



Appendix 1 : Undergraduate Assignment Coversheet and Feedback Form



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module title: Philology</i>	
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Provisional mark:</i> NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.	

English Oral Presentation

Researching the animal in Chinese character · Horse 馬

Good afternoon Professor Zhu and Good morning Mr. Daniel!

Today I am going to share with you a Chinese Character, horse 馬. We can see how it evolves from the ancient oracle bone scripts 甲骨文 and Chinese bronze inscriptions to the today general forms.

And let's look at the table of the contents at the beginning:

First of all, in the introduction, I will simply explain with you what is Pictogram.

And then we will enter the second part: I will share a Chinese Pictogram character that I have learned. We will see how it emerge from the beginning and the changes of it alongside the history.

And then I will compare the Chinese Pictogram with that of other civilization and culture.

Finally, in conclusion, I will share my feeling and understanding of studying Philology.

OK! Let's enter the first part, the introduction:

At the beginning, we may have two questions:

- 1, How the Chinese Pictogram would emerge?
- 2, What is Pictogram?

According to the first question, there is an answer in *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字, it said that:

“When Cangjie 倉頡 saw the footprints of animals, he realized the difference of the creature which could be distinguished, so he began to create characters.”

黃帝史官倉頡，見鳥獸蹄迹之跡，知分理之可相別異也，初造書契。¹

And by answering the second one, it also said that:

“The Pictogram means describing the object by drawing, and the waving and twisting of the strokes are consistent with the changes of the natural object.

¹ Han 漢, Xu Shen 許慎: *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 (*Si Bu Cong Kan Chu Bian* 四部叢刊初編, Jing Ri Ben Yan Qi Shi Jing Jia Tang Cang Bei Song Kan Ben 景日本岩崎氏靜嘉堂藏北宋刊本) 1 vol.

象形者，畫成其物，隨體詰詘。²

So, we can understand that, Pictogram is one of the types of the Chinese character, and its feature is describing the object by drawing, according to the specific characteristics of the object. Indeed, our ancient ancestors observed all the objects carefully, so they could create the vivid Chinese Pictogram Characters.

Let's enter the main part:

Horse, in the ancient China, is one of the most common animals, and it has been closely related to people. And the horse also can be used as a kind of vehicle. Therefore, in order to let every people understand and can recognize this animal, our ancestors created the character 馬.

Let's look at the oracle bone scripts first, which is the earliest and the most original form of the character:



We can see that this character is really seemed like a picture but not a formal character. It describes some of the main features of the horse. We can see from the top, there is a big head of the horse, and some of the form also have eyes. And then, we can see the body of the horse, and the feet towards the left. And we also can see the mane on the back. And a tail beneath.

This is the lifelike image of horse:

And then let's see the bronze inscriptions form of the character:



We can see that the bronze inscription inherits the shape of the oracle bones scripts, keeping the big head above and the mane. However, the body is purely represented by lines, both the feet and the tail.

And Let's see the Guwen 古文(the characters from Eastern Countries before Qin Dynasty),

² Han 漢, Xu Shen 許慎: *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 (*Si Bu Cong Kan Chu Bian* 四部叢刊初編, Jing Ri Ben Yan Qi Shi Jing Jia Tang Cang Bei Song Kan Ben 景日本岩崎氏靜嘉堂藏北宋刊本) 1 vol.

and Zhouwen 籀文:



Duan Yucai 段玉裁 annotated in the *Shuowen Jiezi* that: “𠂔 is seemed like the mane in both Guwen and Zhouwen”

古、籀文皆以𠂔象髦。³

And we can see that, the big eye was also retained. But the head of the horse became a circle.

And let's see the form of Square style 隸書 and Seal style 小篆:



We can see that the Seal style also inherits the main shape of the bronze inscription, which is mane, feet and tail, but the lines have been carefully arranged.

However, in Square style, the feet of the horse have been replaced, or simplified, with four points. Pro. Chu told us in the class that, the aim of creating the Square style was to simplify some of the complicated-structure characters, in order to let everyone understand the characters.

And let's see two renowned Philologists' explanations:

In *Shuowen Jiezi*, Xu Shen 許慎 explained that, “the shape of the character seems like the head of the horse, the mane and the feet.” 象馬頭髦尾四足之形。⁴

And in *Wenzi Mengqiu* 文字蒙求, Wang Yun 王筠 also said that: “There are head and four feet and tail on the left, and 𠂔 is like the mane of the horse, which is connected with the head in Seal style.” 左象首及四足一尾, “𠂔”象髦, 小篆之髦連於首。⁵

And let's see the form of Regular style 楷書, Cursive style 草書 and today's Chinese simplified character:



The Regular style became neater and more regular than both Seal style and Square style, and the Cursive style has omitted the two lines (part of the mane) and the four points (refer to the feet). And the structure of the simplified character has inherited from the cursive style.

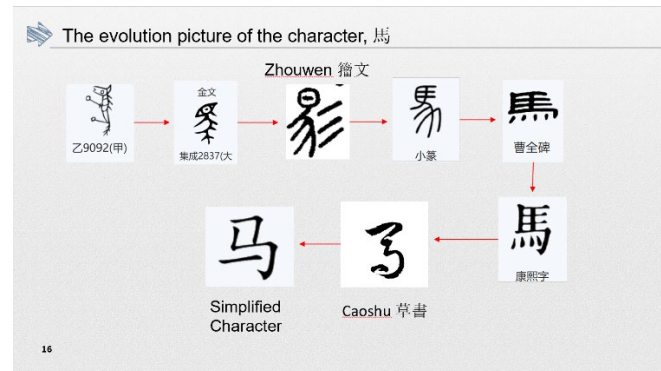
³ Qing 清, Duan Yucai 段玉裁: *The annotation of Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字注 (Taiwan: Yi Wen Press, 2007) 18 vols. P465

⁴ Qing 清, Duan Yucai 段玉裁: *The annotation of Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字注 (Taiwan: Yi Wen Press, 2007) 18 vols. P465

⁵ Qing 清, Wang Yun 王筠: *Wenzi Mengqiu* 文字蒙求 (Beijing: Zhonghua Press 中華書局, 2021) P11

We can see a common phenomenon that, the character has been more simplified and neater after the changes.

So, those are the changes and evolution of the character, 馬. And we can see the evolution picture below, which would be clear:



According to the picture, we can clearly see that, the character, 馬, has evolved from the drawing form to the formal and simplified form. The strokes have become easier and the lines have become neater. But the main and key features have not lost throughout the history, which are mane, feet and tail. Although some of them have been replaced by other strokes, we also can see the contour of the real horse from the character.

As we known, before Qin unifying China, there were lots of independent countries. And different countries had different characters.

This is also the character, 馬, but it belongs to other country

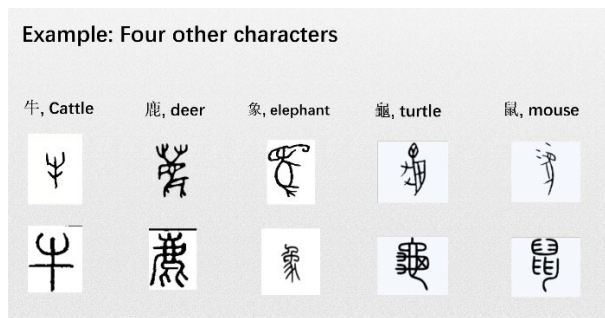


They were excavated from the region of the Country Chu 楚國 before Qin. We can see that the main feature of horse was also retained.

Through observing those characters, we could find a principle of the Chinese animal Pictogram: the characters include some of the main features of the objects, which have retained well in spite of many changes and evolutions alongside the history. Therefore, today's people also can understand some of the Chinese Pictogram characters by its specific shape.

I can take other characters as examples.

I choose the character of 牛, 鼠, 象, 龜 and 鹿:



We can see, those animal Pictogram characters really include some of the main characteristics of that animals. Therefore, we can easily to recognize them. I think, our characters are vivid indeed.

Xunzi 荀子 mentioned in his book that: “Thousands and millions of changes are based on only one Dao 道.” 千舉萬變，其道一也。⁶

OK, Let's move on the next section:

Comparing with Pictogram of other civilization and culture.

First, let's see the Egypt hieroglyphics 埃及圣書文字:

We can see that, compared with Chinese Pictogram, those characters are more complicated and more difficult to understand. They are more than like pictures or symbols. And unfortunately, after the time, less people can understand those characters, and the meanings of the characters have been gradually forgot by people.

And let' see the Dto-mba writing 東巴文字, which are also the antient pictogram. And they are used in eastern Tibet and northern Yunan region by the group of Naxi minority. We can see, the characters seem beautiful and vivid, but the structure and strokes are also complicated, and they are really like pictures but not the characters.

After comparing the pictogram of other culture and civilization, we can find some of the advantages of Chinese pictogram:

- 1, When our ancestors creating the pictogram, they just focused on the main feature of the objects and emphasized them, thence, they could use just simple and less lines to complete the characters, which would make the structure of characters less complicated and easy for people to learn and understand.
- 2, Even though our Chinese characters have faced lots of changes and evolution. Nevertheless, every change is to omit the unnecessary strokes or lines and retain the main characteristics.

⁶ Xunzi 荀子: *Xunzi (Si Bu Cong Kan Chu Bian)* 四部叢刊初編: Jing Shanghai Han Fen Lou Cang Li Shi Jing Song Kan Ben 景上海涵芬樓藏黎氏景宋刊本) 20 vol.

Finally, let's enter the conclusion:

After studying this course, philology, I have learned and understood some of the advantages of our Chinese characters. Chinese is my native language, but I even did not know the creation and evolution history and method of our language and characters. I learned Chinese characters since I entered the primary school, but I just learned how to read and how to write at the moment. I did not understand the importance and advantages of them. And I just learned the today's simplified characters, which are lost some of the important features from the original types after the changes. It is not clear actually.

However, after this course, I find that, our Chinese characters have had complete and perfect systems for creation and evolution. There are some reasons that the Chinese characters can survive from 5000 years to become the world one of the most ancient characters, and continuously develop well. This is what we need to learn and understand, and always keep in mind when studying philology.

Thank you all! My presentation has come to an end. Any feedback and suggestions will be appreciated. Thank you for listening!

Bibliography

- (1) Xunzi 荀子: *Xunzi* (*Si Bu Cong Kan Chu Bian* 四部叢刊初編: Jing Shanghai Han Fen Lou Cang Li Shi Jing Song Kan Ben 景上海涵芬樓藏黎氏景宋刊本)
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- (4) Qing 清, Wang Yun 王筠: *Wenzi Mengqiu* 文字蒙求 (Beijing: Zhonghua Press 中華書局, 2021)