A Comparative Study：

The *Tangxieben* and *Songkanben* of the *Shuowen Jiezi*

by

Can Gao

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Approved April 2017 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Young Kyun Oh, Chair
Xiaoqiao Ling
Stephen H. West

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2017

ABSTRACT

The *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 [Explaining depictions of reality and analyzing graphs of words] (100 AD), written by Xu Shen 許慎 of Eastern Han dynasty, is known as the first comprehensive dictionary for Chinese characters. However, the earliest complete edition of the *Shuowen* available today is the *Songkanben* 宋刊本 (Woodblock printed edition from the Song dynasty). As a result, *Songkanben* is employed as the primary source in most studies on the *Shuowen* conducted by scholars after the Song dynasty. In 1982, the discovery of *Tangxieben Shuowen mubu canjuan* 唐寫本說文木部殘卷 (The incomplete *juan* under wood classifier of the *Shuowen* written in manuscript form in the Tang), shed light on a new angle of view in examining the *Shuowen*, mostly developed from *Songkanben*. In this paper, after an introduction on the *Songkanben* by Xu brothers, as well as the discovery and dating of the incomplete manuscript form of *Shuowen* from Tang, a comparative study between the *Songkanben* and *Tangxieben* of the *Shuowen* from five aspects: order of entries, the appearance of the Small Seal script of a few entries, the explanation of the meaning of some characters, the graphic analyze and the *fanqie* 反切 phonetic notation for some entries. The hypothesis presented in this thesis is that *Tangxieben*, with its antiquarian value, advantages and features, though not older for sure, may belong to an older tradition. And it suggests that there is a scholarship of the *Shuowen* during the Tang. And *Xiao Xuben* 小徐本 by Xu Kai 徐鍇 (920-74), from some specific aspects in the comparison, tends to be closer to *Tangxieben* compared with *Da Xuben* 大徐本 by Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917-92).

Consequently, as the original text of the *Shuowen* is not available today and what we have studied on the *Shuowen* basically is based on the editions by Xu brothers, it would be reasonable to keep this in mind, and refer to different editions of the *Shuowen* and critically examine them in philological studies related to it when apply and study the *Shuowen* nowadays.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Ms. Congxia Shui and my husband Mr. Xinxing

Zhao, who have been supportive all the time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The *Shuowen jiezi* [Explaining depictions of reality and analyzing graphs of words][1],
compiled in the Eastern Han dynasty by Xu Shen, was known as the first
comprehensive dictionary of Chinese characters based on an analysis on their
graphic structure, in specific, *liushu* 六書[2] (the six script categories). In the
postface of *Shuowen jiezi*, while elaborated the origin and development of Chinese
characters, Xu distinguished *wen* from *zi* by saying:

When Cang Jie[3] first made characters, he probably depicted shapes according
to their categories. Thus they are called *wen* (patterns or letters). Later he had
the shape (signific part) and sound (phonetic part) added to each other, and then
called it *zi* (characters). *Wen* is the root of the shapes of things and *zi* is (that
through which) words breed and gradually multiply. When they (*wen* and *zi*) are

---

[1] Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1162), from the Southern Song dynasty, was the first one who defined *wen* 文 as
single-component characters and *zi* 字 as component characters. His interpretation of the title of the *Shuowen*
was supported and applied by Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815). Therefore, the *Shuowen* used to be translated as
"Explaining single-component graphs and analyzing component characters". However, the translation of the
book title of the *Shuowen* applied in this paper is translated by Françoise Bottéro, who argued that the distinction
Xu Shen intended was between depictions of reality (*wen* 文) and graphs of words (*zi* 字), or, in other words,
between pictographs and logographs. See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Boston:
Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 79. Also see Françoise Bottéro, "Revisiting the wén 文 and the zì 字:
The Great Chinese Characters Hoax," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002): 14–33.

[2] Xu Shen's six types of characters are *xiangxing* 象形 (pictographic), *zhishi* 指事 (indicate matters),
xingsheng 形聲 (signific-phonetic), *huiyi* 會意 (combine meanings), *zhuanzhu* 轉注 (turned and annotated)
and *jiajie* 假借 (borrowed characters). See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 35.

[3] Among all the legends on the invention of Chinese characters, Cang Jie's story is the most popular one.
Although there is no reliable evidence to prove that this person ever existed for real, Cang Jie 倉頡, also written
as 蒼頡, recorded as one of the scribes of the legendary Yellow Thearch, was credited to the invention of
characters. Xu Shen had his stories summarized in the postface of *Shuowen*. Also see Françoise Bottéro, "Cāng
Jié and the invention of writing: Reflection on the elaboration of a legend," in Christoph Anderl and Halvor
Eifring, ed., *Studies in Chinese Language and Culture* (Oslo, Hermes Academic Publishing, 2006), 135.

revealed on bamboo slips and fabrics it is called *shu* (writing). *Shu* is *ru* (likeness, to be like).

倉頡之初作書也，蓋依類象形，故謂之文。其後形聲相益，即謂之字。文者，物象之本；字者，言孳乳而浸多也。著於竹帛謂之書。書者，如也。[4]

The graphs of Xu Shen's analysis are characters mostly in the Small Seal script form (*xiaozhuan* 小篆) while with a few of them in the Large Seal script form (*dazhuan* 大篆) which is sometimes identified as *zhouwen* 籀文. *Zhouwen*, as an early form of the seal script, originated from the late Western Zhou around the 9th century BCE. In the *Shuowen*, there are 225 *zhouwen* characters quoted from *Shizhou pian* 史籀篇, an early dictionary of characters written in the Large Seal script traditionally dated to the reign of King Xuan of Zhou 周宣王 (827–782 BCE). And these characters in *zhouwen* form resembled Western Zhou bronze script and appeared to be more elaborate than the seal script in general.[5]

Although the clerical or official script (*lishu* 隸書) was the current form of characters during Xu's period, it was not included in the *Shuowen*. Because it was not easy to discern the original structure of characters in *lishu* form, that is to say, the structural elements of the characters in the form of clerical script became less clear

---

[4] The postface of *Shuowen* has been either partially or completely translated several times by different scholars, see the ones I refer to: Roy Andrew. Miller, *Problems in the study of Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, PhD diss., 273–97; Timothy Michael O'neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory* (Berlin/Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 258-73 and Françoise Bottéro, "Revisiting the wén 文 and the zì 字: The Great Chinese Characters Hoax," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002): 14–33. Since my interpretation on this sentence in the postface is somehow different from these two translations, the translation applied is on my own.

[5] See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 33. Also see Li Yongjian 李詠健, " 'Shuowen' zhouwen e'xing xushi" 《說文》籀文訛形續釋 [Continuing Explanation of Incorrect Shapes of Zhouwen in *Shuowen*], *Yindu xuekan* 殷都學刊 [Yindu Journal], 2013. no.2: 79-85.

than they had been in small seal script and the small seal script characters were closer to the character forms used in Ancient-script Classics (*guwenjing* 古文經), which was believed as the form in which the *Five Classics* was first recorded.[6]

While the detailed information about Xu Shen's birth and death is not clear, one can find Xu Shen's biographical description in the seventy-ninth *juan* of *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書[Book of the Later Han] by Fan Ye 範曄[7], shown as below:

Xu Shen 許慎, whose courtesy name is Shuzhong 叔重, was a resident of Shaoling in Ru'nan prefecture. He was unpretentious and earnest. He learned classics and documents widely when he was young. Ma Rong used to frequently hold a high respect to him. People of his age commented on him, saying "When it comes to the Five Classics, there is not a second person able to match Xu Shuzhong". He served in the Labor Section of Ru'nan prefecture and got recommended as a Xiaolian (a filial and incorrupt person)[8]. Later on he was promoted and appointed to be the governor of the Xiao. He died at his home. At first, Xu thought the comments and explanation of the Five Classics were appraised inconsistently. Therefore he compiled *Wujing yiyi* 五經異義

---

[6] See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 79.

[7] Fan Ye 範曄 (398-445), with courtesy name Weizong 蔚宗, is the complier of *Hou Han shu*. He was a historian and politician of the Liu Song dynasty during the Southern and Northern dynasties. See Wu Hailin 吳海林 and Li Yanpei 李延沛 ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian* 中國歷史人物辭典 [Dictionary of Chinese Historical People] (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1983), 140.

[8] Xiaolian ("filial and incorrupt"), established by Emperor Wu of Han in 134 BCE, is an institutional system of annual recruitment, whereby the heads of various units of administration were required to nominate local men who were renowned for their characters. See Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li and Xiaofei Tian, *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 101.

[Different Meanings of the Five Classics][9], and then compiled *Shuowen jiezi*,

in total 14 chapters. Both of them got circulated afterwards.

許慎字叔重，汝南召陵[10]人也。性淳篤，少博學經籍，馬融[11]常推敬之，時

人為之語曰：「五經無雙許叔重。」為郡功曹[12]，舉孝廉，再遷除。卒於家。

初，慎以五經傳說臧否不同,於是撰為五經異義,又作說文解字十四篇,皆傳

於世。[13]

According to the postface by Xu, the *Shuowen* contains 9353 head characters

and 1163 graphic variants (*chongwen* 重文), and the characters are sorted into 540

groups (*bu* 部) according to their signific which is placed at the head of each group.

While in organizing and ordering classifiers Xu considered both their graphic

structure and their meaning, he did have rules in ordering the characters under each

classifier. Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 (1914-1995), a modern Chinese philologist, once

argued about the basic rules that Xu followed for the order of characters within each

classifier[14]. For example, characters presenting proper nouns and concrete things go

---

[9] The book title of *Wujing yiyi* was translated as "Different Interpretations in the Canon" by Roy Andrew Miller. See Roy Andrew. Miller, *Problems in the study of Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, 34. The translation I apply in this thesis is more literal.

[10] The modern equivalent of Shaoling 召陵 County is the place to the east of Yancheng 郾城 County of He'nan province. See Dai Junliang 戴均良, *Zhongguo gujin diming dacidian* 中國古今地名大詞典 [Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Place Names of China] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005), 1018.
[11] Ma Rong 馬融 (79-166), whose courtesy name is Jichang 季長, was the commentator of the Han dynasty who was famous for his commentaries on the Five Classics. See Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 78.

[12] See Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2008), 296.

[13] In the translation of Xu Shen's biographical information cited here, I did take the translation by Roy Andrew Miller in his dissertation as a reference. See Roy Andrew. Miller, *Problems in the study of Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, 298–300. However, in the translation of the official titles, I followed Hucker's dictionary.

[14] See Zhou Zumo, " 'Shuowen jiezi' gailun" 說文解字概論 [General Introduction of *Shuowen jiezi*],

first, followed by characters presenting actions and characters used to describe things, in other words, verbs and adjectives. Characters with similar meanings are placed together and characters with negative meanings are put after ones with positive meanings. Knowing and comparing the organization of different editions of the *Shuowen* may provide us an important perspective on examining its original text and various editions.

Each entry, as shown below, starts with the character in the Small Seal form. Then it comes to a brief definition of the basic and original meaning of the character, followed by an analysis of its graphic structure including its signific and phonetic (if applied), and often ends with a citation of its usage. In this way, the *Shuowen* systematically sorted the characters primarily by significs while taking the phonetic indicators fully into account. Xu Xuan 徐鉉[15] (916-991), the northern Song editor of the first woodblock edition of the *Shuowen*, known as *Da Xuben* 大徐本, added *fanqie* readings at the end of each entry to indicate the pronunciation based on the *Tangyun* 唐韻 [Tang Rhymes] by Sun Mian 孫愐[16] (?-?).

Xiaozhuan 小篆 + meaning + <u>signific---phonetic</u> + (citation) + *fanqie*
graphic structure

Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu 中國文化研究 [Studies on Chinese Culture], 1997. no.1: 64-72.

[15] Xu Xuan 徐鉉, whose courtesy name is Dingchen 鼎臣, is from Guangling of the end of the Five Dynasties and the beginning of the Northern Song dynasty. His work on the *Shuowen* is known as *Da Xuben*. See Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 258.

[16] *Tangyun* refers to the fragments of a Tang revision of the Qieyun 切韻 [Spelling Rhymes]. It is a rhyme dictionary compiled by Sun Mian, published around the twentieth year of Kaiyuan 開元 reign of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗(685-762) of Tang, 732. Its original edition has been lost. See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 27. Also see Sun Mian's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 209.

Table 1 Structure of Each Entry in *Da Xuben*

As to the original text of the *Shuowen* by Xu Shen, though presented to the throne by Xu's son, unfortunately, no complete edition of it was successfully preserved and not even fragments of it was recovered in the collection of Han documents found so far. This situation was explained by Roy Andrew Miller's conjecture that *Shuowen* did not play an important role during the period from Eastern Han to Tang dynasty[17]. The *Shuowen* that one has access to nowadays mostly came out after the Song dynasty, based on Xu Kai's 徐鍇[18] (920-974) edition, edited in the Five Dynasties and known as *Xiao Xuben* 小徐本, and Xu Xuan's edition, edited in Northern Song and known as *Da Xuben*, the first woodblock edition of which was mentioned earlier. Almost all the scholarship on the *Shuowen* after the Song dynasty, including Duan Yucai[19] 段玉裁 (1735-1815), Wang Yun[20] 王筠 (1784-1854), Gui Fu[21] 桂馥 (1736-1805) and Zhu Junsheng[22]

---

[17] Roy Andrew. Miller, *Problems in the study of Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, 174-176.

[18] Xu Kai, whose courtesy name is Chujin 楚金, is the younger brother of Xu Xuan. His work on the *Shuowen* is known as *Xiao Xuben*. See Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 260.

[19] Duan Yucai, whose courtesy name is Ruoying 若膺, also named as Duan Maotang 段懋堂, is a Chinese Philologist in the Qing dynasty. His most influential work is *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [Annotations of the *Shuowen jiezi*]. He concentrates on the elucidating the meanings through establishing the ancient pronunciation but is also strong on the forms of the characters. See Wilkinson Endymion, 79. Also see Duan Yucai's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 660.

[20] Wang Yun, whose courtesy name is Guanshan 貫山, compiled *Shuowen jiezi judou* 說文解字句讀 [Punctuate edition of the *Shuowen jiezi*]. He also wrote Shuowen shili 說文釋例. He did a systematic study of the *Shuowen* entries concentrating on the meanings of the characters as revealed by their forms and comparing discrepancies between the interpretations found by Duan Yucai and Gui Fu. Ibid., 79. Also see Wang Yun's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 702.

[21] Gui Fu, whose courtesy name is Weigu 未榖 and Donghui 東卉, compiled *Shuowen jiezi yizheng* 說文解字義証 [Examination of the meanings in the *Shuowen jiezi*]. He quotes from usage and definitions found in the *Classics* and later works to compare with the definitions given by Xu Shen. Ibid., 79. Also see Gui Fu's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 661.

[22] Zhu Junsheng, whose courtesy name is Fengqi 豐芑, is famous for his work *Shuowen tongxun dingsheng* 說

朱駿聲 (1788-1858) of the Qing—the high point of the *Shuowen*

scholarship—refers to the editions by Xu Xuan and Xu Kai.

文通訓定聲 [*Shuowen* etymologies and an arrangement by sounds] which was finished in 1833 and published in 1848. His purpose in rearranging the *Shuowen* into 21 sound groups was to highlight the relationship between the sound (especially the vowel) and the meaning. The preface contains his much quoted calculation that the *Shuowen* contains 364 *xiangxing* characters (3.89 percent of the total); 125 *zhishi* characters (1.34 percent); 1,167 *huiyi* (12.48 percent); and 7,697 *xingsheng* (82.3 percent). Ibid., 79. Also see Zhu Junsheng's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 705.

Chapter 2

TANGXIEBEN SHUOWEN 唐寫本說文

Before the *Songkanben,* there is no complete edition of the *Shuowen* remaining today. The only two pieces of the incomplete *Shuowen* disclosed before the *Songkanben* are both identified as the manuscript edition from the Tang dynasty. One is the *Tang xieben Shuowen mubu canjuan* 唐寫本說文木部殘卷 [The incomplete *juan* under 'wood' classifier of the *Shuowen* written in manuscript form in the Tang], abbreviated as *Tang mubu* 唐木部 hereafter, and the other one is the *Koubu canjian* 口部殘簡 [Incomplete slips of the 'mouth' classifier], abbreviated as *Tang koubu* 唐口部 below. The preservation of these fragments of *Shuowen* of Tang can be credited to the thriving scholarly activities due to the long period of comparative peace and the flourishing spread of Buddhism. The *Shuowen* was vigorously employed and copiously quoted in both the voluminous commentaries on the Classics by Confucian scholars and the semantic and phonetic glosses to those Buddhist canons in a vast amount, with even greater frequency[23].

Tang mubu* was found in the first year of Tongzhi 同治 reign, 1862, in Anqing 安慶. Only 2% of the whole *Shuowen* remained, in total 6 leaves, 188 characters, under the 'wood' classifier. According to the replicated version of the *Tang mubu* (see Figure 1 below), one can see that there are ten rows on each page and two characters in the Small Seal script in each row (one is in the upper position and the other one is in the lower position). For each entry, the phonetic notation (mostly in

---

[23] Roy Andrew. Miller, 176-177.

fanqie) goes first, then comes Xu Shen's explanation and analysis about the charater. But for those interchangeable graphs, the phonetic notation is omitted, and only exists the explanation, normally about its meaning and form. Here are some examples (entry 1 and 2). *Nou* 鎒 is the interchangable graph for *nou* 槈 and *pan* 鎜 is the interchangable graph for *pan* 槃.

Entry 1:

槈： 奴豆。 薅器也。從木辱聲。

鎒： 槈。或從金。

Nou 槈: Its pronunciation is derived from *nu* 奴 and *dou* 豆. It represents the tool for weeding. The graph is derived from *mu* 木 and *ru* 辱 is the phonetic.

Nou 鎒: It is as *nou* 槈. The graph may be derived from *jin* 金.

Entry 2:

槃：父安。承槃也。從木般聲。

鎜： 古文從金。

Pan 槃: Its pronunciation is derived from *fu* 父 and *an* 安. It represents the wooden tray. The graph is derived from *mu* 木 and *ban* 般 is the phonetic.

Pan 鎜: It is *pan* 槃 in the ancient texts. The graph is derived from *jin* 金.

Mo Youzhi [24] 莫友芝 (1811-71), a well-known scholar specializing in

---

[24] Mo Youzhi 莫友芝 (1811-1871), whose courtesy name is Zisi 子偲, is a Qing specialist in Chinese colophon.

examining colophons of books, acquired the valuable *Tang mubu* from Zhang Lianchen 張廉臣, the magistrate of Yi 黟 county. He carefully examined *Tang mubu* and compared it with editions of Xu brothers, and composed *Tangxieben Shuowen jiezi mubu jianyi* 唐寫本說文解字木部箋異 [Comments on the differences in the 'wood' classifier section of the manuscript form of *Shuowen jiezi* of Tang][25]. In the preface of *Jianyi*, Mo introduced how he obtained *Tang mubu*, the writing style of the Seal script in it, the taboos applied, and its paper quality:

In the first month of the summer of the first year of Tongzhi 同治 reign, my younger brother Xiangzhi came to Anqing from Qimen, said that Zhang Lianchen, the county magistrate of Yi, owned a half of the "wood" classifier section of the *Shuowen jiezi* copied by someone in the Tang dynasty. While its style of the Seal script is similar to ones on the *Meiyuan shenquan shi bei* 美原神泉詩碑 (Tablet for the poem on the divine spring of Meiyuan county)[26], its regular script resembles the Tang scripts of Buddhist sutras on minor epigraphs. The character *tian* 桰 and *gen* 楒 are incomplete ones for avoiding emperors' names[27], but there are no omitted strokes for the character *ang* 枊 and *yang* 卬

See Mo Youzhi's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 721.
[25] Abbreviated as *Jianyi* in below text.

[26] *Meiyuan shenquan shi bei* is a poem tablet unearthed from today's Meiyuan 美原 of Fuping 富平 county of Shaanxi province, carved by Yin Yuankai 尹元凱 (?-?) in the fourth year of Chuigong 垂拱 reign(688) of Tang. See Liu Dongping 劉東平, " 'Meiyuan shenquan shi' bei de shufa yishu tedian ji zai zhuanshu fazhan zhong de diwei tanxi" 《美原神泉詩》碑的書法藝術特點及在篆書發展中的地位探析 [Discussion and Analysis on the Art Feature of Calligraphy on the Tablet for the Poem on the Divine Spring of Meiyuan County and its Position in the Development of Seal Script], *Wenbo* 文博 [Relics and Museology], 2014. no.6: 90-93.

[27] *Tian* 桰 is incomplete for avoiding the name of Li Shi 李適 (742-805), Emperor Dezong 德宗 of Tang. *Gen* 楒, and *heng* 恒, which used to indicate the pronunciation in the explanation of *gen* 楒 in *Tang mubu*, are

^{28}. Compared with *Kaicheng shijing*^{29} 開成石經 (Kaicheng Stone-carved Classics) which did not avoid the current emperor's name, *ang* 昂, hence it was copied by people after Emperor Muzong 穆宗. The paper is firm and clean surpassing those collected Classics of Song. It is so-called *yinghuang*^{30} 硬黃 paper. In wan 皖 (Anhui) area, I have seen almost a hundred famous remaining works from previous generations, and indeed none of them was better than it. Therefore, I consider it as someone's original handwriting from Tang period. Although it is incomplete, it will certainly aid to correct and judge (other editions of *Shuowen*). Without considering the fineness or roughness of calligraphy and painting (by my brother), I especially considered that it was treasure to be collected, from which one would be reluctant to stay away. I asked my brother that if he came back, he must have a copied one with him back to me. Lianchen saw that Xiangzhi copied to every whit of it but could not succeed in accomplishing it in a hurry, and he generously gave it to me as a gift. Soon it

---

incomplete with the last stroke omitted for avoiding the name of Li Heng 李恒 (795-824), Emperor Muzong 穆宗 of Tang.

^{28} *Ang* 枊 and *yang* 卬 without strokes omitted did not avoid the name of Li Ang 李昂 (809-840), Emperor Wenzong 文宗 of Tang.

^{29} In total 12 Confucian Classics were engraved on *Kaicheng shijing* 開成石經 (Kaicheng Stone carved Classics), which initiated in the seventh year (834) of Dahe 大和 reign of Emperor Wenzong 文宗 and finished in the second year (837) of Kaicheng 開成 reign of Emperor Wenzong. It is the first fully preserved stone *Classics*. See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 374. Also see Song Tingwei 宋廷位, "Liu Gongquan yu Kaicheng shijing" 柳公權與開成石經 [Liu Gongquan and Kaicheng Stone-carved Classics], *Shufa shangping* 書法賞評 [Appreciation and Comments on Calligraphy Works], 2013. no.2: 30-37.

^{30} *Yinghuang* 硬黃 refers to one kind of paper. In "Gu hanmo zhenji bian" 古翰墨真跡辨 [Distinguish Ancient Authentic Work of Painting or Calligraphy], in *Dongtian qinglu* 洞天清錄 [Clear Record of Fascinating Places], Zhao Xihu 趙希鵠 (1170-1242) recorded, "*Yinghuang* paper, which was used by Tang people to write the Classics, was dyed with yellow liquid of cork trees which was taken to avoid bookworms. The paper was starched with pulp, and it was smooth with sparking and clean luster, hence many people who were skilled in calligraphy took this kind of paper for writing. 硬黃紙，唐人用以書經，染以黃蘗，取其辟蠹，以其紙加漿，澤瑩而滑，故善書者多取以作字".

arrived in the first month of the next year, I examined and checked one or two (characters under "wood" classifier in *Tang mubu*), and was greatly surprised by its fineness and marvelousness. It was the end of spring with cold rain. In this full period of ten days, I did not go out of door, whereupon I took editions by Xu brothers, and proofread all the differences and similarities. It is very worth to add to and correct, as many as dozens of places.

同治改元初夏，舍弟祥芝自祁門來安慶，言黟縣宰張廉臣有唐人寫說文解字木部之半，篆體似美原神泉詩碑，楷書似唐寫佛經小銘志。栝柂諱闕，而柳印不省，例以開成石經不避當王之昂，蓋在穆宗後人書矣。紙堅絜逾宋藏經，蓋所謂硬黃者。在皖見前代名跡近百，直無以右之。餘則以謂果李唐手蹟，雖斷簡，決資訂勘，不爭字畫工拙，特慮珍弆靳遠，假命其還，必錄副以來。廉臣見祥芝分毫摹似，蒼踔不得就，慨然歸我。明年正月將至，檢對一二，劇詫精奇。莫春寒雨，浹旬不出門戶，乃取大小徐本，通讐異同，其足補正，夥至數十事。

In *Jianyi*, Mo recorded the detailed physical appearance of *Tang mubu* and examined the postscript and seals attached at the end of it:

The paper is as high as a *jianchu chi*[31] 建初尺 with another 8 *fen*[32] 分. The

---

[31] *Jianchu chi* 建初尺 refers to the bronze ruler made during the period from 76 to 83 of Jianchu 建初 reign of Emperor Zhang 章 of Eastern Han. One *jianchu chi* equals 235 millimetres. See Zhang Chunhui 張春輝, etc., *Zhongguo jixie gongcheng faming shi* 中國機械工程發明史 [History of Invention of Mechanical Engineering in China] (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2004), 44.

[32] *Fen* 分 is a unit of length. It is often one tenth of *cun* 寸 and the actual measurements may vary from dynasty to dynasty. See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 555.

right side of the first sheet is broken and rotten, and there are 8 characters from *zha* 柤 to *huan* 桓. The upper margin is as wide as 4 *cun*[33] 寸, and the lower margin is as wide as 4 *cun* with another 6 *fen*. The second sheet is damaged in the middle, and it is torn into two parts. One is as 1-*chi* wide with another *cun* with a little less, and there are 20 characters from *wo* 楃 to *xi* 鑠. The other one is as wide as 7 *cun* with another 8 *fen*, and there exists 14 characters from *you* 櫌 to *bei* 栝. The damaged and lost ones are *si* 鉰 and *hui* 楎 these two characters. The third sheet is as wide as 1 *chi* with another 7 *cun* and 8 *fen*, and there exists 36 characters from *bei* 匦 to *chuan* 椯. On the fourth sheet, characters are from *jue* 橛 to *xi* 槃. On the fifth sheet, characters are from *qi* 綮 to *nie* 桙. On the sixth sheet, characters are from *bo* 檗 to *jie* 楬. There are 36 characters on each of them. And their widths are the same as that of the third sheet. (So that) it can be inferred that for the second page, if it is not damaged and torn, the number of characters it contains and its width are also the same as those of the following four sheets. (From these) we can see the measurements of paper of Tang for classics. At the end of the *juan*, a postscript by Mi Youren[34] (1074-1153) is attached. There are small imperial seals of Shaoxing reign at the

---

[33] *Cun* 寸 is also a Chinese unit of length. It is one tenth of *chi* 尺. Normally, 1 *chi* equals one third meter, but it may vary in different dynasties. By Mo's time, Qing dynasty, 1*chi* equals approximately 13 inches. Ibid., 555-556.

[34] Mi Youren 米友仁 (1086-1165), also named as Yinren 尹仁, whose courtesy name is Yuanhui 元暉, was a Southern Song calligrapher, painter and collector specialized in authenticating paintings and calligraphy works. He was the oldest son of Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107). Mi Fu, whose courtesy name is Yuanzhang 元章, was a painter, poet and calligrapher of the Northern Song. See Mi Youren's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 322 and Mi Fu's in page 302.

joint seam. After the postscript, there is the inscription by Yu Song[35] (?-?) in the first year (1225) of the Baoqing[36] reign. (So that) we can know that it was still in the imperial storehouse at the beginning of Southern Song, and later it belonged to a collector of Jiahe[37]. On the left of Yu Song's inscription, there are two seals: *Yu Song xinhua* 俞松心畫 (Yu Song's writing) and *Shouweng* 壽翁 (aged man, *Shouweng* is a courtesy name of Yu Song). Shouweng, is the one who composed *Lanting xukao* 蘭亭續考 [Further Examination on the Orchid Pavilion] in the *jiachen* year (1244) of Chunyou[38] reign. He was a resident from Jiahe, and he was an official acting as a Court Gentleman for Consultation. All (these biographical information) can be seen in his book. For the twenty years before this inscription, (people) mostly had not particularly recorded its significance. Only the postscript by Mi Youren mentioned it was in the Seal script, on 6 sheets. Using the first sheet to compare with other sheets, the damaged and lost characters should be 28 and the second sheet lost 2 characters. (The characters were lost) after the period of Yuanhui 元暉, and (those lost characters) can still be found based on (other versions of *Shuowen*), that is all.

紙高建初尺，尺有八分。弟一紙右斷爛，存祖至桓八文。上端廣四寸，下

---

[35] Yu Song 俞松 (?-?), whose courtesy name is Shouweng 壽翁, composed *Lanting xukao* 蘭亭續考 [Further Examine on the Orchid Pavilion]. See *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 [Annotated Catalog of the Complete Libraries of the Four Treasuries] in Scripta Sinica 漢籍電子文獻資料庫, p. 1795.

[36] Baoqing 寶慶 refers to the title of the first reign of Zhao Yun 趙昀 (1205-1264), Emperor Lizong 理宗 of Southern Song, from 1225 to 1227.

[37] Considering about Yu Song's biography recorded in *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, one may infer that the equivalent of Jiahe 嘉禾 is today's Jiaxing 嘉興 of Zhejiang province.

[38] Chunyou 淳祐 is the title of the fifth reign of Zhao Yun, in total 12 years, from 1241 to 1252.

端廣四寸六分。弟二紙中爛，析為二。一廣尺有一寸弱，框至鑅二十文。一廣七寸八分，櫋至梧十四文。爛失者鉛楎二文。弟三紙廣尺有九寸八分。匫至檔三十六文。弟四紙橉至槃。弟五紙槩至桻。弟六紙檘至楬。各三十六文，廣並與弟三同。以推弟二紙，若不斷爛，其容文數及廣亦同後四紙。可因見唐經紙尺度。卷末坿米友仁跋，合縫有紹興小璽，跋後有寶慶初俞松題記。知南宋初猶在內府。後乃歸嘉禾藏弄家。松題記左有俞松心畫及壽翁二印。壽翁，淳祐甲辰著蘭亭續考者，嘉禾人，官承議郎，皆見書中。此題先廿年，皆殊不藉輕重，唯米跋謂篆書六紙。以第一紙例諸紙，爛失當二十八文，第二紙失二文。是在元暉後，猶可依尋雲爾。

In *Jianyi*, he elucidated his opinion on *Tang mubu* that it was the manuscript edition from the mid Tang, specifically after the reign of Li Heng 李恒, Emperor Muzong 穆宗 (820-824), based on evidence from five diverse perspectives: the writing style of the Seal script and Regular script, the taboo style of specific characters, the quality of the papers, the seals and the postscript composed by scholars in the Song, and the organization of the writing pattern. After Mo Youzhi's death, *Tang mubu* was sold to Japan by his descendants. Today, it is preserved in Japan by the Naitō Tora 內藤虎 family.

Tang koubu is also conserved in Japan (see Figure 2 below), and there are only 12 characters on it. Unlike the entries on *Tang mubu*, for each entry on *Tang koubu*, explanation of the meaning and graphic structure goes first, followed by its *fanqie* reading. Another thing that draws one's attention about *Tang koubu* is that the *fanqie*

readings of most characters here are different from those in *Songkanben*, the same situation as when *Tang mubu* is compared with *Songkanben*. Therefore it would be logical to infer that scholars who worked on the *Shuowen* had already started early on to edit and make some changes to its original text, and different *fanqie* systems may have been applied in different editions of the *Shuowen*. The *fanqie* systems applied in *Tang mubu*, *Xiao Xuben* and *Da Xuben* are discussed in chapter 4.

Figure 1. *Tang Mubu Canjuan*, Replicated Version[39]

---

[39] The figure is taken from the replicated version of *Tangxieben Shuowen jiezi mubu jianyi* 唐寫本說文解字木部箋異 [Comments on the differences in the 'wood' classifier section of the manuscript form of Shuowen jiezi of Tang] by Mo Youzhi 莫友芝, published in the eighth month of 1864, the third year of Tongzhi reign, page 1 and 2.
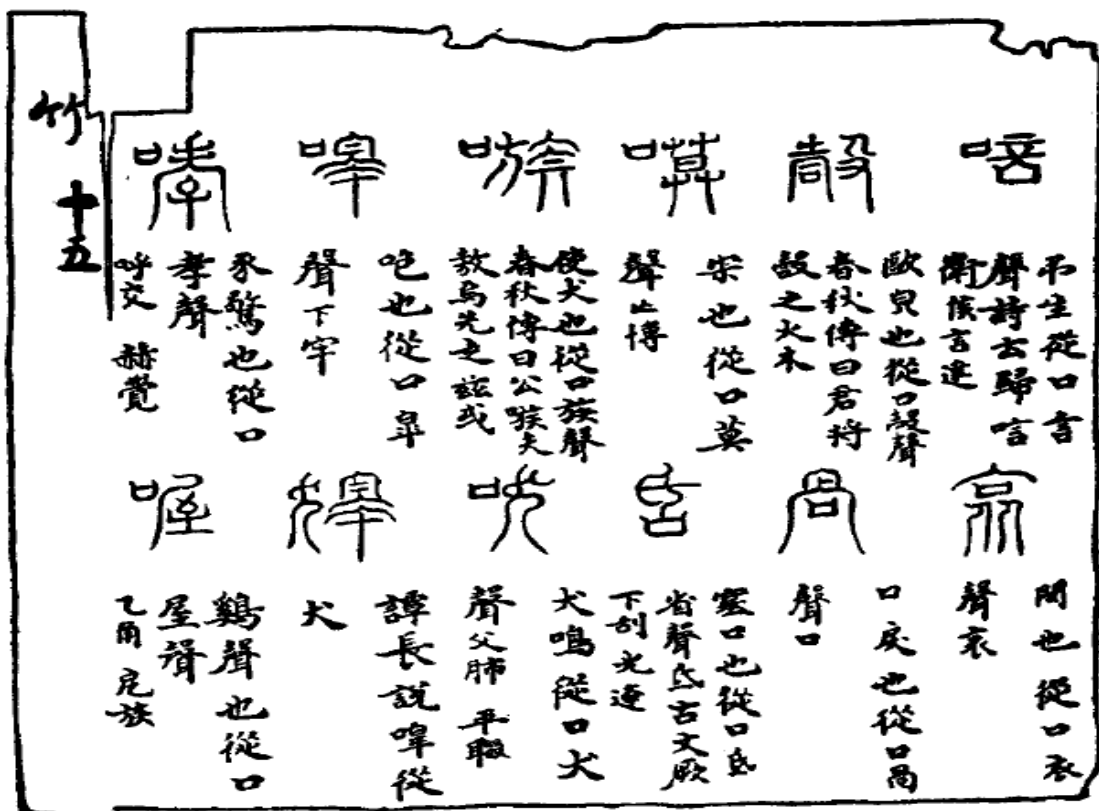
日人某氏藏說文口部殘簡（摹本）

Figure 2 *Tang Koubu Canjian,* Replicated Version[40]

---

[40] The figure is taken from Zhou Zumo, *Wen xue ji* 問學集 [Collection of Learning] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1966), 724.

Chapter 3

SONGKANBEN SHUOWEN 宋刊本說文

The *Shuowen jiezi xichuan* 說文解字繫傳[41] [Related circulating editions of the *Shuowen jiezi*], known as *Xiao Xuben*, was completed during the period of the Five Dynasties, by Xu Kai. Xu Kai died very soon after he finished compiling his work and did not see it carved and printed. There are three carved and printed editions of *Shuowen jiezi xichuan* circulating afterwards. The edition with the highest quality, which one can see today, was carved by Qi Xizao[42] 祁寯藻 (1793-1866) in 1839, the ninth year of Daoguang 道光 reign of the Qing, based on the manuscript edition of the Song (*Songchaoben* 宋鈔本) preserved by Gu Qianli 顧千里 (1766-1835) and the incomplete printed edition of the Song preserved by Wang Shizhong 汪士鐘 (1786-?). See Figure 3 below for its carving and printing information. The text reads "道光十九年依景宋鈔本重彫" (Re-carved in the 19th year of Daoguang reign based on the image of the Song manuscript edition). This edition[43] was photographically reprinted again by Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 in 1986.

---

[41] Not Sure about the meaning of *xichuan* 繫傳 here. *Xi* 繫 may refer to the meaning "relate to" and *chuan* 傳 may refer to the meaning " *liuchuan* 流傳 (circulate, spread)".

[42] Qi Xizao, whose courtesy name is Shuying 叔穎 and Shifu 實甫, was a poet and calligrapher of late Qing. See Qi Xizao's biographical information in Chen Yutang 陳玉堂, *Zhongguo jinxiandai renwu minghao dacidian* 中國近現代人物名號大辭典 [Dictionary on Modern Chinese People] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1993), 226.

[43] See Xu Kai 徐鍇, *Shuowen jiezi xichuan* 說文解字繫傳 [Related circulating edition of the *Shuowen jiezi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1.

Figure 3[44] *Shuowen Jiezi Xichuan*, *Feiye* 扉頁.

According to the preface composed by Yin Yunchu 殷韵初[45] in the *Shuowen jiezi* published in December of 1963 by Zhonghua shuju, in 986, the third year of Yongxi 雍熙 reign of Emperor Taizong 太宗 of Song, Xu Xuan received an imperial order to proofread the *Shuowen* and had it carved on woodblock. Xu Xuan referred to various editions of the *Shuowen* circulated at his time, such as the edition compiled by his younger brother, Xu Kai and the one edited by Li Yangbing[46] 李陽

---

[44] This figure is the *feiye* 扉頁 taken from the *Shuowen jiezi xichuan* of the modern edition published by Zhonghua shuju in 1986. In general, *feiye* refers to the title page placed at the beginning of a book giving details of title, author, compiler, publisher, etc.

[45] Yin Yunchu 殷韻初 is the assumed name of Chen Naiqian 陳乃乾 (1896-1971). See Chen Naiqian's biographical information in Chen Yutang, *Zhongguo jinxiandai renwu minghao dacidian*, 489.

[46] Li Yangbing 李陽冰, whose courtesy name is Shaowen 少溫, was born during the period of Kaiyuan 開元 reign of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 of the Tang. He used to edit and make changes to the *Shuowen* by Xu Shen and was criticized by many later scholars. However, his contribution in preserving and developing the study of the *Shuowen* still shed light on the studies afterwards. The version he edited is no longer available now and the only information about it we can find traces back to the "Quwang pian" 袪妄篇 (the section on removing errors) of the *Shuowen jiezi xichuan* by Xu Kai. See Zhou Zumo, "Li Yangbing zhuanshu kao" 李陽冰篆書考 (Textual Research on the Seal Script by Li Yangbing), in *Wen xue ji* 問學集, 801. Also see Li Yangbing's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 209.

冰, collated the *Shuowen jiezi*[47], which is known as *Da Xuben*.

Yin Yunchu also introduced the two editions of *Da Xuben* extant today. One is the *Jiguge ben* 汲古閣本 printed by Mao Jin[48] 毛晉 (1599-1659). Based on the edition carved in the Song dynasty, he had *Da Xuben* re-carved and printed it twice, the second one of which was a proofread version. Both versions are known as the *dazi ben* 大字本 (large characters edition). The other edition is the *Pingjinguan ben* 平津館本. Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753-1818) reprinted it in 1809, the fourteenth year of the Jiaqing 嘉慶 reign, based on the edition printed in the Song. But the characters are very small and not convenient to read. Hence it is called as the *xiaozi ben* 小字本 (small characters edition). In 1873, the twelfth year of Tongzhi 同治 reign, Chen Changzhi 陳昌治 changed the layout of Sun's edition and had it reprinted into the most widespread and convenient version today.[49]

---

[47] The background information of *Da Xuben* introduced here can be found in the preface of the *Shuowen jiezi*, written by Yin Yunchu, published by Zhonghua shuju, 1963.

[48] Mao Jin, whose courtesy name is Zijin 子晉 and room name is Jiguge, is a bibliophile of late Ming dynasty and a commercial printer as well. See Mao Jin's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 535.

[49] See the preface of the *Shuowen jiezi*, p.4-5.

Chapter 4

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TANGXIEBEN AND SONGKANBEN

Apart from the textual analysis on the *Shuowen* quotations of other pe-Song works, the discovering of the *Tangxieben* provides a new perspective for us to examine the editions of the *Shuowen* by Xu brothers, by comparing these two editions with *Tang mubu* and *Tang koubu*, as Zhou Zumo commented[50]:

> If it were not for the *Shuowen* of Tang edition, it is difficult after all to assess the fine beauty and rough unsightliness of the editions by Xu brothers.
>
> 不有唐本，終難定二徐之精粗美惡也。

At the beginning of "Zaijiao yigao shihou" 再校易稿識後 (After acknowledging Recomparing and Revising the Draft) of *Jianyi*, Mo summarized the differences between Xu brothers' editions and Tang edition he detected:

> There are 188 characters in the Tang manuscript edition of Mister Xu Shen's book, and the Seal scripts of 5 of them are different from Xu brothers' editions. There are 130 and some where my explanations and analysis are about those added or reduced or just places simply different. There could not have been no erroneous addition or displacement, and I obtained relevant references for what

---

[50] See Zhou Zumo, "Tangben Shuowen yu Shuowen jiuyin" 唐本說文與說文舊音 [Tang Edition *Shuowen* and the Old Phonetic Notation in *Shuowen*], in *Wenxue ji*, 725.

to preserve or delete, and correcting errors, often for 6 or 7 out of 10 of them.

唐寫許君書百八十有八文，與兩徐本篆體不同者五。說解增損殊別百三十

有奇。衍誤漏落所不能無，而取資存逸訂訛十常六七。

While comparing *Tang mubu* manuscript with *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, Mo

carefully checked and cited third sources as the auxiliary testimonies, such as *Yiqie*

jing yinyi 一切經音義[51] [Pronunciations and Meanings of all the Sutrus] and

Yupian 玉篇[52] [Jade characters]. These third sources were sorted into two levels by

Ron Andrew Miller:

(1) Citation, comprising works citing the *Shuowen* integrally and often by name

(2) Utilization, comprising works, usually of a lexical nature of themselves,

whose authors incorporated *Shuowen* entries into their own texts, usually

without detailed or explicit citations of *Shuowen* as such or by name.[53]

In the comparison presented in this thesis, some of those auxiliary sources are

also applied. Although these may not make us judge which is "right" or "wrong", or

which is "better" or "worse" among the different versions of *Shuowen* compared

here, because the two pieces of manuscript of *Shuowen* remain incomplete and

occupy only a small part of the whole thing, and these auxiliary testimonies must

---

[51] *Yiqie jing yinyi*, mostly complied by Huiling 慧琳(737-820), is the earliest extant bilingual glossary from the seventh century, as one of the first lexical works which were glossaries of Chinese borrowings from Sanskrit in the form of transcriptions. See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 63 and 393.

[52] The *Yupian* is a major source on Early Middle Chinese compiled in 543 by Gu Yewang 顧野王(519-581) of the Liang dynasty. The structure of the *Yupian* was strongly influenced by the *Shuowen* and the entries in *Yupian* were arranged under 542 radicals. See William Hubbard Baxter, *A handbook of Old Chinese phonology*, 41. And see Gu Yewang's biographical information in Wu Hailin and Li Yanpei ed., *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian*, 161.

[53] Roy Andrew. Miller, *Problems in the study of Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, 202.

have been strongly influenced by the version of *Shuowen* circulated during the time when these auxiliary testimonies were composed, just as Miller stated:

> "…any attempt to decide upon 'better' or 'worse' readings would at once involve us in a vicious circle, for we would have to make the decisions on the basis of our own conceptions of the *Shuowen* phonology, before we have established which of the texts, when they differ, among *Da Xuben*, *Xiao Xuben* and *Tang mubu*, best represents the phonology."[54]

However, these auxiliary sources may aid us to define the antiquarian value of the two incomplete manuscripts of *Shuowen* survived, and to speculate which explanation and analysis of one specific entry applied in different versions of *Shuowen* is more convincing and reasonable, and probably gets closer to the original *Shuowen*. Apart from the most outstanding differences one can see on the stylistic rules and layout among *Tang koubu*, *Tang mubu*, *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, five main distinctions between *Tangxieben* and *Songkanben* detected will be explained and exemplified below: (1) the order of the entries under the same classifier, (2) the appearance of the Small Seal script, (3) the explanation of the meaning of some characters, (4) the analysis of the graphic structure and (5) the phonetic notations and the *fanqie* spellings.

1. The order of the entries under the same classifier

By comparing the *Tangxieben* and *Songkanben*, we can see that the order of the

---

[54] Roy Andrew. Miller, *Problems in the study of Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, 212.

entries under same classifiers in different editions of the *Shuowen* may vary. Figure 4 is the first page of the replicated version of *Tang mubu*, and the two characters on the first row are not completely preserved and remain unclear. But through comparing the characters on this page with the counterpart of *Da Xuben* (see Figure 5), one can recognize them easily. The first one is *zha* 柤 which signifies the wood fence, and the second one is *jian* 楗 meaning the wooden door bar. What one needs to pay attention here is that, in both *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, between *zha* and *jian*, there is another character, *qiang* 槍. Based on Duan Yucai's annotation "按槍有相迎鬭爭之意", *qiang* means *ju* 距, indicating "to encounter and resist each other".[55] As mentioned before, Xu Shen basically put characters with similar meanings together. Having *qiang* placed between *zha* and *jian* by Xu Xuan and Xu Kai must have been somehow uncertain to do the same. In addition, in other dictionaries strongly influenced by the *Shuowen*, such as the *Yupian*, *qiang* was not put between *zha* and *jian*, either.

The same situation also happens in *koubu* 口部 (classifier "mouth"). See Figure 2 above and 6 below. Compared with *Tang koubu*, characters such as *ti* 嗁 (to give forth sound), *shu* 嗽 (to remain in silence), *pao* 咆 (to roar) and *jie* 嗜 (the sound of birds' warble) are added in both *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*. In this case, these characters appearing in *Da Xuben* seem to be in accordance with other characters and do follow the rule of Xu Shen to organize the order of the characters under the same classifier. One possibility is that these characters may be newly

---

[55] See Duan Yucai, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [Annotations of the *Shuowen jiezi*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 256.

developed characters and another one is that missing or disordering entries took place in the *Tang xieben*. For the character *pao* 咆, which is added in *Da Xueben* and *Xiao Xuben* but did not exist in *Tang koubu*, the second possibility is preferred here. In *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, *pao* 咆 and *hao* 嗥 are two adjacent characters utilized to explain the meaning of each other. And in *Tang koubu*, *hao* is also explained by using the character *pao*, exactly the same as *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*. Hence it is reasonable to infer that *pao* may be accidently left out or displaced in the manuscript version of *Tang koubu*. Similar phenomenon can also be found in *Tang mubu*. In the editions of Xu brothers, the character *jing* 樫 (a small bedside table) is placed between *ting* 桯 (explained as "牀前幾也"; a small bedside table) and *chuang* 牀 ("安身之坐也"；the seat for relaxing or easing one's body). *Jing* and *ting* represent the same object and *jing* is explained as: "*Jing* 樫 is *ting* 桯, in the east, it is called *dang*" 蕩樫桯也，東方謂之蕩. However, *Tang mubu* placed *jing* between *lei* 櫑 (wine container) and *pi* 椑 (elliptic drinking vessels), 46 entries after *ting*. Another instance is the entry *ba* 柭, explained as "*ba* 柭 means *bang* 棓 (a rod, a stick), and its graph derives from the signific *mu* 木 and the sound follows the phonetic *ba*" 犮柭，棓也。從木犮聲. *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* reasonably locate it between the entries *zhang* and *bang* with the same meaning with *ba*. But it is put between *zhuo* 櫡 (an axe, a big hoe) and *pa* 杷 (tools to harvest wheat) in *Tang mubu*. In these two cases, the positions of *jing* and *ba* in the editions of Xu brothers are more convincing than *Tang mubu*. Table 2 below is a form illustrating all the differences on the order of entries among *Tang mubu*, *Da Xuben* and *Xiao*
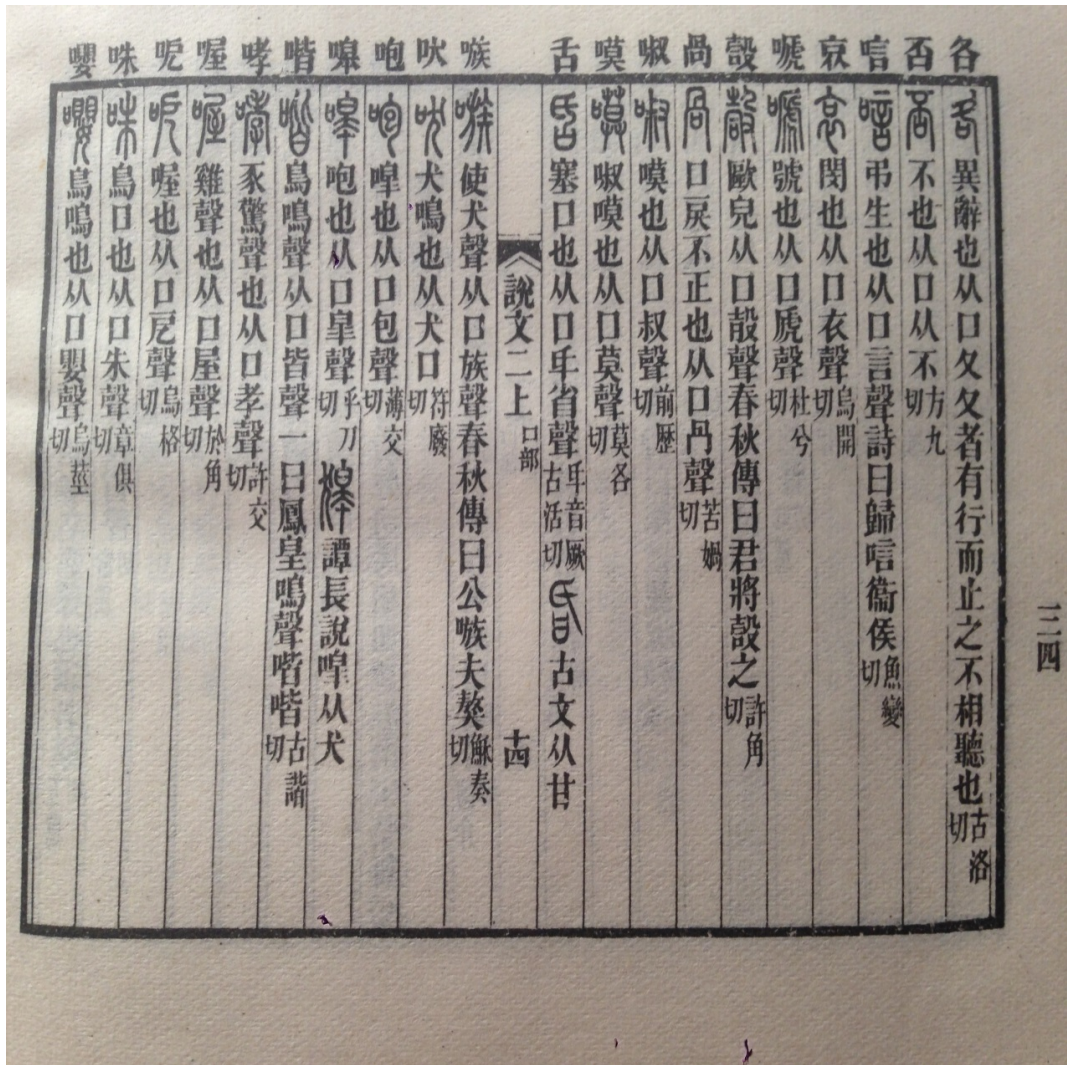
Xuben. More studies and research in this area could be conducted critically in the future.

Figure 4 *Tang Mubu*, Replicated Version Figure 5[56] *Shuowen Jiezi*, by Xu Xuan

---

[56] Figure 5 and 6 were both taken from the photographic version of the *Shuowen jiezi* compiled by Xu Xuan and published by Zhonghua shuju in 1963.

Figure 6 The *Shuowen Jiezi*, by Xu Xuan

Entry	Entry No. in Tang mubu	Description
Jing 桱	59	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *ting* 桯 and *chuang* 牀; *Tang mubu*: between *lei* 櫑 and *pi* 椑.
Hui 楎	∅	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *si* 柶 and *you*

		櫋; *Tang mubu*: Not found.
Ba 柭	32	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *zhang* 杖 and *bang* 棓; *Tang mubu*: between *zhuo* 櫡 and *pa* 杷.
Ling 柃	∅	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *xi* 椻 and *fu* 柭; *Tang mubu*: Not found.
Zhen 栚	∅	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *she* 梌 and *lian* 槤; *Tang mubu*: Not found.
Zhen 橓	69	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Not found; *Tang mubu*: Between *ji* 檕 and *zhu* 杼.
Ni 檷	∅	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *ji* 檕 and *ji* 機; *Tang mubu*: Not found.
Ji 機	∅	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *ni* 檷 and *sheng* 滕; *Tang mubu*: Not found.
Sheng 滕	∅	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *ji* 機 and *zhu* 杼; *Tang mubu*: Not found.
Zhan 棧	121	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *peng* 棚 and *zun* 栫; *Tang mubu*: between *bi* 桦 and *ji* 極.
Fei 棐	98	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *xiao* 枭 and *zhi* 栀; *Tang mubu*: between *hun* 楯 and *qi* 綦.
Qiang	178	*Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*: Between *zha* 柤 and

槍		*jian* 楗; *Tang mubu*: between *xi* 榍 and *xian* 閑.
Xian 閑	179	*Da Xuben*: Not found.
		Xiao Xuben: Between *xi* 榍 and *jian* 檻;
		Tang mubu: between qiang 槍 and *jian* 檻.

Table 2 Differences on the Order of Entries Among *Tang Mubu*, *Da Xuben* and *Xiao*

Xuben

We also notice that there is another character, *hao* 獋, as an independent entry in both *Tang koubu* and *Xiao Xuben*, but listed under the entry *hao* 獋 in *Da Xuben*, shown as below.

唐本口部: 獋，譚長說：“嗥”。從犬。

大徐本：譚長說：“嗥”。從犬。

小徐本: 獋，譚長說：“嗥”。從犬。臣鍇按:《春秋左傳》曰“犲狼所獋”，犲狼犬屬獋，其聲高大也。

In *Tang koubu*, *hao* is explained as an interchangeable graph of *hao* 嗥 (to roar, to howl) and the graph is derived from the signific "*quan* 犬 (dog)". Both Xu Xuan and Xu Kai followed the explanation in *Tang koubu*, and Xu Kai added: "It is recorded in the *Zuo's Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals* as the howl of wolves and jackals. Jackals and wolves of dog genus howl and the sound of their howls is high and loud. "

By comparing the *Tangxieben* with the editions by Xu brothers, one can notice that all the graphical variants or interchangeable characters were listed as

independent entries in *Tangxieben* and *Xiao Xuben*, but under independent entries in *Da Xuben*.

2. The appearance of the Small Seal script

The Small Seal script of some characters presented in *Songkanben* got changed from the ones in the *Tangxieben*, under both wood and mouth classifier. In "Zaijiao yigao shihou" of *Jianyi*, Mo pointed out that among those 188 characters in *Tang mubu*, the Seal script of 5 appears to be different from Xu brothers' editions:

> The Seal script of *si* 枱, *zhen* 柣, *zhui* 椎, *xi* 橴 and *hui* 欈, in Tang edition they were written as *qi* 杞, *zhen* 槭, *sun* 榫, *xi* 㮤 and *hui* 橃. Zhen 槭 had part of it omitted but without pronunciation omission. For *xi* 㮤 and *hui* 橃, their up-down structure were changed into left-right structure. Their graphs and pronunciations are passed through with minor variations, and it is common in ancient works. For *qi* and *si*, and *sun* and *zhui*, they are entirely in two forms. The (explanation for) phonetic and meaning for each one is complete, but they are unexpectedly left out for each other.

枱柣椎橴欈篆，唐本作杞槭榫㮤橃。槭省聲不省。㮤橃下上易左右。形聲輾轉小岐，古書恒有。杞枱榫椎，截然兩體，聲義各足，直是互漏。

Below is a table illustrating the Seal scripts of the characters introduced above in *Tang mubu* and *Da Xuben*.

Tang mubu 唐木部	*Da Xuben* 大徐本
Qi 杞	*Si* 枱
Zhen 楲	*Zhen* �
Sun 榫	*Zhui* 椎
Xi 槩	*Xi* 檄
Hui	*Hui* 槥

Table 3 Comparison of the Small Seal Scripts in *Tang Mubu* and *Da Xuben*[57]

Among the characters under mouth classifier, the Small Seal scripts of *yan* 唁 and *ai* 哀 appear to be slightly different from the ones in *Da Xuben*:

哀: (Tang koubu) (Da Xuben)

唁: (Tang koubu) (Da Xuben)

By examining the Small Seal scripts in diverse editions of the *Shuowen* from different periods, it would be reasonable for us to infer that different shapes of the Small Scripts do exist as time flows and the Small Seal script had kept developing all the time.

3. The explanation of the brief meaning of a few characters

---

[57] The Seal scripts in *Tang mubu* are taken from Mo's *Jianyi*, and the ones in *Da Xuben* are taken from the *Shuowen jiezi* compiled by Xu Xuan, published by Zhonghua shuju in 1963.

The small seal script of each entry is followed by a brief explanation of the original meaning of the character. For some characters, the original meaning is interpreted differently in *Songkanben* from that in *Tangxieben*. Divergences even exist between *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* of *Songkanben*. Comparatively speaking, *Xiao Xuben* is closer to *Tangxieben* than to *Da Xuben* on this perspective. The following five instances exemplify these variations.

Example 1: 梳

唐本木部: 梳，理髮者也。從木，疏省聲。

二徐本: 梳，理髮也。從木，疏省聲。

In *Tang mubu*, *shu* 梳 is explained as "*Shu* is the thing used to tidy or comb one's hair. Its graph is derived from *mu* 木 (wood) and *shu* 疏 is the phonetic with pronunciation omission". But *shu* 梳 is explained as "*Shu* means to tidy or comb one's hair, and its graph is derived from *mu* 木 (wood) and *shu* 疏 is the phonetic with pronunciation omission" in both *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*. Based on *Songknben*, it would be easy or natural to interpret *shu* as a character to present the action "comb one's hair". On this entry, the explanation applied in *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* may have reflected the historical lexicalization where verbs are made from nouns, which we see frequently in Chinese language.

Example 2: 牀

唐本木部: 牀，安身之座也。從木，爿聲。

大徐本：牀，安身之坐者。從木，爿聲。

小徐本：牀，安身之几坐也。從木，爿聲。

The character *chuang* 牀 was demonstrated differently in all the three editions of the *Shuowen* examined here. In *Tang mubu*, it was described as "The character *chuang* presents the seat for relaxing one's body. Its graph is derived from *mu* 木 (wood) and *pan* 爿 is the phonetic." Xu Kai replaced *zuo* 座 (seat) with *jizuo* (a small table and seat). Since *ji* 几 here can be clearly recognized as a noun "a small table", we may conclude that *zuo* 坐 here is a noun as well, as a replacement of *zuo* 座. Therefore, Xu Kai's interpretation is very similar with the *Tang mubu*. However, in *Da Xuben*, even though *zuo* 坐 could also be understood as a noun, as an allograph of *zuo* 座, with the changing of the ending particle from *ye* 也 to *zhe* 者, the explanation is more likely to mean "the one who sit on the seat or (the action of) sitting on the seat", which may cause confusion and misunderstanding. However, by consulting the quotations in *Yupian*: "*Chuang* 牀, its *fanqie* refers to *shi* 仕 and *liang* 良, and the *Shuowen* explained it as the one who sit on the seat or (the action of) sitting on the seat" 牀, 仕良切, 說文曰, 安身之坐者[58] and *Fangyan* 方言 [Regional Speech][59]: " According to what the *Shuowen* explained, *chuang* refers to the one who sit on the seat or (the action of) sitting on the seat" 案說文云, 牀, 安身之坐者[60], one can see that both of them appear to be in accordance with the

---

[58] See *Fangyan*, *juan* 5, 12., in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書 [Imperial Collections of Four Sections], recorded in Chinese Text Project.

[59] *Fangyan* 方言(literally translated as "Regional Speech"), attributed to Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53BCE-18CE), is the earliest dialect geography in the whole ancient world but not only in China. See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 92.

[60] See *Yupian*, *juan* 12, 15., in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書 [Imperial Collections of Four Sections], recorded in Chinese Text Project.

explanation in *Da Xuben*. Therefore, it may be doubtful to justify by this point which is "better" or which originated from the original *Shuowen* by Xu Shen. Based on the analysis here, the only thing we may hypothesize is that *Xiao Xuben*, at this point, tends to be closer to the *Tangxieben* than *Da Xuben*.

Example 3: 梲

唐本木部: 梲，大杖也。從木兌聲。

大徐本：梲，木杖也。從木兌聲。

小徐本：梲，木杖也。從木兌聲。

In *Tangmubu*, *zhuo* 梲 means *dazhang* 大杖 (a big stick) and its graph derives from the signific *mu* 木 and its sound follows the phonetic *dui* 兌. But in *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, *zhuo* was explained as *muzhang* 木杖 (a wooden stick). In the explanation of the entry *dabang* 大棒 (a big stick) in *Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義 [Pronunciation and Meaning in the Complete Buddhist Canon], it quoted *dazhang* from *Shuowen* instead of *muzhang*.

Example 4: 杠

唐本木部: 杠，牀前撗也。從木工聲。

大徐本：杠，牀前橫木也。從木工聲。

小徐本：杠，牀前橫木也。從木工聲。

In *Tang mubu*, *gang* 杠 was explained as "牀前撗也" (the middle rail before the bed). And Xu Xuan and Xu Kai added *mu* 木 (wood) after *heng* 橫 (the middle

rail) in their explanation. By checking the entry *heng* 橫[61] in *Shuowen*, one can see

that *heng* 橫 represents "闌木也" (the railing wood) and this character itself

contains the meaning "wood". Also, the records in both *Yupian* and *Guangyun* 廣韻

[Broad Rhymes] appear to be in accordance with the explanation in *Tangmubu*.

Hence the *mu* 木 added in the editions of Xu brothers may be redundant or

reflecting the language of their time.

Example 5: 槱

唐本木部: 槱，積木燎之也。從木火，酉聲。《詩》曰，薪之槱之。《周禮》

　　　　　曰，以槱燎祠司中司命。

大徐本：槱，積火燎之也。從木從火，酉聲。《詩》曰，薪之槱之。《周禮》

　　　　曰，以槱燎祠司中司命[62]。

小徐本：槱，積火燎之也。從木從火，酉聲。《詩》曰，薪之槱之。《周禮》

　　　　曰，以槱燎祠司中司命。

In *Tang mubu*, the entry *you* 槱 is explained as "積木燎之也" (to amass wood

to set afire) and its graph derives from the signific *mu* 木 and its sound follows the

phonetic *you* 酉. In *Shijing* 詩經 [The Book of Odes], it said "supplying firewood;

yea, stores of it"[63]; and in *Zhouli* 周禮 [The Rites of the Zhou], it said "using the

amassed wood to set afire to offer sacrifice to the lord of life and the director of

---

[61] See entry 142 in *Tang mubu* and p.124 in *Da Xuben*.

[62] See the translation of *Sizhong* 司中 and *Siming* 司命 in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220-589 AD)*, Leiden: Brill, 2009. vol.1. p.84.

[63] Translated by James Legge. See the translation in *Yupu* 棫樸 of *Shijing* in Chinese Text Project.

destiny". In *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, *mu* 木 is replaced by *huo* 火 (fire), as in *jimu* 積木 to *jihuo* 積火, and the explanation applied in the editions of Xu brothers is translated as "amassing fire to set afire". Since the character *liao* 燎 (to burn, to set afire) itself has the meaning to apply *huo* 火, and the *Yupian* also says "橪, 積木 燎以祭天; *You*, it means to amass wood to set afire to offer sacrifice to the heaven", the explanation in *Tang mubu* may be more appropriate here.

4. The analysis of the graphic structure for a few entries

Although the brief meaning of a few characters appears to be the same in both *Tangxieben* and *Songkanben*, I do find that *Tangxieben*, *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* may hold different interpretations on the graphic structure of these characters. And most of the divergences focus on identifying whether the graphic structure of the character is *huiyi* or *xingsheng*, as the five examples (example 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) shown below. Based on the examples examined, one may achieve the impression that on some entries while *Xiao Xuben* and *Da Xuben* were quite similar and close probably because they referred to similar, if not identical, base texts different from the *Tangxieben*, and on some entries *Xiao Xuben* was closer to *Tangxieben* than *Da Xuben* from this aspect. After the examples is a table listing all the differences found on graphic structure analysis by comparing *Tangxieben* and *Songkanben*, in total 22 entries.

Example 6: 吠

唐本口部：吠，犬鳴也。從口。犬聲。父肺。

大徐本::吠，犬鳴也。從犬口。符廢切。

小徐本：吠，犬鳴。從口犬。臣鍇曰，會意或雲從犬。扶穢反。

   Fei 吠, with the meaning "the dog is barking, [or the barking of dogs]", is categorized as a *xingsheng* character in *Tang koubu*. Its graph is derived from the signific *kou* 口 (mouth) and *quan* 犬 (dog) is the phonetic. *Fei* was identified as a *huiyi* character in both *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* by saying that its graph is derived from both the signific *kou* 口 and *quan* 犬. However, it is not likely that *fei* derived from *quan* phonologically, yet Xu Shen viewed it a *xingsheng*. This suggests that the pronunciation of the character had changed since Xu Shen's time, and thus the Xu brothers took it as a *huiyi* character.

Example 7:   杓

唐本木部：杓，匹麼。枓柄也。從木。勺聲。

大徐本：枓柄也。從木從勺。臣鉉等曰，今俗作市若切，以為栖杓之杓。甫
         搖切。

小徐本：枓柄也。從木，勺聲。臣鍇曰，北斗之柄弟一星，取此為名。杓猶
         標也。片麼反。

   Biao 杓 signifies the handle of a spoon. In *Tang mubu*, it was regarded as a *xingsheng* character that its meaning follows the signific *mu* and its pronunciation follows the phonetic *shao* 勺 (spoon). On this entry, Xu Kai hold the same opinion on the graphic structure analysis of *biao*, but Xu Xuan clarified that *biao* was a *huiyi*

character and its meaning is the combination of *mu* and *shao*. Since the entry 杓 has

three pronunciations, *biao*, *shao* and *zhuo*, there sure are two sound series for the

initial of 勺 phonetic, one alveolo-dental and the other one labial. Given

Baxter-Sagart OC reconstruction has *t-qewk (*m-t-qewk, and the same for 杓) for

勺, the labial initial may have developed regionally or at a later time perhaps with a

prefix-induced change. Therefore it is possible that Xu Shen and Xu Kai read it with

alveolo-dental initial (modern *shao* or *zhuo*), which is still predominant in modern

Chinese, whereas Xu Xuan read it with a labial initial (*biao*).

Example 8:　　科

唐本木部：科，主。勺也。從木，斗聲。

大徐本：科，勺也。從木從斗。之庾切。

小徐本：科，勺也。從木，斗聲。臣鍇按，字書科鬥有柄，所以斟水。拙庾
　　　　反。

Dou 科 means the spoons. Familiar with the graphic structure of *biao* 杓 in

example 7 above, it is considered as a *xingsheng* character in both *Tang mubu* and

Xiao Xuben that its meaning follows the signific *mu* and its pronunciation follows

the phonetic *dou* 斗. Again, Xu Xuan interpreted it as a *huiyi* character that its

meaning is the combination of *mu* and *dou*. And *dou* 科 (and 斗) can be read *dou* or

zhu (OC *tˤoʔ or *toʔ)—the difference is in the OC pharyngealization. The phonetic

斗 leads multiple sound series of initials: *ke* 科, *hu* 斛 (velar) and *dou* 抖, 蚪

(alveolo-dental). There is a chance that a similar phonological ramification to that for

38

the previous example had happened. However, the *fanqie* spellings for this entry applied in *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* showed that they actually assigned the same initial here. According to Baxter's reconstruction, in Middle Chinese, *zhi* 之 (MC tsyi) and *zhuo* 拙 (MC tsywet) have the same initial. Therefore, here it is a matter of how to perceive one character. While Xu Kai interpreted it as a *xingsheng*, Xu Xuan might have chosen it as a *huiyi*, because it is not perfect for a *xingsheng* in his interpretation.

Example 9: 柵

唐本木部: 柵，義白。編豎木也。從木刪省聲。

大徐本：柵，編樹木也。從木從冊冊亦聲。楚革切。

小徐本：柵，編樹木。從木冊聲。妻側反。

Zha 柵 was explained as the weaved vertical woods in *Tang mubu*. Its graph was analyzed to be derived from the signific *mu* 木 and its sound followed the phonetic *shan* 刪 with part of the pronunciation omitted. In the explanation of the meaning of this character, *Xiao Xuben* omitted *ye* 也, and both *Xiao Xuben* and *Da Xuben* replaced *shu* 豎 (vertical) by *shu* 樹 (trees). Therefore, in *Songkanben*, *zha* 柵 means the weaved trees and woods, literally. Also, Xu Kai interpreted *zha* as a *xingsheng* character that its graph was derived from the signific *mu* 木 and its sound followed the phonetic *ce* 冊 (volumn, book). On this point, Xu Xuan analyzed that the graph was derived from the signific *mu* 木 and *ce* 冊 while *ce* 冊 served as the phonetic at the same time.

Example 10: 榻

唐本木部: 榻，握。木帳也。從木屋，屋亦聲。

大徐本：榻，木帳也。從木屋聲。於角切。

小徐本：榻，木帳也。從木屋聲。臣鍇曰，木為帳匡也。乙卓反。

Wo 榻, refers to the wood frame of curtains and canopies. In *Tang mubu*, it said that the graph was derived from *mu* 木 and *wu* 屋 (room, building, shelter), and *wu* 屋 was the phonetic as well. But both *Xu* editions introduced that *wu* 屋 only served as the phonetic. Mo Youzhi indicated that *chang* 悵 (disappointed, dissatisfied) was a scribal error recorded in the explanation of *wo* 榻 in *Tang mubu* that should be replaced by *zhang* 帳 (canopy, curtain) as Xu brothers applied.

Characters	No. in *Tangxieben*	*Tangxieben*	*Da Xuben*	*Xiao Xuben*
Fei 吠	8 (in *Tang*	從口犬省	從犬口	從口犬

	koubu)			
Zha 柵	5	從木刪省聲	從木從冊冊亦聲	從木冊聲
Gui 枑	22	從入木象形眲聲	從木入象形眲聲	從木入象形眲聲
Hua 釫	24	或從金亏	或從金從于	或從金于，臣鍇曰，于聲
Qi 椑	26	或從裡	或從裡	或從裡，臣鍇曰，裡聲
Si 枱	27	從枱台聲	從木台聲	從木台聲
Bo 欂	28	從辟	從辟	從辟，臣鍇曰，從木辟聲
Dou 枓	53	從木斗聲	從木從斗聲	從木斗聲
Biao 杓	54	從木勺聲	從木從勺子	從木勺聲
Lei 欙	55	從木畾，畾亦聲	從木畾聲	從木畾亦聲
Peng 棚	74	從木用聲	從木朋聲	從木朋聲
Sun 榫	86	從木隼聲	從木隹聲	從木隹聲
Ni 柅	93	或從尼	或從木尼聲	或從木尼聲
Nie 槷	104	從木自聲	從木自	從木自聲
Lu 櫓	107	或從鹵聲	或從鹵	或從鹵，臣鍇曰，

				鹵聲
Que 榷	130	從水寉聲	從木寉聲	從木寉聲
Fa 橃	135	從木發聲	從木發聲	從木發省聲
Cai 采	140	從爪木	從爪從木	從木爪
Ping 枰	154	從木平聲	從木從平平亦聲	從木平聲
Xi 析	159	從木斤	從木從斤	從木斤聲

Table 4 Comparison on the Graphic Structures of *Tangxieben*, *Da Xuben* and *Xiao*

Xuben

5. The phonetic notations and the *fanqie* spellings

While the phonetic notation goes first for each entry in *Tang mubu*, it comes to the end of explanation of each character in *Tang koubu* and the versions of Xu brothers. From this single point, it would be reasonable to conjecture that *Tang mubu* and *Tang koubu* probably referred to two different prototypes of *Shuowen* of Tang period. If more pieces of *Tang koubu* or other pieces in manuscript form of *Shuowen* from Tang could be recovered, it would be possible to seek for the detailed information and evidence on the accurate dating of *Tang koubu* and conduct comparative studies on different editions of *Shuowen* from Tang.

As mentioned above, except for the graphical variants, these two Tang manuscripts provided one, sometimes two or even three *fanqie* spellings for most entries to indicate the pronunciation of those characters. And for a few entries among

the rest without *fanqie*, another character with the same pronunciation was listed as the direct sound gloss. In both *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, normally one *fanqie* spelling for each entry was given. While *Da Xuben* used the character *qie* 切 to mark *fanqie*, *Xiao Xuben* always applied the character *fan* 反. And *fanqie* of each entry in each of these three editions sometimes is different from the other two.

As to the origin of the *fanqie* spelling system applied in *Da Xuben*, although a considerable number of differences were detected between the *fanqie* spellings in *Da Xuben* and the ones in the fragments of extant *Tangyun* in manuscript form, it has been studied and proved by scholars such as Yan Xuequn 嚴學宭 (1910-91)[64] and Zhou Zumo[65] that the *fanqie* spelling system in *Da Xuben* was actually derived from *Tangyun* by Sun Mian. As to the *fanqie* in *Xiao Xuben*, Mo stated in *Jianyi* that "The sound of *Xizhuan* circulated today originated from *Wuyin yunpu* of Zhu Ao" 今行《系傳》音出朱翱《五音韻譜》. Also, at the very beginning of each *juan* of *Xizhuan*, it recorded that "Commented and explained by Xu Kai, Gentleman-litterateur in charge of the Glorification of Literature in Palace Library, and the *fanqie* was by Zhu Ao, Grand Mater for Closing Court implementing the Glorification of Literature in Palace Library" 文林郎[66]守秘書省[67]校書郎[68]臣徐鍇

---

[64] See Yan Xuequn 嚴學宭 (1910-91), "Da Xuben *Shuowen* fanqie de yinxi" 大徐本說文反切的音系 [The Phonology System of Fanqie in *Shuwen* of Older Xu], *Guoli Beijing daxue guoxue jikan* 國立北京大學國學季刊 [Quarterly Publication of National Beijing University on Chinese Studies], 1936, vol.6. no.1: 45-153.

[65] See Zhou Zumo, "Xu Shen jiqi 'Shuowen jiezi' " 許慎及其說文解字 [Xu Shen and His *Shuowen jiezi*], in *Wenxue ji*, 721.

[66] See Hucker, p. 567. no.7717.

[67] Ibid., p.378. no. 4598.

[68] Ibid., p.142. no.742.

傳釋，朝散大夫[69]行秘書省校書郎臣朱翱反切. Therefore, the *fanqie* spellings added in *Xiao Xuben* probably came from a scholar named Zhu Ao[70] at Xu Kai's period. However, it could be a misunderstanding by Mo to conclude that the *fanqie* in *Xizhuan* came from *Wuyin yunpu* by Zhu Ao, since *Wuyin yunpu* was actually recorded to have been composed by Li Dao 李燾 (1115-84) of Southern Song. As to the *fanqie* spellings in *Tang mubu*, Mo pointed that "It was recorded in the *Jingji zhi* 經籍志 [Record of Classics and Books] in *Suishu* 隋書 [Book of Sui] that there were four *juan* of *Shuowen yinyin* 說文音隱[71] [Delicate Sound of *Shuowen*], listed before *Zilin* 字林 [Forest of Characters] by Lü Chen 呂忱 (420-79), and there was no information about its compiler. Before Tang, (when one) quoted the sound mentioning the *Shuowen*, it may have referred to this book. (As to) the *yinniu* 音紐 [72] (sound button) here (in the discovered manuscript of *Tang mubu*), whether it refers to *Yinyin* or not remains uncertain......(the *fanqie* sound spelling system in both *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*) is not as archaic as this one; 《隋（書）經籍志》有《說文音隱》四卷，次晉呂忱《字林》，無撰人時代。唐以前稱引《說文》音，或即其書，此之音紐，不知即《音隱》否……不若此音之古". Despite the uncertainty

---

[69] Ibid., p. 119. no.334.

[70] So far the detailed bibliographical information about Zhu Ao was not found by me. The only thing one may infer from the record at the very beginning of each *juan* of *Xizhuan* is that Zhu Ao, as a scholar at the same period of Xu Kai, served in the Department of the Palace Library of Song and provided *fanqie* spellings for *Xizhuan*.

[71] See *Suishu* 隋書[Book of Sui], vol. 32., *zhi*, 27., *jingji*, 1:943.

[72] *Yinniu* comes from calling the circle (*niu*) in rime dictionaries (e.g., *Guangyun*), where it led a new homophone group. Since each homophone group is distinguished by a *fanqie* spelling, it came to mean "a sound defined by a *fanqie*," or *fanqie* itself. It later became *shengniu* 聲紐 and *yinniu* 音紐, i.e., *shengmu* 聲母 (initials) and *yunmu* 韻母 (finals).

of the origin of the *fanqie* spelling system applied in *Tang mubu*, Mo asserted that it was developed earlier than the ones applied in the versions of Xu brothers. Below is a table summarizing the various *fanqie* spelling system in the three compared editions of *Shuowen*.

	Quantity of *fanqie* provided for each entry	*Fanqie* derived from	Marked by
Tangxieben	0(direct sound gloss applied) /1/2/3	Unclear, but earlier than editions of Xu brothers applied	∅
Da Xuben	1	*Tangyun*	*qie* 切
Xiao Xuben	1	Zhu Ao	*fan* 反

Table 5 Comparison on the Phonetic Notations of *Tangxieben*, *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*

Although Mo said the *fanqie* spelling system applied in *Tang mubu* was more antique than the one by Sun Mian in *Da Xuben* and the one by Zhu Ao in *Xiao Xuben* as stated above, there was no firm proof and testimony provided in Mo's *Jianyi*. However, by referring to the period and process of the divergence of *qingchunyin* 輕唇音 (labiodentals), such as f-, v-, from *zhongchunyin* 重唇音

(bilabials), such as m-, p-, and b-, one can infer that it is indeed as Mo's conclusion at this point. *Fanqie* spelling method began to be used to indicate pronunciations of characters since the late period of Eastern Han, probably influenced by Sanskrit from India after the introduction of Buddhism[73], and it is translated as "turning and cutting[74]" and defined as "The method of *fanqie* uses two written words to fashion the pronunciation of one written word. The upper-speller word and the glossed word alliterate, the lower-speller word and the glossed word rhyme" 切語之法, 以二字為一字之音: 上字與所切之字雙聲, 下字與切之字疊韻.[75] Based on Baxter's study, there were no labiodentals in Early Middle Chinese and the change, which is called labiodentalization, refers to the process that labiodentals developed from labials under certain conditions in later varieties of Chinese including the Later Middle Chinese[76]. When the labiodentals were not clearly distinguished from the bilabials, the initials of the upper-speller words, belonging to either the class of labials or labiodentals, could always be utilized to indicate of the initials, either labials or labiodentals as well, of those target written words. In other words, an upper-speller word with a labial initial can be used to indicate the labiodental initial of a written word and vice versa. For example, this kind of *fanqie* spellings just

---

[73] William Hubbard Baxter, *A handbook of Old Chinese phonology* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), 33.

[74] Bernhald Karlgren, "Compendium of Phonetics in Ancient and Archaic Chinese", *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 26 (1954): 213.

[75] See Chen Li 陳澧 (1810-1882), *Qieyun kao* 切韻考 [Examinations on *Qieyun*] (Beijing: Beijingshi zhongguo shudian, 1984), *juan* 1: 2. See the translation in Timothy Michael O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese language theory: a history* (Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2016), 173.

[76] William Hubbard Baxter, *A handbook of Old Chinese phonology*, 46-49.

mentioned can be seen in the commentaries on *Erya* 爾雅[77] and *Fangyan* by Guo

Pu 郭璞 (276-324), a scholar of the Jin dynasty[78]. Since labiodentalization is a

gradual process, taking a look at those bilabial and labiodental initials and their

upper-speller words may aid one to speculate the date of *fanqie* spellings applied in

Tang mubu. Within all of the 188 entries preserved in *Tang mubu*, 21 of them take a

bilabial or labiodental initial, and *fanqie* spellings are provided to 17 of them. See

table 6 below for details of *fanqie* spellings of characters with bilabial or labiodental

initials in *Tang mubu* and the counterpart in *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*. Bilabials are

abbreviated as BL and labiodentals are abbreviated as LD below.

Entry	Entry No. in *Tang mubu*	The upper-speller of the *fanqie*		
		Tang mubu	*Da Xuben*	*Xiao Xuben*
Pa 杷 (BL)	35	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Pu* 蒲 (BL)	*Pu* 蒲 (BL)
Fu 柫 (LD)	37	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Fu* 敷 (LD)	*Fu* 附 (LD)
Bei 栻 (BL)	44	*Fang* 方 (LD)	*Bu* 布 (BL)	*Pu* 脯 (BL)
Pan 槃 (BL)	46	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Bo* 薄 (BL)	*Bie* 別 (BL)
Biao 杓 (BL)	54	*Pi* 匹 (BL)	*Fu* 甫 (LD)	*Pi* 匹 (BL)

[77] *Erya* is the earliest lexicographical work gathering together the glosses of many hands dating back to the 3rd and 4th centuries BCE. The extant form of *Erya*, in total 19 *pian* 篇, around 2000 entries sorted into 19 broad subject categories, was completed in Han. See Wilkinson Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 78.

[78] See Peng Huiqiu 彭輝球, "'Erya' Guo Pu zhu de fanqie" 爾雅郭璞住的反切 [*Fanqie* in the Commentaries by Guo Pu on *Erya*], *Xiangtan daxue xuebao* 湘潭大學學報 [Journal of Xiangtan University], 1991. vol. 15., no. 4: 111-115.

Bei 椑 (BL)	60	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Bu* 部 (BL)	*Pin* 頻 (BL)
Fu 榑 (LD)	71	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Fu* 扶 (LD)	*Fu* 符 (LD)
Peng 棚 (BL)	74	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Bo* 薄 (BL)	*Bu* 部 (BL)
Bang 棓 (BL)	83	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Bu* 步 (BL)	*Bu* 步 (BL)
Bing 柄 (BL)	88	*Fang* 方 (LD)	*Bei* 陂 (BL)	*Bi* 鄙 (BL)
Bi 柲 (BL)	90	*Fang* 方 (LD)	*Bing* 兵 (BL)	*Bi* 筆 (BL)
Bang 榜 (BL)	94	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Bi* 比 (BL)	*Bu* 補 (BL)
Fu 柎 (LD)	110	*Fang* 方 (LD)	*Fu* 甫 (LD)	*Fu* 甫 (LD)
Bi 椑 (BL)	120	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Bian* 邊 (BL)	*Bi* 比 (BL)
Fa 橃 (LD)	135	*Fu* 符 (LD)	*Fang* 房 (LD)	*Fu* 扶 (LD)
Ping 枰 (BL)	154	*Fang* 防 (LD)	*Pu* 蒲 (BL)	*Bi* 弼 (BL)
Pian 楄 (BL)	163	*Fu* 父 (LD)	*Bu* 部 (BL)	*Ping* 屏 (BL)

Table 6 Upper-spellers of Characters with Bilabial or Labiodental Initials in

Tang Mubu and the Counterpart in *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*

According to the data collected in the chart above, among 18 characters with bilabial or labiodental initials and *fanqie* spellings provided, 12 of them applied either an upper-speller with a bilabial initial for a character with a labiodental initial or an upper-speller with a labiodental initial for a character with a bilabial initial. However, there is only one case "*biao* 杓" of this kind of *fanqie* showed in *Da Xuben* and labiodentals were clearly distinguished from labials in *Xiao Xuben*. Hence it can be confirmed that the *fanqie* system applied in *Tang mubu* is indeed more antique than the ones in *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, although now it is difficult to date it in detail and find out its origin.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis focuses on comparing the *Tangxieben* of the *Shuowen* with the two editions of *Songkanben* of the *Shuowen* by Xu Xuan and Xu Kai respectively. Chapter 1 introduced to the study of the *Shuowen*, the first Chinese comprehensive dictionary and major lexicographical work, by Xu Shen of Han, completed in 100 AD, along with Xu Shen's basic biographical information from *Hou Hanshu* included. Chapter 2 related the earliest extant *Shuowen* nowadays, though incomplete, in total two pieces, in manuscript form, from Tang. With more scholarship on the *Tang mubu* being provided, the discovery, and the stylistic rules and layout of *Tang mubu* is presented with supporting documents translated from *Jianyi* by Mo Youzhi. Chapter 3 introduced the time of compilation and editions carved and printed of the two recensions of the *Shuowen* from the Song, *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, as the earliest extant complete versions of the *Shuowen*. Finally, Chapter 4 compared the *Tangxieben* with the two Song recensions from five distinctive aspects: the order of the entries under the same classifier, the appearance of the Small Seal script, the explanation of the brief meaning of some characters, the analysis of the graphic structure for a few entries and the phonetic notations and the *fanqie* spellings, with examples provided to illustrate the differences on each aspect.

Before the conclusion drew from this comparative study between the *Songkanben,* specifically, the *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben*, and *Tangxieben*, both the *Tang mubu* and *Tang koubu*, of the *Shuowen* is summarized here, it should be kept in

50

mind that the *Tangxieben*, in the manuscript form, remains incomplete and only presents one portion of the *Shuowen*. Hence the comparison in this thesis is limited to selected parts of the text common in the compared versions. Therefore, strictly speaking, this conclusion is valid only for these specific portions of the text concerned. The most desirable thing in this study is to discover more pieces remained or evidence of the manuscript form the *Shuowen* from Tang or earlier period. The conclusion of the investigation in this study includes:

a. While the authenticity and date of *Tang mubu* is clarified in previous studies, the comparative study between *Tang mubu* and *Songkanben* with auxiliary testimonies referred suggests that *Tang mubu*, though an incomplete manuscript form of the *Shuowen*, showed its own antiquarian stance on different aspects in the study of the transmission of the *Shuowen*, such as the change of the Seal Script, the graphic analysis and phonetic glosses. It is different from the rest, though we cannot say for sure that it is older or earlier than others, its feature on the phonetic glosses we have already examined above indicates it is reasonable to conjecture that it belongs to an older tradition. As a manuscript but not a printed one, in terms of book form, *Tang mubu* may or may not reflect the entire tradition and the observation is valid for this manuscript only. And also no proof showed in the above comparison that there is direct connection between *Tangxieben* and *Songkanben*. That is to say, *Songkanben* may not apply *Tangxieben* as a base text and *Tangxieben* suggests that there is a scholarship of the *Shuowen*

51

during the Tang. And this must be clearly recognized before we make comparison among different editions of the *Shuowen*.

b. In general, the two *Songkanben* editions by Xu brothers are quite similar, probably based on one prototype or similar prototypes circulated in Song. However, through the comparison above, we notice that Xiao Xuben by Xu Kai somehow tends to be closer to the *Tangxieben* than to *Da Xuben* by Xu Xuan, especially on the order of some entries and the graphic analysis of some entries. And again, as the situation is that the original text of the *Shuowen* is not available today, it would be necessary to refer to different editions of the *Shuowen* and critically examine them philologically.

c. Although Roy Andrew Miller claimed that the two Song recensions are found to be very close, and presumably derive from a single prototype, the differences between these two recensions suggests that the approaches applied in *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* to those characters in the *Shuowen* may differ from each other. This indicates that there was no standard or stable understanding and scholarship of the *Shuowen* before Xu brothers' time. In other words, despite the fact that the *Shuowen* was considerably quoted and its popularity was definite throughout the history and what we are ultimately relying on is Duan Yucai's *Shuowen jizi zhu* based on Xu brothers' editions. But the differences detected between *Da Xuben* and *Xiao Xuben* indicates there is no standard understanding on the study of the *Shuowen* before Song, and no clear and consistent authorship on the

prototype or prototypes they have consulted, maybe in the manuscript form just as the discovered *Tang mubu*. Therefore, the study of the *Shuowen* was a rediscovered tradition perhaps during the Song. There was not a noticeably established body of scholarship or knowledge of the *Shuowen*, which can only be traced by its transmission started with Tang, and it is possible that the original *Shuowen* by Xu Shen can be totally a different one.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baxter, William Hubbard. *A handbook of Old Chinese phonology*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992.

Chen Li 陳澧 (1810-1882). *Qieyun kao* 切韻考 [Examinations on *Qieyun*]. Beijing: Beijingshi zhongguo shudian, 1984.

Chen Yutang 陳玉堂. *Zhongguo jinxiandai renwu minghao dacidian* 中國近現代人物名號大辭典 [Dictionary on Modern Chinese People]. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1993.

Dai Junliang 戴均良 (1875-?). *Zhongguo gujin diming dacidian* 中國古今地名大詞典 [Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Place Names of China]. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005.

Denecke Wiebke, Li Wai-Yee and Tian Xiaofei. *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874-1952). *Shuowen jiezi gulin ji buyi* 說文解字詁林及補遺 [A Treasury of Commentaries and Supplement on *Shuowen jiezi*]. Taibei: Taibei shangwu yinshuguan, 1970.

Dong Xiqian 董希謙, Zhang Qihuan 張啓煥 et cl., Zhao Tianli 趙天吏, Pan Yunzhong 潘允中 eds., *Xu Shen yu 'Shuowenjiezi' yanjiu* 許慎與《說文解字》研究 [Research on Xu Shen and *Shuowen jiezi*]. Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubansh1e, 1988.

Duan Yucai 段玉裁(1735-1815). *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注[Annotations of the *Shuowen jiezi*]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988.

Françoise Bottéro, "Cāng Jié and the invention of writing: Reflection on the elaboration of a legend," in Anderl, Christoph, and Eifring Halvor, ed., *Studies in Chinese language and culture*. Oslo: Hermes, 2006, 135-55.

Françoise Bottéro, "Revisiting the wén 文 and the zì 字: The Great Chinese Characters Hoax," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 74 (2002): 14–33.

Gui Fu 桂馥 (1736-1805). *Shuowen jiezi yizheng* 說文解字義證 [Examination of the Meanings in *Shuowen jiezi*]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987. (陝西師範大學圖書館藏連筠簃原刻影印)

Jiang Shanguo 蔣善國(1898-1986). '*Shuowen jiezi' jianggao* 《說文解字》講稿

[Lecture Notes on *Shuowen jiezi*]. Beijing: Yuwen chubanshe, 1988.

Karlgren, Bernhard, "Compendium of Phonetics in Ancient and Archaic Chinese", *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 26 (1954): 211-367.

Liang Guanghua 梁光華. "Tang xie ben 'Shuowen' mu bu canjuan lunlüe" 唐寫本 說文木部殘卷略論 [General Argument on Incomplete Volume of the Written Version of *Shuowen*], *Guizhou wenshi congkan* 貴州文史叢刊 [Collections of Literature and History of Guizhou], 1996(5).

Liu Dongping 劉東平. " 'Meiyuan shenquan shi' bei de shufa yishu tedian ji zai zhuanshu fazhan zhong de diwei tanxi" 《美原神泉詩》碑的書法藝術特點 及在篆書發展中的地位探析 [Discussion and Analysis on the Art Feature of Calligraphy on the Tablet for the Poem on the Divine Spring of Meiyuan County and its Position in the Development of Seal Script]. *Wenbo* 文博 [Relics and Museology], 2014. no.6: 90-93.

Li Yongjian 李詠健. " 'Shuowen' zhouwen e'xing xushi" 《說文》籀文訛形續釋 [Continuing Explanation of Incorrect Shapes of Zhouwen in Shuowen]. *Yindu xuekan* 殷都學刊 [Yindu Journal], 2013. no.2: 79-85.

Miller, Roy Andrew. *Problems in the study of Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*. PhD diss., 1953.

O'Neill, Timothy Michael. *Ideography and Chinese language theory: a history*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2016.

Peng Huiqiu 彭輝球, " 'Erya' Guo Pu zhu de fanqie" 爾雅郭璞住的反切 [*Fanqie* in the Commentaries by Guo Pu on *Erya*], *Xiangtan daxue xuebao* 湘潭大學學 報 [Journal of Xiangtan University], 1991. vol. 15., no. 4: 111-115.

Ren Xueliang 任學良(1922-2012). *Shuowen jiezi yinlun* 說文解字引論[Guiding Introduction to *Shuowen jiezi*]. Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1985.

Song Tingwei 宋廷位. "Liu Gongquan yu Kaicheng shijing" 柳公權與開成石 經 [Liu Gongquan and Kaicheng Stone-carved Confucian Classics], *Shufa shangping* 書法賞評 [Appreciation and Comments on Calligraphy Works]. 2013. no.2: 30-37.

Tang Wen 唐文, comp. *Guo Pu cidian* 郭璞詞典 [Guo Pu Dictionary]. Yuwen, 2004.

Wang Jun 王筠(1784-1854). *Shuowen judou* 說文句讀 [Punctuated Edition of the *Shuowen jiezi*]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983.

Wilkinson Endymion. Chinese History: A New Manual. Boston: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013.

Wu Hailin 吳海林 and Li Yanpei 李延沛 ed.. *Zhongguo lishi renwu cidian* 中國 歷史人物辭典 [Dictionary of Chinese Historical People]. Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1983.

Xu Shen 許慎(58-147). *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 [Explaining Depictions of Reality and Analyzing Graphs of Words]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963.

Xu Shen 許慎(58-147) and Duan Yucai 段玉裁(1735-1815). *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說 文解字注 [Annotated *Shuowen jiezi*]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981.

Zang Lihe 臧勵和 (1875-?), ed. *Zhongguo renmin dacidian* 中國人名大辭典 [Cydopedia of Chinese Biographical Names]. Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1966.

Zhang Chunhui 張春輝, etc. *Zhongguo jixie gongcheng faming shi* 中國機械工程 發明史 [History of Invention of Mechanical Engineering in China]. Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2004.

Zhou Zumo 周祖謨(1914-1995). "Xu Shen jiqi 'Shuowen jiezi'" 許慎及其說文解 字 [Xu Shen and His *Shuowen jiezi*], *Wen xue ji* 問學集 [Collection of Learning]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966.

Zhou Zumo 周祖謨(1914-1995). " 'Shuowen jiezi' zhi Song keben" 說文解字之 宋刻本 [Song Woodblock Edition of *Shuowen jiezi*], *Wen xue ji* 問學集 [Collection of Learning]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966.

Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 (1914-1995). "Xu Kai de 'Shuowen' xue" 徐鍇的說文學 [Xu Kai's Study on *Shuowen jiezi*], *Wen xue ji* 問學集 [Collection of Learning]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966.

Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 (1914-1995). "Tangben 'Shuowen' and 'Shuowen' jiuyin" 唐 本說文與說文舊音 (Tang edition *Shuowen* and the old phonetic notation in *Shuowen*), *Wen xue ji* 問學集 [Collection of Learning]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966.

Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 (1914-1995). "Lun Duan shi 'Shuowen jiezi' zhu" 論段氏說 文解字注 (Argument on Duan's Annotation on *Shuowen jiezi*), *Wen xue ji* 問 學集 [Collection of Learning]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966.

Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 (1914-1995). " 'Shuowen jiezi' gailun" 說文解字概論 [General Introduction of *Shuowen jiezi*], *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu* 中國文化研

究 [Studies on Chinese Culture]. 1997. no.1: 64-72.

Zhu Junsheng 朱駿聲 (1788-1858). *Shuowen tongxun dingsheng* 說文通訓定聲
[*Shuowen* Eymologies and An Arrangement by Sounds]. Beijing: Zhonghua
shuju, 1984. (臨嘯閣刻本斷句影印)