

A Brief Study on the Words From the Northwest China Garrison Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips

GUO Lihua^{[a],*}; ZHANG Xiancheng^[a]

^[a]Southwest University Unearthed Literature Research Center, Chongqing, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

Northwest China garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips refer to the bamboo slips left over by Han Dynasty in the northwest China borderland. Up to now, the discovered materials include Juyan Han Dynasty bamboo slips, Juyan new bamboo slips, Ejina Han Dynasty bamboo slips, Dunhuang Han Dynasty bamboo slips, Dunhuang Xuanquan Han Dynasty bamboo slips, and Jianshui Jinguang Han Dynasty bamboo slips. These bamboo slips are mostly documentary archives, which as the sources of Han Dynasty, are very precious. Scholars have studied these archives from different perspectives. Here we will gather from the academic achievements on the words from the northwest China garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips, and make an exploration from two aspects: papers and books.

Key words: Documentary words; Garrison Han dynasty bamboo slips; Northwest China

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 20th century, a large number of Han Dynasty bamboo slips have been found in northwest

China, many of which were left over by Han Dynasty in the northwest China frontier fortress, and thus were called as “Northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips”. “Northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips” include the “Dunhuang Han Dynasty bamboo slips” found during several excavations in Dunhuang, Gansu since 1907, the “Juyan Han Dynasty bamboo slips” discovered in Juyan, northwest China, the “Juyan new bamboo slips” found in the exploration of the Juyan Site from 1972 to 1982, the “Dunhuang Xuanquan Han Dynasty bamboo slips” discovered in the Xuanquan Site, Dunhuang from 1990 to 1992, the “Ejina Han Dynasty bamboo slips” found in Ejina from 1999 to 2002, and the “Jianshui Jinguang Han Dynasty bamboo slips” discovered in the Jinguang Site, Jianshui. These bamboo slips are mostly documentary archives, of which many are the relics of the people at that time and are very valuable first-hand materials. Their writing formats and clerical languages retain the characteristics of the documents at the time. The diverse forms and rich contents are rare to be seen in the handed-down documents, and attract scholars’ attention widely. Scholars have conducted studies in this field from different aspects of language, history, politics, economy and military. Below we will make an exploration by focusing on the words of Northwest China garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips.

1. RELEVANT MONOGRAPHS ON THE WORDS OF THE NORTHWEST GARRISON HAN DYNASTY BAMBOO SLIPS

Researches of Han Dynasty should be premised on the interpretation of characters, and only in the premise of interpreting characters, we can proceed with words and other contents. In the beginning of the 20th century, the famous French sinologist Chavannes (1913) published

The Chinese Documents Found by Stein in the East Turkestan Desert (E. Chavannes: Les document chinois decouverts par Aurel Stein dans les Sables du Turkestan Oriental, Oxford, 1913), making interpretations and criticisms to the Dunhuang bamboo slips obtained by Stein (Hungarian-British archaeologist) in the second Central Asian expedition. In the research history of northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips, Chavannes became the first Western people making an achievement.

Liu Sha Zhui Jian co-written by Luo Zhenyu and Wang Guowei (1914) is the pioneer of the Chinese bamboo slips study. The book contains bamboo slips' classifications, characters and phrase interpretations, wording relations and documentary systems, making many creations and contributions in this regard. It also makes thorough interpretations and criticisms of the words in the bamboo slips. Although the book remains open to question, its fundamental status in the academia cannot be shaken by certain defects.

Mr. Kao Gan (1944) published *An Exploration on Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips –A Verification*, classifying bamboo slips into five categories according to the nature and application. In the 1960 revision, Mr. Lao Gan reclassified bamboo slips into seven categories, and sub-classified into sixty-six entries. Mr. Chen Pan (1975) published *Seven Categories of Han and Jin Dynasties' Bamboo Slips*, which based on the Juyan Han Dynasty bamboo slips, verifies the commonly used words, symbols, scripts and documentary structures one by one. Mr. Chen Zhi (1986) published *A Study on Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips*, studying the documentary words of bamboo and silk books in the parts of overview, interpretation and revision.

Mr. Li Tianhong (2003) published *A Study on the Classification of Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slip Account Books*. The author classifies the Juyan Han Dynasty bamboo slip account books into 10 categories, 135 kinds, records and analyzes each kind respectively, and makes an in-depth exploration on the account book system and related historical and cultural issues. Mr. Zhang Xiancheng (2004) published *A General Study of Bamboo and Silk Book Philology*, introducing documents when it comes to bamboo and silk book classification, and classify documents into 10 categories according to the contents, natures and purposes. Mr. Wang Wenjun (2006)'s master degree thesis, *Documentary Language and Classification of the Bamboo Slips Found in the West Frontiers*, analyzes the account book Words and public and private document words in addition to classifying the bamboo slips found in the West Frontiers. Mr. Shen Gang (2008)'s *Collected Annotations of Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* finds out a variety of explanations to the Juyan bamboo slip words from the Qin and Han history studies and bamboo slip studies, classifies these explanations under each word in chronological order, indicates the source

of each explanation and gives the author's notes when necessary. Mr. Li Junming (2009)'s *A Classification and Interpretation of Qin and Han Dynasties' Bamboo Slip Documents* classifies Qin and Han Dynasties' bamboo slips into 6 categories, including documents, decrees, account books, textbooks, incantations and letters. Each category is sub-classified into 2 or 3 levels and tries to select complete bamboo slips as examples to reveal its basic format and rule.

In recent years, works of general annotations or collected annotations to the northwest garrison bamboo slips have also been published, such as Ge Hongli (2007)'s *A General Interpretation on the Words of Juyan New Bamboo Slips*, Fan Dongping (2008)'s *A General Interpretation on the Words of Dunhuang Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips*, Li Li's *A General Interpretation on the Words of Ejina Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (2010), Ma Yi and Zhang Rongqiang's *A Collation and Interpretation of Juyan New Bamboo Slips* (2013), and Zhang Defang's *Collected Annotations of Dunhuang Majuanwan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (2013). The works on the Dunhuang Xuanquan Han Dynasty bamboo slips and Jianshui Jinguang Han Dynasty bamboo slips appeared later, but they also enrich the contents of the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips.

2. ACADEMIC PAPERS ON THE NORTHWEST GARRISON HAN DYNASTY BAMBOO SLIPS

After the 1970s, some scholars of paleography and related areas got involved in the studies of the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips, out of whom the representatives are Mr. Yu Haoliang and Mr. Qiu Xigui. From 1961, Mr. Yu Haoliang successively published *A Supplementary Interpretation of Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips A Series* (1961), "*Sheng Zu*" in *Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1963) and *A Collation of Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1964), etc.. From 1981, Mr. Qiu Xigui published *Han Jian Ling Shi* (1981), and 8 serials of *A Discussion on the Annotations of Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips A and B Series* (1982 -1983). They relied on their strong paleographical ability to explain the obscure words in Juyan bamboo slips, and many of their explanations have been conclusive.

From 1982, Mr. Li Junming successively published *An Explanation on the Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips "Nan Bei Qiang Fu"* (1982), *An Explanation on "Zhu Li" in No. 714 Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1982), *An Explanation on "Pi Huo" in Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1983), *An Explanation on "Bian Shi" in Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1986), "*Bing Shu*" Note in *Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1988), and *An Interpretation on "Shi" in Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1990), etc., proposing some creative ideas on the

words in northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips and correcting some previous views.

From 1983, Mr. Xue Yingqun successively published *Some Examples of Referential Evidences of Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1983), *"She" and Its Origin in Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1984), *Selected Annotations of Juyan New Bamboo Slip Official Documents (I)* (1986), *Selected Annotations of Juyan New Bamboo Slip Official Documents (II)* (1986) and *"Qiu She" and "Shu" in Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1988), discussing and discriminating the documentary words, especially the official documentary words in Juyan Han Dynasty bamboo slips and Juyan new bamboo slips.

After the annotations and drawings of Juyan Han Dynasty bamboo slips were spread to Japan in the 1950s, Japanese scholars achieved fruitful results in this regard. Accomplished scholars are Datingxiu, Yongtianyingzheng and others. When the Japanese scholars provided examples for the bamboo slips, they usually explained the meaning of the words firstly, so this also constituted an aspect of word study. This made some obscure bamboo slip words acquire a relatively clearer modern meaning.

There are many other academic papers on the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips, such as Hu Pingshe's *"Gong" and "Lao" in Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (1995), He Shuangquan's *An Amendment on the Annotations of Dunhuang Xuanquan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (2000), Zhang Junmin: *A Collation of Selected Annotations of Dunhuang Xuanquan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (2001), Zhang Guoyan's *The Notes of Juyan New Bamboo Slip Vocabulary* (2002), Xu Hairong's *A Debate between "Zhi Man" and "Zhang Man" of Juyan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (2005), Li Xiaoru's *The Notes of Dunhuang Xuanquan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slip Vocabulary* (2005), Li Yanyun: *Addendum for the Related Issues of Dunhuang Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips* (2010), Ma Zhiquan's *A Proofreading of Jianshui Jinguan Han Dynasty Bamboo Slips (I)* (2012), and Lu Fangge's *Four Notes on the Words of Juyan New Bamboo Slips* (2013), etc. They make explanations on the specific words from the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips, for which we no need to detail here.

In addition to vocabulary studies, scholars of Qin and Han History often talk about the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slip words while discussing the related issues, and make explanations to the words and lines. In recent years, some scholars have studied the words of the garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips from a linguistic perspective, and their achievements are also noteworthy.

SUMMARY

In short, our predecessors have been fully aware of the importance of the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo archives. They have carried out extensive studies and made fruitful achievements. Their

focuses are different, some of which are on a general introduction, some on a batch of bamboo slips, some on the interpretations of specific words, and some on a specific class of documents. Their studies on the words of the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips are mainly made by examples, especially the examples of difficult words, but lack a more comprehensive and systematic analysis. In several batches of the northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips, the studies on "Juyan Han Dynasty bamboo slips" are the richest, and that on "Jianshui Jinguan Han Dynasty bamboo slips" are relatively less. In general, the studies on the documentary words of northwest garrison Han Dynasty bamboo slips still have room for improvement, but the predecessors' solid verification foundation and fruitful research results undoubtedly provide a strong support and help for future researches.

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