

The Research Significance of Newly-supplemented Characters from Bamboo Manuscripts Deposited in Shanghai Museum

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Abstract. At present, *Characters Collection in Chu Area* (called *CWZB* in later content) is not only just an important ancient writing dictionary, but also a high-level academic bookmaking because of its appropriate stylistic rules and layout, abundant contents and easiness to use. However, any academic achievements have historical limitations. After *CWZB* came out, it had been revealed a lot of defects from the perspective of current situation and the status of unearthed study of Chu literature. The main disadvantage is missing graphemes from *Bamboo Manuscripts Deposited in Shanghai Museum* (called *SBJ* in later context)). *SBJ* is the most important written material after *Bamboo slips from Guodian Tomb*. *SBJ* is published in succession since 2001. The total number of characters are up to 20000. Obviously overall presents about Characters collection in Chu area will not be intact if Characters from *SBJ* are not embodied. We concluded about 900 newly-supplemented characters with *SBJ* making up *CWZB*. Those newly-supplemented Characters show the following research significances: 1) bringing forward existence of some Characters; 2) enriching meanings of some characters with the reference of new manuscripts; 3) amending some errors in *CWZB* with the reference of newly-supplement Characters; 4) numerous newly-supplemented characters show their corresponding relations between themselves in Chu area.

1 Introduction of Characters Collection in Chu Area and Bamboo Manuscripts Deposited in Shanghai Museum

Chu country is a vassal state of the Zhou Dynasty established in southern China by Huaxia nation. Chu people's ancestors first lived in the Central Plains region of the Yellow River basin, gradually moved to the south, and then continued to the south to reach the Jing Mountain (荆山).

Chu Characters are more widely used in vast region after Chu state destroyed Yue (越) state. Chu cultural circle had extended to the Shandong peninsula. Not only Chu area but also affiliated countries dominated by Chu wrote in Chu characters. Today in the Chu tomb, cultural relics with Chu style characters are often found.

Materials used for writing on are various. Those carriers with characters can be bronze, stone, currency, bamboo and wooden slips, silks, seals, wood, pottery, coffin, and so on. However, the most distinctive characters written on silk and bamboo slips are the most abundant.

Rich contents are recorded with Chu characters. Bamboo slips and silk recorded long-gone ancient works, official documents, divination records, funeral gifts etc. Bronze wares were engraved with their manufactures' names or temperament about music. Chu stamps were carved with ranks and surnames. The value of real handwriting is incalculable for studying ancient history literature.

Chu bamboo slips found in large numbers will become the new breakthrough of the Chinese ancient civilization.

Characters collection is a reference book, which requires sorting graphemes in a certain range of Chinese characters and compiling according to stylistic rules and layout. It displayed writing forms of Chinese characters in a limited range in the most intuitive way. It also reveals the corresponding relationship between the grapheme and pronunciation & meaning when examining grapheme conveniently.

At present, *CWZB* edited by Professor Li Shoukui reflects the latest achievements. The grapheme sources from *CWZB* include the following:

Inscriptions on Currency from The pre-Qin volume in every dynasty Currency compendium
(《中国历代货币大系.先秦卷》)

Bamboo slips from Zeng Houyi Tomb(《曾侯乙墓》)

Chu characters collection on bamboo slips and silk (《楚系简帛文字编》)

Bamboo slips from Xinyang Tomb(《信阳楚墓》)

Bamboo slips from Wang mountain sand mound Tomb in Jianglin (《江陵望山沙塚楚墓》)

Bamboo slips from Baoshan Tomb(《包山楚墓》)

Bamboo slips from Guodian Tomb (《郭店楚墓竹简》)

Jiudian tomb of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty in Jianglin (《江陵九店东周墓》)

Bamboo slips from No 25th Tomb in Yangtianhu (《仰天湖二五号墓竹简》)

Zidanku silk book in Changsha (《长沙子弹库帛书》)

Besides above, some painting characters, characters on seal, carved characters are all collected in *CWZB* as well. *CWZB* is not only just an important ancient writing dictionary, but also a high-level academic bookmaking because of its appropriate stylistic rules and layout, abundant contents and easiness to use.

This batch of Chu bamboo slips appeared in the Hong Kong cultural relics market in the spring of 1994. Professor Zhang Guangyu from the Chinese Department of Hong Kong University, who concentrated on compilation of the Warring States bamboo slips text, informed Shanghai Museum curator Ma Chengyuan and also faxed several copies. In May 1994, the Shanghai Museum furnished funds for repurchase. As the first batch of bamboo slips, there are totally 1200 pieces including incomplete and complete bamboo slips.

By protection of cultural relics and archaeological scientific laboratory's testing and comparative analysis, these bamboo slips were confirmed as funerary objects for nobles in Chu tombs of the late period of the Warring States.

So far 9 volumes have been published by Shanghai Classics Publishing House since 2001.

Discovery and collation of Chu bamboo books in the Warring States period has significant philological value. Because of appearance of long-gone classic works, complex character relation rules like universal (通用), borrowing(假借) and calligraphy were revealed, which is helpful to research on the development history of characters. Comparing and analyzing unearthed handed-down edition of *GDJ*, experts and scholars can learn general and convention status of characters in the Warring States period and interchangeable words(通假) in the changing process, which offered a direct help to interpret the literature of the Warring States period. Meanwhile unearthed literature is authentic for studying on Chu dialect and other state characters. Discovery and collation of Chu bamboo books also provides a different handed-down edition with quite valuable reference materials.

CWZB is a masterpiece of the stage without doubt. However, any academic achievements have

historical limitations. After *CWZB* was published, Volumes of *SBJ* were published in succession since 2001. There are a lot of characters on those bamboo slips. Obviously overall presents about Characters collection in Chu area will not be intact if Characters from *SBJ* are not embodied.

2 How to seek newly-supplemented characters?

We made two databases with digital method. One is called *CWZB* database, including head character field, Subordinate character(隶定字) and page information etc., The other is *SBJ* database.

We can seek those newly-supplemented characters with head characters not matching query. But before confirming head characters and Subordinate ones, we need the help of grapheme and textual research. As far as graphemes are concerned, we cut the whole bamboo slip into small pieces according to character, which will be helpful when we need to collate between subordinate characters and graphemes. As far as textual research is concerned, we benefit from two sources. First in excavation report, experts will present the textual research about unearthed material; second lots of textual paper will be published once scholars see the Plate material.

Therefore, we coordinate characters from those bamboo slips systemically. We try to present all-around and intact characters collection with newly-seen characters supplementing *CWZB*. The supplemented part is those characters restricted to those unseen in *CWZB*. Of course, this part is the most valuable graphemes data in Chinese characters phylogeny perspective.

We found more than 900 newly-seen graphemes with not matching database query between *SBJ* and *CWZB*. These newly-seen characters bring forward appearance of some common characters and reflect the characteristics of characters in Chu Kingdom. There are four aspects of research significances about these 900 newly-seen graphemes. Those newly-supplemented characters combining those from *CWZB* more fully lay out the Warring States Chu characters set. As far as those newly-seen characters are concerned, they reveal the value of Chinese characters' evolution.

3 Research Significances of Newly-supplemented Characters

3.1 These newly-seen characters graphemes bring forward appearance of some common characters.

Generally speaking we judge the first appearance of a character according to age information in dictionaries if we need to conclude historical levels of many characters. Sometimes, this way has its limitations because new discovery of the masterpieces of literature and unearthed documents are not collected in dictionaries. The appearance on bamboo slips will correct the age judgment in dictionaries, which show their historical position more accurately.

戡 (愷) 紘 (豫) 是好, 佳心是蕝 (四逸交•3 简¹)

Like happiness and harmony. Cultivate frame of mind (cited vaporized Poem from volume 4 of *SBJ*).

蕝 yù is the eighth character on the 3rd bamboo slip. Comparing the consistent format *wéi xīn shì wàn (lì)* 惟心是萬 (勵) in the same poem, we conclude that 蕝 yù is a verb and the meaning is cultivating oneself according to some doctrine. With the help of dictionaries, 蕝 yù means good wine and it appeared in *Yupian*(《玉篇》) in Southern Dynasties (420-589). 蕝 yù found on bamboo slips brings forward its appearance to the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.)

又戒言曰: “牲, 爾正衽; 不牲, 而或興或康, 以 (四曹•37 简)

A Mot says that if you rush, you must be defeated, on the contrary, if you don't rush, maybe you will be thriving and powerful. (From volume 4 of *SBJ*).

牲 *yàn*, we know its pronunciation from YP and its meaning from *Zihui* (《字汇》). Whether its appearance in YP or ZH, its age can't be earlier than the Warring States period, in which those bamboo slips were written on.

What's more we have more graphemes proofs on bamboo slips to show their already appearance in the Warring States period. eg: 媿 *zhòng* come forth from *bù yín zhī zhòng* (《不寅之媿》) in volume 4th in *SBJ*, however we can only check the earliest age of its appearance in Song Dynasty in *JY* (《集韵》). other examples are like *yí* (眵), *chóu* (壽), *jīng* (睛), *xuǎn* (选), *fū* (肤). All these characters are first seen in *GY* (《广韵》) or YP. Their appearance on bamboo slips shows their existence in the Warring States period, which can correct the time errors in our dictionaries.

3.2 The usage in literature enriches meanings of some characters, which will be helpful to us to consummate meanings in dictionaries.

Eg: 訃 *jié* in *SWJZ* (《说文解字》) means “attack the weaknesses of others, expose others privacy; Call a spade a spade”, however the usage from the bamboo manuscripts cannot be looked up in dictionaries. 訃 *jié* in *Zhouyi* (《周易》) from volume 3 of *SBJ* means a name of the Eight Diagrams (八卦). Another meaning is a classification of sound names. Their usages and meanings can't be looked up.

“車闕(間)容伍=(伍, 伍)闕(間)容兵。”(四曹 24 简)

Five people stand by the chariot and Weapons are put next to the five people (cited from *cáo mò zhī chén* (曹沫之陳) in volume 4 of *SBJ*)

伍 *wù* in fact, the lower-right part is a repetitious sign. the character 伍 *wù* is the combination of two 伍 *wǔ*. 伍 *wǔ* means the lowest level of the ancient military establishment, which is composed of five peopleⁱⁱ.

胃(謂)天高而不概, 胃(謂)陸(地)毫(厚)而不達。(六用 10 简)

This sentence comes from *yòng yuē* (《用曰》) in volume 6 of *SBJ*. These two sentences are like Chinese couplets from the format. Although We can't look 概 *gài* up in *SWJZ* we conclude the 'to reach' meaning of 概 *gài* according to the characteristic of Chinese couplets.

榿 *kuí* means a kind of tree, however it is found 3 times in *zhōu yì* (《周易》). 榿 *kuí* means a name of the Eight Diagrams (八卦).

羣(澤)梨(濟)吏(史)斂守之; 山替(林)吏(史)羹(衡)守之。(六競 8 简)

This sentence come from *jìng gōng nǚ* (《競公瘡》) in volume 6 of *SBJ*. There are two explanations about the character 梨 *lí*. One kind thinks 梨 *lí* can be read as 济 *jì*, which means ancient water name including two rivers on both sides of Yellow River. The other opinion thinks that this character includes three components that are 禾 *hé* 刃 *rèn* and 木 *mù*. it should be 梁 *liáng* which means Water fishing weirⁱⁱⁱ. We can't judge which explanation is better, but the meaning of 梨 *lí* is obviously related to water. Many meanings in unearthed documents are not included in our dictionaries, which leads to incomplete explanation. Research on newly-supplement characters will be helpful to us to consummate meanings in dictionaries.

3.3 Referring some newly-supplement characters, we can not only correct errors about head character from *CWZB*, but also interpret difficult characters in the appendix.

Professor Li Shoukui confirm the head character *xi* (系) according to the 179th bamboo slip *wén shū* (《文书》) from *bāo shān chǔ jiǎn* (《包山楚简》). More grapheme proofs seen in *SBJ* show that *xi* (系) must be *xi* (奚).

1) 公曰：“朕(然)愬(則)奚(五鮑 6) (Picture 1)

He says: “if so, why...”

2) 公曰：“勿兵目克奚女(如)?” (四曹 38) (picture 2)

Mr. Zhuang says: “how about letting the enemy troops lose their ability to fight.”

3) 馱(守) 鄴(邊) 城奚如(如)? (四曹 13) (Picture 3)

How about guarding the border



(pic 1

pic2

pic3

pic4

pic5)

系 *xì* must be 奚 *xī*. We have two reasons. As far as meaning is concerned, 奚 *xī* used as interrogative is common.

e.g.: 子奚不為政? cited from The Analects of Confucius(《论语》)

Why not go into politics?

“死者天地之理，物之自然者也，奚為甚哀?” cited from Historical Records (《史记》)

Death is the rule of the nature. Why are you so sad about death?

蝗螟，農夫得而殺之，奚故? 為其害稼也。cited from *lǚ shì chūn qiū* (《吕氏春秋》)

Why farms kill grasshoppers? They eat the crops.

Obviously, 系 *xì* does not have the usage as interrogative. As far as the glyph is concerned, the upper component is like a hand and the lower part is like the shape of a rope. The shape consistent with 奚 *xī* from textual research in *zēng dìng yīn xū shū qì kǎo shì*《增订殷墟书契考释》. Another proof is that we have two newly-supplement characters xi (奚) and xi (奚). Obviously the right parts of two characters are different. We confirmed the head character in *CWZB* is 奚 *xī* instead of 系 *xì* with the help of usages and glyph from *SBJ*

Because of the help of usages in literature and glyph from *SBJ*, We can clarify matters and get to the bottom of things.

使 *shǐ* 事 *shì* and 吏 *lì* are the same grapheme before ancient writing differentiation^{iv}. No wonder only one 吏 *lì* comes forth as the head character in *CWZB*. We thought that 使 *shǐ* had not been divided, because the ancients used shi(𠄎) to record 使 *shǐ* in literature in Chu(楚) area before *SBJ* were excavated.

4) 心𠄎(使) 𠄎(氣) 曰𠄎(強) (《老子》甲 35)

Reason can make the emotion more and more fair. What we call it great vital energies (cited from *lǎo zǐ* (《老子》I))

5) 其甬(用)心各異，𠄎(教) 𠄎(使) 狀(然)也。(《性自命出》9)

Their intentions are different because education works (cited from the 9th bamboo slip *xìng zì mìn* (《性自命出》))

However, 使 *shǐ* is an independent character if we can see the grapheme. Look at the example.

毋以辟(嬖) 士𠄎夫=(大夫) 向(卿) 使(士)。(《上博》一《紂衣》12)(Pic 5)

Don't hate serious and decent literati and officialdom and spoil ministers (cited from the 12th bamboo slip *zī yī* (《紂衣》) in *SBJ* volume 1)

The character 使 *shǐ* with the 人 *rén* component comes divided from shi(𠄎).

Some characters in appendix of *CWZB* can be read and explained because of newly-supplement characters.

𠄎(早) 與𠄎(賢)人，是胃(謂) 𠄎行。(《郭店楚墓竹簡·语丛四》12-7)

The earlier you make the acquaintance of wise men, the better it will be for your future development. (cited from *yǔ cóng* IV (《语丛四》) in *GDJ*.)

Professor Liu Zhao thinks 𠄎 is a combination of upper 𠄎 *mián* and lower 浸 *jìn* and the meaning is “permeating”. In this sentence 𠄎 means “step by step”.

遊於央(瑤)臺(臺)之上，又(有)嬰監(銜)卵而踏(錯)者(諸)兀(其)前，取而軟(吞)之。—紂11—13。

The lady wandered on jade terrace. There is a swallow holding the egg in its mouth to put in front of her. The lady took it and swallowed it. (cited from Ziyi(紂衣) in SBJ volume 1) .

The researcher thinks 𠄎 is 央 yāng . In ancient document, it can be used as 瑤 yáo. The difference between 𠄎 and the right-lower part of 𠄎 is only a decoration point. However decoration stroke was common. :e.g. 不 bù can be written like 𠄎;Yong(用) can be written like 𠄎.

So this character 𠄎 can be read as a combination of upper 𠄎 mián and lower 泱 yāng.

3.4 Numerous newly-supplement characters show their corresponding relations between themselves in Chu area.

Fan(𠄎) is the same character with 帆 fàn. 帆 fàn means baffle plate in ancient vehicle. 帆 fàn can be seen in lots of Chu area documents. The person name Fàn Wǔzǐ (𠄎武子) is actually Fàn Wǔzǐ(范武子)^v.The grapheme of Fan(𠄎) on bamboo slip makes us know that 范 fàn as a surname was written to Fan(𠄎) in the Warring States period^{vi}.

The character 林 lín in handed-down literature is written to Lin(𠄎) in jìng gōng nǚè (《競公瘡》) from volume 6 in SBJ.

What's more,以 yǐ is written to 怠 dài; 殷 yīn is written to Yin(𠄎); 答 dá is written to Da(𠄎); 敏 mǐn is written to Min(𠄎)^{vii}.All these writing style has strong Chu(楚) area characteristic, which can help us not only in interpreting characters but also in judging its place of origin

List of Abbreviations

<i>SBJ</i>	<i>Bamboo Manuscripts Deposited in Shanghai Museum</i> (《上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書》)		
<i>CWZB</i>	<i>Characters Collection in Chu Area</i> (《楚文字編》)		
<i>GDJ</i>	<i>Bamboo slips from Guodian Tomb</i> (《郭店楚墓竹簡》)		
<i>YP</i>	<i>Yupian</i> (《玉篇》)	<i>ZH</i>	<i>Zihui</i> (《字匯》)
<i>JY</i>	<i>Jiyun</i> (《集韻》)	<i>GY</i>	<i>Guangyun</i> (《廣韻》)
<i>SWJZ</i>	<i>Shuowenjiezi</i> (《說文解字》)		

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Notes

- ⁱ To save space, we choose abbreviations to stand for the intact source. E. g. : 四逸交•3 简, The first digital four represents Volume 4th from SBJ, The second one stands for name of the article. The 3rd one stands for the first character in the article. The 4th number indicates orders of bamboo slips. If this information is not enough to distinguish the source, we took the article by more information from the first sentence.
- ⁱⁱ For the meaning of Wu(伍), see the reference of annotations from *Bamboo Manuscripts Deposited in Shanghai Museum volume 4th*
- ⁱⁱⁱ See the reference He Youzu, Notes on Volume 6th SBJ., 2007 July 9th [EB/OL]
http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=596
- ^{iv} In Characters collection in Chu(楚) area, Shi (使) shi (事) and li (吏) are the same grapheme.
- ^v Fan Wuzi(軹武子), a name of a person is Fan Wuzi (范武子) see the reference of annotations from *Bamboo Manuscripts Deposited in Shanghai Museum volume 6th,p172*
- ^{vi} fan(范)as a surname written to Fan(軹) in the Warring States period see the reference of annotations from *Bamboo Manuscripts Deposited in Shanghai Museum volume 6th,p160-161*
- ^{vii}See the reference Zhao Bingqing, Supplement Notes on Pengzu.in SBJ Volume 3rd, 2005 January 26th , [EB/OL] <http://www.bamboosilk.org/admin3/2005/zhaobinqing001.htm>