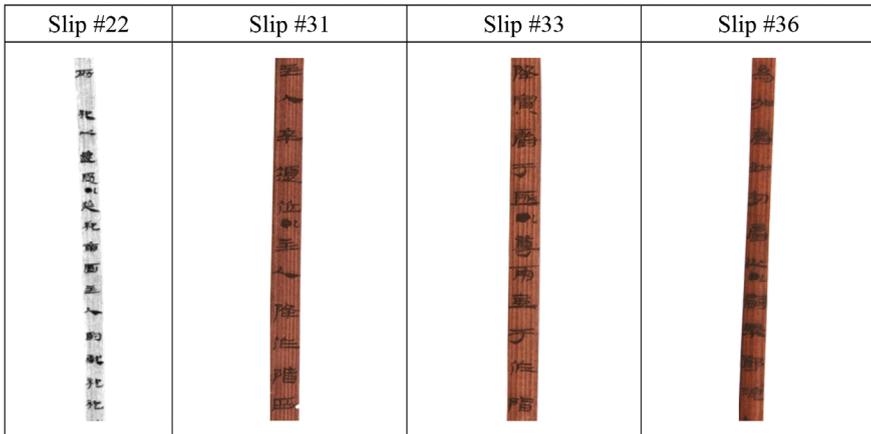


FIGURE 3 Examples of a divider and hook appear simultaneously in “Te sheng”

TABLE 3 Translations of the slips of the “Te sheng” chapter in which a divider and hook appear in the same place

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Slip #23 | <p>祝以邊（籩）受。⌊延（筵）祝南面，主人酌，獻祝。</p> <p>The liturgist receives [the grain]. • ⌊ A mat is spread for the liturgist, facing south. The Master of Ceremonies then ladles out wine and offers it to the liturgist.</p>  |
| Slip #31 | <p>詐（酌）于主人。卒，復位。• ⌊主人降作（阼）階，西面拜賓如初，洗。</p> <p>[The guest] drinks a toast to the Master of Ceremonies. This being done, he returns to his place. • ⌊ The Master of Ceremonies descends by the east steps and, facing west, bows to the guest as before. He washes [a goblet].</p>  |
| Slip #33 | <p>降，賓（賓）爵于匪（筐）。• ⌊尊兩壺于作（阼）階東。</p> <p>[All the guests] descend, and the cup is placed in the basket. • ⌊ The Wine-holder is two jars placed to the east of the eastern steps.</p>  |
| Slip #36 | <p>眾賓長爲加爵，如初。爵止。• ⌊嗣舉鄭（奠），浣（盥），入，北面再拜稽首。</p> <p>The senior among the body of guests offers an additional cup as the second offering of wine is made. Thereupon, the cup is held in reserve for the time being. • ⌊ The heir to the Master of Ceremonies then raises the cup, which was laid down, and drinks it. After washing his hands, he enters the room, faces north, and bows twice.</p> |

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If these hooks were only meant to break down the ritual themes, as shown above, one can infer that they would not be placed with the dividers in the same spots. This situation also suggests hooks function differently from dividers in punctuating and constructing the meaning of the text.

If so, the next question would be, “Who wrote the hooks.” Previous scholarship generally assumes that hooks were “traces of reading” marked by readers during the reading process.<sup>36</sup> After a reader obtained the manuscript in which the copyists’ punctuations had already been added, he punctuated the text again based on his understanding. Plausible as it appears, close scrutiny compels us to reconsider the validity of this assumption – it is hard to make a general conclusion that all hooks were written by readers.

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36 Chen Mengjia was the first person to explicitly claim that large dots were written by copyists, while hooks were added by readers. See *Wuwei Hanjian*, 71.



FIGURE 4  
The hook written on slip #74 of “You si”

First, some hooks feature obvious mistakes. For example, slip #74 of “You si” has “The guest bows in reply. He receives the cup, exchanges it 丿 for another at the cup-basket” [賓答拜。賓受爵，易爵 丿于匪（筐）] (Fig. 4). The last line, “exchanges it for another at the cup-basket” is a common phrase frequently seen in the *Yili*, and so one should not insert any punctuation marks to separate the phrase. However, neither a divider nor hook was unnecessarily inserted into the same phrase appearing on slip #35.<sup>37</sup> I would suggest the hook was misplaced on slip #74 because the correct punctuation should be “He receives the cup 丿.”<sup>38</sup> If hooks are traces left by a proofreader, it is hard to explain why he made such a careless mistake. Therefore, one cannot exclude the possibility that the misplaced hook was already there in the source text (*diben* 底本), and then it was faithfully transcribed by a copyist.

Second, hooks are highly unevenly distributed in the manuscripts. Still taking “You si” as an example, while hooks appear only once from slips #1 to #67 (on #20), five can be found on the last eleven slips (#68–78, yet #78 is missing). In addition, all of them were not positioned in the same spot with dividers. These hooks were not used to break down rituals but to differentiate repetitive words.<sup>39</sup> For instance, on slips #68 and #71, a hook was placed between the words “the Master of Ceremonies” (*zhuren* 主人) that appeared

37 Moreover, one finds nearly one character space between “*yi jue*” and “*yu fei*.” It seems that the spacing left for the hook is large enough to suggest that the punctuation mark was consciously added by a copyist to break down the phrase.

38 This punctuation, which seems to be one of the most plausible readings of the text, is also supported by the *Yili Zhengzhu judou*. See *Yili Zhengzhu judou*, 775.

39 The only exception is the above-mentioned *yi jue yu fei*. Meanwhile, in this article, “repetitive words” refer to cases where the last word of the previous sentence is the same as the first word of the following sentence.

twice, respectively. On slip #72, a hook was placed between the words “lady” (*zhufu* 主婦) that was repeated twice. On slip #76, it comes between the two repetitive “liturgists” (*zhu* 祝). However, words written twice can also be found frequently in the first half of the “You si” chapter, in which no hooks were inserted. For example, even though the words “lady,” “personator” (*shi* 尸), “Master of Ceremonies,” and “female leader of the ceremonies” (*fu zanzhe* 婦贊者) are repetitively written on slips #9, #16 and #39, #33 and #53, #37, no hooks were introduced to break them apart. If a reader habitually added them to separate repetitive words, it would be hard to explain these inconsistencies.

At this point, maybe we should still consider whether copying played some role in creating these discrepancies. By paying attention to handwriting and slip numbers, one can find that “You si” was transcribed by more than one copyist: it is possible to divide “You si” into three parts written by different hands. Indeed, after a copyist numbered slips #1 to #50 in a proper order, slips #52 to #64 were re-assigned new numbers as #1 to #13. And then, slips #65 to #79 were renumbered as #1 to #15. Chen had already suggested the phenomenon of renumbering might indicate the manuscripts were pieced together or made up afterward.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, it is only on the last fifteen slips (i.e., the third part) that hooks were used to break down repetitive words, which makes it highly likely that only the copyist who transcribed this part had such a personal writing habit. Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility that what was originally shown in the source text had been faithfully copied afterward.

Lastly, we should pay attention to the above-mentioned situations where a divider and hook are placed together, which does not fully support the assumption that hooks were marked by readers.<sup>41</sup> Although it is again highly likely that a reader left the hook on slip #8 of “Shi Xiangjian li” to correct the original punctuation, this assumption cannot explain the situations when a hook and divider were placed next to each other. And so, under what circumstances could a hook be marked down? To give a further demonstration, let us take slips #33 and #36 as examples.

升，拜受。坐祭，立飲。薦、俎（俎）執（設）于其位，辨。主人備合（荅）拜焉，降，賓〈實〉爵于匪。• 丩尊兩壺于作（阼）階東，

40 *Wuwei Hanjian*, 66.

41 According to Wang Guanshi, hooks were marked by readers who were further identified by him as the “teachers of the Classics” (*Jingshi* 經師). Thus, a hook placed next to a divider indicates that the reader agreed with the original punctuation of the text. If a hook and divider did not appear together, the reader disagreed with the original divisions of ritual proceedings and utilized hooks to express their own reading. His suggestion does not convince me. See Wang Guanshi, *Yili Hanjian ben kaozheng*, 151.

加勺，南柄，西方亦如之。主人洗觶（罍），酌于西方之尊。⊥西階前北面州（酬）賓。賓在左。33

[All the guests] ascend the steps and bow to receive the cup. They sit to offer the wine and rise to drink. They set the relishes and stands, and all partake. Then, the Master of Ceremonies receives a return bow from them all, they descend, and the cup is placed in the basket. • ⊥ The Wine-holder is two jars placed to the east of the eastern steps, with ladles set on them and handles southward. There is another similar holder on the west side. The Master of Ceremonies washes a goblet and ladles wine into it from the holder on the west side. ⊥ He stands in front of the west steps and pledges the guests, they standing on his left as he faces north. 33

觶爲加爵。如初義（儀），不及佐食。洗致主人、主婦如初，無從。眾賓長爲加爵，如初。爵止。• ⊥嗣舉鄭（奠），澆（盥）入，北面再拜稽首。⊥尸執鄭（奠），進受，復位，祭酒，啐酒。尸舉肝。舉鄭（奠）左執 36

[The senior descendant] offers wine once more as when he made it before (i.e., the third offering). This does not extend to the waiter. The washing and handing of the cup to the Master of Ceremonies and Lady are as before, but there are no [roast dainties served to] follow it. The senior among the body of guests offers an additional cup as before (i.e., the second offering of wine was made). Thereupon, the cup is held in reserve for the time being. • ⊥ The heir to the Master of Ceremonies then raises the cup, which was laid down, and drinks it. After washing his hands, he enters the room, faces north, and bows twice. ⊥<sup>42</sup> Then the personator takes the cup, and the heir goes forward and receives it, returns to his place, and offers and tastes the wine. The personator raises the liver. [The heir], who lifted the cup, grasps [the goblet] in his left hand. 36

On these slips, the hooks sometimes appear together with the dividers, yet they sometimes show up in different places to generate more subtle and delicate textual divisions. Since the sections divided by hooks only occasionally overlap with those separated by dividers, perhaps hooks were used based on a different logic. Another case that supports the “copyists theory” is “Te sheng,” where one cannot find even a single hook on the last thirteen slips. One

42 Unlike *Wuwei Hanjian*, the *jishi* interpretation does not record this hook. However, doublechecking the photograph, the ink mark is quite clear.

possible explanation is that, like “You si,” the manuscript was also written by two different copyists – one transcribed the first forty slips, and the other copied the last thirteen slips. If hooks were marked by a reader, he would possibly finish reading the whole manuscript and leave the hooks throughout the text. Therefore, by raising the “two-copyists theory,” one might plausibly explain the absence of hooks on the last thirteen slips – while the first copyist accurately transcribed the hooks originally in the source text, the second copyist did not faithfully write them down.

Moreover, hooks, which are extremely common in unearthed manuscripts, are usually written by copyists. As modern scholars have already noticed, hooks also appear on Han slips found in northwestern China other than the Wuwei manuscripts: for instance, on the Baoshan 包山 Chu slips, and the *\*Annalistic History* (*\*Xinian* 繫年) of the Tsinghua manuscripts.<sup>43</sup> I would like to add another interesting example here – the Han slips titled *Statutes on Burials* (*Zang lü* 葬律), which can be dated to the reigns of Emperor Wen (180–153 BCE) and Emperor Jing (157–141 BCE) of the Western Han dynasty. Now we have two versions of “Zang lü” excavated from Shuihudi 睡虎地 Tomb M77 and Hujia caochang 胡家草場 Tomb M12, respectively. These tombs can be dated to a relatively specific period of the Han dynasty and are located extremely close to each other.<sup>44</sup> The two versions contain similar writings, although the placement of their hooks is slightly different. For example, the first slip of the Shuihudi version has:<sup>45</sup>

43 These examples have all been discussed in Cheng Pengwan, *Jiandu boshu geshi yanjiu*, 190–191. All hooks shown in these examples could only be written by copyists. On the slips found in the northwestern region, hooks were marked to differentiate nouns such as personal or place names in the process of copying to ensure readers would not be confused by the proper names. However, the *\*Xinian* used the mark to demonstrate that paragraphs had ended.

44 The Shuihudi Han tomb dates to the period from the later years of Emperor Wen's (180–153 BCE) reign to Emperor Jing's (157–141 BCE) reign. The Hujia caochang M12 dates to the reign of Emperor Wen, not earlier than 163 BCE. See Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所, Yunmeng xian bowuguan 雲夢縣博物館, “Hubei Yunmeng Shuihudi M77 fajue jianbao” 湖北雲夢睡虎地 M77 發掘簡報, *Jianghan kaogu* 江漢考古 2008.4, 36; color plate 15. Jingzhou bowuguan 荊州博物館, “Hubei Jingzhoushi Hujia caochang mudi M12 fajue jianbao” 湖北荊州市胡家草場墓地 M12 發掘簡報, *Kaogu* 考古 2020.2, 20. Jingzhou bowuguan, Wuhan daxue jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 武漢大學簡帛研究中心, *Jingzhou Hujia caochang Xihan jiandu xuancui* 荊州胡家草場西漢簡牘選粹 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe), 2021, 86–87.

45 I have consulted the annotated transcription given by Peng Hao 彭浩, and I have slightly revised his punctuation. See Peng Hao, “Du Yunmeng Shuihudi M77 Hanjian ‘Zang lü’” 讀雲夢睡虎地 M77 漢簡《葬律》, *Jianghan kaogu* 江漢考古 2009.4, 130. Translator's note: The English translation of the quoted texts is borrowed, although somewhat revised,

徹侯衣衾毋過盈棺，衣衾、斂束<sup>ㄌ</sup>、輅，所用次也，其殺<sup>ㄌ</sup>。小斂用一特牛，棺、開各一太牢<sup>ㄌ</sup>，祖一特牛<sup>ㄌ</sup>，<sup>1</sup>遣一大牢。<sup>2</sup>

Penetrating Lords' shrouds should not exceed and overfill the coffin. [Compared to the textile used for the funerary rites,] shrouds, coffin binding cords<sup>ㄌ</sup>, and what is used for the coffin cover should be of a lesser quality<sup>ㄌ</sup>. The rite of Minor Dressing (i.e., clothing the deceased before putting the corpse into the coffin) uses a single ox. The rites of confining (i.e., putting the corpse into the coffin) and Starting (i.e., starting setting out and proceeding to the ancestral temple before burial) [use] one set of grand triple-sacrifice [consisting of ox, pig, and sheep], respectively<sup>ㄌ</sup>; [the rite of] Ancestral Sacrifice [at the ancestral temple], [uses] a single ox<sup>1</sup>; [the rite of] Departure (i.e., departing from the ancestral temple and proceeding to the burial ground) [uses] one set of grand triple-sacrifice<sup>2</sup>.

However, the first slip of the Hujia caochang version is punctuated as follows:

徹侯衣衾毋過盈棺，衣衾<sup>ㄌ</sup>斂束<sup>ㄌ</sup>，輅，所用次也，其殺<sup>ㄌ</sup>。小斂用一特牛<sup>•</sup>。棺、開各<sup>1571/94</sup>一大牢<sup>ㄌ</sup>，祖一特牛<sup>ㄌ</sup>。遣一大牢。<sup>1564/95</sup>

Penetrating Lords' shrouds should not exceed and overfill the coffin. [Compared to the textile used for the funerary rites,] shrouds<sup>ㄌ</sup>, coffin binding cords<sup>ㄌ</sup>, and what is used for the coffin cover should be of a lesser quality<sup>ㄌ</sup>. The rite of Minor Dressing (i.e., clothing the deceased before putting the corpse into the coffin) uses a single ox<sup>•</sup>. The rites of confining (i.e., putting the corpse into the coffin) and Starting (i.e., starting setting out and proceeding to the ancestral temple before burial) <sup>1571/94</sup> [use] one set of grand triple-sacrifice [consisting of ox, pig, and sheep], respectively<sup>ㄌ</sup>; [the rite of] Ancestral Sacrifice [at the ancestral temple], [uses] a single ox<sup>ㄌ</sup>; [the rite of] Departure (i.e., departing from the ancestral temple and proceeding to the burial ground) [uses] one set of grand triple-sacrifice. <sup>1564/95</sup>.

Both manuscripts contain hooks that take up nearly one-character space, which indicates they were probably added by copyists during their copying process. Based on the differences between punctuation marks shown in these versions, it can be argued that among legal and administrative manuscripts produced within a relatively short period of time and sharing similar

from Guo Jue, "Western Han Funerary Relocation Documents and the Making of the Dead in Early Imperial China," *Bamboo and Silk* 2 (2019), 194.

contents as well as ways of circulation, punctuation marks were transmitted in a more fluid degree than for the texts. The copyists, who can probably be identified as scribes (*shi* 史) in the case of “Zang lü” since these people knew legal and administrative documents pretty well, added different punctuation marks to each manuscript. All the examples discussed above suggest that most hooks that appeared in the unearthed early Chinese manuscripts were probably written by copyists. Those that can be identified as readers’ marks are extremely rare.

Compared with dividers, hooks only appear sporadically and do not explicitly show a stable rule of use. To be more specific, no hooks were found in the “Fu zhuan” A and B, “Sangfu” C, “Shao lao,” and “Yan li.” Only one was found in the “Shi xiangjian li” (slip #8). And they only appear on slips #22–36 of “Te sheng,” slips #68–76 of “You si,” and only show up in “Tai she.”<sup>46</sup> While I have no intent to insist that all hooks were either copyists’ interpretation or their transcription of those originally written in master copies, I am afraid there is insufficient evidence to support the claim that hooks were added by readers, who were sometimes even identified as the tomb owners, during the reading process.

### 2.3 *Signaling Markers Placed at the Upper Edges of the Slips and the Manuscript Collection Composed by Multiple Copies*

This section explores the last kind of punctuation mark found in the Wuwei *Yili*, i.e., the large dots placed above the upper binding straps. While Chen named them “passage markers” (*zhang hao* 章號), I refer to them as “signaling markers placed at the upper edges of the slips” (*jiantou tishi fu* 簡頭提示符). According to Chen, these markers divide the “Sang fu” text into eleven passages.<sup>47</sup> The placement of signaling markers in three texts of the manuscripts related to “Sangfu” are basically the same, revealing the fact that how “Sangfu” should be divided had become relatively stable. Following set patterns, signaling markers were always positioned above the upper binding straps, kept at a distance from the first characters. Indeed, they should not be confused with dividers and should be discussed for their own sake. However, apart from those that appeared in “Sangfu,” not all signaling markers in the *Yili* manuscripts can be identified as “passage markers.”

First, in the three texts related to “Sangfu,” if one passage had come to an end, the copyist would leave the rest of the slip blank and add a signaling

46 Among all 114 “Tai she” slips, hooks only appear on slips #15, #65, #78, #84, #95, and #113.

47 Du Yiheng verified Chen’s suggestion by giving a more careful and detailed comparison of how “Sangfu” was divided into different passages. See Du Yiheng, “Wuwei Hanjian *Yili* jingxue jiazhi fafu,” 9.

marker at the top of the following slip right before the start of a new passage. Yet in other texts of the manuscripts, one can seldom find these markers placed after the end of the passage because the manuscripts were generally copied slip by slip continuously, leaving no blank after the end of a passage. Meanwhile, the distribution of signaling markers is extremely uneven, with none of them appearing in “Shi xiangjian li.”<sup>48</sup> “You si” comprises as much as seventy-nine slips, which surpasses even the number of slips in “Fu zhuan,” yet it only has one signaling marker. The phenomenon that the passage markers are so unevenly distributed casts doubt on whether all the texts of the *Yili* manuscripts were transmitted via “passage and verse” – it would be hard to explain why some texts contain many passages while others include only a few. Therefore, it is necessary to consider other possibilities regarding the function of signaling markers. Instead of following Chen’s suggestion, this article questions whether these markers had been used by conforming to a particular strict set of rules. Instead, they are probably markers showing that the manuscripts had been pieced together or traces indicating these texts were copied by multiple hands. Below, I will take “Te sheng” and “Shao lao” as examples to elaborate on this point.

There are altogether six signaling markers in “Te sheng”:

TABLE 4 Signaling markers in “Te sheng”

| Number | Placement of the signaling marker | Content   | Possible function of the signaling marker   |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1      | Slip #1                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 特牲餽食之禮。不詛日。</li> <li>• In the ceremonial for the presentation of the single sacrificial animal as food to the ancestor, [in the case of an ordinary officer,] no attention is paid to the season.</li> </ul> | To mark the beginning of the first slip, indicating the opening of the main text. |

48 The photograph and transcription of slip #1 in *Jishi* contain an ink dot located close to the upper edge, above the first binding strap. However, such a dot cannot be discerned in the photograph and transcription of the *Wuwei Hanjian*. If it is noticeable enough, one would not ignore it when making a transcription. And so, I hesitate to take the dot into account.

TABLE 4 Signaling markers in “Te sheng” (*cont.*)

| Number | Placement of the signaling marker | Content   | Possible function of the signaling marker                           |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 2      | Slip #27                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 獻祝，邊燔從，如初義。</li> <li>• The offering of wine to the liturgist, with the presentation of the splint holders, and the roast to follow, are done as before.</li> </ul> | Uncertain   |
| 3      | Slip #34                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 主人鄭軫，拜，賓合拜。</li> <li>• The Master of Ceremonies sits down to offer wine, and bows when he has finished the goblet, the guest replying with a bow.</li> </ul>       | Uncertain   |
| 4      | Slip #41                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 賓弟子及兄弟弟子洗，各酌于其尊。</li> <li>• The juniors among the guests and descendants wash cups, and each ladles out wine into the vase appropriated to him.</li> </ul>         | To signify the following content is written by a different copyist. |
| 5      | Slip #47                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 特牲饋食，其服皆朝服。</li> <li>• In presenting the meat of the single beast to the ancestor as food, all wear dress clothes.</li> </ul>                                      | To mark the beginning of the “notes” part.                          |
| 6      | Slip #48                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 明日，卒尊。</li> <li>• 暮用郤。</li> <li>• On the morrow, when the offerings to the spirit are complete, these are covered with bean-fibre cloth.</li> </ul>                | Uncertain   |

To compare the quoted texts with those sections divided by the *Judou*, one would find that signaling markers shown in cases 2, 3, 4, and 6 do not initiate any sections. Instead, the quoted texts are located in the middle of individual sections, and so they ought to be seen as parts of larger ritual proceedings.

Therefore, rather than insisting the chapter could be divided into six parts, as indicated by the number of signaling markers, it would be more reasonable to admit that we are uncertain about their exact functions.

Some unique characteristics of the “Te sheng” copy are worth discussing. The manuscript, altogether made up of fifty-three slips, can be sub-divided into two parts based on their handwriting and other features. First, from slips #1–40, each slip contains around sixty well-balanced and delicate characters, which generally look like those written in “Shi Xiangjian li” and “Fu zhuan” A. Moreover, slip numbers were written on the recto sides. However, from slips #41–53, no slip number has been found. Around seventy to eighty characters were written on each slip. Meanwhile, both the width of the slip and the style of calligraphy differ from those of slips #1–40. Second, before the end of the last slip (#40), the first part was copied continuously without leaving any blanks at the lower parts of the slips. By contrast, the remaining thirteen slips can be further divided into two sections – while the copyist regarded slips #41–46 as a closed entity, thus leaving a blank at the lower part of slip #46, he started a new section from slip #47 (see Fig. 5). Furthermore, with regard to the usage of punctuation marks, one can find at least the following differences: (1) while multiple hooks appear in the first part, none can be found in the second part; (2) no repetition mark (*chongwen hao* 重文號) can be seen in the first part, yet it was used in the second part; (3) compared to the first part, dividers are generally more densely distributed in the second part. This phenomenon is especially valid for those manuscripts belonging to the “notes” part, where one constantly sees three to four dividers shown on each slip. Chen Mengjia argues the first part was copied afterward to make up the incomplete thirteen slips.<sup>49</sup> Even though current evidence does not allow us to decide which part was written earlier, it would be reasonable to infer that “Te sheng” was pieced together from two different copies for which copyists had utilized punctuation marks with different habits and rules. Therefore, the fact that the manuscript, composed of two different copies, was a “patchwork” by nature makes it more difficult to imagine a unified design in text division, indicating a coherent understanding of the text that transcended the differences between individual copies.

Three signaling markers are placed at the upper edges of the “Shao lao” slips. While the sentences marked by two of them coincide with the openings of individual sections, as suggested by *Judou*, the passages behind the first marker are an integral part of the “offering of satisfaction made in the dark chamber” (*yinyan* 陰厭).

49 Wuwei Hanjian, 66. Yet Chen did not demonstrate how such a conclusion was drawn.

TABLE 5 Signaling markers in “Shao lao”

| Number | Placement of the signaling marker | Content   | Possible function of the signaling marker   |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1      | Slip #19                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 主婦被錫，衣移袂，薦自東房。</li> <li>• The wife wears the bordered garment with wide flowing sleeves, and she brings it forward from the east chamber.</li> </ul> | Uncertain   |
| 2      | Slip #30                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 主人降，洗爵，升，北面酌酒。</li> <li>• Then the host goes down, and washing a cup, faces north, and ladles wine into it.</li> </ul>                               | To signify the following content is written by a different copyist. Yet the <i>Judou</i> regards it as the starting point of a new section. |
| 3      | Slip #42                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 主人出，立于作階上，西面。</li> <li>• The host, going out, stands at the top of the eastern steps, facing west.</li> </ul>  | To signify the following content is written by a different copyist. Yet the <i>Judou</i> regards it as the starting point of a new section. |

Similar to “Te sheng,” the “Shao lao” is made up of different copies. The original manuscript might contain forty-seven slips in total, two of which are lost. The text was copied continuously without leaving any blanks at the bottom of the slips. All slip numbers were written on the verso. The manuscript could also be divided into two parts with their characters slightly different from each other. While the first part includes all the slips from #1 to #41, the remaining slips from #42 to #47 (numbered as slips #1–6 by a copyist) constitute the second part.<sup>50</sup> While most chapters in the Manuscript A are carefully and neatly written, with each slip consisting of around sixty characters, individual slips in

<sup>50</sup> All photographs of the slips are printed in the *Wuwei Hanjian*, although the transcription is somewhat problematic. This article has synthesized information from both photographs and transcription, and I will explain more according to the text when appropriate.

“Shao lao” contain character numbers that vary from each other – characters are either crowded together in great number or scattered about. One can easily notice how characters were sparsely written on slip #41, leaving the impression that the copyist intentionally inserted larger word spaces between them. One possible explanation is to assume that the last six slips had already been written down by someone else before the copyist obtained them, impelling him to struggle with the design of characters and space on slip #41 to make sure it could properly connect with slip #42 (numbered as #1 on the verso). If so, it can be said with certainty that when the copyist encountered the manuscript, the last six slips were already there, yet the rest were left out. It was under this circumstance that he began to transcribe slips #1–41 to make up the manuscript. Similarly, one finds the character density is unusually high before the signaling marker of slip #30. No signs indicate slip #29 underwent a certain degree of scraping or any forms of correction,<sup>51</sup> and we cannot exclude the possibility that the copyist intended to transcribe a specific amount of text onto slip #29 to fit the content that had already been written on slip #30. It would be easier to explain the instability of the number of characters included in individual slips, along with the poor control of the character distribution, by surmising that the manuscript was formed together by joining individual copies written at different times.

In both “Shao lao” and “Te sheng,” signaling markers placed at the upper edges of the slips appear on intersections where different parts got spliced. Having demonstrated this point, it is possible to put forth a hypothesis: even though the placement of signaling markers is not entirely irrelevant to the content, it probably has nothing to do with the systematic plan of text division designed by some commentator. Instead, they might be markers left by copyists. For example, copyists might have divided a source text into multiple parts and then completed the whole text in stages instead of finishing it all at once. And so, they used the signaling markers to mark the intersections where individual parts were joined together. Although the limited evidence does not allow us to fully reconstruct the copying process of “Te sheng” and “Shao lao,” making it hard to substantiate our hypothesis, it seems sufficient here to claim that signaling markers have stronger connections to copying than to interpretation.

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51 It seems difficult to demonstrate this point before examining the slips with one's own eyes, yet no scraping traces have been found in either the high-resolution photographs of *Jishi* or Chen Mengjia's description. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that no character had been scraped off from the slip.

It is worth adding that signaling markers above the binding straps do not necessarily relate to the interpretation of the text.<sup>52</sup> One finds them in the eight slips of the *\*Ten Slips of Imperial Edict on Royal Staff* (*\*Wangzhang zhaoling shijian* 王杖詔令十簡) excavated from Tomb 18 of the Mozuizi Cemetery, yet they seem to be written merely to catch the eye and basically have no influence on the reading of the text.<sup>53</sup>

An analysis of how “You si” was copied can be used as collateral evidence to demonstrate that the manuscript was completed by multiple hands. The text was originally written on seventy-nine slips, though only seventy-four were found (five of them, i.e., slips #46, #51, #63, #67, #78 being missing). These slips can be divided into three parts, each with slightly different handwriting. The first part includes slips #1 to #50, the slip numbers of which were written on the verso;<sup>54</sup> slips #52 to #64, numbered initially on the verso as slips #1 to #12, constitute the second part; the third part comprises slips #65 to the last slip of the manuscript (#79), although they were renumbered as slips #1 to #15. What is more, among the last fifteen slips, the slip numbers of the first nine slips (#1–9) are written on the verso, while those of the last six slips (#10–15)

52 Signaling markers are found in other unearthed manuscripts, for example, the *Laozi* of the Peking University Han Bamboo Slips, where these dots, placed above the upper binding straps, were used to remind readers of the beginning of passages. See Beijing daxue Chutu wenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學出土文獻研究所 ed., *Beijing daxue cang Xihan zhushu (er)* 北京大學藏西漢竹書 (貳) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe), 2020, 3–30.

53 For example, slips #2 and #3 have:

制：詔書御史曰：年七十受王杖者比六百石，入官廷不趨，犯罪耐以上毋二尺告劾，有敢徵召、侵辱<sub>2</sub>者比大逆不道。建始二年九月甲辰下。<sub>3</sub>

Decree: An edict is hereby proclaimed to the imperial counselor: those men of 70 years of age on whom a royal staff has been bestowed shall have status comparable with that of officials of 600 *shi* grade; they are permitted to enter offices and the official courtyard without hurrying; if they have committed crimes punishable by the sentence of whisker-shaving or great severity, they shall not be subject to indictment made by means of 2-foot longboards; and any person who ventures to summon them for attendance or to treat them with insult or contumely<sub>2</sub> shall be subject to treatment as if he were guilty of gross moral turpitude. Promulgated on the day *jiachen*, of the ninth month of the second year of *jianshi* [7<sup>th</sup> November, 31 BC].<sub>3</sub>

See *Wuwei Hanjian*, 140, plate xxii. Translator's note: the translation has consulted Michael Loewe, “The Wooden and Bamboo Strips Found at Mo-Chü-Tzu (Kansu),” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1965), 13–26.

54 Although I consider the first fifty slips to be “the first part,” it is possible that this part also includes the missing slip #51.



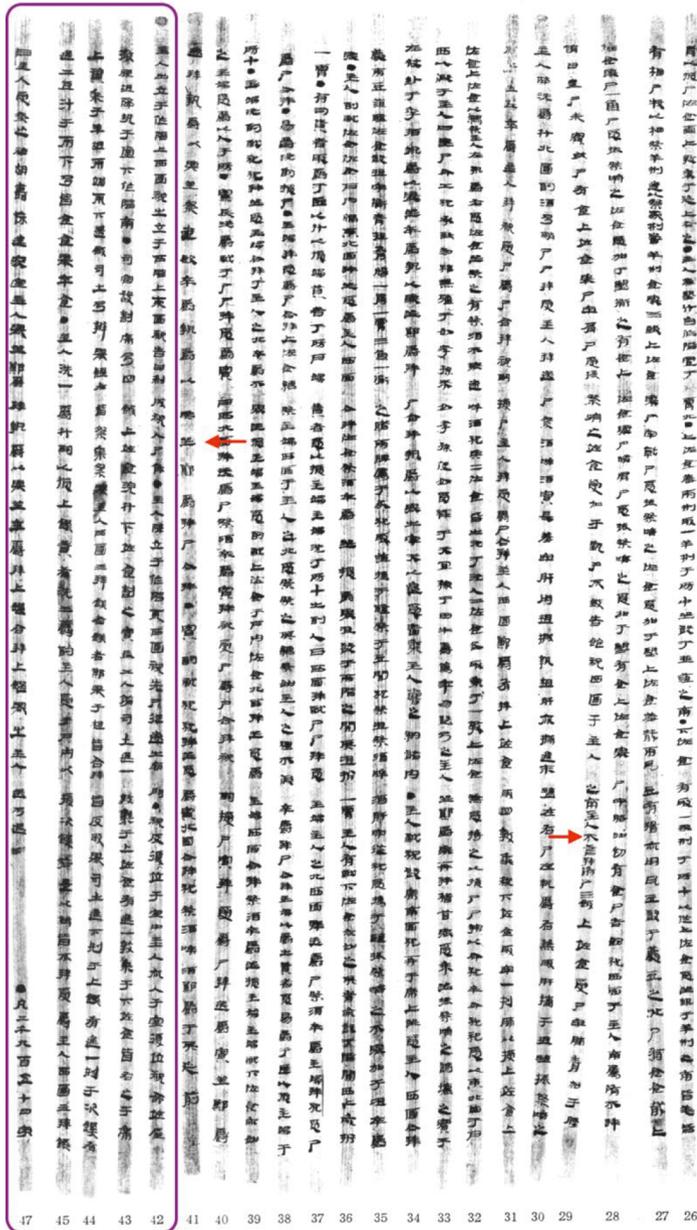


FIGURE 6 Different copies that compose the “Shao lao” manuscript

are added on the recto.<sup>55</sup> The changes of slip numbers indicate at least that the copying task had been broken down into multiple sections.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, dividers are also unevenly distributed in “You si”: (1) none of them is found on slips #1 to #11;<sup>57</sup> (2) six dividers are written on the following nine slips (#12–20); (3) no dividers could be found on slips #21 to #35; (4) seven dividers appear on the next twenty-two slips (#36–57, with dividers written on slips #36, #40, #42, #48, #50, #54, and #55); (5) on the last twenty-two slips (#58–79), dividers suddenly show up seventeen times, thus increasing their density to a much higher level. Note that a signaling marker was written on slip #12. The repeated attempts at renumbering the slip numbers, as well as the unstable distribution of signaling markers and dividers within different parts of the manuscript, might suggest that “You si” underwent multiple rounds of copying.

To conclude, except for the situation shown in the three texts related to “Sangfu,” signaling markers might not be regarded as traces left by a commentator with a systematic text division design. Rather, they were imprints that reflect how copyists allotted their jobs. Evidence shown in manuscripts such as “Te sheng,” “Shao lao,” and “You si” reveals that multiple copyists or even source texts were involved in the copying process. And so, what signaling markers uncover is not a systematic structure, as it could be shown in practices such as dividing the “passage and verses” conducted by commentators, but the complexity of the copying process.

### 3 Part Three: Conclusions

One can classify punctuation marks written on the Wuwei manuscripts into three different kinds – dividers, hooks, and signaling markers. Numerous

55 The slips #67 (numbered by a copyist as #3) and #78 (numbered by another copyist as #14) are missing.

56 Apart from those on slips #10–15, all the slip numbers were written on the verso. Chen Mengjia proposed the last six slips (#10–15) were written by another copyist. Yet, he further questioned what made it necessary to require another copyist to finish these slips, since it obviously demanded a minimal amount of work. Therefore, he suggested that the last six slips were once lost, requiring hiring another copyist to rewrite them to complete the manuscript.

57 According to the interpretation in *Jishi*, both slips #1 and #5 were written with dividers, yet no traces of their appearance can be found in the photographs. In addition, in *Wuwei Hanjian*, neither the photographs nor transcription of the slips include these punctuation marks. I follow *Wuwei Hanjian* since it was published much earlier, which might indicate that (1) the textual information it preserves was more faithful and trustworthy; and (2) the transcription was based on direct observation of the original slips.

dividers found all over the slips were used to break down the rituals recorded in the texts into multiple proceedings. And so, how punctuation marks were assigned reflects how individual texts were interpreted. However, the text was neither evenly divided nor do we find a coherent logic underlying the practice of text division. And so, the passages separated by dividers should not be equated with the “sections” divided by traditional Chinese classical commentators. Meanwhile, a few sporadically scattered hooks reveal a different understanding of how to divide the text. Finally, while signaling markers were used to break down each chapter into multiple “passages” in the three texts regarding “Sangfu,” thus representing a certain degree of interpretation, I argue that they are actually relevant to how copyists allotted their jobs in the other texts of the manuscripts.

Previous scholarship usually assumed that one can differentiate copyists from readers by analyzing the *Yili* manuscripts: while copyists were regarded as a professional class who lacked a sense of agency and merely provided readers with duplicates of the original texts, readers, on the other hand, belonged to a higher class who truly knew the meaning of the classics, thus actively engaging in their reading practices. Therefore, certain punctuation marks were regarded as the traces left by the readers’ proofreading activities. However, a careful reading of the *Yili* manuscripts would cause us to ask whether the degree of readers’ participation might have been overestimated.<sup>58</sup> Instead, it

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58 Apart from the above-mentioned evidence presented in the main text, there is a mark in “Shi xiangjian li” commonly regarded as evidence of the reader’s proofreading activity. Slip #11 has:

與幼者言，言孝弟（悌）於父兄。與眾言，言忠信[慈謫（祥）]。與居官者言，言忠信。

In speaking with young people, of their filial and brotherly duties. In speaking with the common man, of loyalty and sincerity, [benignity and goodness]. In speaking with those in minor offices, of loyalty and sincerity.

What is written in the unearthed manuscript is identical to the received text, with the exception of a few phonetic loan characters. In addition, the word “benignity and goodness” (*cixiang* 慈謫) was circled for some reason. Indeed, the following sentence also contains the term “loyalty and sincerity” (*zhongxin* 忠信), which seems to repeat the term used in the preceding clause. It would seem that the circle around the *cixiang* was meant to suggest that *zhongxin* in this sentence should be deleted. (It is less likely that the proofreader proposed to delete *cixiang*.) However, the proofreader only left a mark without making any revisions, even though “proofreading” actually means reading and correcting a piece of written work. Moreover, since the manuscripts contain many wrongly written characters, it would be hard to explain why a proofreader, who was supposed to read and correct the text carefully, did not make any corrections. Therefore, it seems unconvincing to read the circle around the *cixiang* as a reader’s correction.

was probably the copyists who constructed the shape of the manuscripts.<sup>59</sup> The manuscripts are characterized by a combination of various writing elements, including handwriting, that is distinct from one another, punctuation marks that were used by following different rules of usage, and slip numbers that were frequently reordered and rearranged, all of which reveal the complexity of the formation of the *Yili* manuscripts: more than one copyist using multiple source texts participated in the construction of the manuscripts.

Influenced by the “Biographies of Confucians” (*Rulin zhuan* 儒林傳) of the *Book of Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書), which provides an orthodox narrative of scholastic lineages on the transmission of the Confucian classics, contemporary scholars tend to believe that the interpretations of classics were transmitted from masters to disciples in the Han dynasty. Yet, the Wuwei *Yili*, as a collection of manuscripts possibly copied in the northwestern district of the late Western Han, proves that the transmission of classical interpretation did not necessarily rely upon face-to-face communication between masters and disciples. Instead, via the hands of multiple copyists, manuscripts themselves could be endowed with interpretations possibly originating from various sources and then circulating through the intellectual world. As one of the manuscripts containing copyists’ interpretations, the Wuwei *Yili* obtained by the tomb owner should be regarded as an example that includes knowledge derived from heterogeneous sources.

By investigating the distribution of the punctuation marks, we can identify the Wuwei *Yili* as a new composite manuscript collection influenced by various sources of knowledge concerning text division. Attaching these manuscripts to a particular school of thought would be wishful thinking. Instead, via the lens of the Wuwei *Yili* manuscripts, we find that while the structure of chapters and passages and the main text of the classics had become stabilized by the end of

59 Xiao Yunxiao 肖芸曉 proposes that we should not understand copyists as merely craftsmen who lacked a sense of agency and transcribed texts in a mechanical manner. In contrast, one should consider their contributions in preserving and transmitting the texts. See Xiao Yunxiao 肖芸曉, “Chaogong yu xuezhe: Shilun Qinghua jian shushou de zhi yu neng” 抄工與學者：論清華簡書手的職與能, paper presented in “Dijiujie chutu wenxian qingnian xuezhe guoji luntan ji Xianqin Qin Han Jingchu diqu de kongjian zhenghe xueshu gongzuofang” 第九屆出土文獻青年學者國際論壇暨先秦秦漢荊楚地區的空間整合學術工作坊, Wuhan University, 2021.3, 56–81; Xiao Yunxiao 肖芸曉, “Shushou yu diben: Zailun Qinghua jian shushou shuxie de nengdongxing” 書手與底本：再論清華簡書手書寫的能動性, paper presented in the conference “Wakate kenkyūsha chikukangaku kokusai kaigi” 若手研究者竹簡學國際會議, Ritsumeikan University, 2021.12, 5–22. Translator’s note: the former article has already been published. See Xiao Yunxiao 肖芸曉, “Shilun Qinghua jian shushou de zhi yu neng” 試論清華簡書手的職與能, *Jianbo* 簡帛 25 (2022), 67–85.

the Western Han, punctuation marks became the medium that generated new classical interpretations. Various ways of placing punctuation marks make it possible for classical interpretations to be greatly fluid. Therefore, when studying manuscripts written with Confucian classics or investigating the situation of knowledge transmission by the end of Western Han, discovering and describing such a state of fluidity might lead us closer to reality.

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