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LINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO READING EXCAVATED MANUSCRIPTS

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Abstract

The so-called phonetic loan characters in transmitted early texts and what are generally called 'phonologically related textual variants' in excavated late Warring States to early Western Han manuscripts can both be accounted for by systematic structural variability of character forms in the early Chinese writing system. In the process of inventing a compound character for a given word, alternative choices were available from sets of graphs that denote meanings of the same semantic category and from ones that stand for words with the same syllabic value for use as components in any new character. These non-unique selections of graphic components for one and the same word are reflected in the writing system of the Zhou period respectively as systematic alternations of signific and phonophoric elements of the same functional value, viz., *Synonymous Significs* (SS) and *Equivalent Phonophorics* (EP). The fact that refined Western Zhou ritual bronze inscription texts circulated across regions together with the apparent overall agreement on the use of phonetic components between the Qin and Chu scripts in all likelihood testifies to the existence of an elaborate *orthographic meta-system*, as opposed to the writing system itself at any given time or any individual region, well before the Warring States period. In reading a Chu manuscript in comparison with its transmitted counterpart or examining it for the study of historical phonology, we ought to consider the probability of SS and EP originating from an early period as a part of the historical meta-system.

1. Phonetic Loans: Methodology and Application to Discovered Texts

Of all kinds of textual variation in early Chinese texts, it is orthographic variation, i.e., variant ways of writing the same word, that is by far the most frequently encountered. Philologists in the Qing dynasty recognized that distinct characters appearing in matching textual positions in different redactions of early Chinese texts, including the *gǔwén* 古文 texts, are in most cases phonologically similar to each other. They thus surmised that in ancient times one character normally associated with a certain word could be used alternatively for a different word that was similar in pronunciation. This is what is now conven-

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tionally referred to as *tōngjiǎzì* 通假字, or "phonetic loan characters". Wang Yinzhi 王引之 (1766–1834), in an article titled "Jingwen jiajie" 經文假借, in his *Jing yi shu wen* 經義述聞, remarked:

> 經典古字, 聲近而通, 則…往往本字見存, 而古本, 則不用本字, 而用同聲之字. 學者, 改本字讀之, 則怡然理順; 依借字解之, 則以文害辭.
> For the archaic characters in the classics, […] it is often the case for the old text versions that homophonous characters are used even when their proper characters are attested. Students, when they read those characters, should [cognitively] change them to their proper characters [for the intended words], so that the texts make good sense. If one should interpret them relying on loan characters, then he will let the written forms get in the way of the words.[1]

Wang Yinzhi emphasizes that it is important to distinguish "written forms", *wén* 文, from "words", *cí* 辭. In order for one to discern the *words* in various graphic guises, Wang says, "[one should] begin with characters for homonyms and near-homonyms, and then match them against the meaning (i.e., the context) until the proper character is obtained" (由聲同聲近者, 以意逆之, 而得其本字). And in doing so, "[one should] refer them (= the textual variants) to the old sound system" (參之古音).[2]

The (near-)homophony in Old Chinese that Wang refers to here, which we might rephrase as 'phonetic compatibility', is defined by having the same *Shijing* 詩經 rhyme together with initial consonants of the same point of articulation. Qing philologists referred to these two key phonological units, the rhyme and initial consonant, as *yùn lèi* 韻類 'rhyme category' and *shēng lèi* 聲類 '[initial] sound category', respectively. In the modern reconstruction system, which is a synthesis of Western historical phonology and the categories of distinctive sounds established by the Qing philologists, initials such as *t-, *t^h- and *d-, belonging to the *dental* initial group, qualify as compatible initials; so are the *p-, *p^h- and *b-, the *labial*, and *k-, *k^h- and *g-, the *velar* group.

Wang Yinzhi, after the general statement cited above, presents over two hundred cases of loan usages in the Classics that, according to Wang himself, had not been recognized by his predecessors. Wang notes for example, the character 光 in the phrase 光被四表 from the *Shujing* 書經, chapter "Yao dian" 堯典, is a loan for *guǎng* ***kk^{w}aŋ-q** 廣 'broad', and it does not stand for *guāng* ***kk^{w}aŋ** 光 'luster'; the character 易 in 喪羊于易 from the *Zhouyi* 周易 stands

1 WANG, 1979:32.1269.
2 WANG, 1979:32.1269.

for *yì* ***lek** 埸 'land division', and not *yì* ***lek** 易 'easy'; the character 格 in 孝友時格 from the *Yili* 儀禮, chapter "Shi guan li" 士冠禮, stands for *jiǎ* ***kkra-q** 嘏 'blessings', and not *gé* ***kkrak** 格 'arrive'; the 聞 in 莫我聞 from the *Shijing* 詩經 stands for *wèn* ***mən-s** 問 'ask', and not *wén* ***mən** 聞 'hear'.[3]

From the perspective of phonetic loans, this type of textual variant will appear as an alternation of phonetically compatible words, but is to be interpreted as writing the same word. This text-interpretive method applies more or less in the same way to Western Han manuscripts such as the *Mawangdui* 馬王堆 (MWD) manuscripts dating to *ca.* 200 BC. The early Western Han manuscripts are written in the clerical script (*lìshū* 隸書), the calligraphic style of which approximates the modern *kǎishū* 楷書, and the individual character forms of which are in most cases found in received literature or traditional lexicographical works such as the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*ca.* 100 AD). Textual variants between a MWD manuscript and its received counterpart or distinct character forms that are suspected to be used for the same repeated words within the manuscript corpus, when compared with the words they normally represent in the received literature, do appear as phonetically compatible words. But the occurrence of such textual variants between manuscripts and received texts is far more frequent than between different recensions of the same received text. This abundance of phonologically related lexical pairs makes excavated manuscripts valuable as a major new source of data for Old Chinese phonology. The hexagram chapter "Qian" 乾 of the *Zhouyi* appears in the MWD and received versions as follows:[4]

3 Wang Yinzhi uses the same syntactic structure repeatedly to clearly indicate the words behind his suggested loan and proper characters: "the character 光 is borrowed for 廣 [in the examples below], but readers misinterpret the character as 光 as in 光明" (借光為廣而解者誤以爲光明之光) (WANG, 1979:32.1269–1271).

4 The transcription of the MWD "Zhouyi" manuscript here follows MAWANGDUI HANMU BOSHU ZHENGLI XIAOZU, 1984.

Textual variants from the perspective of phonetic loans

Mawangdui silk ms.	Received text
鍵元享利貞	**乾**元亨利貞
jiàn < ***gan-q** 'door-bolt'	*qián* < ***gran** 'Qian, hexagram name'
初九**浸**龍勿用	初九**潛**龍勿用
jìn < ***tsəm-s** 'soak'	*qián* < ***dzəm** 'submerge'
九二見龍在田利見大人	九二見龍在田利見大人
九三君子終日鍵鍵夕泥若厲无咎	九三君子終日乾乾夕惕若厲无咎
九四或**鑰**在淵无咎	九四或**躍**在淵无咎
cf. 龠 ***Lawk**	*yuè* < ***lawk** 'jump'
九五**翡**龍在天利見大人	九五**飛**龍在天利見大人
fěi (irregular tone) < ***bəj-s** 'sparrow'	*fēi* < ***pəj** 'fly'
尚九抗龍有悔	上九亢龍有悔
shàng < ***daŋs** 'loft'	*shàng* < ***daŋ-s** 'up'
迵[5]九見羣龍无首吉	**用**九見羣龍无首吉
dòng < ***lloŋ-s**[6] 'thorough'	*yòng* < ***loŋ-s** 'use'

The correspondence in the last line between the MWD 迵 and 用 in the received text suggests that the phonophoric components in these characters, 同 and 用, have the same *functional value*, viz., ***Loŋ**. That is to say, independent of the word identity for the characters in which they are used, these graphic components are used to indicate syllables that have the ***L-** type initial consonant (e.g., ***l-** and ***hl-**) combined with the rhyme ***-oŋ**. If we examine characters that

5 Other than this textual occurrence, the graph 迵 occurs in the MWD corpus representing *tōng* 通 'penetrate' as well as *tóng* 同 'identical' (CHEN, 2001:64). The graph 用 in MWD is regularly used for *yòng* 用 'to use' (CHEN, 2001:131).

6 The 同 phonetic series (KARLGREN, 1957: no. 1176) consists of words with MC d- and th-, thus the OC origin of this phonophoric would be indeterminate between *L- and *T- had we not had the textual evidence that links this phonophoric to 用. The 用/甬 phonetic series (KARLGREN, 1957: no. 1185) contains words with MC d-, th-, y- and z-, which is confidently reconstructed with *L-. Textual correspondences such as the case of 迵~用 expand our scope of data for OC word reconstructions as well as word family relations.

contain these two phonophorics with their relatedness in mind, we might find a word family whose members come from either the 同 or the 用 phonetic series. But first note that the graph 用 is in origin derived from 甬.[7] It turns out that the latter regularly appears as a phonophoric, but the former is rarely used other than for the lexical item *yòng* 用 'use' in the received orthography. We identify a series of cognate words written with either 同 or 甬, the root meaning of which is √ PENETRATE.

Alternating phonophorics 同~用 (甬) *and the word family* ****Loŋ*** *√ penetrate*

湧, 涌 *yǒng*	< *yowngX*	< ***loŋ-q**	'gush forth (as a spring)'[8]
筩, 筒 *tóng*	< *duwng*	< ***lloŋ**	'(bamboo) tube'
通 *tōng*	< *thuwng*	< ***hlloŋ**	'pass through'
洞 *dòng*	< *duwngH*	< ***lloŋ-s**	'fast current, penetrate, cave'[9]
迵 *dòng*	< *duwngH*	< ***lloŋ-s**	'thorough'

The last two items, although written with different *signific* components, 氵 'water' and 辶 'motion' and attested in early texts for different meanings, stand from a phonological perspective for the same etymological word. Thus the apparently different *meanings* associated with the distinct forms of characters are linguistically nothing but different shades of the same word's meaning. The graphic distinction 氵 versus 辶 would likely have been initially made according to the contexts where this word typically occurs. When such a distinction becomes conventionalized the variant forms come to constitute orthographically different characters.

Recall that the textual correspondences as illustrated in the "Qian" hexagram line text in the present discussion only look like phonetically related pairs of words, but each pair ought to be, in principle, identified with a single word. In the case of a comparison between excavated and received texts, given the phonetic compatibility, it is often the case that the word/character in the received version is the best candidate for our text interpretation. For example, in the phrase 或躍在淵, "some [dragons] jump in the abyss", above, the word written as 躍 is convincingly interpreted as 躍 *yuè* < ***lawk** 'jump'. This phrase is relat-

7 The Western Zhou bronze inscription forms for these characters are 𠂤 ("Song gui" 頌簋) and 𠂤 ("Mao gong ding" 毛公鼎) respectively (RONG, 2005:225, 486).

8 This lexical item is taken from KARLGREN, 1957: no. 1185.

9 The meaning 'cave' for the character 洞 is not attested in early texts, but it seems to be etymologically the same as the early Chinese word associated with the character.

able to the 潛龍, "submerged dragon", in the same text and makes good sense. Therefore we can reasonably suspect that the corresponding MWD character 鱎, which is unknown in the received literature but has a phonophoric 龠 suggesting the *syllable type* ***Lawk** (cf. 禴 *yuè* < ***lawk** 'libation' and 籥 *yuè* < ***lawk-s** 'flute'), is probably intended to write the same word, *yuè* 躍 'jump'.

Problems of interpretation often arise when the word in the received version itself is difficult to understand. The word 乾 *qián* < ***gran**, in this association of pronunciation and character, occurs only in the *Zhouyi*, and its etymological origin is obscure.[10] So in this case we wonder whether the character 鍵 in the MWD version with its regular use for *jiàn* < ***gan-q** 'door-bolt' was chosen as a *phonogram* simply to represent the hexagram *name* (pronunciation) regardless of the meaning 'door-bolt' or rather if this character is indeed intended as *jiàn* 'door-bolt' revealing some sort of esoteric interpretation based on phonological relation with the reading 乾 *qián* < ***gran** or still a third word of the same syllable type the MWD version drew on.[11] We can tentatively treat this as a case of phonologically motivated lexical variation, and thus translate the character 鍵 as the hexagram name 'door-bolt', only if the textual correspondence between the forms 鍵 and 乾 does not recur outside of the "Zhouyi" text and its commentaries in the MWD corpus. Even so, the phrase 鍵鍵 in the line 君子終日鍵鍵 "the lord all day long ~" is used as a predicate in the form of a reduplicative bi-syllabic word which makes no sense as the word *jiàn* 'door-bolt'. We can only suppose that a pun and double entendre is intended here, but the meaning still remains uncertain. The same is true for the received version.

2. The Case of *fǔ* 簠

The Zhou bronze vessel type identified as *fǔ* 簠, known from received early texts since the Song- dynasty work *Kao gu tu* 考古圖 by Lü Dalin 呂大臨 (1046–1092), is a distinctively square-shaped vessel. The *Zhouli* 周禮 has the line: "For

10 The *Guangyun* registers two pronunciations for the character 乾: (i) *gān* < *kan* (古寒切) < ***kkan** 'dry' (ii) *qián* < *gjen* (渠焉切) < ***gran** 'heaven (天), lord (君), firm (堅)' (LIN 2003:122, 142). The latter pronunciation refers to the hexagram "Qian". The definitions of "Qian" in the *Guangyun* come from the classical commentaries of the *Zhouyi* traditionally associated with the Confucian school.

11 This hexagram chapter is lost in the Shanghai Museum Chu manuscript version of the *Zhouyi*.

any sacrificial offering, the [food] offerings are filled in the *fu*-vessel and *gui*-vessel to be laid out [on the offering table]" (凡祭祀, 共簠簋實之陳), to which Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) notes "when [the offering vessel is] square-shaped, it is called *fǔ* 簠, when round, it is called *guǐ* 簋".[12]

In bronze inscriptions on this *fu*-type vessel the characters that write the name of the bronze vessel are extremely varied in their graphic structure. Some of these character forms have phonophorics that indicate distinct pronunciations suggesting that the *fu*-vessel actually had different names. Note first that Zhou ritual bronze inscriptions have formulaic text structures. These text formulas were established in the early Western Zhou period and continued to be repeated on all vessel types throughout the Western and Eastern Zhou periods in all feudal states. In the following I will present some examples. For the sake of discussion X stands for the character in the textual position for the vessel's name.

(i)	射南自作其X Archer South made his own X.	late W. Zhou, JC[13] 4480
(ii)	虢叔作旅X其萬年永用 Uncle-lord of Guo made the X in commemoration of the campaign. May it be used forever, for ten thousand years.	late W. Zhou, JC 4514
(iii)	塞自作旅X其子子孫孫永寶用 Se made X for himself for the expedition. May sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons forever treasure and use (it).	late W. Zhou, JC 4524
(iv)	内大子白作X其子子孫孫永寶用 The heir apparent Bai of the Nei state made the X. May sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons forever treasure and use (it).	late W. Zhou, JC 4538
(v)	季宮父作仲姊嬴姬媵X其子子孫孫永寶用 Sir Jigong made for his middle elder sister this nuptial bestowal X. May sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons forever treasure and use (it).	late W. Zhou, JC 4572

12 RUAN, 2003:749.

13 The JC numbers throughout this paper represent inscription serial numbers in ZHONGGUO SHEHUI KEXUEYUAN KAOGU YANJIUSUO, 1984–1994. The dates of inscriptions are also taken from this publication.

(vi) 鄀公誠作旅X用追孝于皇祖皇考用賜眉壽萬年子子孫孫永寶用
Lord Xian (?) made the expedition X to proceed with filial sacrifices to the (deceased) King grandfather and King father and to bestow (it) for its full life of ten thousand years. May sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons forever treasure and use (it).
late W. Zhou, JC 4600

(vii) 唯正月初吉丁亥許子妝擇其吉金用鑄其X用媵孟姜秦嬴其子子孫孫永保用之
It was in the beginning auspiciousness (i.e., first week) of the first month, on the *dinghai* day when Lord of Xu, Jiang, selected the fine metal and used (it) to cast the X so as to use (it) accompany Lady Elder Jiang, Qin Ying (to her newly married home). May sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons forever cherish and use it.
Spring and Autumn, JC 4616

In some 160 inscriptions on the *fu*-vessels collected in the *Yinzhou jinwen jicheng*, many of them being repetitions of identical texts cast individually on each object, there are about twenty different written forms for the word X, the name of this square vessel. In these variant character forms we find seven different signific components and five different graphs suspected as phonophorics. In a few inscriptions a two character expression 匩匜 is used in the position for X while each of these two characters also appears by itself to write the vessel's name.[14] For purposes of analysis, the characters for X can be divided into five groups.

*1. The *Ka Type*

(a1) 匜  (a2) 匝  (b) 匲  (c) 盬 

(d1) 匲  (d2) 匾  (e) 鈷  (f) 祜 

(a) S {匚 'square container'} + Ph {古}
(b) S {匚 + 金 'metal'} + Ph {古}
(c) S {金 + 皿 'vessel'} + Ph {古}
(d) S {匚 + 攴 'manipulate'} + Ph {古}
(e) S {金} + Ph {古}
(f) S {示 'ritual'} + Ph {古}

14 Liu, 1986:459.

This group of characters have in common the phonophoric (Ph) 古 (cf. 古 *gǔ* < ***kka-q** 'old') which suggests a syllable type ***Ka**. Combined with this phonophoric are various significs (S) that indicate some aspects of the meaning of the written word. These are 匚 '(square) container' which appears in two variant forms of mirror images (a1 and a2), 金 'metal', 皿 'vessel', 攴 'manipulate', written also in an abbreviated variant, 卜 in a duplicated inscription (d1 and d2), and 示 'ritual'. One may suppose that form (b) 𨸏 could alternatively be analyzed as composed of S {匚} and Ph {*gǔ* 鈷}. This character and word-pronunciation is known only from the medieval period. For example, the *Guangyun* registers it as *gǔ* < *kuX* [公戶切] with a usage in the bisyllabic noun *gǔ máng* 鈷鋂 'iron' (as a tool).[15] But when we compare this form with form (a) 𠂤 in the same textual position, which is by far the most frequently occurring form, it is straightforward and reasonable to regard the component 金 as an added signific to the form 𠂤, rather than as part of a different character unrelated with the word for the bronze vessel name in question. Similarly, form (d) 𣪊 would seem to contain the whole character 故 *gù* < ***kka-s** 'therefore, reason' as a phonophoric, but the signific 攴 may well be analyzed as an alternative signific to the 示 'ritual' used in form (f) 祜. I am suggesting that although the bronze form (f) is structurally coincident with the character 祜 *hù* < ***gga-q** 'blessings' that is attested in the bronze script, it is reasonable to consider it as independent from the latter based on the textual evidence here. We will discuss systematic semantic relation among alternating graphic components in variant character forms later.

*2. The *Pa Type*

(a) 𢍏  (b) 𨸏 (?)  (c) 笑 

(a) S {匚} + Ph {夫}
(b) S {匚 + 弭 (?)} + Ph {夫}
(c) S {竹 'container (made of bamboo)'} + Ph {夫}

This group shares the phonophoric 夫 (cf. *fū* < ***pa** 夫 'grown man') suggesting a syllable type ***Pa**. Form (a) has the top horizontal stroke of 夫 coinciding with a horizontal line of the component 匚 as we can infer from form (c). Form (c)

15 LIN, 2003:266.

has the signific 竹 'bamboo' which is presumably used to signify the semantic category 'container'. Form (b) has a form that resembles 大 which seems to be a further abbreviation of 夫 with the top horizontal stroke omitted. This character form has two additional elements on either side of the phonophoric 大 (< 夫). The one on the right side resembles 耳 but the left is puzzling. The name of the vessel-maker, 弭中(仲) "Middle uncle-lord of Mi (state)", appears three times in the inscription: as

(i)  , (ii)  , and as (iii)  .

It seems possible that this personal name is copied onto the character. Once the two necessary components are present, one phonophoric and one signific of the conventional kinds, this type of impromptu graphic modification seems to have been allowed and did not hinder the recognition of the character.

The *Shuowen* records the form 匜 as a *guwen* variant of the Qin Seal form 簋 (簋…匜古文簋, 从匚夫).[16] This shows that 匜 and 簋 were regional variants by the Warring States period, the former used in a certain non-Qin script contrasting with the latter in the Qin script.[17] But the origin of the alternation 夫 ~甫 may be earlier than the Warring States period.

*3. The *K^{w}aŋ Type*

(a) 匽  (b) 匰  (c) 匰 

(a) S {匚} + Ph {黃}
(b) S {匚} + Ph {生}
(c)[18] S {匚 + 金} + Ph {生}

16 DUAN 2003:194.

17 The source of the *guwen* script is traditionally said to be texts written on bamboo strips discovered during early to mid Western Han at a residence of a descendant of Confucius. Thus the *guwen* is sometimes referred to as the "eastern script", as opposed to the "western" Qin script. It is interesting that we find a character form with the phonophoric 夫 on a *fu*-vessel that comes from the Qi state of the Warring States period. The 夫 is not found in discoveries from the southern region surrounding the Chu state.

18 The form (c) is a very strange form which has a normal structural composition but is executed in an upside down image.

This group includes two distinct phonophorics, 黃 and 生 (> 往) that have the same phonetic functional value, viz., ***K^{w}aŋ**: *huáng* < ***gg^{w}aŋ** 黃 'yellow', and 往 (<生) *wǎng* < ***G^{w}aŋ-q** 'go'.

Form (a) comes from a *fu*-type vessel approximately dated to late Zhou period, excavated in Shaanxi Fufeng 扶風, the homeland of the Western Zhou ruling house, and (b) from one whose caster is inscribed as "史免 Scribe Mian". The latter is identified as a court official during the reign of the Western Zhou King Yi 懿 (934–910 B.C.).[19] So in this case, the two phonophorics, were likely to have been used contemporaneously within a single region. Even if an individual scribe did not actually use them simultaneously, they were acceptable alternative "spellers" for the same word in the late Western Zhou period around the capital region.

The word of the syllable type ***K^{w}aŋ** represented by this group is distinct from the *fǔ* < ***pa-q**, and so it ought to be another name for the *fu*- type vessel. That is to say, these are synonyms that alternate in matching textual positions.

4. Undeciphered Phonophoric

(a1)  (a2)  (b)  (c)  (d) 

(a) Ph {  }
(b) S {匚} + Ph {}
(c) S {匚} + Ph {+ 夫}
(d) S {金} + Ph {}

The graph seems to be phonophoric, but it is not identified with any graphic component in the inventory of the received writing system. This graph can stand alone as in form (a) or can be combined with the usual significs such as 匚 and 金 as in (b)–(d). Form (c) has an additional phonophoric 夫 ***Pa**. It is not uncommon in the early Chinese script for one character to contain two phonophorics of the same value. This then identifies this group with group 2 (夫), standing for the word *fǔ* 簠. The unidentified graph has a simplified variant as seen in (d).[20] Form (a2) has an extra horizontal line across the vertical center

19 See GUO, 1935:90.

20 The apparent phonetic component in form (d), which I assume on the basis of the textual correspondence to be an abbreviated variant of , looks somewhat like the character 呂 *lǚ* < ***ra-q** 'a kind of musical note', attested in the bronze script as the form  ("Ban gui" 班簋). This identification would then suggest that the word written by forms (a)–(c) of this set

stroke. This together with the hemisphere-shaped graphic element right underneath it resembles the graph 古 closely. This then would serve as a link between the two syllable types 古 ***Ka** and 夫 ***Pa**. But we cannot be sure if that horizontal stroke is in fact functionally meaningful or historically legitimate.

5. Signific Only

匜 

This character consisting of the graphs 匚 and 金 has no apparent phonophoric.[21] This is one of the comparatively rare cases in which the phonophoric is omitted instead of the signific.

The phonophorics in the variant character forms discussed so far suggest three distinct OC pronunciations: 古 for ***Ka**, 夫~甫 for ***Pa**, and 黃~ 往 for ***K^{w}aŋ**. It is probable that the first two reflect a single word which has undergone a sound change in the initial consonant from ***K-** to ***P-**, viz., labialization of a velar initial. This sound change should have taken place at least by late Western

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which are connected to the phonophoric 夫 ***Pa** may be reconstructed in the syllable type ***Pra**. The finals ***-ra** and ***-a** in type B syllables after labial initials merge into Middle Chinese rhyme *-ju* (虞), and so the combination of ***P-** and ***r-** as a cluster can be justified. The problem with this graphic identification is that the short horizontal center line present in the modern character 呂 began to appear only since the Warring States period. The 呂-like graph also *looks* like 予 *yú* < ***la** 'I'. See for example, the Chu bamboo script form 予  (Shanghai Museum "Zhouyi", strip 49). This word is regularly written with the character 余 in the bronze script appearing as  ("Yu ding" 盂鼎) in the Western Zhou period and as  ("Qin gong gui" 秦公簋) in the Eastern Zhou period. So we do not know the early form of the Warring States form  . My reservation with identifying the phonophoric in form (d) with 予 is that the Old Chinese initials *P-* < ***P-** of ***Pa** and *y-* (喻四) < ***l-** of ***la** are not easily reconcilable. Some cases of MC *y-* come from OC velar or uvular initials, but the 予 phonetic series is not one of them (KARLGREN, 1957:41). And this makes it unlikely that form (d) is linked to the 古 ***Ka** series (Group 1) above.

21 The two short horizontal lines in this bronze form that look like a duplication (*chongwen* 重文) marker is in fact a graphic element integral to the signific 金. The form of latter in the Western Zhou period sometimes has two, sometimes three, short lines moving around the center part of the character. See for example  ("Shu you" 叔卣),  ("Shi tong ding" 師同鼎),  ("Tong you" 同卣"),  ("Shou gui" 守簋), ("Ze fang yi" 夨方彝) (RONG, 2005:905–907).

Zhou period as we see both types of phonophorics in bronze vessels dating to that early period and cast by a court official or excavated in the capital area.

The old phonophoric 古 remained in use throughout the Eastern Zhou period in various regions such as southern states of the "Chu culture" area, including Chen 陳, Cai 蔡, Xu 許, Fan 番, Ruo 鄀, Chu 楚 and Zeng 曾, as well as the eastern states of Qi 齊, Lu 魯, Xue 薛 and Zhu 邾 as well as the central Jin 晉, just to list some of the regions that have yielded archeological evidence. In addition we find the 夫 and 古 alternate in two *fu*-vessels that come from the same state, Qi 齊, and that are dated to two consecutive reign periods:

 "Chen ni fu" 陳逆簠 Qi Ping gong 平公 (r. 480–456 BC);

 "Chen man fu" 陳曼簠 Qi Xuan gong 宣公 (r. 455–404 BC).[22]

The presence of the 夫 is a strong indication that this word was pronounced like ***pa-q** in this region in the early Warring States period. This means that the 古 which reflects the OC pronunciation ***Ka** was "read" as *fǔ* < ***pa-q** there for this particular word. A case such as this could potentially lead to an association of two pronunciations, ***Ka** and ***Pa** with the graph 古. In the Chu script, we do not find an OC ***Pa**-type phonophoric for the *fu*-vessel. Rather, it is always the form  (楚王畬肯簠)[23] that writes the word. One cannot assume, based on this character structure, that the word *fǔ* in the Chu dialect was pronounced like ***Ka** differently from the Qi dialect or late Western Zhou Old Chinese.

Thus the five phonophorics including the 甫 in the received character are divided into two groups, {古, 夫, 甫} and {黃, 往}, by the words they represent. These two groups constitute in each case a set of graphs that are functionally of the same value and thus selected alternatively to write the same word. We will call graphs in such a relation *equivalent phonophorics* (EP).

The various significs appearing in groups 1 (古) and 2 (夫), now identified with the word *fǔ* 簠, are likewise equivalent in their semantic function and used alternatively to write the same word. Analogously with EP, we shall call such significs *synonymous significs* (SS). As has been assumed all along, the neces-

22 The images are from MA, 1987–1990, nos. 853 and 861, respectively. The dates of these two bronze vessels are taken from HE, 2003:99.

23 MA, 1987–1990, no. 662.

sary condition for EP is that they stand for the same syllable type (initial consonant of the same place of articulation and identical rhyme). By contrast, the condition for SS is somewhat less concrete. Generally speaking, significs that indicate the same semantic category tend to alternate with one another. (And of course, defining semantic category itself involves subjectivity to a greater degree than assessing phonetic compatibility does.)[24] But, because each alternative signific for a given word is intended to indicate a certain semantic aspect of the word, the members in a given set of SS may not always be synonymous with one another. For instance, three distinct semantic categories can be drawn up from the SS for *fǔ* 簠.

VESSEL:	匚 '(square-shaped) container', 皿 'vessel'
MATERIAL:	金 'metal', 竹 'bamboo'
RITUAL, TREATMENT:	示 'ritual', 攴 'manipulate'

These categories have to do with the following semantic aspects of the written word: the *identity* of the object denoted by the word (i.e., vessel), the *material substance* of the object in question or objects like it (i.e., wooden or metal), and finally the *circumstances* in which the object or word is used (i.e., ritual offering).

Since the two words, ***Pa** (< ***Ka**) written with EP1 {古, 夫, 甫} and ***K^{w}aŋ** with EP2 {黃, 往}, are synonyms that refer to the same object, we would expect some overlap in the selections of significs between the two sets of EPs. As it happens, 金 and 匚 of the six attested for EP1 are the most frequently selected ones for EP2.

Characters in the early Chinese script thus can vary in their componential structure, and the alternating graphs in such structurally different characters are related by their semantic or phonetic values. Alternations of EP and SS may result in variant forms that bear no graphic resemblance, such as the pair 笑 and 祐.

24 This now well-known thesis that significs denoting similar meanings can be used interchangeably in early Chinese script was first articulated by Tang Lan (GAO, 1987:146). Tang Lan (TANG, 1965, 2:55) swiftly makes his point just giving two examples, 巾 'kerchief'~衣 'cloth' appearing in a few characters such as *cháng* 常~ 裳 'lower-garment', and likewise 土 'ground'~阜 'mound' for a few such as *jiāng* 疆~ 隰 'border'. An extensive list of such interchangeable significs is found in GAO, 1987:146–180. Some of Gao Ming's examples are 牛 'cow'~羊 'sheep', 目 'eye'~見 'see', 日 'sun'~月 'moon', 首 'head'~頁 'top'.

Compositional Variability

	Equivalent Phonophorics	Synonymous Significs	Variant Forms
word I ****Ka** > ***Pa** = *fǔ* 簠 ***pa-q**	{古, 夫, 甫}	{匚, 金, 皿, 竹, 攴, 示}	匫, 匽, 祜, 盬, 鈷, 匽, 匾, 匧, 笑, 簠 (R)
word II ***K^{w}aŋ**	{黃, 生}		璜, 堭, 鍠

As with a signific or phonophoric reused for different words, a set of SS or EP assigned to one word tends to recur for another word. For example, the SS {金 'metal', 皿 'vessel'} for *fǔ* 簠 above is also used regularly for *zhù* 鑄 'cast' and in some variants for *xǔ* 盨 'type of bronze ritual vessel'.[25]

The EP {夫, 甫} found for *fǔ* 簠 is repeated in the following cases. In an early Western Zhou bronze inscription both 夫 and 甫 are used in a character for a person's name:

> 小臣遹即事于西, 休仲賜遹鼎 early Western Zhou, JC 2581
> Lesser official Fu (?) had just been appointed to the Western Region. Lord Xiu granted him the *ding*-vessel.

In an inscription from the early Spring and Autumn period, the form 甫 is used for the word *fū* 夫 as in *fū rén* 夫人 'primary wife':

> 黃子作黃甫人孟姬器… early Spring and Autumn, JC 2566
> The lord of the Huang state made the vessel for his wife Lady Elder Ji.

We find an alternation of 夫 and 甫 in a textual correspondence between the Warring States Chu manuscript and received versions of the *Zhouyi*.[26] The word represented by the variants is *bū* < ***ppa** 逋 'flee':

25 See RONG, 2005:908–911, 341–343.

26 I am referring to the Shanghai museum Chu manuscript "Zhouyi".

Chu: 九二不克訟逯 **肤**其邑人晶四戶
Received: 九二不克訟歸而**逋**其邑人三百戶
Nine in the second line: he did not win the litigation. He returned and then helped three or four (Chu) / three hundred (Received) households of people in the town to flee (Hexagram 6, "Song" 訟).

Finally there is a word family with the root meaning √ASSIST, whose cognate words are written either with 夫 or 甫:[27]

扶 *fú*	< *bju* < ***ba**	'support'
輔, 俌 *fǔ*	< *bjuX* < ***ba-q**	'assist' 'strut [of a chariot]'
賻 *fù*	< *bjuH* < ***ba-s**	'gift money (especially for a funeral)'
傅 *fù*	< *pjuH* < ***pa-s**	'tutor'

I suspected earlier that the alternation of the phonophorics 古 and 夫~甫 in the characters for '*fu*-vessel' is due to labialization of an original velar initial. This supposition can be strengthened if we can find parallel cases in Old Chinese lexicon. Consider the following cases:

Phonetic series

The word *pēng* 烹 is written with the graph 亨 in common with two other words that have a uvular initial.

烹 *pēng*	< *phæng* < ***pphraŋ**	'boil'
亨 *hēng*	< *xæng* < ***qqhraŋ**	'success' (in the *Zhouyi*)
享 *xiǎng*	< *xjangX* < ***qhaŋ-q**	'type of sacrificial offering, feast, enjoy'

While recognizing the graphic connection among these items Karlgren chose to treat them in two separate phonetic series[28] because the difference in the initial as ***p-** and ***qh-** apparently disqualifies them for belonging to the same phonetic series. One can assume that the 亨 was initially chosen to write *pēng* as a phonophoric at a time when the word had a uvular initial. And as Karlgren notes, there is a use of the character 亨 for the word *pēng* 烹 in the *Shijing*. Middle Chinese labial initial for *pēng* seems to come from an Old Chinese variety in which a uvular initial became labialized.

27 This word family is presented in WANG, 2000:1398.
28 KARLGREN, 1957: nos. 716, 751.

Textual variants

The MWD manuscript version of the *Zhouyi* has the character 芳 with the Ph 方 ***Paŋ*** (cf. *fāng* 方 ***paŋ*** 'direction') in the position for the word 享 *xiǎng* ***qhaŋ-q*** 'type of sacrifice' of the received version.[29]

> Received: 上六 …王用享于西山
> Mawangdui: 上六 …王用芳于西山
> Six on the top […] The King made the *xiang* -sacrifice at the West Mountain. (Hexagram 17 "Sui"隨)

> Received: 九二 …利用享祀
> Mawangdui: 九二 …利用芳祀
> Nine on the second […] It is beneficial to use the *xiang*-sacrificial ceremony (ibid.).

The MWD character 芳 in another line in the same hexagram corresponds to *jì* 祭 'type of sacrificial ceremony':

> Received: 九五 …利用祭祀
> Mawangdui: 九五 …利用芳祀
> Nine on the fifth […] It is beneficial to use *ji*-sacrificial ceremony (R) / *xiang*- sacrificial ceremony (M). (Hexagram 47 "Kun" 困)

If we identify the 芳 with the word *xiǎng* 享 with the ***P-*** ~***q-*** alternation in mind, the variation between 芳 (for *xiǎng* 享) and *jì* 祭 'type of sacrifice' is explained as an alternation of synonymous words. The MWD version reveals at

29 The Shanghai Museum Chu manuscript version has graph  in this textual position. This early character [亯]  (買簋) gave rise to two variant forms in *clericization*, 享 and 亨, which are distinguished for different words in the modern standard orthography, 享 *xiǎng* < ***qhaŋ-q*** 'sacrifice, feast, enjoy' and 亨 *hēng* < ***qqhraŋ*** 'success'. The *Zhouyi* has both of these words. The *xiǎng* of the received version corresponds to [亯] in the Chu version as just mentioned, whereas the *hēng* to a different character  [卿] in the text. Luo Zhenyu has said that the early character [卿]  (效卣) developed into three distinct characters: 饗 for *xiǎng* < ***qhaŋ-q*** 'feast, offer food and drinks', 卿 for *qīng* < ***khraŋ*** 'minister', and 鄉 for *xiāng* < ***qhaŋ*** 'village' (cited in RONG, 2005:645; see also KARLGREN, 1957: no. 714). The in the *Zhouyi* seems to stand for *xiǎng* 饗 'feast, …'. This word in turn seems to be the same etymological word as 享 *xiǎng* < ***qhaŋ-q*** 'sacrifice, …' and also related to 亨 *hēng* < ***qqhraŋ*** 'success'. Etymologically related words can be written with graphically unrelated characters, and words or characters in such relation often appear in matching textual positions.

this point a dialect that has a labial initial corresponding to the OC ***qh-** for the word *xiǎng* 享.

Etymology

The two words *xiāng* 香 and *fāng* 芳 alike mean 'fragrance', but one has a uvular initial and the other a labial. It seems likely that they are in origin cognate words that go back to the same root with a uvular initial.

香 *xiāng*	< *xjang*	< ***qhaŋ** 'fragrance'
芳 *fāng*	< *phjwang*	< ***phaŋ** 'fragrance'

The labialization hypothesis provides a clue to the interpretation of the compound expression

 (匣匠)

that occurs in the textual position for the vessel name *fǔ* 簠. Suppose the first character 匣 which suggests the syllable type ***K^{w}aŋ** is a variant form for *kuāng* 筐 'square container'. This word, assumed as a case of velar-labialization, can be related to 方 *fāng* ***paŋ** 'square'.

筐 *kuāng*	< *khjwang*	< ***kh^{w}aŋ**	'square shaped basket or object'
方 *fāng*	< *pjwang*	< ***paŋ**	'square, quarter (i.e., region)'

The expression 匣匠 would mean 'square-shaped *fu*' where the first word is a qualifying modifier.

Recall that the word for '*fu*-vessel' is written with the Ph 甫 in the received character 簠, but this phonophoric is not found in inscribed characters on the *fu* bronze vessels discovered so far. Interestingly, there is a different vessel type whose name is written regularly with 甫.[30] This bronze vessel resembles the *dou* 豆-type:

30 I am grateful to Dr. Olivier Venture for pointing out this fact to me. The *Yinzhou jinwen jicheng* classifies this vessel under the category of *dou* (JC 9: nos. 4651–4695) and uses the graph 簠 for the name of this vessel. The *dou*-vessel has a pronounced cylindrical base holding a wide, shallow bowl. The early script form of *dòu* 豆  ("Zhou sheng dou 周生豆") itself resembles this vessel.

6. (a) 甫  (b) 簠  (c) 鋪  (d) 匷 

(a) Ph {甫}
(b) S {竹} + Ph {甫}
(c) S {金} + Ph {甫}
(d) S {匚 + 肉 'meat'} + Ph {甫}

The question is, whether the *word* that refers to this *dou*-like vessel is the same as the word 簠 *fǔ* ***pa-q**. It seems possible to me that the word *fǔ* ***pa-q** was a generic word for 'pedestal bowl (with cover)'[31] as we observe the common features of the two vessel types in question. The distinctively square *fu* is a relatively new vessel type compared to other Shang and Zhou bronze vessels. The distribution of the archaeological finds suggests that the *fu* bronze type emerged in mid Western Zhou and became common in late Western Zhou. The word *kuāng* 匡 (筐) 'square container' used optionally in front of the word *fǔ* would have been intended to distinguish the "square-shaped" *fu* from the generic *fu*. So the graphic distinction between 夫 and 甫 or 古 and 甫 that seems to have been made in one region or another as can be surmised from the available archaeological samples is to distinguish the two *objects* and not two distinct *words*.

Contrary to this supposition one might wonder if this *dou*-like 甫 vessel is the intended referent of the word represented by the Qin Seal form 簠, distinct from the word for the square type? [32] When Xu Shen identified the word/character 簠 with 匡, he was basing himself on a *textual correspondence* between the two graphic forms in received and *guwen* versions of early texts. The superficial non-resemblance of the two compared character forms should not, and did not, keep him from identifying the word correctly.

On the archaeological side we have the *guwen* form 匡 inscribed on a distinctively square type ritual bronze vessel, alternating with other character forms such as 匠. This links the *fǔ* 簠 with another archaeologically attested phonophoric, 古. In the following lines from received early texts the characters 簠, 胡 and 瑚 correspond to one another. The last two are further variants that contain the phonophoric 古.[33]

31 I took William Watson's wording (WATSON, 1961:95) for his description of the *dou*-vessel.

32 This surely is what naturally comes to many scholars' minds, including Tang Lan 唐蘭. See CHEN, 2004:479, for a quotation of Tang Lan's opinion.

33 CHEN, 2004:478 and also GAO, 1997:863.

仲尼曰: 胡簋之事 則嘗學之矣 (*Zuozhuan*, "Ai gong 11")
Zhongni said, "As for matters of ***Ka**-vessels and *gui*-vessels, I have studied these before".

有虞氏之兩敦, 夏后氏之四璉, 殷之六瑚, 周之八簋 (*Liji*, "Ming tang wei" 明堂位)
There were two *dui* vessels for the Yu clan, four *lian* vessels for the Xiahou clan, six ***Ka**-vessels for Yin, and eight *gui*-vessels for Zhou.

籩豆俎豆, 制度文章, 禮之器也 (*Liji*, "Yue ji" 樂記)
The *fu*, *gui*, *zu* and *dou*, the prescribed rules and their elegant variations are the instruments of ceremony.[34]

These lines are not from matching versions of the same text, but they have comparable context in which the ***Ka** 胡~瑚 or *fǔ* 簠 are regularly collocated with *guǐ* 簋: *Zuozhuan* 胡簋 :: *Liji*, "Ming tang wei" 瑚簋 :: *Liji*, "Yue ji" 籩豆. Zhu Junsheng 朱駿聲 (1788–1858) identifies the 瑚 in this textual position with the word 盬 *gǔ* < ***kka-q** (vessel name) (ZHU, 2002:501).[35] Zhu quotes the following line from the *San li tu* 三禮圖 ("Illustrations of [the objects in] the 'Three [Classics of] Rites'"): "The ***Ka** vessel can contain one *sheng* (unit of measure). It is similar to the *gui*-vessel but flatter." (瑚受一升如簋而平下)[36] Zhu's supposition of the graphic and phonetic relation between the characters 瑚 and 盬 is quite plausible. But we still wonder if this *gǔ* 盬-vessel was an object that was different from the *fǔ* 簠-vessel and whether or not these two words are etymologically related. I suspect that the words *gǔ* and *fǔ* are doublets of the same original etymological word referring to the same vessel; *gǔ* < ***kka-q** retaining the original velar initial and *fǔ* < ***pa-q** with a labialized alternate. It is interesting that the form 盬 is structurally similar to the form 1-(c) 盬 cited above. The former has the signific 缶 'earthenware, vessel' alternating with 金 'metal' in precisely the same graphic position, which can be explained as an instance of synonymous significs.

Textual evidence together with archaeological attestation agrees with Xu Shen's account of the *word*. What Xu Shen was not aware of is the existence of

34 Translation adapted from James Legge; see CHAI/CHAI, 1976, 2:100.

35 This character is registered in the *Shuowen* with the definition "kind of vessel" (器也, 从缶皿古聲; DUAN, 2003:212). The *Guangyun* records the Middle Chinese pronunciation *kuX* (公戶切) with the same definition (LIN, 2003:266). See also KARLGREN, 1957:33.

36 Nie Chongyi 聶崇義 in his *San li tu ji zhu* 三禮圖集注 (962 A.D.) collated six different earlier versions of the *San li tu* 三禮圖. It is traditionally said that the original *San li tu* was first compiled during the Eastern Han dynasty by Ruan Zhan 阮諶 (LI/LÜ, 1996:240).

the distinctively square vessel that the word *fǔ* was used for. Xu Shen said that the *fǔ* 簠 was "round":

> 簠, 黍稷圜器也.
> 簠 is a *round* vessel [for containing] *shu*-millet and *ji*-millet.

Even so, he was correct in saying that the vessel was used for containing grains. The source of this explanation seems to be also textual, and it is in fact consistent with what is said in inscriptions about the use of the vessel. It may be that this seemingly inaccurate account of the vessel's shape is simply because the word was generally used in Xu Shen's time to refer to a round-shaped vessel as well.

3. The Nature of Orthographic Variation in Early Texts

The occurrence of so called loan characters is so infrequent in received literature, no more than one percent even in the least conservative estimations,[37] that it gives the impression that the users of phonetic loans arbitrarily selected those unusual characters among all possibilities within the recognized phonetic constraints. This is the idea implicit in the notion that a character is *borrowed* for a (nearly) homophonous word despite the existence of a "proper" character. Then a loan character is by definition a non-standard character. Could such a *practice* of borrowing one percent of the time really exist, different from simply not getting the correct one because of, say, carelessness or incompetence? Have the odd character usages been legitimized in reverence of texts from the antiquity? The decisive reason not to regard such characters as "wrong" is that a given case of loan tends to recur a few times within a text as well as in different texts, both in quotations and independent usages. It seems as if loan characters, as odd as they are by comparison to the mainstream orthography, generate conventions of their own.

Excavated texts from the Warring States to early Han periods reveal in one case after another the existence of such conventions, attested only marginally in received texts, but that were once widespread orthographic practices. Take for

37 It is generally agreed that loan characters occupy less than one percent in received texts (Shao Rongfen 邵榮芬 in the foreword to LI, 1994). Qian Xuan (QIAN, 1980:44) for example reports that the *Laozi* has about 30 loan characters amounting to 0.6 %.

example, the well-known use of 亡 for *wú* 無 'lack' in several early texts including the *Shijing*. The 亡 is used more commonly than 無 in many discovered texts, and is even exclusively used in some Chu bamboo texts;[38] the character 蚤 for *zǎo* 早 'morning' appearing in the *Liji* (ch. "Yueling" 月令), among others, is the only character used for that word in the MWD manuscripts (we will discuss this example in some detail below); the character 魚 appears in the *Liezi* 例子 (ch. "Huang di" 黃帝) for *wú* 吾 'I' while the same odd usage is also found in the MWD "Zhanguo zonghengjia shu" 戰國縱橫家書.[39] The 魚 (cf. 魚 *yú* < ***ŋra*** 'fish') for 吾 *wú* ***ŋŋ(r)a*** is identified with the character 虞 [虡] (鎛鏄) regularly used for the same word in Eastern Zhou bronze inscriptions from various regions such as Qi, Chu and Zhongshan.[40] In the MWD manuscripts the graphic form 殹, besides its unsurprising use for *yī* 醫 (var. 毉) 'healer (of ailments)' in "Tai chan shu" 胎產書, takes the place of the final particle *yě* 也 in a few texts such as "Wu xing pian" 五行篇 and "Jing fa" 經法.[41] This 殹 is a less frequently used variant than the form 也 in the MWD manuscripts, but it is the only form for the same grammatical function in the Shuihudi Qin manuscript corpus (ca. 250 BC). It also appears in two inscriptions from the Qin state dated to mid-to-late Warring States, which are "Xin qi hu fu" 新郪虎符 and "Du hu fu" 杜虎符.[42]

Thus the existence of variant forms found within a given region or corpus, with one of the less frequently used variants being a dominant form in some other region(s), may be in part attributed to convergence of regional conventions through contact. This is a synchronic factor. Diachronically, various regional

38 Xu Dan 徐丹 (XU, 2004) observes that the Guodian Laozi B manuscript only has 亡 for the word *wú* (無) while the character 無 is used only once for the word in the Guodian Laozi A and that this situation becomes reversed in the MWD silk manuscripts: "Zhan guo zong heng jia shu" has 無 but not 亡, MWD Laozi A and B have 無 together with its abbreviated form 无 but not 亡. The Shanghai Museum Chu manuscript version of the *Zhouyi* like the Guodian manuscript has 亡, but not 無. But the graph 勿, normally for *wù* < ***mət*** 'should not', is also used once in this manuscript for the word 無 *wú* < ***m(r)a***. Orthographic representation of negatives in Chu manuscripts is somewhat intricate. This subject is beyond the scope of the present paper.

39 GAO, 1997:855.

40 See HUADONG SHIFAN DAXUE, 2001, 2:146, for the inscription texts and their provenances.

41 See CHEN, 2001:122. The Old Chinese pronunciations for 醫 *yī* < ***qə*** (var. 毉) 'healer (of ailments)' and 也 *yě* < ***laj-q*** do not meet the phonetic compatibility criterion. It is an open question whether the 殹 represents a Qin dialect word etymologically unrelated to *yě* 也.

42 "Du hu fu" is dated to ca. 337–325 BC in CHEN, 2003:329. The *Jicheng* inscription numbers are no. 12108 for "Xin qi hu fu" and no. 12109 for "Du hu fu".

scripts can also independently preserve variants from an earlier period. Also, an old form on the verge of extinction in one region could return to common use by an influence from a different region where the old form is still the norm. This would be an interaction between convergence and preservation.

There does not seem to have been a *practice* of consciously using a character against the convention in early China. To recognize the fact that the existence of variant forms in an early text, whether excavated or received, is not the result of an individual scribe's conscious selection goes beyond simply no longer calling such characters "loans". It has implications on how we understand the process of textual transmission in early China and on what basis we understand the phonological phenomena reflected in the graphic alternations in early texts.

As mentioned above, the word 早 *zǎo* < ***ttsu-q** 'early, morning' is regularly written with 蚤 in the Mawangdui manuscripts, which normally stands for *zǎo* < ***ttsu-q** 'flea' in received literature. By contrast the 早  is found in the Shuihudi Qin manuscripts, which in turn alternates in the same corpus for the same word with the form 棗  , normally for *zǎo* < ***ttsu-q** 'dates (plant)'.[43] As it turns out these two characters with no apparent graphic resemblance to each other are both derived from a single compound character, viz., 昊 consisting of S 日 'day, sun' and Ph 棗 ***TSu**. This compound form is found in the "Zhong shan Wang Cuo" 中山王譽 bronze corpus dating to ca. 310 BC.

成王昊棄君臣寡人幼童未通智唯傅母氏從 MA, 1987–1990: no. 880
My father King Cheng [too] early left behind the many vassals. I, the solitary one, was only a small child and did not understand things. I only had my tutor and my mother to guide me.

We find the same form  [44] in the Guodian Chu manuscripts appearing also in an abbreviated variant such as  [45] [晳]. So the Shuihudi form 棗 is another simplified variant of the 昊 with the signific component 日 omitted. The *Shuowen* Qin Seal form  shows a vestige of the 棗 (> ). We must assume that the compound form 昊 for 'morning' found in three different Eastern Zhou states was received from the Western Zhou script. No occurrence of the word *zǎo* 'morning' is attested in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions discovered so far. But if one is to assume that this everyday word was ever written before Eastern Zhou, the character form or forms for it should have included the graph 昊.

43 The word identifications and manuscript character forms are from ZHANG, 1994:103, 107.
44 Guodian "Yu cong (si)" 語叢(四), strip no. 12, cited in LI, 2003:418.
45 Guodian "Laozi-B", strip no. 1, cited in LI, 2003:418.

In much the same way, the use of 蚤 for 'morning', an anomaly in relation to the usual form 早 in received texts, is a residue of an old writing convention that somehow escaped the orthographic regularization of the eastern Han period. This old convention, which underlies the Mawangdui manuscripts, is traceable by archeological evidence at least to Warring States Chu. The Wangshan 望山 Chu manuscripts have an occurrence of 蚤 for 'morning'.[46] This means that the 叕~蚤 were used variably in the Chu script. If the 早~蚤 variation in received literature dates back to the late Warring States period, would it not also be likely that the 叕~蚤 variation in the Chu script itself originated in an earlier time?

Character use for zǎo 早 *'early, morning'*

<table>
<tr><th>Western Zhou</th><th>Eastern Zhou</th><th>Western Han</th><th>Eastern Han</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Zhongshan
← 叕
Chu
← 叕~蚤</td><td>Mawangdui mss.
蚤
→</td><td rowspan="2">Received
早~蚤
[standard] [anomaly]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Qin
← *[叕] > 棗~早
[reconstruction]</td><td>→</td></tr>
</table>

The *fu* case discussed above illustrated that the variant forms for the word found in the Eastern Zhou period, either as regional variants or as region-internal variants can be traced to the Western Zhou period; the regional differences register which particular form(s) among the pre-existing ones available from the earlier orthographic stock became conventionalized in a particular region. Sound change may motivate the generation of a new phonophoric that accommodates the contemporary pronunciation, but the new phonophoric did not necessarily displace the old phonophoric.

46 HE, 2004:227.

Phonophoric selection for fǔ 簠 *'type of vessel'*

Western Zhou	Eastern Zhou	Han
古~夫~  ~(甫?)	*Chu* 古	*Received* 甫~古
	Qi 古~夫	
	Qin 甫	

4. Summary

I should like to take this last observation as a starting point to make the following summarizing remarks:

— Variability of character structure, a fundamental feature of the early Chinese script, shows up as textual variation in discovered texts as well as in received texts. This componential variability of character forms was fully active in the Warring States script and was waning fast during the Western Han period. It eventually disappeared in received early texts leaving behind vestiges that appear to be phonetic loan characters.

— The overall phonological picture that we obtain through the co-relations among alternating phonophorics in such "phonetic loan" characters found in comparisons either of received texts or of discovered texts, or of discovered texts with their received counterparts will be the phonology of a time when the orthographic system was first established. We have been calling the phonology of this period Old Chinese.

— To put it in a nutshell, alternate phonophorics in loan characters amount to duplicates or triplicates of *phonophoric* selections in the early script. So the phonemic distinctions and individual word pronunciations deduced from the "loan character" alternations by and large will be the same as those from the *xiesheng* phonetic series.

— The phonological system reflected in the Chu script, like any other regional script of the Eastern Zhou period is Old Chinese. Chu script is not like a "phonetic transcript" of the contemporaneous Chu dialect.

I do not mean to say that Warring States manuscripts are expected to be completely silent about their contemporaneous phonology. Note for instance, that the Zhongshan Wang Cuo 中山王譽 corpus has the form 𧾷 [蹙] for 位 *wèi* < ***G^{w}rət-s** 'position'.[47] The component 胃 (cf. 胃 *wèi* < ***G^{w}əj-s** 'stomach') reflects the Warring States pronunciation in which the earlier final stop ***-t** is lost. But this variant did not survive beyond that regional boundary. It is the traditional phonophoric 立 that was used commonly across regions during the Warring States period: see the Chu form  [48] and the Qin form 立  (Shuihudi) for *wèi* 位. And it is this old form that survives today.

位 *wèi*	< ***G^{w}rət-s**	< ** **G^{w}rəp-s**	'position'
立 *lì*	< ***(Kə-)rəp**		'stand'

Then, when was the early orthographic system that underlies both Warring States and received texts established? This orthographic system, i.e., the collective entity of conventions with regard to which phonophoric(s) represent which individual words, should include writings of literary texts as well as administrative documents. The Chinese writing system at this stage should have included a sizeable stock of learned words of the early Chinese intelligentsia. It would not be too adventurous to speculate that such an elaborate orthographic system was completed no later than the end of Western Zhou.

Source list of cited bronze inscription character images

Ex. no.		vessel name	JC no.	date	place of discovery	note on the vessel maker
1-a1		虢叔簋	4515	late W.Z.	unknown	aristocrat of Guo 虢 state (present-day Shaanxi Baoji 寶鷄)
1-a2		虢叔作叔殷穀簋	4498	late W.Z	unknown	殷穀 is the wife of 虢叔 above (Wu, 2006:378)

47 The signific 立 'standing man' of 蹙 is an alternative to the common early script form 人 (亻) which recurs in this bronze script corpus. Compare the Chu form  (Guodian, "Wu-xing", strip no. 14) with the Zhongshan form  (大鼎) for *zhǎng* 長 'senior'. This case shows an alternation of the synonymous signific {立, 人} combined with the shared phonophoric {長}.

48 Guodian Laozi-C, strip. no. 10.

Ex. no.		vessel name	JC no.	date	place of discovery	note on the vessel maker
1-b		蜡公諴簋	4600	late W.Z.	unknown	lord of Xiaruo 下都 (present-day Henan, Xichuan 淅川)
1-c		伯公父簋	4628	late W.Z.	Shaanxi, Fufeng 扶風	
1-d1		商丘叔簋	4558	early S.A.	unknown	
1-d2		商丘叔簋	4559	early S.A.	unknown	
1-e		西替簋	4503	W.S.	Jiangsu, Pei-xian 邳縣	
1-f		伯其父簋	4581	early S.A.	unknown	
2-a		叔邦父簋	4580	late W.Z.	unknown	official of the King Li 厲 (r. 878–828 BC) (WU, 2006:195)
2b		弭仲簋	4627	late W.Z.	"得于驪山白鹿原" (歷代鐘鼎彝器款識法帖, Song dyn.) (cited in JC, 9: 36)	aristocrat of Mi 弭 state (near present Shaanxi, Lantian 藍田) (MA, 1987–1990, 3:196)
2c		陳逆簋	4629	early W.S.	unkown	official of Qi 齊 Pinggong 平公 (r.476–456 B.C.) (WU, 2006:239)
3a		xx 簋	4516	late W.Z.	Shaanxi, Fufeng 扶風	
3b		史免簋	4579	mid W.Z.	unknown	official of King Yi 懿 (934–910 BC) (GUO, 1935:90)
3c		猷叔簋	4552	late W.Z.	unknown	aristocrat of the Hu(?) 猷 state (with 猷 identified as Hu 胡, present-day Anhui, Fuyang 阜陽, MA, 1987–1990, 3:257)
4-a1		交君子妥簋	4565	late W.Z.	unknown	lord of Jiao 交
4-a2		鑄公簋	4574	early S.A.	Shandong, Qidong 齊東	

Ex. no.		vessel name	JC no.	date	place of discovery	note on the vessel maker
4-b		魯士厚父簋	4517	early S.A.	unknown	official in the state of Lu 魯
4-c		季宮父簋	4572	late W.Z.	unknown	
4-d		X伯簋	4484	S.A.	unknown	
5		仲其父簋	4482	late W.Z.	Shaanxi Lantian 藍田	
6-a		曾仲旅父簠	4673	early S.A.	Hubei, Jing-shan 京山	
6-b		微伯癲簠	4681	mid W.Z.	Shaanxi, Fufeng 扶風	
6-c		X公作杜嬀簠	4684	late W.Z.	unknown	
6-d		魯大嗣徒厚氏元簠	4690	S.A.	Shandong, Qufu 曲阜	

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