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The Radical ‘𠂔’ from *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*

Good morning and good afternoon, respected teacher Liu and my fellow students.

Today's presentation is about the radical ‘𠂔’ from *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*. It mainly researches Xu Shen's 許慎 explanations and Duan Yu-Cai's 段玉裁 annotation combining modern paleographical scholars and archeological finds.

My presentation is divided into three parts. Let's start at the categorization and meanings of characters.

I. The categorization and meanings of Radical 𠂔

Firstly, according to Six Scripts, these 25 characters have 1 pictograph, 5 associative characters and 19 picto-phonetic characters.

Look at the radical ‘𠂔’ that is a pictograph and the original meaning is a vessel.

The small seal script is written like this . The top is to hold things, the middle is the body, and the lowermost stroke is the bottom of the vessel. The oracle bone inscription  and the bronze inscription  have a deeper space.¹

In this part, 𠂔 is a significant component of these characters.

According to Xu Shen's arrangement and explanations. These characters could be divided into six categories. Now I'll try to briefly interpret all of them.

(1) Types of ‘𠂔’.

Types of vessels include 孟, 盥, 盛, 盥, 盥, 盧, 盥, 盥, 盥, 盆, 盥. These 11 characters are all picto-phonetic characters.

¹ Li Xue Qin 李學勤, Liu Wen Jun 劉文君, *Zi Yuan* 字源 [The Origin of Chinese Characters] (Tianjin: Tianjin Gu Ji Chu Ban She, 2012) p.439.

‘盂’ and ‘盥’ are drinking vessels, and they are notative characters of each other.

‘盛’ and ‘盥’ are sacrificial vessels, which are mainly used to hold grain.

‘盥’ is a kind of basin.

‘盧’ is a food container made of bamboo.

‘藍’ is not explained much in the book. According to the bronze inscription ,

the graphic component is ‘匚’ that is the protoform of ‘筐’ which is a square container

made of bamboo, so we can conclude ‘藍’ is also a bamboo container.

‘盥’ is also not explained much. According to *Tong Xun Ding Sheng* 通訓定聲 by

Zhu Jun-Sheng 朱駿聲, ‘the vessel by Suzhou people to brew tea is commonly called

吊子, and 吊 is 盥.²’ So, 盥 is a kind of decocting apparatus.

‘盥’ and ‘盆’ paraphrase each other in the book, but their shapes are different. 盥

is an earthenware with a small mouth and a large belly, which is a kind of basin. 盆 is

basin with a big mouth and small bottom.

‘盥’ is a vessel, and 盥 is listed after to 盆, so we can suppose 盥 may be a kind of basin.

(2) Items for use with ‘皿’.

². Zhu Junsheng 朱駿聲 (CE1788—1858), *Shuo Wen Tong Xun Ding Sheng* 說文通訓定聲 (Wuhan: The photocopied version by Gu Ji Shu Dian, 1983) p.234.

The group of characters include 盥、盪、盪, which are all picto-phonetic characters.

‘盥’ was explained ‘櫜盥, 負戴器也’³. Duan Yu-Cai annotated that 櫜盥 is a cushion used to support the basin when carrying objects on the head. Actually, ‘盥’ is a kind of bronze ware in the Western Zhou Dynasty discovered through archaeology. It was used to contain grain. But 盥 disappeared after entering the Spring and Autumn Period. So, Xu Shen and Duan Yu-Cai had never seen this kind of ware, resulting in an incorrect explanation.

‘盪’ has two pronunciations and two meanings. One meaning is to stir and make turbid or unsettled. Another is an insulated container.⁴

‘盪’ is a brush-type item used to clean vessels.

(3) Expressing flavours.

‘醢’ is the old name of vinegar.

‘盞’ means not only blending flavours but also a vessel used to blend flavours. 和 later replaced 盞 to express blending flavours.

(4) Expressing the state of vessels.

The group of characters ‘益、盈、盞、盅、盞’, which have two associative characters and three picto-phonetic characters.

‘益’ means fruitful and extended to mean profit and benefit. It is an associative

³. Xu Shen 許慎 (Later Han Period) wrote, Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (CE1735—1815) annotated, Li Tianfu 李添富 proofread, *Shuo Wen Jie Zi Zhu* 說文解字注 (Taipei: Hong Ye Cultural Enterprise Ltd. 2016) p.214.

⁴. Zong Fu Bang and others ed. 宗福邦等主編, *Gu Xun Hui Zuan* 故訓匯纂 (Beijing: Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan, 2003) p.1541.

character. The oracle bone inscription  looks like water overflowing, so it was probably originally a pictograph with some component parts. The bronze inscription  still has water overflowing above. The small seal script's  upper part changed to the Kan trigram representing water. So the original meaning is water overflowing, and 溢 later replaced 盈 to express this meaning.

‘盈’ means the state of a vessel being full and is an associative character. Duan Yu-Cai annotated the character ‘𪛗’ was used in the upper part because the extra thing you get when you buy goods was called ‘𪛗’ in the Qin Dynasty.⁵

‘盥’ means the state of a vessel being empty. According to the oracle bone inscription , we can see a hand holding a brush to clean the vessel, so the original meaning is to indicate the completion of a meal, extended to mean finished.

‘盅’ means the same as 盥, and 冲 is the borrowed script of 盅 and replaced to express this meaning later. Nowadays 盅 means small handle-less cups or bowls.

‘盥’ means the state of a vessel being covered. Duan Yu-Cai annotated it means the lid of a vessel.

(5) Expressing abstract meanings.

‘盥’ means humanity and is an associative character. Xu Shen quoted the saying of Guan Pu 官溥. ‘盥 indicates giving food to prisoners,’ which reflects the humanity of people. Duan Yu-Cai annotated gentleness, tenderness, warmth were represented by

⁵ *Shuo Wen Jie Zi Zhu* p.214.

盥, and 盥 later replaced 盥.⁶

(6) Indicating cleaning.

‘盥’ is a way of washing hands. It is an associative character made of 白, 水, 皿.

Duan Yu-Cai annotated someone pours water from above, while someone wash their hands, and a tray holds water below.

‘盥’ means water shaken in vessels. 盥 later replaced 盥.

II. The reclassification and thinking

As we can see, this is the classification in the previous part, but some of these were not the most reasonable. we’ve already examined archaeological finds to research diachronic meanings of these characters. So, in the last part, we can reclassify to make it better understood and remembered. I’ve reclassified as follows, and let me explain how I think:

(1)Types: 皿, 盂, 盥, 盛, 齋, 盥, 盧, 盥, 盥, 盥, 盥, 盥, 盥.

(2)Flavours: 盥, 盥

(3)States: 盥, 盥, 盥, 盥, 盥.

(4)Cleaning: 盥, 盥, 盥.

(5)Quality: 盥

Obviously, 盥 should be classified into types. Because it is a bronze and just used by nobility, I lined it up behind sacrificial vessels. And then I moved 盥 behind basin because three of them have similar meanings. 盥 lined up behind 盥 because 盥 is also

⁶ Shuo Wen Jie Zi Zhu p.215.

a vessel. 盥, 盥, 盥 are all mean cleaning, so I put them together. And 盥 lined up behind 盥 because they are the only two objects that are not vessels themselves.

I made a smaller adjustment to Xu Shen's arrangement; Actually, he already had a great arrangement. but I just want to build more connection between characters and easy to categorize and remember. So I redo this, and this categorization is just my personal opinion. Let's move on the last part.

III. The conclusion

Through learning the categorization and meanings of radical 皿, We can safely make some conclusions:

Firstly, according to Six Scripts, we found that 80% of characters are picto-phonetic characters.

Secondly, in these categorizations, the types of 皿 have the largest number, totaling 11 characters. Also, we can know more about details of noble life, like how to wash hands. From these we can get the importance and the diversity of ancient vessel culture.

Finally, I found characters expressing the state of vessels almost had lots of extensional meanings, which express human states or other things' states.

This is the end of my presentation, any comments and suggestions are welcome, thank you for listening.

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