

CHARLES UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF SINOLOGY

HISTORY AND CULTURE OF ASIAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

BETWEEN DAO 道 AND FA 法: INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE WARRING STATES PERIOD  
COSMOLOGICAL TEXTS

MEZI DAO 道 A FA 法: INTERTEXTUÁLNÍ ANALÝZA KOSMOLOGICKÝCH TEXTŮ Z OBDOBÍ  
VÁLČÍČÍCH STÁTŮ

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ABSTRACT:

The cosmologies contained in excavated texts from the Warring States period, such as *Taiyi Sheng Shui* 太一生水, *Heng Xian* 恆先, or *Fan Wu Liu Xing* 凡物流形, shed new light on the landscape of early Chinese thought. The work seeks to build a coherent argument through which the previously disconnected elements of the texts in question would come together in a logical way. It starts from the reconstruction of the main features of the cosmologies contained in these texts and, on their basis, proposes the reformulation of the basic concepts used in early Chinese texts.

Using process philosophy as a conceptual arsenal, the work traces new connections between fundamental ontological concepts in Chinese texts. Building of this newly proposed interpretive framework starts from the exposition of the specific features of early Chinese cosmology, as captured in the texts of the corpus and supported by the received texts from the period. It continues to the investigation of the role of naming and the place of names within cosmological accounts. Finally, it leads to the reframing of the notion of the self in which the cosmological discourse and the naming discourse overlap.

In its main part, the dissertation focuses on the role of names within the cosmologies. Names seem to play an important part in the constitution and individuation of things (*wu* 物). Given the temporary character of all boundaries between things within the cosmos regarded as one, names provide things with provisional stability and integrity, thus allowing people to navigate the ever-changing world. As such, names form not only one's direct experience but also one's pre-understanding and expectations of future reality. Names are

thus constitutive not only of what there is but also of what there is to be. The cosmological texts bring about the realization that one's reality is inevitably language based and therefore dependent on the prevailing discourse, but the one who knows this can rise above language and become an active co-creator of the discourse.

Keywords: cosmology, names, processual ontology, oneness, individuation