The Concept of shěng 省 in Shuōwén jiězì

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Abstract

In order to understand Xū Shèn's 許慎 contribution to the analysis of the Chinese writing system, it is important to clarify the terminology he uses in his Shuōwén jiězì 釋文解字 (100 AD). In this paper I shall focus on the term shěng 省. Scholars who have studied the problem of shěng 省 in Shuōwén usually tried to reveal the mistakes either made by Xū Shèn or added later to the text, from different perspectives including the classification of the graphs in traditional liùshū approach, paleography, as well as phonological reconstructions. Most of these authors may be right in their critical investigation of shěng 省, there are indeed many mistakes in Xū Shèn's graphic analysis, but none of them considered the problem as a whole or tried to understand what was the real reason for Xū Shèn to use this term. Shěng 省 is a rather complex term with different significations, such as omission, abbreviation, fusion, etc. I shall first clarify the meanings and uses of shěng in Shuōwén, before trying to understand why Xū Shèn needed this special term. We will see that despite many mistaken graphic analysis, already described by Chēn Shìhuī 陳世輝 (1979), Qiú Xīguī 裘錫圭 (1988), and others, shěng 省 was an important tool for Xū Shèn's methodological approach to the Chinese writing system that also shows his deep knowledge of the evolution of the script.

Keywords: Shuōwén jiězì; shěng 省; abbreviated form; abbreviated constituent; graphic analysis
1. Graphic analysis in Shuōwén

Xǔ Shèn introduces the term shěng 省 in his graphic analysis. The graphic analysis is the core system of Xǔ Shèn’s interpretation of written words. It is based on a few formulae meant to clarify the nature and structural interaction of graphemes or graphic constituents. Constituents are primarily semantic, but they can also be declared «phonetic». Thus in Shuōwén there are about four main formulae provided to distinguish graphemes into semantic and phonetic constituents. ii They can be represented in the following way:

\[a) \text{从} X \text{ 从} Y \text{ 从} Z \text{ (从} X \text{ 从} Y \text{ 从} Z)\]
\[b) \text{从} X Y \text{ 从} X Y Z \text{ 从} X Y Z \]
\[c) \text{从} X, Y \text{ 聲} \]
\[d) \text{从} X \text{ 从} Y, Y \text{ 聲} \]

They are used from the begining of the text (starting with the 2nd entry in Xú Xuàn’s 徐鉉 text):

1) **yuán** 元 始也。从一从兀。
2) **tiān** 天 顛也。至高無上，从一大。
3) **pī** 丕 大也。从一不聲。
4) **lì** 吏 治人者也。从一从史，史亦聲。

In some of these formulae, Xǔ Shèn may add the term shěng 省. The first occurrences of shěng 省 appear under the 52nd entry, yǒng 禜, and the 66th, jìn 禃, in Xú Xuàn’s 徐鉉 text (abbreviated as DXB below). They correspond to the formula: e) 从 X, Y 省聲。

yǒng 禜 設縣蒼為營，以禳風雨、雪霜、水旱、疫疫於日月星辰山川也。从示，糰省聲... (1A 4b).

But Xú Kǎi 徐锴 or Xiǎo Xú 小徐 (abbreviated as XX or XXB below) provides a different character XX: 从示，營省聲。 (1.7a)
The evidence for the use of *shěng* 省 in *Shuōwén* can be traced back to the Táng fragmentary manuscripts:

-1) In the manuscript that comprises 188 characters under the radical *mù* 木 «tree/ wood»，7 of them are graphically analysed with *shěng* 省:

  zhà 柵（棚） 編樹木也。从木、則省聲。 (6A 14b; 11.17a)
  shū 梳 理髪者也。从木、疏省聲。 (6A 15b; 11.18a-b)
  zhé 柆 楸也。从木、特省聲。 (6A 17b; 11. 20b)
  yīn 椫（㮤） 桿也。从木、隠省聲。 (6A 19b; 11. 23a)
  qì 榑 傳，信也。从木、啟省聲。 (6A 20a; 11. 24a)
  bì 柗 柷恒也。从木、陛省聲。 (6A 20b; 11. 24a-b)
  zhù 祝 柀，木控也，所以止音為節。从木、祝省。 (6A 19a; 11. 24a)

- 2) In the manuscript that comprise 12 characters with the radical *kǒu* 口，we also find one occurrence of *shěng* 省 under:

  guā 塞（舌） 塞口也。从口，啙省聲。啙，古文厥。

In other words the term *shěng* 省 should belong to Xǔ Shèn’s text or analysis. A short passage under the entry *zhēn* 贞 suggests on the other hand that *shěng* 省 might have been already used before Xǔ Shèn by Jing Fāng 京房, (77-37) the specialist of the theory of catastrophies and Yi jīng:

  zhēn 贞 問也。从卜，貝以爲贄。一曰鼎省聲。京房所說。

Now it is important to note that some differences occur between the Táng manuscript and the Xǔ brothers versions, not only in the glosses, but also in the graphic analysis. Thus, for example, the three versions show no less than three graphic analysis for zhà 柵 «fence, stockade », each corresponding to a different graphic formula:

  DXB: zhà 柵（棚） 編樹木也。从木、從冊，冊亦聲。楚革切。 (6A 14b)  d) 从 X 从 Y, Y
Since Xǔ Shēn’s text underwent all sorts of modifications including the term shěng 省, it is not easy to figure out which are the original analysis. Indeed, we have some graphic analysis with shěng 省 in DXB that are absent in XXB and vice versa, but we also have examples of different characters preceding shěng 省 or shěng shēng 省聲 in both versions. Therefore it is important to keep an eye on both versions.

Consider, for example, the following variations between DX and XX’s versions:

DX: Y 省聲 XX: Y 聲

yuè 鳥 也。DX: 从鳥、說省聲。(4A 21a)
XX: 从鳥、說聲。(7.20a)

yuè 閣 具數於門中也。DX: 从門、說省聲。(12A 6b)
XX: 从門、說聲。(23.20a)

dōu 哆 謹哆，多言也。DX: 从口、投省聲。(2A 12a)
XX: 从口、投聲。(3.9b)

DX: Y 聲 XX: Y 省聲

lèi 輝 推也。DX: 从力、晶聲。(13B 19a)
XX: 从力、晶省聲。(26.11b)

DX: Y 省 XX: Y 省聲

tuí 蝜 蛛蛾所解皮也。DX: 从虫、說省聲。(13A 22a)
XX: 从虫、說省聲。(25.13a)

xí 席 籍也。... DX: 从巾、席省。B【儀】觀文(席)从石省。(7B 22b)
XX: 从巾、席省聲 (14.23a)

diàn 甸 天子五百里地。DX: 从田、包省。(13B 15b) 天子五百里內田。
XX: 从田、包省聲 (26. 8b)

DX: O XX: Y 省聲

yàn 晏 安也。DX: 从女日。《詩》曰：以晏父母。 (12B 9a)
XX: 从女、晏省聲。《詩》曰：以晏父母。(24.6b)

In this paper, I have mainly relied on Xǔ Xuàn’s 徐鉉 (or Dà Xú’s 大徐) version, but I
have tried to present examples that are identical in both Xú’s versions, or at least to indicate when Xú Kǎi’s 徐邈 (Xiǎo Xú 小徐) version differed in its graphic interpretation of shěng 省. Since Duàn Yùcái 段玉裁 (1735-1815) has introduced many modifications in his Shuōwén jīezì zhù 說文解字注, I have only referred to it when it provided specific or valuable information.

2. The meaning of xǐng / shěng 省 in Xǔ Shèn’s glosses

In the Shuōwén, xǐng is glossed as « observe, examine (oneself), investigate » (fǎnxǐng 反省):

xǐng 视也。从省、从中。【省】古文从少、从囧。（XX：古文省从少、囧）(4A 8a ; 7.7a)

As noticed elsewhere, in his glosses Xǔ Shèn only provides the meanings that are relevant for the explanations of the graphs. Now, if the meaning « observe, investigate » can be found in some other glosses such as those for qì 啓, xiāng 相, mián 嫁, piǎo 賣, and yán 妍, the meaning « omit, reduce » is used by Xǔ Shèn under the entry zì 白, an allograph of zì 自:

- xǐng / shěng 省 « observe, examine (oneself) »:
  
  qì 啓 省视也。从目、啓省聲。（4A 5a ; 7.4b) « qì is to examine. »
  
  xiāng 相 省视也。从目、从木。（4A 5a ; 7.4b)
  
  mián 嫁省视也。不見也。一曰：呉呉，不見省人。从氵、呉省。« mián as in miánmián is
to fail to see; an alternative source says: it is to fail to see someone. »
  
  XX: 嫁省，不見也。从氵、省、日：呉，不省人。 (7B 5a ; 145a)
  
  piǎo 賣省省也。目有察省視也。（no「見也」 in XXB ）从見、票聲。（8B 6a ; 16.14a) « piǎo is
to see something after careful observation »
  
  yán 婦省也。技也。曰：不省省事。（12B 11a ; 24.8b) « Is to be skillful. An (alternative)
  source says: it is to fail to investigate and record events. »

- xǐng / shěng 省 « omit, reduce »

  zì 白 此亦自字也。省省者，言言之气 从鼻出與口相助也。（4A 8b ; 7.7b) « This is also
  the written word for zì 自; as for the abbreviated zì, when one speaks the air goes out from
  the nose and supports the mouth. »
As shown in this last example, shěng 省 can be used to show a reduction or an abbreviation of a graph (here zì 自).

3. The formulaic use of shěng 省 in Shuōwén

There are two basic formulae with shěng 省 in Shuōwén that correspond to the two functions the graphic constituents can be attributed:
- the first applies to more than 200 entries in D XB:
  X shěng X 省 « it has an abbreviated form of X (as a semantic constituent) »
- the second applies to more than 300 entries in D XB:
  X shěng sheng X 省聲 « it has an abbreviated form of X as a phonetic constituent »

3.1. The formula (从) X 省 (about 214 examples in D XB)

If we look in details, this basic formula can take the following forms:

- X 省 (29)
  Qin 秦 伯益之後所封國。地宜禾。从禾，春省。一曰秦，禾名。B【篆文秦从禾。】
  (7A 18b ; 13.21b)
  tui 蜥 蛇蟶所解皮也。从虫，稅省。（XXB: 从虫、稅省聲。）(13A 22a ; 25.13a)

In this case, both Xú have shěng 省 but they differ in their interpretation of the function of the abbreviated constituent, semantic (according to D XB) versus phonetic (according to XXB).

- 从 X 省 (89)
  yōu 鬶 北鹿也。从鹿，从北省。（10A 9b ; 19.7a)
  mào 蒿 年九十曰蒿。从老，从蒿省。（8A 25a ; 16.7a)
  duò 隋 裂肉也。从肉，从隓省。（XXB: 从」before 「隓」) (4B 12a ; 8.11b)

- B (A) 或省(X) (37) « (in) the graph B, (A) is alternatively written in an abbreviated form (with the omission of X) »
The formulae with *huò* or only concern synchronic graphic variants, whereas the other formulae can apply to any style of graph.

(xiōng 諱: 諱或省。(3A 15a ; 5.14b) B 或省)

(xiōng 諱 is a graphic variant of xiōng 諱 which is written in an abbreviated way. We would expect 或省聲 since it is the phonetic constituent that is abbreviated here. But we will see other examples of such omissions.)

(xiāo 囂 or省 (3A 1a ; 5.1a)
B: A 或省 ➔ abbreviation of 2 口 ‘mouth’.

(zī 葕 or省艸。（1B 19a ; 2.19a)
B: A 或省 X ➔ suppression of 艸 ‘grass’.

-B 或从 X 省 (6) « B is alternatively written with an abbreviated form of X as a semantic constituent »

(jīn [cén] 楠 青皮木。从木岑聲。B【口】或从口省，口，籒文寑。（XXB:「口，籒文□」 作「寑文」) (6A 3a ; 11.3b).

This concerns the phonetic constituent but as we have already seen above, with xiōng 諱, Xu Shèn does not always find necessary to specify the phonetic nature of the (abbreviated) constituent, especially in the case of graphic variants.

There are about 25 examples (in DXB)(16 in XXB) of shěng 省 involving ancient graphs gǔwén 古文 with 3 different formulae:

- 古文(A)省 (17 in DXB) (in these cases, DXB and XXB vary a lot: only 9 in XXB)
  « The ancient graph (for A) is abbreviated »

(sà 希 (冊): 三十并也。古文省。(3A 4a ; 5.5a)

(fēng 墨: 古文封省。(13B 9b ; 26.4a)
- B 古文 A 省 X (1)
  « B is the ancient style graph (for A) and it is abbreviated »

(bāo 寶古文寶省貝。(7B 5a ; 14. 5a)
There are some 24 examples (in DXB)(21 in XXB) of shěng 省 involving large-seal style graphs zhòuwén 篆文 with two different formulae:

- B 篆文(A) 非 X 省 (7)
  "B is the ancient style graph (for A) and it has an abbreviated form of X as a semantic constituent"

chái 蒡 古文从隋省。(1A 3a; 1. 6a)
xìn 信: B【ゎ】古文从言省。(XXB:古文信省也) (3A 6b; 5. 7b)

We have the 3 following examples (in DXB and XXB) of shěng 省 involving small-seal style graphs zhuànwén 篆文 and one involving a contemporary graph jīnwén 今文 in DXB but none in XXB:

- B 篆文(A)省 B is the small-seal style graph (for A) and it is abbreviated
  xué 学篆文故省。(3B 19b; 6. 20a; Duàn 3B 41a)
  sui 【隍】篆文崇从隍省。(1A 3a; 1. 8a)
suì 瘗: B【ゎ】篆文从省。(5A 1b; 9. 1b: 篆文从省 no 从)

- A 篆文从 X 省 A is the small-seal style graph and it has an abbreviated form of X as the semantic constituent
  xiàng 【巐】篆文从巐省。(XXB: 篆文从巐省) (14B 6a; 28. 5a; Duàn 14B 13a follows XXB)
3.2. The formula X 省聲 «it has an abbreviated form of X as a phonetic constituent»

According to my counting there are about 311 exemples of X 省聲 in DXB (including 6 从 X 省聲, 5 or from X 省聲 and 1 籀文), but I have not counted in detail how many they were in XXB.

- X 省聲 (≈300)

méng 蒔 貝母也。从艸、朙省聲。(1B 13a; 2.14a)

zhuàn 瑉 卦璧上起兆瑑也。从玉，篆省聲。(1A 10b; 1.14a) (Duàn 1A 28a: 从王彖聲)

If we look in details, this basic formula can take different forms such as:

- 从 X 省聲 (6)

If the common formula corresponds to 从 XY 省聲, we also have 6 examples of 从 X 从 Y 省聲 including a 从 before Y. This is the case for 4 small-seal entries and 2 ancient graphic variants in DXB.

jiàn 筮 筮之本也，从箭，从兜省聲。X【戉】簪或从肉建。（XXB: 兜省聲）(4B 16a)

duò 嶞 山之嶞嶞者。从山，从脩省聲。（XXB: 从山，偑省聲）(9B 2b)

mèi 魃 老精物也。从鬼、冬，鬼毛。B【魅】或从未聲。B’【录】 古文。B”【篹】 籀文从絹首，从尾省聲。（9A 15b; 17.14aë)

In the following formule the abbreviation concerns the allographs:

- B, A or from X 省聲 (2) «In the graph B, A is alternativelly written with the abbreviated phonetic constituent X»

liào 膏 牛膔脂也。从肉、夗聲。.. B【膏】，臒或从夗省聲。（4B 12b; 8.12a/b)

shàng 醴 畲食也。从食、象聲。B【醧】，醆或从傷省聲。（XXB: 醪或从 [醹] ）(5B 4a; 10.4b)

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- B, (A) or from XY 省聲 (2) «In the graph B, A is alternativelly written with X as a semantic constituent and it has an abbreviated form of Y as the phonetic constituent»

dǎo 繘 聚牲馬祭也。从示，周聲。B【鷮(鷮)】或从馬，壽省聲。* (1A 5b ; 1.8a)
qū 醅 酒母也。从米，箥省聲。B【齲】(齲)或从麥，鞠省聲。(7A 21b ; 13.25b)

- B, (A) or from XY Z 省聲 (1) «In the graph B, A is alternativelly written with X and Y as semantic constituents and it has an abbreviated form of Z as the phonetic constituent»
pǐ 坠 毀也。《虞書》曰：方命坠族。从土，己聲。B【䤏】(䤏)或从手，从非，配省聲。

Note that XXB proposes a different graphic analysis in this case: 坠或从手，从非，配省聲。
(13B 11b ; 26.5b).

3.3. The formula  不省 « not abbreviated »

The 不省 formula usually appears with all sorts of graphic variants: older styles of graphs as well as synchronic allographs. There are about 15 common examples in DXB and XXB.

Lin 闕 今闕似鴧鷥而黃。从隹，門省聲。B【闕】籀文不省。（XXB:「籀文闕不省」）
hōng 訇 驍言聲。从言，勾省聲。漢中西城有訇鄉。又讀若玄。B【訇】籀文不省。
zhé 讍 失言也。「曰」止義。从言，讙省聲。傅毅讀若懲。B【讙】籀文讙不省。
róng 鮭 炊氣上出也。从鬲，蟲省聲。B【鮭】籀文鮭不省。
zǐ 梓 楫也。从木，宰省聲。B【梓】或不省。
xi 駑 左衽袍。从衣，騂省聲。B【駑】籀文駑不省。
tàn 歎 吟也。从欠，讙省聲。B【歎】籀文歎不省。
jūn 麈 麈也。从鹿，麤省聲。B【麤】籀文麤不省。
xué 溪 夏有水。冬無水，曰瀉。从水學省聲。譯若學。B【澠】湳或不省。
sòng 遣 遣也。从辵，侖省聲。B【遙】籀文不省。

Included in DXB and Duàn (7A 551a), but not followed by  不省 in XX:

qiū 秋 禾穀孰也。从禾，酋省聲。七由切。B【籀(籀)】籀文不省。(7A 18b XX 13. 21b)
3.4. Double shěng formulae

In some cases two shěng 省 may appear in a graphic analysis like, for example, under the following entries:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{qióng} 甹 所以枝鬲者。从髠省，鬲省。(3A 22b ; 6.2a)
  \item \textit{xī} 酱也。作醡以醡以酒。从廽、酒並省，从皿。皿，器也。(5A 20a ; 9.19b)
  \item \textit{ruǎn} 柔韋也。从北，从皮[皮]省，从敻省。(3B 14b ; 6.16b)
  \item \textit{ji} 荷 自急敕也。从羊[羊]省，从包省。从口[口]，口猶愼言也。从羊[羊]，羊與義、善、美同意。凡苟之屬皆从苟。(9A 14b ; 17.13a)
  \item \textit{náng} 囊 橋也。从囊省、襄省聲。(6B 4b ; 12.7a)
  \item \textit{pāo} 囊 囊張大貌。〔XXB:「囊」作「橐」。〕从囊省、匋省聲。(6B 5a ; 12.7a)
\end{itemize}

4. The particularities of shěng 省 (in the graphic analysis)

- In all these examples shěng 省 can apply to semantic as well as to phonetic constituents:

  \begin{itemize}
    \item \textit{a) semantic constituents} (with the formula X 省):
      \begin{itemize}
        \item \textit{wèi} 患 患也。从冫，虎省。(鬼頭而虎爪，可畏也)。(9A 16a ; 17. 14b)
        \item \textit{xìng} 睦 睦也。从眉[眉]省，从中。 古文从少从囧。(4A 8a ; 7.7a)
        \item \textit{huì} 會 合也。从亼[亼]，從曾省。曾，益也。【俗】古文會如此。(5B 7a ; 10. 6b)
        \item \textit{cāng} 倉 棄藏也。倉黃取而藏之，故謂之倉。从食[食]省，口象倉形。【仓】奇字倉。(5B 7a ; 10. 7a)
      \end{itemize}
    \item \textit{b) phonetic constituents} (with the formula X 省聲):
      \begin{itemize}
        \item \textit{jìn} 禚(福) 精氣感祥。从示、纜省聲...
        \item \textit{róng} 釱 亂髮也。从形，茸省聲。
        \item \textit{róng} 茸 亂髮也。从仲省聲。(1B 25a ; 2. 24b)
        \item \textit{dú} 點 牛子也。从牛，濬省聲。
      \end{itemize}
    \item \textit{c) Note that, in some cases, the formula X 省 covers the abbreviation of a phonetic constituent without mentionning it:}
      \begin{itemize}
        \item \textit{qǐng} 柯 粟屬。从禾，奬省。As noted by Duàn Yúcái (7B 1b-2a), here one would expect \textit{ying}
      \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
IF certain abbreviated constituents are limited to a semantic role (fen 粉, gou 薯, hao 号, gao 高, luo 老, jue 爵, gao 栓, etc.) or to a phonetic role (xue 学, jue 決, qin 侵, yi 役, shan 删, etc.), like other constituents, abbreviated constituents can usually play both roles (ying 熒, bao 包, wei 胃, yin 隱, zhong 重, wei 微, etc.):

For example, wei 微 which first plays the role of a phonetic constituent in wei 薇, wei 滢, and wei (□)xvii can be declared an abbreviated phonetic constituent in mei 黴, wei 滢, hui 徽, hui 徽, and qi 豈, as well as an abbreviated semantic constituent in zheng 征 and in □, the large-seal style graph for wei 徽.

meh 徽 中久雨青黑。从黑，微省聲。
wai 污 小雨也。从水，微省聲。
hui 徽 曦也。以绛徽幑著於背。从巾，微省聲。

(xx writes 「徽」 instead of 「微」) (7B 22a; 14.22a)
hui 徽 賃也。从糸，微省聲。
qi 豈 還師振旅樂也。从豆，微省聲。 (5A 16a; 9.15b)
zheng 徵 召也。从微省。

(xx: 从□、微省) (8A 17a; 15.16a)
wai □ 鑛文从微省。

Most abbreviated constituents only appear once (i.e. under one single entry), but some of them appear at least twice. We can find as much as 23 instances of the constituent □ presented as an abbreviation of 5 different characters: 熒省聲, 荣省聲, 劳省聲, 榕省聲 and 萌省聲. There are 9 高省, 8 決省聲 in DXB (but only 6 in XXB), 8 學省聲, 8 老省 (but 7 in XXB), 8 廟省, 5 侵省聲, 7 微省聲, 5 履省, 5 弦省, 4 寒, (+1 寒省聲), 4 蟲省聲, 4 稀省聲 (but 2 in DXB), 3 从省聲, 3 剃省聲, 3 役省聲, 3 禍省, 3 啓省聲, 2 隨省聲 (+1 □省 +1 □省声 +2 慕省声 +1 慕省声 +1 隨省 +2 隨省), 2 勺省声, 2 濯省声, 2 □省, 2 蒟省, 2 引省聲, 2 亦省聲, 2 華省聲, 2 隨省聲, 2 赱省聲, 2 莹省聲, 2 莹省聲, 2 榧省, 2 粉省, 2 薰省, 2 雞省, 2 榧[□]省, 2 號省, 2 種[殿]省. On the other hand, the following graphs are presented as abbreviated phonetic as well as abbreviated semantic constituents: 4 包省(聲), 2 尾省(聲), 2 胃省(聲), 2 隱省(聲), 2 重省(聲), 2 宰省(聲), 2 旋省(聲), etc.
- Constituents abbreviated in certain graphic analysis can be themselves analysed as having an abbreviated constituent in their graphic structure when they are listed as entries. For example, in the graphic analysis of róng 茸, róng 茸 is declared abbreviated, but as an entry róng 茸 is also analysed as having an abbreviated form of cōng 聰.

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We note that for all these examples except jiàn 範 (analysed in 3 semantic constituents), Xu Shèn only recognises two graphic constituents.

- A few radicals are analysed as having an abbreviated form of another constituent, as we can see with jīng 京 [広] « capital city », xiàng 祥 « offering » and fǔ 與 all presented as having an abbreviated form of gāo 高 « high » as a semantic constituent (from 高省). But this is also the case for lì 隸 (from 尾省), huì 會 (from 曾省), cāng 倉 (from 食 [倉]省), etc.

- In some cases entries under a radical are all declared to have an abbreviated form of this radical. The radical gǔn, for example, is analysed the following way: gǔn 囗 萎 異也。从束 (束) 囗聲。.. « gǔn is a kind of bag. It has shù ‘bind’ as a semantic constituent, 囗 is the
phonetic constituent. » (6B 4b; 12.7a), but the four characters classified under gǔn: tuó 囿, náng 囿, gāo 囿, and pāo 囿 are all declared to have an abbreviated form of this constituent since the inner part of hùn 囘, which corresponds to the phonetic constituent in the middle of the graph, is each time replaced by another phonetic constituent put in 囗. In other words 石, 罟, 囿, and 匋 (both abbreviated) replace 豕 in 囗 in the following graphs:

tuó 囿 囿也。从囿省，石聲。(6B 4b; 12.7a)
náng 囿 囿也。从囿省，襄省聲。(6B 4b; 12.7a)
gāo 囿 車上大囿。从囿省，咎聲。(6B 4b; 12.7a)
pāo 囿 囿張大兊。从囿省，匋省聲。(6B 5a; 12.7a)

Under the radical mèng 寐 « to dream » (graphically analysed as: 从宀从疒, 悢声) all the entries (qǐn 寐, mèi 寐, wù 寐, rǔ 寐, mì 寐, jǐ 寐, bìng 寐, yì 寐, hū 寐) are declared to have an abbreviated form of mèng 寐 (从囿省). This is also the case for all the entries under lǚ 履 « shoes », yán 鹽 « salt », xián 弦 (弦) « string for a musical instrument », gāo 高 « high », cuán 寐 « cook » xxi, etc. xxi

5. The function of shěng 省

In the use of shěng 省 we have to distinguish different functions:

- 1) Omission or absence of a constituent
- 2) Merging of strokes or constituents
- 3) Abbreviation of a constituent:
  a) The abbreviated constituent does not exist as a independent character
  b) The abbreviated constituent exists as a independent character

5.1. Omission or absence of a constituent

The phrase shěng 省 X usually means that X has been ommitted. It usually involves ancient styles graphs. The ancient graph for dé 得, for example, is written without the constituent chí 註：古文省 إح.

qiú 囿：求古文省衣。xxiii (XXB: 古文求。此與裘意同) (8A 25a)
5.2. Merging of constituents or strokes

As shown by Chēn Shìhuī 陈世辉 (1979: 166) and Qiú Xīguī 裘錫圭 (1988: 161), in a few cases, shěng 省 refers to the fusion of some strokes or constituents in a graph:

zhāi 齋 戒，戒也。从示齋省聲。
the two strokes 二 in 示 are mixed with the 2 strokes of 齋；
pí 獭 如熊，黃白文。从熊，罷省聲。
the two constituents 能 are fused
li 黎 履黏也。从黍，利省聲。利，古文利。

In this last example, we have two hé 禾, one in li 利 and one in shǔ 黍. Xǔ Shèn declares li 利 to be abbreviated as it plays the phonetic role.

5.3. Abbreviation of a constituent

In the case of the abbreviation of a constituent, we have to distinguish whether the abbreviated constituent exist or not as an independant character (in Shuōwén).

5.3.1. The abbreviated constituent does not exist as an independant character

In some cases, the abbreviated constituent does not exist as an independent graph in Shuōwén.

- a) The grapheme 𧵇, for example, is not recorded as a radical nor as an entry in Shuōwén, but Xǔ Shèn refers to it 8 times as a phonetic constituent in an abbreviated form of xué 學:

    xué 學省聲    xué 學省聲
    xué 學省聲    xué 學省聲
    jué 聒 學省聲    què 聒 學省聲
Note that xié 學 is itself the result of an abbreviated form 學：篆文斆省.
All these characters had an entering tone 入聲 in ancient Chinese (and apparently the same main vowel in Old Chinese according to Pān Wùyún’s reconstructions).

- b) The grapheme yìng (?) 燎 is also not recorded as a radical nor as an entry in Shuōwén. Xǔ Shèn nevertheless takes it as a recurrent constituent, without feeling the need to declare it a radical. Like in the preceding case (築), this is most probably because 燎 and 築 basically stand for phonetic constituents and radicals do not usually represent pure phonetic graphemes in Shuōwén.

Now, in order to indicate this phonetic constituent 燎, Xǔ Shèn introduces no less than five different characters including it: yìng 燎, róng 榮, yìng 僭, yìng 臀, yìng 纡, and láo 勞, which is most puzzling. If we look in details we have:

- 14 yìng 燎 燿 in DXB used to note the following different modern pronunciations:
  5 yìng (yìng 僭, yìng 臀, yìng 臀, yìng 臀, yìng 臀 (but 臀省 in XXB))
  3 yìng (yìng 臀, yìng 臀, yìng 臀)
  1 yìng (yìng 僭)
  2 xíng (xíng 臀, xíng 僭)
  1 yòng (yòng 臀)
  1 róng (róng 榮)
  1 qiòng (qiòng 臀)

One wonders here why róng 榮 is not declared the abbreviated phonetic constituent in yòng 臀 nor in qiòng 臀？

- 3 róng 榮省聲, but no 榮省 (and 2 榮省)
  1 yòng 榮
  1 yìng 臀
  1 yìng 鶯

Here again, one wonders why yìng 臀 is not declared the abbreviated phonetic for yìng 臀
and yīng 燿?

- 1 yīng 燿省聲 (从玉熒省聲) (no 燿聲 in Shuōwén)
  1 yīng 燿 ( Yours)

Why not giving 燿省聲 here?

- 1 (or 2) yīng 燿省聲

There is only one occurrence of yīng 燿省聲 in DXB (but 2 in XXB)

1 qióng

According to Pān Wūyün’s phonological reconstructions (in TLS) we see good phonological reasons operating in most of these examples to use the same phonetic constituent at least in Old Chinese, xxx but why did Xǔ Shèn use four different characters for that?

- 2 láo 勞省聲 xxxi in DXB and no 勞省 (but 3 勞聲 xxxii)
  1 luò 萊
  1 liáo 膋 (graphic variant of liáo 醹)

According to Pān Wūyün (TLS), the ancient and old pronounciations had the same initials. xxxiii

As for qǐng 榖 and láo 勞, they are both declared in DXB to have 燿 as a semantic constituent (熒省), which is rather surprising for qǐng. xxxiv This could be a mistake since XX takes it as a phonetic abreviation (熒省). But it is not clear why Xǔ Shèn analyses láo 勞 as 燿省？(Unless one is ready to follow Xǔ Shèn’s forced graphic interpretation of 燿 which curiously differs from the gloss he provides for that entry). xxxv

- c) The grapheme 燿 is not recorded as an entry in Shuōwén, but Xǔ Shèn declares it a
phonetic constituent under qǐ 祺:

Qǐ 祺 徵緝也。一口微趫，信也，有齒。从糸攵聲。

Thus it is surprising to see that in spite of one occurrence of 改 as a phonetic constituent Xu Shèn needs to use an abbreviated constituent of qǐ 啓 under the 3 following entries:

qi 啓 省視也。从目，啓省聲。(4A 5a ; 7.4b)
qi 啓 雨而盡性也。从日，啓省聲。(7A 2a)
qi 擅 傳，信也。从木，啓省聲。(6A 20b) Táng MS

Here again, the problem, is that we do not know what was the original text. In other words, are we dealing with later modifications of the original text, some possible mistakes, some incoherence in Xu Shèn’s analysis or any special motivation that we can not grasp anymore?

- If, on the other hand, zhào 肇 could not have been analysed as having the abbreviated phonetic constituent qǐ 啓, we might have thought that qǐ 啓省 could have been possible here. Now the fact that Xu Shèn analyses zhào 肇 as having the abbreviated phonetic constituent zhào 肇 (肇省聲) shows that his graphic analysis is based on a precise knowledge of graphic constituents that we can call immediate graphic constituent.

zhào 肇 擊也。从支，肇省聲。(3B 15a)

Indeed, instead of analysing zhào 肇 as having the constituents 改 and 卒, Xu Shèn identifies the constituent pǔ 支 (glossed 小擊也，从又卜聲) as the semantic constituent. He then interprets in a coherent way for his graphico-semantic analysis the other partxxxvi in the graph and proposes an abbreviated form of zhào 肇 as the phonetic constituent. In this way he has only two immediate constituents in the graph. One may wonder why he does not simply choose zhào 肇 (which is an entry in Shuōwén glossed: 始開也。从戶从聿。XX: 从戶、聿聲) as the phonetic constituent. But it is probably because he can then suggest that zhào 肇 and 肇 are also graphic variants.
5.3.2. The abbreviated constituent exists as an independent character

In most cases, abbreviated constituents exist as independent characters in *Shuōwén*, but in some cases their pronunciation may appear too far from that of the entries, or they refer to different words.

- a) The pronunciation of the entry and that of the phonetic constituent may vary a lot:

When the pronunciation of the phonetic constituent appears too far from that of the entry, Xu Shèn introduces another word with an identical or close pronunciation that is written with the same grapheme, and declares it to be the phonetic constituent in an abbreviated form.

- *cè 册 (册)* versus *shān 删 ➔ shān/shān/zhà*

  shān 删 削也。从刀册。册，書也。

  shān 珊 珊瑚 色赤，生於海，或生於山。从玉、删省聲。 (1A 14b; 1. 18a) (Duàn 1A 36b)

  shān 嫇 誹也。一曰：冀便也。从女、删省聲。 (XXB: 一曰：女臭也。从女、删省聲。

  一曰：嫳，翼便也)

  shàn 獬 恶健犬也。从犬、删省聲。

In the Táng manuscript, we also have:

- *zhà 柵 編繩木也。从木、删省聲。*

In all these cases, we can see that *cè 册 (册)* could be felt as a doubtful or too far-fetched phonetic constituent. Thus by refering to another word pronounced *shān 删*, Xu Shèn could provide a better way to read the characters he analyses. Now why did he choose *shān 删* « to cut » rather than *shān 嫇*, for example? Could it be because it is less negative than *shān 嫇* « to mock » glosed as 謹也 « to slander »?***

- The same thing could be said with *jué 決* and *guài 夤*. According to Chēn Shìhuī 陳世輝 (1979: 140-141), Xu Shèn analyses *jué 決*, *jué 跌*, *yuè 竽*, *jué 疾*, *yuè 姦* and *jué 骇* (but not XX: 从韚、夬聲) with the abbreviated phonetic constituent 決省聲 because their pronunciation is close to *jué 決*; and *kuài 快*, *jué 姦*, and *jué 骇* with 夬聲音 because their
pronunciation is closer to guài 夔. He can then make a distinction between their pronunciation which have changed with time even though this is not visible anymore in the graphs, but I leave this to the specialists of the reconstruction of late Hàn Chinese pronunciations.

- b) The abbreviated constituent refers to another word with another pronunciation.

In the following cases, Xū Shèn cannot declare 虫 to be the phonetic constituent since it refers to another word pronounced huǐ « snake »:

- róng 融 蟲省聲。【籀】籀文融不省。
- tóng 螣 蟲省聲
- tóng 螽 蟲省聲
- tóng 螀 蟲省聲

Besides, as we can see, the large-seal style graph for róng 融 is written without any abbreviation. Therefore, in his graphic analysis of róng 融, tóng 螣, tòng 螾, and tóng 螾, Xū Shèn can rightfully declare chòng 蟲 « insect, worm » to be the abbreviated phonetic constituent.

The same thing can be said for lóng 龍 and dá 龆 since they too refer to different words with different pronunciations:

- zhé 蜤 蟲省聲。【籀】籀文蜉不省。(3A 14b; 5.14a-b)
- xí 襄 蟲省聲。【籀】籀文襄不省。(8A 19b; 16.2b)

In yōu 懿 « doe », Xū Shèn cannot simply declare bǐ 匕 which refers to another word « dagger » to be a semantic constituent, therefore he has to use the shěng 省 strategy (从牝省) to be able to provide a proper meaning of the graph (pìn) 匕 « female ».

- yōu 懿 牝鹿也。从鹿，从牝省。(10A 9b; 19.7a)

- c) Semantic motivation of shěng 省

Sometimes, Xū Shèn tries his best to motivate the choice of a graphic constituent in its relation to the gloss he proposes.
- For example, in the case of the pronoun-object *yōu 彊*, which he glosses as «flowing water» (行水也。从支从从人，从水省)，Xǔ Shèn introduces a water related constituent in order to provide a relevant interpretation of the graph as «flowing water» 行水。He thus explains the vertical stroke as an abbreviated form of *shuǐ* 水 «water». In this he is helped by the Qin Shihuang’s inscribed stone which has the graph including the water constituent:

```
攸 行水也。从支、从人、从水省。【□(汝)】秦刻石繹山文攸字如此。(3B 17；6.18b)
```

- We find this kind of semantic motivation in the following cases where the character that corresponds to the semantic constituent declared abbreviated also appears in the gloss:

```
chuí 鬚 发也。从髟，髟省。(9A 10b)
kēng 砻 餌堅者。从石，堅省。(9B 11a)
cháo 𢒪 水朝宗于海。从水，朝省。(11A 10b)
```

Note that in this last example, Xiǎo Xú coherently presents 朝 as an abbreviated phonetic constituent (XX: 从水、朝省聲). In Xǔ Shèn’s logic, abbreviated phonetic constituents may also be chosen for semantic reasons and not always declared phonetic. This is probably also the case for *máo* 麂 «tail»:

```
máo 麂 麂牛尾也。从犛省，从毛。(2A 5b p.30；3.5a)
lái 斄 彊曲毛，可以著起衣。从犛省，來聲。【□】古文斄省。(2A 5b；3.5a)
```

Here *lái/ mão* 麂 and *lái/ lǐ* 莼 are both glossed in relation to yaks *máo* 麂, and are also analysed as having the abbreviated semantic constituent *máo* 麂 (西南夷長髦牛也。从牛□聲 (2A 5b；3.5a)).

- In *ning* 佞 «to be eloquent, to flatter» 巧讇高材也。从女，信省（XX has a different graphic analysis: 从女、仁聲）one understands why Dà Xú following Xǔ Shèn (or not?) chooses 信 to be an abbreviated semantic constituent: anyone too skillful at flattering should not be trusted.

- In some examples, it is a graphic resemblances that motivates Xǔ Shèn’s introduction of
an abbreviated form as a semantic constituent:

\[ lì \quad \text{隶 及也。从又，从尾省。又，持尾者，从後及之也。凡隶之属皆从隶。} \]

\[ wèi \quad \text{尾} \]

The small-seal style graph of \( lì \) 隶 « catch up » is interpreted as having an abbreviated constituent « tail ».

\[ shǐ \quad \text{□ 鬨也。从艸，胃 从□省。} \quad (1 \text{ B 22a}) \]

\[ wèi \quad \text{□ 穰府也。从肉；糥，象形。} \quad (4 \text{ B 8b}) \]

Here, it is also the resemblance between the small-seal style graphs that makes Xǔ Shèn explain the graph for \( shǐ \) 鬨 « excrement » with that for \( wèi \) 胃 « stomac ». When Xǔ Shèn analyses \( shǐ \) 用 as constructed with an abbreviated form of \( wèi \) 胃 « stomac » he does not only have an original (but not necessary right) knowledge of ancient graphs, he tries his best to make graphico-semantic links between written words.

Some of Xǔ Shèn’s graphic associations are still unclear or rather problematic. For example, when Xǔ Shèn declares 冬 to be an abbreviated constituent in 冏 it is not clear what is the relation between « pen » and « winter »?

\[ lào \quad \text{□ (牢) 閒，養牛馬圈也。从牛，冬省。取其四周帀也。} \quad (2 \text{ A 4a}) \]

\[ dōng \quad \text{冬 四時盡也。从冬从夂。夂，古文終字。古文冬从日。} \quad (11 \text{ B 4a}) \]

Since Xǔ Shèn did not have access to bronze nor oracle bones inscriptions, there are of course many mistakes in his graphic analysis.

6. Why did Xǔ Shèn need to introduce the term shěng 省？

Now it seems that Xǔ Shèn’s starting point for the introduction of shěng 省 as an analytic tool is the comparison between graphic variants (synchronic and diachronic) in which some constituents may be kept or suppressed like in the following examples:

\[ zǐ \quad \text{梓 楸也。从木，宰省聲。 } \quad \text{[梓]或不省。} \]
The term *shěng* 省 then gave Xu Shèn the possibility to explain all sorts of phenomenon related to the evolution of the script and helped him clarify the structure of some opaque graphs inherited from older times. It does not only suggest the evolution of the script, it also helps Xu Shèn specify some changes or some links between ancient and modern graphs, as well as some of the particularities of this graphic system.

- 1) Even though this is no longer the proper analysis, Xu Shèn distinguishes the constituent *zhī* 之 (生命力) hardly recognizable in *shì* 事 and *shì* 市, and uses *sheng* 省 to clarify what he thinks is the graphic structure and the nature of the phonetic constituent in these graphs:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{shì } ((\text{豲})) & \quad \text{事 職} \text{也。从史, 之(生命力)省聲。} \quad [\text{豲}] \text{古文事。} \\
\text{shì } ((\text{豲})) & \quad \text{市 貿易所之也。市有垣, 从門从弋, 弋, 古文及, 象物相及也; 之(生命力)省聲。}
\end{align*}
\]

In these examples both the small-seal style graphs and the old graph allowed Xu Shèn a more detailed graphic analysis. Now, with our access to ancient graphs, we can see Xu Shèn’s errors in the analysis of these graphs, but his method which consists in referring to older available graphs at his time is nevertheless more rigorous than that of those who only based their analysis on contemporary graphs.

- 2) In complex or opaque graphs, the use of *shěng* 省 can help Xu Shèn clarify the immediate constituents and their structural interaction.

\[
\begin{align*}
yù & \quad \text{鬱 木叢生者。从林, 鬱省聲。} \quad (6A \text{ 25a}; 11.30b) \\
náng & \quad \text{囊 孢也。从彊省, 彊省聲。} \quad (6B \text{ 4b}; 12.7a) \\
pāo & \quad \text{𤄀 囊張大貌。从彊省, 𤄀省聲。} \\
gòng & \quad \text{賜(賜) 賜也。从貝, 賜省聲。} \quad [\text{賜}] \text{籀文賜。} \quad (6B \text{ 8a}; 12.11a: [賜] 畫文賜) \\
qiòng & \quad \text{窮 夏后時諸矦夷羿國也。从邑, 穷省聲。} \quad (6B \text{ 11a}; 12.14b)
\end{align*}
\]
We can see that Xǔ Shèn simply analyses all these complex graphs in only two immediate constituents instead of many more. This is also the case for róng 茸 and róng 茸. But Xǔ Shèn’s introduction of a 省声 formula here is also induced by the fact that ěr 耳 can not be taken as a semantic constituent, therefore he provides other possible abbreviations for the phonetic constituent ěr 耳 with closer readings.

róng 茸 乱髮也。从形, 茸省聲。(9A 10a; 17. 9a)
róng 茸 帝豊茸也。从豊, 茸省聲。(1B 25a; 2. 24b)

- 3) With shěng 省, Xǔ Shèn is able to deal with some of the particularities of the Chinese writing system such as, for example, the possibility for triple (雥) or double constituents (雔) to be reduced to single ones (è 靜).

Reduction of repeated graphs:

ji 集 : 集或省。 蝟 ➔ 佳
xiāo  użytkow : 用或省。 unity ➔ 団
jǐn 緊 : 緊省省。 丝 ➔ 系

And even sometimes in spite of the fact that non-simplified and simplified graphs can refer to different words as we have seen with chóng 蟲 « insect » and huǐ 虫 « reptile / snake ».

- Shěng 省 also allows Xǔ Shèn to show that with the evolution of the script some constituents have been exchanged or replaced, like, for example, in xīn 信:

xīn 信 : 古文从言省。

- Shěng 省 can also be used to provide connexions between written words:
a) between the different ways to write the same words:

ning 宁 所願也。从用、宁省聲。
ning 宁 願詞也。从亏、寧聲。
yù 鬱 木叢生者。从林, 鬱省聲。
Françoise Bottéro

Ning is the old form for 寧 and as Chen Shihui (1979: 160) has pointed out ning and 寧 are just different ways to write the same word; 鬱 and yù 鬱 are also graphic variants.

b) connexions between graphs.

No matter how conjectural Xu Shen’s abbreviations may be, he might also use the term shěng to suggest some links between graphs. He can analyse the radical jīng «capital city» as having an abbreviated form of another radical gāo «high», and the radical cāng «warehouse» as having an abbreviated form of another radical shí «food» to show their graphico-semantic links. In his graphic analysis of hé 禾, Xu Shen suggests that a simple stroke can be related to a more complex form no longer visible but with the same meaning ‘hanging down’ expressed by the small-seal style graph chuí and thus he introduces graphico-semantic links between these two graphs:

In the small-seal style graph for hé 禾, the upper part is hanging down and that is what Xu Shen wants to express when he writes 从禾省.

With fāng 方 Xu Shen, who probably had fǎng 舫 «boat» in mind, tries to make more explicit the motivation between the graph and the meaning of the word he pretends it refers to by introducing two ‘boats’ supposedly abbreviated.

In order to justify the meaning related to boats, that may be induced by the allograph written with the constituent ‘water’, Xu Shen introduces a no longer visible graphic simplification based on a pure interpretation of graphs.

- Shěng 省 in the end can help retrieve the proper meanings associated with graphs or graphemes: 虫 chóng / huǐ «insect :: snake »; 匕 bǐ pin «dagger :: female », etc.:
With the technical term shěng 省, Xǔ Shèn can show that in this case we are not dealing with bǐ 匕 « dagger » but with another word pìn 牝 « female animal » written or abbreviated as 匜.

There are many incoherences and conjectural abbreviated forms in Xǔ Shèn’s analysis, some of them may correspond to later alteration of the texts, but some of them might also indicate that we are still ignorant of certain ancient pronunciations or reading traditions. Considering the fact that Xǔ Shèn had no real access to ancient graphs, the work he did is quite remarkable.

**Conclusion**

In a more general attempt to make explicit the tools developed by Xǔ Shèn to analyse the Chinese writing system around the first century AD, I have studied all the formulae with shěng 省 (X 省, 省 X, X 省聲) in Shuōwén. Since phonetic constituents are primarily graphic, and since there are many cases for which Xǔ Shèn does not specify the phonetic function of the abbreviated constituent (see 朝 above), in my study I did not separate X 省 from X 省聲 like most authors did.

As we have seen, the shěng 省 formulae were not only used for the small-seal style graphs, they were also used for older styles of graphs: ancient and large-seal, as well as for graphic variants. In other words, the term involves the whole writing system as such from ancient to modern times, and shows that Xǔ Shèn was aware of the evolution of the script, a fact ignored by some of his contemporaries. Other authors have pointed out that there were many mistakes of different kinds in Xǔ Shèn’s graphic analysis, but what I find interesting with Xǔ Shèn’s use of shěng 省 is that we can see his kitchen and what he does in it. In other words, we can see how with a limited access to ancient scripts and documents, he manages to analyse graphically and phonetically quite chaotic and sometimes quite opaque graphs herited from older times. The term shěng 省 gave him the possibility to deal with all sorts of phenomenon related to the evolution of the script and clarify immediate constituents in graphs. In short, it is an important tool for his methodological approach of the Chinese writing system, for explaining graphs and interpreting written words as indicated in the title of his huge work: 說文解字 « Explain graphs to interpret written words ».
NOTES


ii In principle these formulae apply to each entry but we find some exceptions under the entries glossed as tabooed names because of the emperor (shǎnghuì 上諱), such as hú 禊, zhūānɡ 莊, etc., and also under dǐng 鼎 in Xú Xuàn or Dà Xú's version (but not in Xiǎo Xú's) (see note XIII).

iii Other formulae play with the internal construction of the graphs, but it is not necessary to list them here. For a more detailed study see F. Bottéro 2013 Lùn Xù Shèn zìxíng fēnxi de yǒuqí tèdiǎn 《論許慎字形分析的一些特點》 [Some particularities in Xù Shèn’s graphic analysis], The Journal of Chinese Characters 漢字研究 (Hanja Yeongu) 8 (2013.06) p. 1-28.

iv In this paper I first give in parenthesis the reference to Dà Xú's version (DXB) of the Shuōwén, here (1A 5b), and then the reference to Xiǎo Xú's version (XXB) in Shuōwén jiězì xī zhuàn 《說文解字繫傳》 here (1.8a).

v This manuscript which is kept in the Kyō shyouoku Library きょうしょうおく 杏畑書屋, in Osaka, comprises 6 leaf that correspond to 1/50 of the full text. See Mò Yǒuzhī 莫友芝 2002: 232.


vii As we have seen above (p.16) with yōng 榮, DXB: 从示, 荖省聲; XXB: 从示, 荖省聲.

viii B stands for an older style of graphic variant I am not providing but which modern equivalent is given in brackets: 【盈】.

ix For more details concerning Duán’s modification of the graphic analysis with shèng 省 see Wăng Yuanzhī 王元穉 1988: 323-325.


xi According to Duán (3B 41a), in this case since xué 學 is presented as the small-seal style graph, the entry 數 should then correspond to the ancient graph.

xii Duán has changed the graphic structure into: 从水。所以數不直者去之，从水去。

xiii Note that Xiǎo Xú does not write 从 for the 2 entries jiàn 戟 and duó 偶, but provides two other graphic analysis with 从 Y 省, for tián 天 and for dǐng 鼎. Tián 天 舌鬼。从合省, 象形。【XXB: 象形。从合省聲】(3A 2a; XX 5 2b) and dǐng 鼎 三足，兩耳，和五味之寶器也。昔禹收九牧之金，鏤鼎刑山之下，入山林川澤，夔魅魍魎莫能逢之，以協承天 休。《易》卦巽木於下者，為鼎，象析木以炊也。攣文以鼎為貞字。凡鼎之屬皆从鼎。【XXB: writes ‘繫’ instead of ‘纚’]
and 「析木以炊鼎也」 instead of 「析木以炊也」, before giving the graphic analysis 「從貞省聲」 absent in DXB. 1. 古文以貞為鼎，籀文以鼎為貞字。凡鼎之屬皆从鼎。 (7A 13a; 13 15b).

xiv Xiǎo Xú writes: méi 蟹 老精物也。从鬼、乡：乡，鬼毛。 B【录】 古文。 B【聚】 籀文蜈 从象首，从尾省聲。 B【魅】 或从未。

xv Xiǎo Xú gives a different abbreviation for the allograph of 優；【豳】。

xvi The so-called phonetic constituent is taken as a grapheme related to the pronunciation of the character and not, as suggested by the English translation, as a string of phonemes.

xvii Wēi 萧 菜也，似雟。从艸、微聲。 B【雟】 籀文微省； wéi 玮 竹也。从竹、微聲。 B【雟】 籀文从微省。（XXB【雟】） wéi 耒 (隶) 可也。从見、微聲。

xviii In Pān Wùyún’s 潘悟雲 reconstructions (as given in TLS, http://tls.uni-hd.de/) we can see that both lǔ 鲁 and chā 差 had the same main vowel in Old Chinese: 鲁 lǔ - *tuŋ 部古切 通摄 合口呼 一等韵 上声 來母 模部 /从魚聲 魚部 **ɡ-rəaʔ, 差 chā - *tʃɛj 初牙切 假摄 開口呼 二等 韻 平声 初母 麻部 /从左聲 歌 1部 **skraal.

xix Note the difference between the small-seal style graph and the modern graph 囊 for náng, in which the ‘tree’ constituent 木 has been replaced by the lower part of 衣。

xx Xiǎo Xú (12.7a) does not record the first abbreviation: 从黍，囊省聲。

xxi Wáng Yun 王筠 notes in his Shuòwén shìli 说文释例 3.15b (1987: 57), that the two characters zuān 墩 and mén 门 are not analysed as having the abbreviated constituent cuān 墩。But both of them are not classified under the radical cuān 墩 as they are not related to the « cooking » meaning.

xxii This confirms the fact that radicals are not taken as simple graphs (diàozì 独體字) by Xú Shèn.

xxiii In Chù (Bāoshān 包山, Guōdiàn 店郭店) and Qin documents (Shuǐhǔdì 睡虎地), 丘 could stand for 皆, see Xiǎoxuéwén 小學堂:

http://xiaoxue.iis.sinica.edu.tw/chiwenzi?kaiOrder=3245


xxiv If we look at the phonological reconstructions provided by Pān Wùyún 潘悟雲 in TLS: we can see the coherence of the abbreviated form of 學 as a phonetic constituent; 學 xué - *fiyɔk 胡覺切 江摄 開口呼 二等韵 入聲 匝母 輝部 /从學聲 輝 1部 **g-rɔuŋ; 覺 jué - *kŋɔk 古舌切 江摄 開口呼 二等韵 入聲 覺母 輝部 /从學聲 輝 1部 **kruaʊ; 鬤 kū - *khuɔk 巫沃切 通摄 合口呼 一等韵 入聲 汪母 沃部; 聲 wò - *ŋɔk 於角切 江摄 開口呼 二等韵 入聲 影母 輝部; 碧 hú - *fiuɔk 胡沃切 通摄 合口呼 一等韵 入聲 匝母 沃部 /从學聲 輝 1部 **g-rɔuŋ.

xxv Both Chén Shihui 陳世輝 (1979: 163) and Qiú Xīguī 丘思圭 (1988: 162) have pointed out that the equivalent of 譯 existed in bronze inscriptions. Hé Jiǔyíng 何九盈 (1991: 17) considers that not recognising 譯 as a phonetic constituent is one of Xú Shèn’s mistake, and that 譯, 譚, 劳, 呉, or 計省聲 should all be replaced by 勝聲。

xxvi Note the different choice of characters (yīng 营 or yīng 营) between the Xú brothers.

xxvii According to Qiú Xīguī (1988: 162) Xú Shèn is wrong when he analyses yīng 营 as 从炎，since the older graph for 譯 in bronze inscriptions was composed of 2 ‘fire’ and what became  since in modern graph.

xxviii Note that there is no 警聲 in Shuòwén, in other words yīng 营 is never taken as the phonetic
constituent. 《說文》中沒有分析成‘熒聲’的字。

There are two entries with róng 荣 as a phonetic constituent in Shuōwén: yíng 荣, 帝衍元也, 从册、荣声; and róng 獼 前 womb. 从山, 荣声.

荧 yíng - *féng 户卓切 梗摄 合口呼 四等韵 平声 匝母 青部 / 从荧声 聿部 **g‘leŋ; 荣 róng - *fiŋ 半切 梗摄 合口呼 三等韵 平声 云母 庚部 / 从荧声 聿部 **g‘eŋ; 基荧 yíng - *fiŋ 半切 梗摄 合口呼 三等韵 平声 云母 庚部 / 从荧声 聿部 **g‘eŋ; 荣 yíng - *fiŋ 半切 梗摄 合口呼 三等韵 平声 状母 恭部 / 从荧声 聿部 **g‘eŋ; 基荧 yíng - *fiŋ 半切 梗摄 合口呼 三等韵 平声 云母 庚部 / 从荧声 聿部 **g‘eŋ & xiōng - *hien 休正切 梗摄 合口呼 三等韵 去声 晓母 清部 / 从荧声 聿部 **qʰeŋs.

Does the fact that both luò 卍和 liáo (瘞) (written【營】) have an « ox » related gloss makes it another reason for Xu Shèn to use liáo 娣 in an abbreviated form as a (phonetic) constituent, even tough liáo 娣 « labour » is not glossed in relation to the ox but as 劃 - « difficult ». Luò 卍 駮牛也。从牛、勞省聲; and liáo 娣 牛腸脂也。从肉、卵聲。《詩》曰: 取其血腸。X【營】。腸或从勞省聲。

There are three 勞聲 in Shuōwén: láo 娣 喋, 駮牛也。从口、勞聲; láo 蹈 朝鮮謂藥毒曰箍。从ד、勞聲; and lǎo 漂 水出風部, 北入潕。从水、勞聲。

勞 láo - *lau 魯刀切 效摄 開口呼 四等韵 入声 来母 鮢部 / 从勞声 寺 1 部 **raaw; 勞 lǎo - *lək 呂角切 江摄 開口呼 二等韵 入声 来母 江部; 章 lǎo - *leu 落塞切 效摄 開口呼 四等韵 入声 来母 蕈部 / 从勞声 寺 2 部 **reew.

Indeed whatever the pronunciation qìng or qiōng for 燈 qìng - *khieŋ 去穀切 梗摄 合口呼 三等韵 上声 溪母 清部 or qiōng - *hieŋ 口穀切 梗摄 合口呼 四等韵 上声 溪母 青部, we see close or identical ancient finals (en or eŋ) with that of the other characters listed in note 30, according to Pán Wùyún (TLS).

As an entry, yíng 荧 (10B 1a) is glossed: 屋下鐵熒之光 (XX writes 「熒」 instead of 「鐙」), but under láo 娣 it is interpreted as 荧, 火燒燃。In other words we see inconsistencies arising here since yíng 荧 would have two meanings, one as an entry and one as a constituent.

Now it is true that neither hù 戶 (護也)。半門曰戶 « guard, half of a door is called hù » nor yù 袁 (所以書曰 « the means that is used to write ») have semantic or phonetic relation with zhào 計. On the other hand, in Shuōwén, zhào 計 is simply glossed as to the name of Emperor Hán Hèdì 和帝 (r. 88-105), and stands as a tabooed name (zhào 計 上諱), but this does not prevent Xu Shèn from using it here for his graphic analysis.

The radical cè 彻(冊) is glossed the following way: 符命也。諸侯厌受於王也。象其札一長一短、中有二編之形。凡冊之屬皆从冊。B【詞(冊)】古文冊从竹, and is analysed as a semantic constituent in sī 誠: 諸侯國籍也。从冊、从口, 口所也。B【冊】古文冊从子, as well as in biàn 扁: 署也。从户、冊。冊者, 署門戶之文也; and in 删(删): 削也。从刀、册。冊, 書也。

Here, it is interesting to note that in the special case of zhà 棟 where we posses the reading instructions (又白, see p.18) of the Táng manuscript, both Xu brothers have changed the graphic analysis and adapted the fanqie spelling to the new analysis:
But Chēn Shìhuī did not include Chēn did not mention oracle bone and in bronze inscriptions. If I agree with Zhēng Niū (2014: 1) who takes shēng shēng 帝省 as a supplementary tool for Xu Shèn’s analysis of graphs, but not with Hé Jiǔyíng (1991: 18) who considers shēng shēng 帝省 to be a method to construct characters. In our previous work, I took a different perspective from both of them since I did not limit my study to shēng shēng 帝省 like they did. On the other hand, it is clear from the examples given in this paper that even shēng shēng 帝省 helped Xu Shèn clarify the structure of graphs and their immediate constituent.

The ancient graphs show a different constituent than ‘foot’ in 事 (乙 2766(甲)): (頌簋) (Shāo jù jiàn 少虡剑 (late Spring and Autumn Period, Shōwén 隨文)). (Xiǎoxué shì, 1991: 160-165) for concrete examples of Xu Shèn’s mistakes with shēng 省 analysis.

If we look at Pān Wūyún’s reconstructions (TLS) we have the following reconstructed pronunciations:

| 白 bái | *b̥r̥k | 開口呼 二等韵 入聲 並母 省部 | 从白聲 省部 | **braag |
|革 gé | *k̥r̥k | 開口呼 二等韵 入聲 春母 職部 | 从革聲 職部 | **k̥rumuŋ |
| 秧 mái | *m̥ẙk | 開口呼 二等韵 入聲 明母 部 | 从秧聲 部 | **m̊rumuŋ |
| 冥 cè | *t̥ik | 阻力切 曾部 開口呼 三等韵 見母 職部 | 从霓聲 職部 | **k̥rumuŋ |

The problem is that we have many cases in which the phonetic constituent can be questionable, but where Xu Shèn, or at least Dà Xú and Xiǎo Xú, do not record any shēng shēng 省聲. Dà Xú, for example, mentions quite a few fēi shēng 非聲 『wrong phonetic』 for which we can see that there are no phonological links (i.e. both initials and rhyme are different) between the character and the declared phonetic constituent, without changing the text.

Note that DX analyses juè 決 as 从水、从夬 and XX as 从水、夬聲. In DX and XX’s versions, we find juè 決声, 夬聲, 夬聲 as well as 夬聲. Considering the fact that these formulae are differently used by DX and XX and noting, for example, that after the graphic analysis (从目、夬聲) for the entry juè 決, DX adds «According to me and others, it should be analysed as 从夬声 』(臣銘等曰: 當从夬省), Wáng Yún 王筠 (1988: 68) concludes that 決省声 in the two brothers’ versions must come from previous modifications of the Shōwén.

Note the graph wèi: in the bronze inscription Shāo jù jiàn 少虡剑 (late Spring and Autumn Period, Shōwén 隨文).
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X XB: 禾 嘉穀也。从二月始生，八月而熟，得時之中和，故謂之禾也。禾，木王而生，金王而死。从木，从口省。口象其采也。凡禾之屬皆从禾。①

Fāng 方 which often plays the role of a phonetic constituent or has the meaning « directions » is presented by Xū Shèn as a radical with a special meaning related to « boat ».②

In his postface (15A 3b), Xū Shèn criticises those who only based their graphic analysis on lǐshū 録書 style graphs pretending that discovered older graphs were pure inventions.③

Qiú (1988: 163) writes, for example: « There are many wrong interpretations of shěng in Shuōwén, we can distinguish three kinds of mistakes: A. Wrong analysis of characters; B. Taking a current phonetic constituent for one that underwent abbreviation; C. Taking an abbreviated phonetic constituent for another one. » 「說文」關於省聲的說法有很多是錯誤的，這些錯誤大體上可以分為三類: A. 錯析字形，B. 把一般的聲旁錯誤作經省略的聲旁，C. 把從甲字省聲的字說成從乙字省聲。」④

As shown by Chēn Shìhuī 1979 the shěng 省 method is still a good procedure 手段 to analyse and explain complex graphs such as those found in bronze inscriptions.

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《说文解字》“省”概念的研究

蒲芳莎

提要：这篇文章主要介绍《说文解字》中包含“省”字句式的研究。要理解许慎在汉字及字形分析方面的独创性及其贡献，就需要研究他在《说文解字》中运用的术语。其中就有“省”这个涉及多种含义、用法非常复杂的术语。本文首先介绍《说文》中“省”的特殊性和不同用法，然后介绍它在字形分析中所具有的重要意义。“省”的概念不仅可以指某个偏旁或所谓字形“成分”的省略，也可以指某个义符或声符的简略形式，还可以指某些字形中公用的偏旁，有时还可以指某字的异体。“省”在《说文》中，是许慎汉字分析的一个极为重要的工具，它完善地解决了那些古代流传下来的复杂、难解的字形问题。“省”的运用表明许慎对他分析的古字、今字都有极为深入的了解。研究“省”在《说文》中的功用，对于我们理解许慎的汉字分析法具有重要的价值。

关键词：《说文解字》、“省”、字形分析

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