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Use of alternative characters in the annotations of ancient texts. By Che Wah Ho.
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USE OF ALTERNATIVE CHARACTERS
IN THE ANNOTATIONS OF ANCIENT TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Exegesis (Xungu 訓詁) is an important branch of classical Chinese philology. It is a discipline devoted to the explanation of characters and expressions in ancient Chinese texts. The emergence of Xungu can be traced back to *Er ya* 爾雅, a Pre-Qin dictionary. The Han-Tang period, which is the heyday of the discipline, witnessed the production of many important Xungu works, most of them appearing in the form of commentaries. They have then become the indispensable guides to subsequent readers of classical Chinese texts. Given the canonical importance of these ancient commentaries, it is not surprising to see that most modern philologists regard the explanations of ancient Chinese texts offered in these classical Xungu works as authoritative dictionary meanings and uncritically adopt them in their own works. To date, however, little work has thoroughly examined how these ancient Xungu scholars arrived at their judgments. This article remedies this gap by clarifying the working mechanism of these ancient Xungu scholars in annotating ancient texts. It argues that these ancient Xungu scholars, when explaining a character in an ancient text, would first and foremost compare that text with parallel texts from other textual sources to identify

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textual variants. If a difference in terms of word choice existed between the text they were commenting and other relevant parallel texts, they would often uncritically use the latter to provide glosses to the former, even if the two were obviously not synonyms or near-synonyms. This article then shows that subsequent important philologists such as Zhu Junsheng 朱駿聲 (1788–1858) and Hong Yixuan 洪頤煊 (1765–1837), unaware of this unique working mechanism of ancient Xungu scholars, anachronistically mistook the judgments offered in these ancient Xungu works, which were simply made on the basis of textual variants, to be true and accurate dictionary meanings. As a result, they unavoidably established unnecessary connection between the semantically unrelated textual variants and ended up creating mistakes of their own.

KEYWORDS

Classical commentaries Alternative characters Exegetics
Semantics Classical Chinese Glossary

INTRODUCTION

The study of ancient texts can be approached from many angles, one of them being alternative characters. Alternative characters might appear under three conditions: 1) different versions of the same book, 2) multiple sources recording the same matter or event, 3) citations and the texts from which they are cited. This last condition can be further divided into three cases: a) general citations and the cited work, b) annotations and the text being annotated, c) *leishu* 類書,¹ excerpts from books, and their original sources. (Wang Yankun 1996) Since characters used in a text are closely linked to its meaning, past scholars would expend great effort in collating and identifying alternative characters in an ancient text in the hope of

1. Chinese encyclopedias (*leishu*) are reference books consisting of extracts from sources extant at the time of compilation. These extracts were organized under different categories. By the time of the Tang 唐 and Song 宋 dynasties, the compilation of *leishu* became fashionable, and well-known examples survive in the present day, for instance, *Beitang shuchao* 北堂書鈔 (Book excerpts from the Northern Hall), *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Classified collection based on the classics and other literature), *Chuxue ji* 初學記 (Materials for elementary instruction) and *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperial readings of the Taiping era).

漢晉注釋依據異文訓解典籍研究

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摘要

中國古代語言學之研究，重在訓詁。訓詁學乃中國傳統研究古書詞義的專門學科，是中國傳統的語文學。訓詁之學，始於先秦的《爾雅》，而大盛於漢晉的古籍注解。自漢代以來以迄於唐，古籍傳注蔚然成風，其中重要典籍注家包括東漢《詩》毛《傳》，鄭玄《毛詩箋》，偽孔安國的《尚書傳》，高誘《淮南子注》，三國六朝時王弼的《周易注》、韋昭的《國語注》，王肅的《孔子家語注》，唐朝楊倞的《荀子注》等。過去訓詁學家極重視古代典籍注解，視之為中國古代字義研究的重要依據，鮮有懷疑這些古代學者的注解可有其他依據。本文嘗試援引書證，以見漢晉以來諸家傳注訓詁，每有參考同書其他版本異文，甚或互見文獻所見異文以為說解，例證甚多，自成系統。顯見據異文為注，乃是中國學者注解典籍的一種傳統釋義方法。可惜過去語言學、訓詁學者研習中國詞義訓詁時，於漢晉傳注相關訓解方式未有注意，未能明晰此等訓詁其實源出重文異文，而重文異文又不必為同義甚或近義詞。因之，此等字義訓詁既於古無徵，甚或扞格難通，後人不察，以為相關字義解釋既出自漢晉著名學者，則其解讀自亦正確無誤，遂加附會曲說，強為之解，舛誤乃生。本文提出諸如《說文》四大家的清代學者朱駿聲、古籍義訓研究權威學者洪頤煊等，均因未明漢晉注家上述訓釋詞義方法而產生誤解。

關鍵詞

古籍注釋 異文 訓詁 詞義學 古代漢語 詞彙