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Meaning-Construction in warring states philosophical discourse : a discussion of the palaeographic materials from Tomb Guōdiàn One
Meyer, D.

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Reconstructions

“TÀI YĪ SHĒNG SHUǏ” 太一生水

13. *Reconstruction: “Tài yī shēng shuǐ”* 太一生水

The present chapter provides the philological references to the argument-based text “Tài yī shēng shuǐ” as discussed in Part Two of my study of meaning-construction in Warring States philosophic discourse. The reader will find the text and the translation of the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ” in chap. 7.¹ The text and the translation of the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ” are discussed in the philological annotations below (chap. 13.1).


As already mentioned earlier in this book, in order to keep track of the length of each strip and the graphs contained therein, in both the transcription and the translation of the text the reader finds superscripted the letter “*t*” to refer to the present manuscript. Numbers refer to the rank number of the strip in question. “*Ty1*”, for instance, refers to strip one of the “Xìng zì mìng chū”. “*Ty1/9*”, for instance, refers to the ninth graph on strip one.


¹ See chap. 7.2.1 “Part One of the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ”: Cosmogony” and chap. 7.2.2 “Part Two: Application”.


13.1. Notes on Text and Translation: “Tài yī shēng shuǐ”


As discussed in chap. 7, the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ” consists of two cantos, the “Cosmology” and its “Application”.

13.1.1 Cosmology: Canto One

[A]: Graph *ty1/1*  *dà* 大 (OC *[d]ʰa[t]-s), ‘great’, is read as *tài* 太 (OC *tʰa[t]-s) ‘great’, stressing its pre-eminent status. The term *dà yī* 大一 ‘the great one’ also appears in the *Lǐ jì*, “Lǐ yùn” 禮運 where it denotes a matter or source that exists prior to Heaven and Earth, similar to that described in the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ”.² Chén Wěi remarks that throughout the Warring States period, the expression *tài yī* (OC *tʰa[t]-s ʔi[t]) was used rather prominently, not *dà yī* *[d]ʰa[t]-s ʔi[t].³ I read the graph as *tài* (*tʰa[t]-s) throughout.⁴

The editors of the Húběi Province Museum read graph *ty1/6*  (輔) as *fù* 輔 (OC *b(r)aʔ) ‘to assist’.⁵ Chén Wěi proposes to read it *bó* 薄 (OC *(Cə.)[b]ʰaʔ) ‘to make contact with each other; to join each other’.⁶ I follow Chén.

Throughout the text, the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ” uses marks for repetition .

[B]: After strip *ty1/21* the strip has broken off. The upper part of the graph *ty1/22* is still visible . Based on the repetitive structure of this passage and the remaining part that

² The *Lǐ jì* “Lǐ yùn” reads: 是故夫禮 必本於大一 分而為天地 轉而為陰陽 變而為四時 列而為鬼神 “That is why the eminent rites by necessity is rooted in the ‘great one’: It split up and became Heaven and Earth. It turned around and became the ‘shadowy’ and ‘sunny’. It altered and became the four seasons. It distributed and became the ghosts and the spirits.” See *Lǐ jì zhù shù* 禮記注疏, p. 438.

³ See Chén Wěi 2002, p. 25.

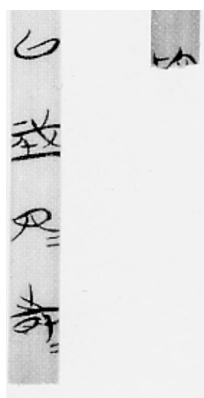
⁴ On the ‘great one’, see also Sarah Allan 2003.

⁵ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 125, n. 2.

⁶ See Chén Wěi 2002, p. 26.

is visible on the strips, it seems most likely that the graph in question should be reconstructed as 隍 *dì* 地 ‘earth’.

Comparing the length of the missing part of strip *ty1* with that of the remaining strips, it is reasonable to assume that some three graphs are missing subsequent to the reconstructed graph 隍 (*dì* 地) ‘earth’.⁷ Based on the repetitive structure of the passage in question, it is most likely to reconstruct the passage as [隍 (地)] 復 (復) 相輔 (薄) ‘earth returns and joins with...’.



Pane of the missing part of strip *t1* as compared to strip *t2*

[C]: Strip *ty4* ends with the two graphs *sì shí* 四(四) 時 ‘four seasons’. Strip *t5*—which position is beyond doubt—starts with 者(陰)易(陽)所(之所)生. We thus have a clear break in the line of developing a continuous train of thought. As compared to the previous sentence, the line in question should run as follows: 滄熱者 四時 [之所生也 四時] 者陰陽之所生. It seems unlikely to assume that the author(s) of the “Tài yī shēng shū” have made a conscious break in pattern, for instance, for signalling a new idea. The four seasons, but also *yīn* and *yǎng* would then all be brought forward by “coldness and heat”. I believe that the gap is not systematic but reflects a mistake.

[D]: I follow Qiú Xīguī who reads the graph *ty6/17* 𠄎 (逌) as *zhōu* 周 ‘to encircle, circle’.⁸ Graph *ty6/19* 𠄎 *huò* 或 should be read in the sense of *yòu* 又 ‘again’.

⁷ See the pane of the missing strip *ty1* in comparison to strip *ty2* as reproduced below.

⁸ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 126, n. 12.

After *ty*6/19 strip six broke off. Based on the length of the missing part, presumably four to five graphs are missing. Qiú Xīguī reconstructs the missing passage as 以己為 ‘to make itself into’.⁹ Despite of this, considering the preceding sentence, it seems more likely to assume that the present line should continue with *shǐ* 始 ‘to start with, to begin with’ [again]. Liú Zhāo reconstructs four graphs. He also starts the passage to be reconstructed as ‘to start with, to begin with [again]’ and then continues with the reconstruction after Qiú.¹⁰ This seems to be corroborated by the subsequent statement, which also reads 呂 (以)呂(己)為萬(萬)勿(物)經 ‘it takes itself to be the alignment of the myriad things’ (*ty*7/8-13). Despite of this, I nevertheless suggest to reconstruct the passage under review as follows:

是故太一藏於水、行於時、周而又 □ [始。] †
 □□□[□] [故太一為] ^{Ty7} 萬物母，一缺一盈，以己為萬物經

“From this follows that the Great One is stored in the water, moves with the [four] seasons, [finishes] a circle, and then {starts over again}: †
 {Therefore, the Great One is} ^{Ty7} the mother of the myriad things, once diminishing, once full, it takes itself to be the alignment of the myriad things. †

I regard the first line to be a description ending with ‘and then {starts over again}’. It is purely descriptive. The second line is a clarification and definition of the Great One that is based on the above description. Therefore the reconstruction ‘[T]herefore, the Great One is’... . The fact, that the phrase 一缺一盈，以己為萬物經 is a rhyme (盈: OC *leŋ; 經: OC *k^seŋ), whereas the preceding line has no rhymed passage, seems to corroborate my assumption that only the last line is some type of defining statement and that the preceding line should stop after 始 ‘start over [again]’.

The character *ty*7/4 (and *ty*7/6) 𠄎 (龍) is read *yī* — ‘one’.¹¹

⁹ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 126, n. 12.

¹⁰ See Liú Zhāo 2005, p. 45.

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of this graph, see Lín Hóngyīng 林虹瑛, Murase Nozomu 村瀬望 & Furuya Akihira 古屋昭弘 2004.

[E]: The editors of the Húběi Province Museum read graph *ty8/3* 𧇗 (𧇗) as *lí* 釐 ‘diminish’.¹² As Lǐ Líng did already note,¹³ in the *Xúnzǐ* “Rú xiào” appears an identical line, which reads: 天不能死 地不能埋 “[H]eaven is unable to kill [it], earth is unable to smother it.”¹⁴ From other sources it becomes likely that this was a current notion during the Warring States period.¹⁵ Accordingly, most scholars follow Lǐ Líng in his reading of *ty8/3* as *mái* 埋 ‘to smother’.¹⁶ At a first sight, this reconstruction seems to be phonologically difficult to defend since the phonetic in 𧇗 (里) (OC *(mə.)rəʔ) has an initial *r- —and so does *lí* 釐 (OC *[r]ə) ‘diminish’ (both have the MC *lái* 來 initial (OC *(mə.)rʰə < *mə.rʰək)—whereas *mái* 埋 (OC *m.rʰə) has the MC *míng* 明 initial (OC *mraŋ), which is a bilabial initial. Calling to mind the criteria for phonetic similarity in Old Chinese for loan characters and phonetic components the elements,¹⁷ the initial of two should have the same position of articulation, which clearly is not the case. However, we also cannot rule out that the bilabial initial *m- of *mái* 埋 ‘to smother’ just reflects a prefix and the word should indeed be reconstructed as *m-rʰə, which would thus be a good phonetic loan. I hold this to be very likely and so I follow Lǐ Líng.

[F]: The latter part of strip *ty8* has broken off. Presumably seven or eight graphs are missing. The last graph on the strip is only partly visible 𧇗. The remaining part suggests to read it *wèi* 胃 (謂) ‘to call; be called’. For my reconstruction of the first missing graphs as *shèng rén* 聖人 ‘sagely person’, see my discussion in chap. 7 “Applying the Methodology” in Part Three of this study.

¹² See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 126, n. 14.

¹³ See Lǐ Líng 2002, p. 33.

¹⁴ See *Xúnzǐ jí jiě* 荀子集解 (vol. 1), p. 138.

¹⁵ See Chén Wěi 2002, p. 29.



¹⁶ See, for instance, Chén Wěi 2002, p. 29; Liú Zǔxìn 劉祖信 2004, p. 254; Liú Zhāo 2005, p. 45.

¹⁷ The criteria for phonetic similarity in Old Chinese for loan characters and phonetic components as defined by William H. Baxter during the second Leiden Workshop on Old Chinese Phonology (held from August 08 through Friday, August 18, 2006 at Leiden University) are as follows. (1) Main vowel should be the same; (2) Coda should be the same; (3) Initials should have the same *position* of articulation [yet, initials must not necessarily have the same *manner* of articulation]; (4) One may be A-type; one may be B-type; (5) One may have *-r- and the other not; (6) The ‘tone’ category can be different; i.e., final *ʔ and final *-s can be ignored [These rules are sometime relaxed]. See also chap. 5 “Xìng zì mìng chū”, 204, n. 80.

13.1.2 Application: Canto Two

[G]: In the present edition of the “*Tài yī shēng shuǐ*”, the editors of the Húběi Province Museum place strip *ty*10 after strip *ty*9, which, in turn, I have placed right before strip *ty*14.¹⁸

The proper location of strip *ty*9 remains problematic. Originally, the editors of the Húběi Province Museum placed strip *ty*9 before strip *ty*13 and after *ty*12. It was only due to the suggestion made by Qiú Xīguī 裘錫圭 that it was finally decided to locate it subsequent to strip *ty*8.¹⁹ Later, however, Qiú withdrew his earlier proposal to insert strip *ty*9 subsequent to *ty*8 and before *ty*10 and now holds that strip *ty*9 should be placed right before the final strip *ty*14 and after *ty*13.²⁰ Qiú’s latest proposal suggests the following order of the strips: 1-13, 9, 14, giving clusters as follows. The cluster of strips *ty*1-8 outlines the cosmology of the “*Tài yī shēng shuǐ*”. The cluster *ty*10-13 discusses the importance of proper naming, the cluster *ty*9, 14 discusses the fact that the “Great One” in itself values weakness.²¹ Most editors of the text now follow this organization.²² I consider strips *ty*1-8 to be canto ‘one’; strips *ty*10-13, 9, 14 to be canto ‘two’ of the “*Tài yī shēng shuǐ*”.²³

[H]: I follow Qiú Xīguī in reading the graph *ty*10/18  (忍) as *zì* 字 ‘style-name’.²⁴ Subsequent to *ty*10/18 appears some type of marking on the strip , which function, however, remains unclear.

The editors of the Húběi Province Museum read the line *ty*10/20-23 書 (請) 昏 (問) 丌 (其) 明 (名) as “may I ask for its name?”, followed by many editors of the text.²⁵

¹⁸ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 125.

¹⁹ See Qiú Xīguī 裘錫圭 2000 (b), pp. 219 f. See also my discussion in chap. 7.2 of the present study.


²⁰ Ibid, p. 220.


²¹ Ibid, p. 221.


²² See, for instance, Chén Wěi 2003, p. 24; Liú Zǔxìn 劉祖信 2004, p. 254; Liú Zhāo 2005, p. 46.

²³ For a detailed discussion, see chap. 7 “*Tài yī shēng shuǐ*”.

²⁴ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 126, n. 16.

Yet, there are also voices arguing for reading *ty*10/21  (昏) in its original form, that is, as *hūn* 昏 ‘dark’,²⁶ a view Qiú Xīguī strongly disapproves of,²⁷ despite of the fact that from a mere palaeographical or phonological point of view both readings were possible. I follow Qiú’s suggestion to read *ty*10/20-21 as 青 (請) 昏 (問) ‘may I ask [for]’, which, however, I do not merely base on the line *ty*11/5-8, but on the argumentative structure of the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ” overall. For a discussion of the argumentative structure of the “Tài yī shēng shuǐ”, see chap. 7 of the present study.

[I]: The editors of the Húběi Province Museum read *ty*11/6  (愿) as *tuō* 託 ‘to entrust’.²⁸ For reading *ty*11/5-8 必愿 (托) 开 (其) 明 (名) ‘must [also] consign [himself] to its name, see Qiú Xīguī and Chén Wěi.²⁹

[J]: The tail of strip *ty*12 has broken off. Presumably three to four graphs are missing. The last graph on the strip is only partly visible . Qiú Xīguī notes that it either is the graph *shàng* 尚, or a graph written with the phonophoric *shàng* 尚 (OC *[d]aŋ-s), here read as *dàng* 當 (*t^haŋ).³⁰ As far as the reconstruction of this passage is concerned, □□□ [天不足]^{Ty13} 於鹵(西)北 ‘... {*If* Heaven does not suffice}^{Ty13} in the northwest’, I follow Qiú.³¹

[K]: The tail of strip *ty*13 has broken off. Presumably seven graphs are missing. Following the suggestion of Liú Zhāo, I reconstruct the first three graphs parallel to those on strip *ty*12.³²

[L]: For the position of strip *ty*9, see [G] above.

²⁵ See, for instance, Wèi Qǐpéng 魏啟鵬 1999, Liú Zhāo 2005, p. 46.

²⁶ See, for instance, Lǐ Líng 2002, p. 32; Chén Wěi 2003, p. 30; Liú Zǔxìn 劉祖信 2004, p. 254.

²⁷ See Qiú Xīguī 2000 (b), pp. 222 ff.

²⁸ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 125.

²⁹ See Qiú Xīguī 2000 (b), pp. 223 f.; Chén Wěi 2003, p. 29.

³⁰ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 126, n. 17.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² See Liú Zhāo 2005, p. 47.

The editors of the Húběi Province Museum read *ty*9/5 雀 (雀) as *jué* 爵 ‘dignity’.³³ Qiú Xīguī suggests to read it as *xuē* 削 ‘to cut; reduce’.³⁴ *Què* 雀 can be reconstructed as OC *[ts]ewk; *xuē* 削 can be reconstructed as OC *[s]ewk. The two fulfil the criteria for phonetic similarity in Old Chinese for loan characters and phonetic components and I follow Qiú.

[M]: The tail of strip *ty*9 has broken off. Given the length of the lost part, presumably seven graphs are missing. Whereas it is downright impossible to reconstruct the missing part of the line 伐於勞(強) 賈(責)於□ [X] ‘[I]t cuts back on strength [and] requests from {...}’, we can indeed reconstruct the subsequent passage with some certainty. The passage begins with the statement ^{Ty9} 天遁(道)貞(貴)黎(弱) 雀(削)哉(成)者曰(以)糝(益)生者 伐於勞(強) 賈(責)於□ [X] ‘The way of Heaven values weakness—it reduces what is accomplished so as to add to [new] life; It cuts back on strength [and] requests from {...}’. Subsequent to this observation we miss some six graphs and the passage continues with: □□□□□□ ^{Ty14} 者 又(有)余(餘)於下 不足於下者，又(有)余(餘)於上 ^{Ty14} ‘has a surplus on below; [And] that what does not suffice on below has a surplus on high’. Thus, we see that the first lines provide the information for the last two lines, which, in turn, run parallel and seem to accomplish each other:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1: the way of Heaven values weakness | (X does + on -) |
| 2: it reduces what is accomplished to add to life | (X does - so as to +) |
| 3: it cuts back on strength and requests from | (X does - [...]) |
| 4: ... | has a surplus on below (X has + on 下) |
| 5: that what does not suffice on below | has a surplus on high (X has + on 上) |

It thus seems justified to read sentence four parallel to five, just that it is opposite of the latter: ‘XX {that what does not suffice on high} has a surplus below; [And] that what does not suffice on below has a surplus on high’.³⁵

³³ See Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 125.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 124, n. 15.

³⁵ For this reading, see also Liú Zhāo 2005, p. 47, who reads ‘{[T]his is why (是故) that what does not suffice on high}...’.