

# Art as an instrument for political legitimization during the Tang

## The small seal script and the legitimization seal\*

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### 1. The Problem

During the Tang dynasty the seal script was rediscovered. Normally this event is described only as a part of art history and the history of calligraphy. But it is obvious that the significance of this rediscovering goes beyond art. When regarded from the point of view of the court – or the emperor – this event touches the self-conception of the Tang. The question I would like to discuss is “was the seal script regarded as part of the cultural activities of the elite (*shi* 士) or was it far more, namely seen as a legitimization symbol for the dynasty?” I shall argue that the latter is true and that the seal script during the Tang was regarded as a token that heaven was blessing the dynasty. If it is correct to state that the *guwen*-movement 古文 was not a mere literary event but far more, namely a new conception of state and society (which, of course, includes the arts and literature), I consider the seal script tradition to be a crucial part of that larger movement.

There is no doubt that after the Qin dynasty the *zhuan*shu 篆書 (the seal script), or more precisely: the *xiao*zhuan 小篆, the small seal, was no longer recognized as important or even useable: All the essays that had been written before the Tang dynasty only mention the seal script in passing. The short essay by Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132–192), *Zhuan*shi 篆勢 [The Power of the seal script] is the important exception. It seems that the new types – or to render it more modern: the new fonts, *ziti* 字體 – as the *lishu* 隸書 or the modern *kaishu* 今楷書, absorbed all the attention of the artists resp. the intellectuals. Of course there was still a demand for the seal script in forms of e.g. official seals, certain inscriptions etc. Nevertheless nowhere in the documents and literary writings we find a remark that this was an important or interesting affair. On the contrary, since the end of

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the Northern Dynasties there was a bureau established at court in charge of the standard (modern) font (*zhengshu* 正書, or *zhenshu* 眞書 i.e. the modern *kai-shu*).<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is remarkable that at the end of the Sui or at the beginning of the Tang we find some noted calligraphers who were skilled at the seal script, artists such as Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641). The *Shudian* 書斷 [Assessments of calligraphers] says about him that he was well versed (*neng* 能) in the eight types of script (*bati* 八體) and that his calligraphy of the seal script was particularly good.<sup>2</sup>

How outstanding the more or less sudden re-emergence of seal script calligraphers really is will become evident when we take a look into the relevant texts for the history of calligraphy, e.g. Yang Xin's 羊欣 (370–442) *Gulai neng shu renming* 古來能書人名 [Annotated list of the names of skilled calligraphers since ancient times]: In this text<sup>3</sup> we find the names of six seal script calligraphers, starting with Qin Shihuangdi's 秦始皇帝 (B.C. 259–210) chancellor Li Si 李斯 (?–210) and the famous eunuch Zhao Gao 趙高 (?–207), next the name of the prison-ward Cheng Miao 程邈, who is normally only known as the alleged inventor of the *lishu* 隸書. These names all belong to the Qin dynasty, Cheng Miao is followed by a certain Cao Xi 曹喜 of the Later Han dynasty together with Cai Yong 蔡邕, whose *Power of the seal script* has already been mentioned, and ending with a certain Chen Zun 陳尊 also known as Chen the party shocker 陳驚座 (Chen Jingzuo, died around 25 AD).<sup>4</sup>

1 Shi Anchang 施安昌, "Tangdai zhengzixue kao" 唐代正字學考: 77, in: *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊, 3 (1992): pp. 77–84.

2 Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘撰 (fl. during the *Kaiyuan* [713–742] reign period), *Shudian* 書斷, p. 159; Sugimura Kunihiko 杉村邦彦, Yoshida Kyōsen 吉田教專, and Kamiya Junichi 神谷順治譯 (transls.), Chō Kaikan (Zhang Huaiguan) 張懷瓘撰, *Shodan* [Shudian]. A further (partial) Japanese translation as well by Sugimura Kunihiko 杉村邦彦 is included in the *Chūgoku koten bungaku taikei* 中國古典文學大系 series, vol. 54, pp. 473–533, Tōkyō: Heibonsha 1982, 7th printing (1st 1974); see also Wang Zhongluo 王仲犛, "Sui, Tang, Wudai de shufa – 'Sui, Tang, Wudai shi zhi yi zhang'" 隋唐五代的書法 – 隋唐五代史之一章 [The calligraphy during the Sui, Tang, and Wudai dynasties – a chapter in the history of the Sui, Tang, and Wudai], in: *Lidai yanjiu* 歷代研究, 1 (1984): pp. 92–102 (loc. cit., p. 95).

3 Yoshida Kyōsen 吉田教專 and Kamiya Junji 神谷順治譯 (transl. and annotated ed. of the Chinese text), Yō Kin (Yang Hsin), *Korai nōsho jinmei* [Gulai neng shu renming], pp. 139–163; (Nakata Yūjiro 中田勇次郎編 (ed.), *Chūgoku shoron taikei* 中國書論大系, vol. 1: Tōkyō: Nigensha 1977); the quotation is on p. 142.

4 He happened to have the same surname 姓 and courtesy name (or style, *zi* 字) as one of the marquises (*liehou* 列侯): Chen Menggong 陳孟公. It seems that he played with this coincidence. Whenever he requested entrance, he shocked the people he wanted to visit when his name (i. d. his style) was called at the door. The relief among his colleagues and friends must have been considerable when they realised that not the marquis Chen Menggong, but the party shocker Chen had arrived! Thus he obtained his name. Cf. his biography in Ban Gu's 班固 (A.D. 32–92), et al. (comp.), *Hanshu* 漢書 [History of the Han dynasty], vol. 11, pp. 3709

For Yang Xin 羊欣 as a writer of the 5th century there were altogether only these few persons to mention, with no person living in the Former Han dynasty!<sup>5</sup> Yet with the exception of the first two, Li Si and Zhao Gao, all other calligraphers were not only known for their skill in the seal script calligraphy but as well for their ability in writing the lishu 隸書 or the bafen 八分. That means that there is no well-known calligrapher who won his reputation exclusively for his seal script, instead the calligraphers were from now on always known for e.g. their lishu as well. This contributes further to the decline of the seal script.<sup>6</sup>

The names of three further calligraphers are added in the *Lun shubiao* 論書表 [List of calligraphers] by Jiang Shi 江式 (?–520/525) in which Jiang laments:<sup>7</sup>

(...) [Then] the Supreme Wei (i.e. the Tuoba) carried on a period of hundred kings, and inherited the sequence of the five elements. The generations alternate and the customs change, [in this course] the writing / characters were transformed and [thus] the form of the seal script has become erroneous, and the *li*-style has lost its authenticity.<sup>8</sup>

皇魏承百王之季，紹五運之緒。世易風移，文字改變，篆形謬錯，隸體失真。

By some effort it is still possible to find some more names of *zhuan-shu*-calligraphers, but as Jiang's complaint shows, the result is the same: the seal script was regarded as old-fashioned or even as outmoded and thus there are not even a dozen names of seal script experts to list and the impression remains that the preoccupation with *zhuan-shu* was more or less an exception.

Why is this statement of importance? Is it not quite normal that some fields gain more attention at some times and others are put aside?

The following arguments will help to answer this question, but one should keep in mind that in China the script and writing system have been conceived for ever as coming from the sages and hence as something sacred.

–3714 (*juan* 92); this story is mentioned on p.3711 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 1962, [1975, 3rd printing]; 12 vols.).

5 Albeit there is too much emphasis on this point, as an overall description of the situation, statements of this kind seem to me to be correct – all the texts only mention the artists resp. scholars according to their special merits and interests. Thus, some training in seal script should, nevertheless, still have been normal practice to some extent. But anyway, the interest in seal script had declined.

6 The only exception is perhaps Li Yangbing, but it is possible that he used for his *bafen*-script the name of Li Chao (see below).

7 Fukumoto Masakazu 福本雅一譯 (Japanese transl. and commented ed. of the Chinese text), Ko Shoku (Jiang Shi), *Ron shohyo* [*Lun shubiao*], *Chūgoku shoron taikai* 中國書論大系, vol. 1, p. 331ff.

8 Loc. cit., p. 341f.

Thus when reading the hexagram 43 *guai* 夬 ("resolution") of the *Yijing* [Book of Changes] we are informed that in "ancient times one knotted ropes in order to govern. In later times the *sages* invented written documents ...".<sup>9</sup>

Yet it is surprising that the well-known *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜 [The (graded) catalogue of calligraphers whose works are kept in the Xuanhe-palace] from the Song dynasty knows no seal script calligraphers prior to the Tang at all. None of the names of pre-Tang calligraphers are listed. This can only mean that for the compilers of that influential work the seal script started with the Tang (of course after it had been lost in the period following the Qin dynasty)!

Obviously, the compilers rated all these scholar-artists as a *quantité négligable*. But what made the Tang artists so extraordinarily good or important?

Peter Kees Bol has convincingly described the attitude of the "seventh-century Tang-scholars who sought to reintegrate the diverse strands of tradition, and thus to establish a cultural synthesis that would support the newly unified empire."<sup>10</sup> But when at the end of the eighth century the social and intellectual condition had changed with the Rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 (?–757), the elite had to face the signs of decentralization, rebellion, and the fading away of the former solidly organized social positions and security. Now it be-

9 *Yijing* 易經, in the *Xici*B section II 繫辭下 [Great treatise II or after Zhu Xi: Commentary on the appended judgements, section II], in: *A Concordance to Yi Ching* 周易引得 (Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series; Supplement no. 10), repr.: Taipei: Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center, 1973, pp. 45–46: (Legge translates these two passages as follows:)"11. Anciently, when Pao-hsi had come to the rule of all under heaven, looking up, he contemplated the brilliant forms exhibited in the sky, and looking down he surveyed the patterns shown on the earth. He contemplated the ornamental appearances of birds and beasts and the (different) suitabilities of the soils. Near at hand, in his own person, he found things for consideration, and the same at a distance, in things in general. On this he advised the eight trigrams, to show fully the attributes of the spirit-like and intelligent (operations working secretly), and to classify the qualities of the myriad of things. 12. He invented the making of nets of various kinds by knitting strings, both for hunting and fishing. The idea of this was taken, probably, from the Li (the third trigram, and thirtieth hexagram). 13. On the death of Pao-hsi there arose Shan-nang (in his place). [...] 23. In highest antiquity, government was carried on successfully by the use of knotted cords (to preserve the memory of things). In subsequent ages the sages substituted for these written characters and bonds. By means of these (the doings of) all the officers could be regulated, and (the affairs of) all the people accurately examined. The idea of this was taken, probably, from Kwai (the forty-third hexagram)." (古者包犧氏之，王天下也。仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地。觀鳥獸之文，與地之宜。近取諸身，遠取諸物。於是始作八卦，以通神明之德，以類萬物之情。作結繩而為罔罟，以佃以漁，蓋取諸離。包犧氏沒，神農氏作。[...] 上古結繩而治，後世聖人易之以書契，百官以治，萬民以察，蓋取諸夬。)" Cf. Legge. *I Ching*: "Appendix III", 'Chapter II', pp. 382–383 and p. 385; James Legge (transl.), Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (ed., introduction, and "Study Guide"), *I Ching. Book of Changes*, New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 2nd printing 1966 (1st printing of the ed. by Chai: 1964).

10 Peter Kees Bol, "This Culture of Ours": *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Pr., 1992, p. 2; see as well the review by Michael Lackner in *T'oung Pao* 81, fasc. 4–5 (1995), pp. 360–366.

came common practice "to speak of the way of the sage (*shengren zhi dao* 聖人之道) and the way of the ancients (*guren zhi dao* 古人之道)".<sup>11</sup> In the times of crisis the sage's actions should serve as the suitable method to guide oneself and the government and put all things back into order. This would result in investigations of nearly every aspect of the ancients and their times.

The script, or more exactly the seal script, belongs to the highest antiquity. Was it not the Yellow Emperor 黃帝, who created a font of his own (the dragon script), was it not his scribe, the sage Cang Jie 倉頡, who invented the script, and was it not Fu Xi 伏羲, who created the trigrams after investigating heaven and earth, i.e. the Creation?

It is true that Cang Jie 倉頡 did not invent the seal script, instead of that the *Shudian*<sup>12</sup> attributes to him the invention of the *guwen* 古文 – as the alleged creator of the great seal script we get normally the name of Shi Zhou 史籀, the scribe of King Xuan 宣王 of the Zhou (reg. 827–782 B.C.).

But the meaning of the *zhuan* in *zhuan* 篆書 is not clear. *Zhuan* often has the generic meaning of scripts from high antiquity. When in the Tang Wei Xu 韋續<sup>13</sup> lists 56 different types of scripts in his *Mosou* 墨薈 [Swamp of ink] (in the part entitled: *Wushiliu zhong shufa* 五十六種書法 [Fifty-six types of script])<sup>14</sup> he did not act without precedent,<sup>15</sup> but for me it is a symptom of this develop-

11 Ibid.

12 Loc. cit., p. 18f.

13 This is, of course, an attributed authorship and maybe only parts of this work are from the pen of Wei Xu. As for the texts mentioned earlier in this article, the names of the authors are used in a generic traditional way, not in the sense of genuine authorship, if there should be any. The problems with such texts have been studied paradigmatically by Dieter Kuhn in his "Die Bewertungskriterien im *Ku Hua P'in Lu* des Hsieh Ho", in: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 123 (1973): pp. 344–358.

14 Han Tianheng edits this text as *Wushiliu zhong shu* 五十六種書: Han Tianheng 韓天衡編訂 (ed.), *Lidai yinxue lunwen xuan* 歷代印學論文選, 2 vols., Hangzhou 杭州: Xiling yin-she 西泠印社, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 5–10. Wei Xu credits e.g. Taihao Pao Xi 太昊庖犧 (Fu Xi) with the invention of the dragon script, *longshu* 龍書, Yao 帝堯 with the invention of the turtle script, *guishu* 龜書; see as well Gan Yang, *Yinzhang jishuo*, p. 153, (*Zhuan yuan* 篆原 [Origin of the seal script]). Gan Yang 甘陽 (about 1596), *Yinzhang jishuo* 印章集說 [Essence of the lore of Chinese seal], *Meishu congshu*-ed., 4b, pp. 153–177; Deng Shi 鄧實, Huang Binhong 黃賓虹, and Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (eds.), *Meishu congshu* 美術叢書, enlarged repr. of the collection originally ed. by Deng Shi (type set ed. of 1936): Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, 1962–1975; 30 vols.; compare Legge, *The Shoo King or The Book of Historical Documents (The Chinese Classics, vol. 3)*: "Prolegomena: On the credibility of the records in the Shoo" (pp. 47–80): p. 73; James Legge, *The Chinese Classics with a translation, critical and exegetical notes, prolegomena, and copious indexes by ... in five volumes: V: The Ch'un Ts'ew with The Tso Chuen with minor text corrections and a Concordance Table*, repr., 5 vols.: Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Pr. 1970, 2nd printing (1st printing of the repr., 1960).

15 See e.g. Yu Yuanwei 庾元威 (Liang dynasty), who in his *Lun shu* 論書 [About script]: 291f. lists 2 times 50 fonts: 50 for writing with ink and fifty for colour; Makeda Akiko 目加田

ment that the Tang now seriously coped with fancy scripts (cf. illus. 1) that in reality never existed (e.g. scripts like the *xieyeshu* 薤葉書, leek leaf script, the *suishu* 穗書, grain script, the *longshu* 龍書, dragon script etc., the latter allegedly invented by the Yellow Emperor). I take this as a longing for emerging deeper and deeper in a mystical antiquity; I do not believe that studies of this kind are a mere play with a nice sentiment. This may, however, be true for times beginning with the Song.

Since all the ancient scripts were lost with only the *zhuan*shu still being extant, it was quite normal that this script was adored as the earliest works of the ancients resp. the sages.

## 2. Li Yangbing

The person who managed to cope with this notion more successfully than anyone of his contemporaries was Li Yangbing 李陽冰.

He belongs to the influential Zhaojun-branch 趙郡 (in present-day Hebei) of the Li-clan and he is known as the relative in whose house the poet Li Bai 李白 finally died.<sup>16</sup>

As important Li Yangbing became for later generations as unaware his contemporaries were about him.<sup>17</sup> Thus there is no formal biography about him and

明子譯 (transl. and annotated ed. of the Chinese text), Yu Gen'i (Yu Yuanwei), *Ronsho* [Lun shu], *Chūgoku shoron taikēi* 中國書論大系, vol. 1, pp. 279–313.

- 16 See his preface to the first ed. of Li Bai's Collected Works; cf. Shigeoshi Obata (transl.), *The Works of Li Po, the Chinese Poet, Done into English Verse* ..., London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1923. Arthur Waley's opinion that there was no relationship between Li Yangbing and Li Bai is solitary and seems not to be supported otherwise: Arthur Waley, *The Poetry and Career of Li Po 701–762 A.D.*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 3rd printing, 1969 (1st printing 1950), p. 103; see as well Lothar Wagner, "Zu Li Yang-ping (ca. 713–785)", pp. 281–299, in: Roderich Ptak und Siegfried Englert (ed.), *Ganz allmählich. Aufsätze zur ostasiatischen Literatur, insbesondere zur chinesischen Lyrik: Festschrift für Günther Debon aus Anlaß seiner Emeritierung und seines 65. Geburtstages*, Heidelberg: Heidelberger Verlagsanstalt, 1986.
- 17 His influence is difficult to calculate. At any rate it was strong enough that only his ed. of the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 [Discussions of single graphic elements and analysis of compound characters] is still extant, at least Boltz (p. 435) blames him with an amateurish ed. of this dictionary, and further assumes that the lack of any extant *Shuowen jiezi* ed. prior to the Tang was due to Li Yangbing's influence. Even if Li Yangbing's competence may be dubious, the crucial point is *not* his scholarship or the quality of his scholarly scrutiny, but – to use a modern term – that he was able to create a new vision, i. e. not only to add new aspects to the view of antiquity, but above all to invent antiquity for himself and to convince his contemporaries of his interpretation. All one can say is that he, after all, was very successful in doing so; see William G. Boltz, "Shuo wen chieh tzu", pp. 429–442, in: Michael Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Early Chinese Special Monographs Series, no. 2), Berkeley, Calif.: The Society for the Study of Early China and The Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993. Both, the reputation and the importance of

even the exact dates of his birth and death are unknown (ca. 713–ca. 785). We still have original calligraphies done by him (e.g. epitaphs on stone, see illustration 4), but we have only a random knowledge about the circumstances of his life.

Even his identity is to some extent obscure. What seems to be sure is that Li Bai was a relative of his, with whom he maintained social contact.<sup>18</sup> But was Yangbing his real name, or a later adopted style (*zi* 字) that he henceforth used as a personal name (*ming* 名)? Was his original name perhaps Chao 潮, is Li Yangbing even identical with Li Chao, the nephew of Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770), praised by the poet for his outstanding calligraphy of the seal and *bafen* 八分 (*li-shu* 隸書) script.<sup>19</sup> This would result in a family relationship between Du Fu and Li Bai and perhaps better explain the relation between these two poets.

The question, whether Li Yangbing is identical with Li Chao 李潮 or not, is still a matter of discussion.<sup>20</sup> As it seems there is no “last” strong evidence. One of the most prominent advocates for the identity of Li Yangbing with Li Chao was Wuqiu Yan 吾邱衍 (1268–1311).<sup>21</sup> Since then there had been a never-ending debate of the question that led Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (ca. 1316–ca. 1402) to the comment:

Someone says that Li Yangbing is identical with Li Chao and that his original name was Chao and that he instead was known by his style (*zi*). Another style is Shaowen 少溫. I have not yet been able to come to know which statement is true and which is not. Subsequently I have included an entry on Li Chao later in this text.

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Li Yangbing are, nevertheless, reflected by the expression *er Li* 二李, the two Li, i.e. Li Si and Li Yangbing, see Ledderose, p. 51; Lothar Ledderhose [=Ledderose], *Die Siegelchrift (Chuan-shu) in der Ch'ing-Zeit. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der chinesischen Schriftkunst* (Studien zur ostasiatischen Schriftkunst, 1), Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1970.

18 See e.g. the remark in the *Xu Shuduan* [Continuation of the assessments of calligraphers], p. 440: “Li Yangbing, from Zhaojun, loved the antiquity and excelled in composing literature. When he once [from 762 on] administered Dangtu 當塗 Li Bai came to depend on him and presented a poem to him, saying: “When you [Li Yangbing] put your pen to paper to shed some seal script, [one has the impression of] collapsing clouds that cause the people to get amazed. When words pour out of your mouth, that again is [like] a splendid glowing, and [resembles] a five-coloured glowing that spreads around like magnificent stars. [...]” (李陽冰，趙郡人，好古，善屬文。嘗令當塗，李白往依之，賜以詩曰：「落筆洒篆文，崩雲使人驚。吐辭又炳煥，五色羅華星。」) ”

19 I follow here Wang Zhuangwei who defines *bafen* as the *lishu* during the two Han-dynasties. This seems the most practical way. There is a long and frustrating discussion, what *bafen* really is; for a short summary see Wang Zhuangwei, p. 12–15.

20 See e.g. the article by Zhu Guantian 朱關田著, “Li Yangbing san kao” 李陽冰散考, *Shufa yanjiu* 書法研究, 2 (1991): pp. 10–23. Zhu denies the identity of Li Yangbing with Li Chao.

21 Or more simply Wu Yan 吾衍 – Wuqiu Yan 吾邱衍 himself seems to have preferred the shortened variant of his surname. His remark about Li Yangbing is in the second part of his *Xuegubian* 學古編: *Meishu congshu*–ed. 美書叢書, p. 71.

或云陽冰即李潮也。初名潮，因以字行，別字少溫。未知其果否，遂復載潮在後。<sup>22</sup>

Dou Meng's 寶蒙 (fl. 775) commentary to the *Shushufu* 述書賦 [On the history and connoisseurship of calligraphy] by his brother Dou Ji 寶叟 gives testimony that the practice of calligraphy had a long tradition in the Li family. Dou Meng states that Li Yangbing had four brothers and that the five all had aspirations for literature and were well versed in the small seal script (冰兄弟五人，皆負詞學，工於小篆).<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the main source for Li Chao is the poem ("Li Chao bafen xiaozhuan ge" 李潮八分篆歌 *Song on the bafen and the small seal of Li Chao* [the son of my sister]).<sup>24</sup> in which Du Fu praises his nephew Li Chao:

Moreover, [my nephew Li] Chao, your small seal is very close to that of the chancellor of the Qin (Li Si), [one believes] that sharp swords and long halberds face each other in close rows.

況潮小篆逼秦相，快劍長戟森相向

In this poem Du Fu mentions the most prominent calligraphers Han Zemu, Cai Yong, and Li Si, but not his contemporary Li Yangbing! He praises the small seal script of Li Chao and compares him with Li Si – but no word about his contemporary Li Yangbing. Should it be plausible that Du Fu should have forgotten to mention him? Even if the persons Li Yangbing and Li Chao were not identical, it is very unlikely that he did not know him, since – as already mentioned above – Li Bai and Li Yangbing stood in social contact and we may assume that on the other hand Du Fu was well enough acquainted with Li Bai to have heard of him at least. There is a comparison of Li Chao's seal script characters with swords and halberds. We find as well comparisons with Li Yang-

22 Tao Zongyi, *Shushi huiyao* 書史會要 [Essential documents for the history and art of calligraphy], under the entry for Li Yangbing, *juan* 5, p. 3b (p. 132f. of the paperback ed.). The biography of Li Chao is on p. 32af. (p. 189f.) in the same *juan*, without further comment. (This ed. is a repr. of the facsimile-ed. from 1929 that reproduces a Ming ed. from the Hongwu 洪武 (1368–1399) period. This repr. exists in a thread bound ed. and in a smaller-sized paperback ed. that adds western pagination.) The *Shushi huiyao* has a preface from July 9, 1376 (Hongwu 9th year, 6th month, 22nd day) by Song Lian 宋廉.

23 Hong Peimo 洪丕謨點校 ed., Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠撰, *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄 [Essential texts on calligraphy] (*Zhongguo shuxue congshu* 中國書學叢書), Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe 上海書畫出版社, 1986, p. 167. The *Shushufu* mentions 198 calligraphers from the Zhou down to the Tang dynasty.

24 Du Fu 杜甫撰, Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲注 (comm.), *Du Shi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注 [Detailed commentary to the poetical works of Du Fu] (*Zhongguo gudian wenxue jiben congshu* 中國古典文學基本叢書), 5 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju: 1979, pp. 1550–1554 (*juan* 18). There is a German translation of that poem: Erwin Ritter von Zach (transl.), James Robert Hightower (ed.), *Tu Fu's Gedichte. Übersetzt von Erwin von Zach 1872–1942. Edited with An Introduction by ...* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, vol. 8), 2 vols., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Pr. 1952; vol 2: 598–599 (xvi, 40).

bing's writings with swords. Is this mere convention or an already fixed setting of how to describe Li Yangbing's seal script?

No doubt, as in the case of Li Bai we also find the name of Du Fu listed under the headings of talented calligraphers. Thus we can expect some awareness of what was happening in the calligraphic world.

Huang Jingya 黃敬雅,<sup>25</sup> considering the diverse arguments for and against the identity of Li Yangbing with Li Chao, finds no way to decide the question. There are no seal script calligraphies signed by Li Chao; should this mean that writing seal script he used the name of Li Yangbing and when writing *bafen* 八分 he used the name of Li Chao as signature?

One strong argument, after all, is that Yangbing does not fit the names of his brothers, but Chao would: In the *Zaixiang shixi biao* 宰相世系表<sup>26</sup> [List of the important officials of the Tang dynasty] we find, however, only mentioned the names and styles of two elder brothers, which is a discrepancy to the *Shushufu* 述書賦. Moreover in the "List of the important officials of the Tang dynasty" the name of his father is given as Huaiyi 懷一, but the *Shushufu* calls him Yongwen 雍問. This may lead us to think that all the texts concerning him are unreliable, but the epitaph for Yangbing's brother Xie 澣 by Mu Yuan 穆員<sup>27</sup> shows that Huaiyi 懷一 is the name of Yangbing's grandfather, the mistake is thus understandable. Yongwen's eldest son was called Shi 澣 (no style is given), the second was Xie 澣<sup>28</sup> with the style of Jianbing 堅冰, the next is Yangbing 陽冰.

25 Huang Jingya 黃敬雅著, *Li Yangbing de yanjiu* 李陽冰的研究 [Studies on Li Yangbing]. Taipei: Guoxing chubanshe 國興出版社, 1985.

26 *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書, vol. 8, p. 2475 (Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), Song Qi 宋祁 (998–1061), et al. (comp.), *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 [New dynastic history of the Tang], 20 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975).

27 "Xingbu langzhong Li fujun muzhi ming" 刑部郎中李府君墓誌銘 [Epitaph for the secretary in the ministry of law, the venerable Li], in Dong Gao et al. (ed.) 董誥等編, *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 [Complete prose literature of the Tang], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, 11 vols.; vol. 8, p. 8198a–8198a (*juan* 784, pp. 13b–15b). In general the epitaphs are not very helpful, because only a small part of them is still extant or available. For example, the *Tangdai muzhi huibian* [Compendium of epitaphs of the Tang] does not include the above mentioned epitaph by Mu Yuan, nor is any tomb inscription written by Han Yunqing or Han Zemu included. There is only one epitaph by Li Yangbing, dating from the *jianzhong* 建中 period (there is no epitaph for Li Yangbing or Li Chao; the epitaph for a certain Li Shi 李澣 from Zhaojun dating from the *Kaiyuan* 開元 period is not for Li Yangbing's brother, but for another person of the same name): see Zhou Shaoliang (general ed.) 周紹良主編 and Zhao Chao (associate ed.) 趙超副主編, *Tangdai muzhi huibian* 唐代墓誌彙編 [Compendium of epitaphs of the Tang dynasty], 2 vols., Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1992. The epitaph by Li Yangbing is in vol. 2, pp. 1822–1824, the one for Li Shi in vol. 2, pp. 1317–1318 (note: the four-corner index to the *Compendium* makes no difference between epitaphs for or by a certain person!).

28 Loc. cit., p. 8198b (*juan* 784, p. 14a). He (a *jinshi* 進士 of the *Tianbao* 天寶 era, 742–756) is the only member of the family mentioned in David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao-chün in Late Tang and Early Sung", in: *Harvard Journal of*

His name does not fit the personal names of his brothers, but Chao 潮 would. Yangbing on the other hand fits the style of his brother Xie. For me all this seems convincing, therefore I can see no reason to take Li Chao and Li Yangbing as two persons, and therefore I assume Chao as his personal name, *ming* 名, whereas I take Yangbing as his *zi* 字.

Li Yangbing saw himself as a reincarnation of the Qin chancellor Li Si (but there are texts that prefer to style him as a reincarnation of the sage Cang Jie 倉頡). This is important, because it links him with the Qin dynasty and not with the Han as one would expect.

At the same time the Tang was credited as the period in which seals had a new start after a period of decay (after the Han resp. the Sanguo and especially in the Nanbeichao). It is true that the relationship between seals and seal script is close. But seal script does by no means always mean a script *for* seals. In the Qin dynasty we have eight scripts (the *bati* 八體), which were reduced to six by Wang Mang (the *liushu* 六書),<sup>29</sup> each script being used for a specialized purpose. Thus only one font was designed for the use on seals – that is the *moyin* 摹印. We know e.g. a short passage by Li Yangbing about the beauty of the *moyin* “Moyin si miao” 摹印四妙 [The four beautiful aspects of the *moyin* type of seal script].<sup>30</sup>

Thus it sounds logical that Li Si gains the position of an ancestor for Li Yangbing, at least until he saw the epitaph allegedly written by Confucius for Jizha 季札 Wu 吳季札墓誌, which caused him to change his style.<sup>31</sup>

*Asiatic Studies*, 327 (1977): pp. 5–102; cf. p. 44. Johnson reads *Hai* for *Xie*, a reading I was not able to verify.

29 This expression has to be distinguished from the other meaning of *liushu* 六書, namely the six categories of characters, like the *huiyi* 會意 (grasp-meaning) or the *jiaxie* 假借 (loan-borrowing): see Xu Shen's 許慎 (ca. 55–ca. 149) postface 序 of the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*juan* 15a): Fukumoto Masakazu 福本雅一譯 (transl. and annotated ed. of the Chinese text Kyo Shin [Xu Shen] 許慎, *Setsumon kaiji jo* [Shuowen jiezi xu] 說文解字序, p. 30 (*Ch-goku shoron taikēi* 中國書論大系, vol. 1); cf. the annotated translation of the postface by K. L. Thern, *Postface of the Shuo-wen Chieh-tzu. The First Comprehensive Chinese Dictionary* (Wisconsin China Series, no. 1), Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, The Department of East Asian Languages and Literature 1966; about the *liushu*, pp. 10–11.

30 This passage is included in the second part of the *Xuegubian* (*Meishu congshu*-ed. 美術叢書, p. 83). Even if Li Yangbing is preoccupied here with seals, I am nevertheless convinced that seals and the carving of seals was not the main interest of the Tang. This main interest did not start until the Song: Wuqiu Yan 吾邱衍, *Xuegu bian er juan* 學古編二卷 (*Meishu congshu*, 4a, pp. 59–84).

Furthermore, original seals of the Qin were hardly available in the Tang, the oldest specimen being Han seals. Original seal script examples, however, were still available in form of some of the steles that had been designed by Li Si and erected by imperial order of Qin Shihuangdi, e.g. the above mentioned Yishan 嶧山 stele.

31 *Shushufu*, p. 167, Dou Meng's commentary; on Jizha 季札 see the *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan*:

1.) *Shiji*: Sima Qian 司馬遷撰 (145–?), *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the Grand Historian], 10 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975, 7th printing (1st 1959); 5:1449ff. (*juan* 31) cf.

But where is the impact for the intellectual history of the Tang?

A letter (*Shang Li daifu lun guzhuan shu* 上李大夫論古篆書)<sup>32</sup> is preserved that probably in 759 Li Yangbing wrote to Li Heng 李暉 (?–763), his senior official at that time – that is to say when Li Yangbing was about fifty years of age.

For 30 years I have been preoccupied with ancient seal script and have regarded the calligraphies of the ancients. As beautiful they are as regrettable it is, however, that there are nearly no more dots and strokes visible. This could be arranged by re-carving the elements of the characters. I have thought back over remote times about the intention of the sages in their complete understanding to establish the symbols (the trigrams resp. the hexagrams) to install the order in the world and to create the script [for that purpose]. And again (like Fu Xi 伏羲 in the *Yijing* 易經)<sup>33</sup> I raised my eyes to observe<sup>34</sup> and I looked down to inspect the six regions in this regard.

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Chavannes, 4: 13f.: Édouard Chavannes (transl. and annotations), *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien. Traduits et annotés* (Collection U.N.E.S.C.O. d'œuvres représentatives. Série chinoise), 6 vols. (vol. 1–5 repr.), Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1967–1969;

2.) *Zuozhuan*: Duke Xiang 襄公, 14th year, 3rd month: *Chunqiu Zuozhuan jizhe* 春秋左傳集解 3: 905f., cf. Couvreur, 2: 294f.; Séraphin Couvreur (transl.), *Tch'ouen Ts'ien et Tso Tchouan. La chronique de la principauté de Lou (Les Humanités d'Extrême-Orient/Série culturelle des Hautes Études de Tien-tsin)*, repr.: Paris: Cathasia 1951; 3 vols.; see as well Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ew*: 464a.

- 32 The date of 759 is given by Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 on p.808 in his “Li Yangbing zhuan shu kao” 李陽冰篆書考, pp.801–842 (vol. 2) in: Zhou Zumo 周祖謨著 *Wenxueji* 文學集 [Collected essays by Zhou Zumo], repr.: Taipei: Zhiren chubanshe 知仁出版社, 1976, 2 vols. (1st published: Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966). There is an alternative reading for the character 暉 namely “huan”. This pronunciation is chosen in Morohashi Tetsuji's 諸橋徹次著 *Dai Kan Wa jiten* 大漢和辭典, Tōkyō: Taishukan shoten 大修館書店 1957–1960, 13 vols., no. 14459.262. The text has been included in Yao Xuan's 姚鉉 (968–1020) *Tang wencui* 唐文粹 [Essence of the prose literature of the Tang], *juan* 81 and again, of course, in the *Quan Tang wen*, vol. 5, pp.4459–4460 (*juan* 437, pp. 12a–13b); the letter is also in full length quoted in Zhou Zumo's “Li Yangbing zhuan shu kao”, pp.806–7. (Yao Xuan 姚鉉 *Tang wencui* 唐文粹 [Zhongguo xueshu mingzhu, vol. 373: *Lidai shiwen zongji* 中國學術名著, vol. 373: 歷代詩文總集第三十四冊] Taipei: Shijie shuju 世界書局, 1962). This letter has also been incorporated into Wu Zengqi's *Gujin wenchao*, vol. 4, p. 2053 (*juan* 48, p. 46af.): Wu Zengqi 吳曾祺, *Gujin wenchao* 古今文鈔 100 vols., repr.: Yang Jialuo 楊家駱 ed., *Gujin wenchao*, 8 vols., Taipei: Wenguang tushu gongsi 文光圖書公司, 1976 (originally published in 1909).

Altogether eight literary compositions of Li Yangbing are included in the *Quan Tang wen*, vol. 5, pp.4459–4462 (*juan* 437, pp. 11B–17a).

- 33 See above footnote 9.

- 34 This quotation is as well found in Xu Shen's 許慎 postface of the *Shuowen jiezi* (*Shuowen jiezi xu* 說文解字序) with the variant *shi* 視 for *guan* 觀. As Thern: 8, footnote 3, however, points out, this variant is found in certain works with this quotation, e.g. the *Tang Shijing* 唐石經 [Stone classics of the Tang].

陽冰志在篆殆三十年，見前人遺跡，美則美矣，惜其未有點畫，但偏傍模刻而已。緬想聖達立制造書之意，乃復仰觀俯察六合之際焉。

The opening passage of the letter ("I have thought back over remote times about the intention of the sages in their complete understanding to establish the symbols, to install the order in the world and to create the script [for that purpose]") will become clearer when read in combination with further texts, e.g. the preface to the Collective biographies of literary men (*Wenyuan* 文苑) in the *Bei Qi shu* [Dynastic History of the Northern Qi], *juan* 45:

The *xuanxiang*, the "dark" symbols (i.e. the planets and the like) are evident and clear, they are used to indicate the changes of time – these are the heavenly patterns (or signs). The sages in their complete understanding established their teachings to transform the world – these are the patterns of men. Complete understanding of the nature of what is dark and what is evident on the one hand and elucidation of [everything] between heaven and the human world on the other hand, it is this that depends on the patterns (i.e. the literature).<sup>35</sup>

夫玄象著明，以察時變，天文也；聖達立言，化成天下，人文也；達幽顯之情，明天人之際，其在文乎。

When speaking of *graphs* in terms of *wenzi* 文字 one also has to speak of *writing*, *shu* 書. In fact the meaning of the two is sometimes synonymous, sometimes *shu* means simply *to write*, i.e. to use the graphs.<sup>36</sup> This leads us to the

35 Li Delin 李德林 (530–606) and Li Baiyao 李百鎰 (565–648), *Bei Qi shu* 北齊書 [Dynastic history of the Northern Qi], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, vol. 2, p. 601; see as well *Zuozhuan*, *Chengong* 成公, 15th year, 4: "the sage completely understands moral integrity, the next one (the wise man 賢) keeps moral integrity, the third one (the common man) loses moral integrity" (前志有之曰：「聖達節，次守節，下失節。」); *Chunqiu Zuozhuan jijie* 春秋左傳集解 [Collected Commentaries on the Zuozhuan and Chunqiu], 5 vols., Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 1972; vol. 2: 739; see as well Shen Yucheng 沈玉成譯 (transl.), *Zuozhuan shiwen* 左傳譯文 [A translation of the Zuozhuan], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, p. 234 (compare Couvreur, vol. 2, p. 116); and further *Zuozhuan*, *Xianggong* 襄公, 24th year, 1: "Mu Shu said: '[...] In Lu there was a late dafu by the name of Zang Wenzhong, after whose death the teachings of his were not discarded; that is what is called 'not rotten'! I, Bao, have heard: 'The highest standard is to establish one's own distinguished [fame], the next one to establish one's own merits and the third one to establish one's teachings'" (穆叔曰：「魯有先大夫曰臧文仲，既沒，其言立，其是之謂乎！豹聞之：「大上有立德，其次有立功，其之有立言。」); *Chunqiu Zuozhuan jijie* 春秋左傳集解, vol. 3, p. 1011; see Shen Yucheng, p. 320; cf. Couvreur, vol. 2, p. 408.

36 See in this sense e.g. the well-known passage in the *Shiji*, vol. 1, p. 295 (*juan* 7): "In his youth Xiang Ji (Xiang Yu 項羽) studied the graphs (i.e. to be a scribe), but failed" (項籍少時，學書不成); Chavannes' translation "il avait étudié les livres" for *xue shu* is definitely not correct: Chavannes, vol. 2, p. 248; 6 vols.); for the more common meaning for *shu* 書=*wenzi* 文字 see e.g. *Xunzi* 荀子 21: "Jiebi" 解蔽: 「[...] 故好書者衆矣，而倉頡獨傳者也。」: *A Concordance to Hsün Tzu*, *荀子* 引得 (Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series: Supplement no. 22), repr.: Taipei [Taipei]: Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center 1966, 81/58; for this passage see John Knoblock, *Xunzi. A Translation of the Complete Works*, vol. III, Books 17–32, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Pr. 1994, pp. 88–112

threefold meaning of *wen*: graphs or script (*wenzi* 文字), literary composition (*wenzhang* 文章), and culture (*wenhua* 文化). The playing with these connotations of *wen* becomes still more evident when reading such passages as the following one in the *Book of Changes* (*Xici* 繫辭上, 12):

The Master said: – ‘The written characters are not the full exponent of speech, and speech is not the full expression of ideas; – is it impossible then to discover the ideas of the sages?’ The Master said: – ‘The sages made their emblematic symbols to set forth fully their ideas; appointed (all) the diagrams to show fully the truth and falsehood (of things) [...]’.<sup>37</sup>

子曰：「書不盡言，言不盡意。」然則聖人之意，其不可見乎？子曰：聖人立象以盡意，設卦以盡情偽。

*Shu* 書, which Legge translates by “written characters”, should in this context be better rendered as “writing”, meaning: the symbols are the ancestors of the ancient graphs. In this capacity, the ancient graphs or writings are fully trustworthy. As the creators (inventors) of script, there are in the realm of sages: Fu Xi, the Yellow Emperor, the sage Cang Jie, and in the human world people like Zhou Xun, the scribe of King Xuan of the Zhou dynasty. Did not even Confucius use this kind of script? The development of scripts that were inspired by the sages was not ended until the emergence of Li Si. Thus the ancient graphs are bound to contain some kind of divine verity that could be revealed by the devoted scholar. Does this passage from the *Book of Changes* in the last consequence not mean that the emblematic symbols contain the real, full intention of the sages? Are the ancient scripts, as *guwen*, great seal, and small seal nothing else but the genuine variations of those emblematic symbols? Hence it sounds like an admonition to a more laic, less mystic interpretation, when Wuqiu Yan utters in his *Second Recommendation*: “[...] The seal [graphs] of today are the everyday characters of the ancients” (二舉曰：[...]今之篆即古人平常字).

After the just quoted opening passage of his letter Li Yangbing describes the creation of script (this means the two seal scripts and/or any ancient script, the *guwen*) as an action that is a genuine imitation of the Creation itself to finally exclaim: “Heaven does not want this script (*si wen* 斯文) to perish! Out of this reason I was able to receive Heaven’s basic intention (*zong zhi* 宗旨) concerning the small and great seal scripts. [...]”

Thus I obtained (like Fu Xi in the *Book of Changes*; see footnote 9) :

“Dispelling Blindness”: “Thus, those who have been fond of writing have been many, yet that Cang Jie alone has been remembered is due to his unity of purpose.” (p. 107).

37 The translation is that by Legge, p. 376f.; for the Chinese text, see *A Concordance to Yi Ching*, p. 44.

the forms (*xing*) – of being round and square – I have got them from heaven and earth – of flowing and towering from streams and mountains;<sup>38</sup>

the rules (*du*) – of being vertical and horizontal (i.e. all kinds of systematics) – I have got them from the sun and the moon (i.e. the *xuanxiang* 玄象) – of glowing and sparkling (shining and revolving) from the stars and the planets;<sup>39</sup>

the notions (*rong*) – of mingling and disseminating<sup>40</sup> – I have got them from the clouds and the snow – of growing and spreading from the trees and the grasses;

the embodiments (*ti*)<sup>41</sup> – of bowing and yielding – I have got them from the cloths and caps – of circling and whirling from the flags and banners;

the differentiations (*fen*) – of being happy and being angry – I have got them from the temples and the eyebrows – of being sad and feeling easy<sup>42</sup> from the mouth and the nose;

38 於天地山川得方圓流峙之形。Li Yangbing observes for this and the following six short sentences a strict chiasmus according to the pattern: *tian* 天–*yuan* 圓, *di* 地–*fang* 方: *shan* 山–*ji* 峙, *chuan* 川–*liu* 流.

39 度: *haohui* 昭回. That echoes the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經) where the poem “Yunhan” 雲漢 of the *Daya* 大雅 begins: “Bright was that milky way/Shining and revolving in the sky” (倬彼雲漢, 昭回于天。). (Legge’s translation: Legge, *The She King with Minor Text Corrections and Concordance Tables*, in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 4., p. 528).

40 容: *xiaoxue* ... *fei* 霏草...霏. Most probably Li Yangbing quotes Xie Lingyun 謝靈運, in whose poem “Written on the lake on my way back to the retreat at Stone Cliff” (*Shibi jing-she huanzhong zuo shi* 石壁精舍還湖中作詩) the following line occurs: “The sunset clouds mingled with evening haze” (*yunxia shou fei* 雲霞收霏) (Frodsham’s translation, p. 134: J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream. The Life and Works of the Chinese Nature Poet Hsieh Ling-yün* (385–433), Duke of K’ang-Lo. Kuala Lumpur: Univ. of Malaya Press, 1967, 2 vols.), Chinese text: Lu Qinli 遼欽立輯校 (ed.), *Xian Qin Han, Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 [The poetry of the Pre-Qin, Han, Wei Jin, and Nanbeichao dynasties], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 3rd printing 1995 (1st 1983), 3 vols.; vol. 2, pp. 1 165. Frodsham quotes Ye Xiaoxue 葉笑雪 who remarks that “with this poem Lingyun inaugurated a new style of verse for the Southern Dynasties” (vol. 2, p. 154), which makes it rather unlikely that Li Yangbing didn’t know that poem.

41 The *Quan Tang wen* has *li* 禮 for *ti* 體, which as well sounds reasonable; the *Tang Wencui* has *ti*.

42 分: *canshu* 慘舒, is used to describe sentiments like to be sorrowful or to be happy, to be lenient or to be severe, to flourish or to wane. This use of *canshu* comes from Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139), who in his *Xijingfu* 西京賦 “Rhapsody of the Eastern Capital” writes: “[Sir Based-on-nothing] said [to Master Where-live]: ‘If a person is in a yang season, he feels at ease, if he is in yin season, he is miserable (...)’” (夫人在陽時則舒, 在陰時則慘, 此牽乎者也); see: Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531) ed., *Wenxuan* 文選 [Zhaoming Wen xuan 昭明文選], 6 vols., Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1986, vol. 1, p. 48 (juan 2); the translation by Knechtges, p. 181, in: David R. Knechtges (transl.), *Xiao Tong* (501–531), *Wen Xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature. Volume one: Rhapsodies on Metropolis and Capitals* (Princeton Library of Asian Translations), Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1982, pp. 180–241 (“Western Metropolis Rhapsody”).

the principles (*li*, *raison-d'être*) – of stretching and bending – I have got them from the insects and the fishes – of flying and moving from the animals in the air and from the animals on the earth;

the power and energy (*shi*) – of shaking and pulling – I have got them from the bones and horns – of chewing and masticating from the teeth and tusks.

於天地山川得方圓流峙之形  
於日月星辰得經緯昭回之度  
於雲霞草木得霏布滋蔓之容  
於衣冠文物得揖讓周旋之體  
於鬚眉口鼻得喜怒慘舒之分  
於蟲魚禽獸得屈伸飛動之理  
於骨角齒牙得擺拉咀嚼之勢

[A script/such a device] which at ease [handles] the 10.000 variations [of Creation], and at random [deals with] what has been accomplished [by the 10.000 beings]<sup>43</sup> – can be called [a means] that embraces the character and outer appearance (*qi xiang*) of the Three Powers (*sancal*: heaven, earth and mankind) as well as [a power] that pervades all inner and outer aspects (*qing zhuang*) of the 10.000 beings.

隨手萬變，任心所成，可謂通三才之氣象，備萬物之情狀者矣。

I often feel a pain because [of the sad situation] of the writings found in the walls of Confucius' house<sup>44</sup> and of the old bamboo slips out of the tomb in Ji.<sup>45</sup> The more the epochs are distant the more mistakes. Thus the

43. *Suocheng* 所成 which is parallel to *wanbian* 萬變 is perhaps best understood similar to the "Shuo gua" 說卦 [Remarks on the trigrams] of the *Yijing*: the "Remark" about the 52nd, the *gen* 艮 hexagram, which denotes "stopping", "resting" or "restraint": "K'un is the trigram of the north-east. In it all things bring to a full end the issues of the past (year), and prepare the commencement of the next." (艮，東北之卦也，萬物之所成終而所成始也 [...]), *A Concordance to Yi Ching*, p. 50, in: "Shuo gua" IV, Legge's translation, see Legge, *I Ching*, p. 426).

44. 孔壁遺文: From the *Yiwenzhi* 藝文志 [Monograph on literature] in the *Hanshu* we know that toward the end of the reign of Han Wudi 漢武帝 (reg. 159–87 B.C.) several texts in *guwen* were discovered. The texts were found in the walls of a house that is said to have belonged to the family of Confucius, see *Hanshu*, vol. 8, p. 2414. As Michael Nylan has pointed out, the meaning of *yi* 遺 is ambiguous in this context: *yi* is often glossed as *guo* 過 ("in error", "faulty"), see his footnote 10 on p. 29 in Michael Nylan, "The *ku wen* documents in Han times", *T'oung Pao* 81.1–3 (1995): p. 25–50.

45. 汲冢舊簡 or *Jizhong shu* 汲冢書, the writings from the tomb in Jijun 汲郡. In the 2nd year of the reign period taikang 泰康 (280–290) of Emperor Wu of Jin 晉武帝 (reign. 265–290), a man named Buzhun 不準 [sic!] robbed in Jijun 汲郡 the tomb of King Xiang of Wei 魏襄王 (died B.C. 295) – or according to other sources: the tomb of King An Li 安釐王 – and obtained several texts in *kedouwen* 科斗文, tadpole script (the *Zhushu jianianji* 竹書記年記, the Bamboo annals, were part of them). Some of these texts are still mentioned in the *Yi*.

gentleman-of-the-household Cai took [the *zhuan* *shu* or *guwen* form of] *feng* 豐 to be identical with *li* 豐, the chancellor Li mistook *shu* 束 for *song* 宋. Those are the typical mistakes of the copyists like the misunderstanding of *yu* 魚 for *lu* 魯 (similar to printing errors like quiet and quite in English texts), and is like the mingling of the muddy water of the river Jing with the clear water of the river Wei. The scholars transmit their mistakes from one to another, and there are no cases where an error ever had been corrected. Every time I think of this, I cannot but refuse to eat, wipe away my tears, take the brush and utter my sighs about that.

Heaven does not want this script to perish! Therefore I could achieve its basic intention concerning the *zhuan* and *zhou* (i. e. the small and great seal script, *zhouwen* 籀文 being synonymous to *dazhuan* 大篆).

常痛孔壁遺文，汲冢舊簡，年代浸遠，謬誤滋多。蔡中郎以「豐」同「豐」，李丞相將「束」為「宋」，魚魯一惑。涇渭同流，學者相承，靡所遷復。每一念至，未嘗不廢食雪泣，攬筆長歎焉。天將未喪斯文也，故小子得到篆籀之宗旨。[...]

*wenzhi* 藝文志 of the *Tangshu*, e. g. the *Jizhong Zhou* *shu* in ten *juan* 汲冢周書十卷, *Xin Tangshu*, vol. 5, p. 1463.

The texts were soon in a bad condition, whereupon Xun Xu 荀勗 (?–289) by order of the emperor commanded Shu Xi 束皙 to put the texts into order, see the biography of Xun Xu, vol. 4, p. 1154 (*Jinshu*, vol. 4, pp. 1152–1158, *juan* 39:), and especially the biography of Shu Xi, vol. 5, pp. 1432–1433, (*Jinshu*, vol. 5, pp. 1427–1434, *juan* 51). Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578–648) et al. comp., *Jinshu* 晉書 [Dynastic history of the Jin], 10 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974. In the *Jingjizhi* 經籍志 [Monograph on literature] of the *Suishu* 隋書 [Dynastic history of the Sui], vol. 4, p. 959, the events are recorded for the 1st year of the taikang period Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643) et al. (comp.), *Suishu*, 6 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973.

The date of the discovery is most probably not correct: The discovery is recorded for the end of 279: reign period *Xianning* 咸寧 (275–80) of Emperor Wu 武帝, 5th year, winter, 11th month (*Jinshu*, vol. 1, p. 70, *juan* 3). As pointed out in the *Jiaokanji* 校勘記 [Editorial notes] to the "Basic annals of Emperor Wu" in the *Jinshu*, the date of the discovery was altered by the officials to taikang, 1st year (280 A.D.), to make the discovery coincide with the "official" commencement of the Jin in 280 (see *Jinshu*, vol. 1, p. 84, n. 23).

This reference is of importance, because in the "Basic annals" there is no mentioning of *kedouwen*. Instead it is recorded that the texts were written in small seal: "[...] texts with more than 10.000 words were found on bamboo slips written in small seal. The texts were kept in the *mifu*, the imperial secretariat." (得竹簡小篆古書十餘萬言，藏于祕府.)

The remark that the texts were written in small seal script is not trivial: The introduction to *zhuan* *shu* calligraphers in the *Xuanhe shupu* shows that the *kedouwen* was considered as a script that eventually was followed by the great seal: *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜, *juan* 2, Hihara Toshikuni 日原利國 (transl. and commented ed. of the Chinese text), *Senna Shofu* [Xuanhe shupu] (*Chūgoku shoron taikai* 中國書論大系, vol. 5), Tōkyō: Nigensha, 1978; on p. 41 and p. 60, n. 2. As a matter of fact, the definition of any writing as *kedouwen*, *guwen*, great or even small seal was at random, because the knowledge of ancient graphs was only superficial. Nevertheless, there was a relatively fixed notion, which font was followed by what font. See as well Legge, who gives a detailed account on the discovery of the *Jizhong* texts: *The Shoo King or The Book of Historical Documents* (*The Chinese Classics*, vol. 3), "Prolegomena: The Annals of the Bamboo Books", p. 106ff.

*Si wen* 斯文, I have rendered here as "this script". In fact *si wen* is far more. Waley (*Analects* 6.15: 119) (and with him Bol) renders *si wen* as "This culture of ours", and points out that in traditional China this evocation of the commonly shared cultural values "is one basic strand or layer of identification, of cultural and historical identity". Li Yangbing plays with the possibly double meaning of *wen* as character and culture. In the *Analects* 9.5 Confucius claims that with the death of King Wen 文王 *wen* is "here with me" and that therefore, "Heaven is not yet about to let this *wen* (*si-wen* 斯文) perish!"<sup>46</sup>

These quotations of King Wen, of Heaven's will and eventually of the overall importance of *wen* 文, adds some dramatic aspect to Li Yangbing's remark. One may argue, however, that this point of view is just the *individual* attitude of a person fully devoted to the seal script. In other words – it is not of general importance. At least inside some circles Li Yangbing must have been popular during his lifetime and famous for his achievements.<sup>47</sup> But, as has been mentioned above, his *real* reputation, his overall importance, started – as it seems – not until some decades after his death.

This is evident in a short text by Han Yu who – some decades after Li's death – praises him: "During this time (i.e. the *dali* 大曆 – period, 766–780) only the [vice] director Li Yangbing was capable of writing seal script" (於時李監陽冰獨能篆書). But this text shows at the same time how long it took Han Yu to fully develop his interest in ancient script.

### 3. Han Yu

In 811 Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) wrote his well-known *Song on the Stone Drums* (*Shiguge* 石鼓歌),<sup>48</sup> which proves his strong interest in ancient writings and

46 *Lunyu* 9.5: "When the Master was trapped in K'uang, he said, When King Wen perished, did that mean that culture (*wen*) ceased to exist? If Heaven had really intended that such culture as his should disappear, a latter-day mortal would never have been able to link himself to it as I have done. And if Heaven does not intend to destroy such culture, what have I to fear from the people of K'uang?" (子畏於匡。曰：「文王既沒，文不在茲乎？天之將喪斯文也，後死者不得與於斯文也；天之未喪斯文也，匡人其如予何？」; the translation is Waley's: Arthur Waley (transl.), *The Analects of Confucius*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., sixth impression, 1971 (1st publ. 1938), p. 139.)

47 Wang Zhuangwei states that "Li Yangbing was the first seal script calligrapher of the Tang dynasty" (Wang Zhuangwei 王壯為著, *Shufa yanjiu* 書法研究 [Studies in the history of Chinese calligraphy] (*Geke yanjiu xiao congshu* 各科研究小叢書), Taipei: Commercial Press, 5th ed., 1976 (1st printing 1967), p. 95.

48 Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯集釋 (ed. and annotations), *Han Changli shi xinian jishi* 韓昌黎詩繫年集釋 [The Poetry of Han Yu arranged chronologically with collected annotations] (*Zhongguo xueshu mingzhu di er ji: Wenxue mingzhu di sanji*, 2, 中國學術名著：中國通俗小說名著第二集，文學名著第三集第二冊), vol. 238, repr.: Taipei: Shijie shuju 世界書局, 1970, 2nd printing (1st printing 1966; originally published in 1957 in Shanghai by Gudian wenxue chubanshe 古典文學出版社); loc. cit., pp. 346–352 (*juan* 7); Hanabusa,

graphs. But as his *Postscript to Some Tadpole Writing*, which will be translated further below, proves, this interest was not very ardent at the beginning. When Li Yangbing's son gave him two texts – maybe family treasures – Han Yu's appreciation of these editions seemed to be rather polite, *not* as though he had obtained two *really* important copies. Thus he gave them away. As it seems, it was not until the *Yuanhe* 元和 period (806–821) that Han Yu's awareness changed. On February 21, 816 he was made *shuzi* 庶子, imperial palace secretary (resp. mentor), a position that he according to Hartman lost on June 17 of the same year.<sup>49</sup>

This short text adds further evidence for another important issue: the *guwen*-movement for which Han Yu's name stands in the first line finds an ideal counterpart in the archaeological and epigraphic interests. The one may result in the other, one may be inclined to think. When Han Yu became acquainted with Li Yangbing's son he may not yet have been aware of the impact of ancient scripts or graphs on his own convictions and considerations. Anyway, it is of some meaning that all the important protagonists have met some time. In addition, there are further implications: *guwen* stands not only for the movement and attitude that was so extremely pushed by Han Yu, but it is also the common designation for ancient scripts (before the small seal) in general – or designates the scripts used by those states that had rivaled with Qin for the hegemony in China (the so-called *liuguo guwen* 六國古文). The name of tadpole is most likely a synonym for *guwen*<sup>50</sup> that is to say a synonym for that type of script in which the

no. 139. For an English translation of this song see Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yu*, New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Pr., 1975, pp. 247–251. There is further a German translation of the *Shiguge*: Erwin Ritter von Zach (transl.), James Robert Hightower (ed.), *Han Yü's poetische Werke. Übersetzt von Erwin von Zach 1872–1942. Ed. with An Introduction by ...* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, 7), Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1952: “Das Lied von den Steintrommeln” (v, 11, pp. 130–133).

The stone drums, which were probably discovered at the beginning of the Tang were regarded as a great event, see Mattos: pp. 37ff.; Gilbert L. Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in* (*Monumenta Serica Monograph Series*, 19), Nettetal: Steyler Verlag – Wort und Werk, 1988. It becomes evident that at the beginning of the Tang the small seal script by Li Si was the only script that was commonly combined with any notion of ancient scripts.

49 Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1986, p. 80. Han Yu's *Kedoushu hou ji* 科斗書後記 [Postscript to some tadpole writing] (see below) is signed: “The eleventh year [of the reign period *yuanhe*] (816), on the fourth day of the sixth month, written by the imperial palace secretary of the right, Han Yu.” According to Dong Zuobin 董作賓 I take this to be equal to July 2, 816! (Tung Tso-pin, *Chronological Table of Chinese History* 中國年曆總譜, 2 vols., Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Pr., 1960)

50 The problem with all designations for ancient scripts is that we only have the discussions or speculations about them, but never any illustrations. Further, the definitions used in the one text will differ from those used in the next one and so on. This has quickly resulted in confusion. In the case of *kedou* the variant graphs for *kedou* 科斗 = 蝌蚪 even stress this aspect, because the verbatim designation “tadpole” increases the misunderstanding. Thus Wuqiu

so-called *guwen* texts of the Han were written, which allegedly were found in a wall of Confucius' house.

What seems to account further for the relative impact of this short text is the fact that the *Xu shuduan* 續書斷 (*Continuation of the assessments of calligraphers*) models the passage on Han Zemu 韓擇木 after Han Yu's tadpole-text<sup>51</sup> and the *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典 uses it at least in two instances for backing up definitions (see below).

Han Yu's Postscript to Some Tadpole Writing (Kedou shu houji 科斗書後記):<sup>52</sup>

During the *dali*-reign period (766–780) only my uncle's [Han Yunqing] compositions were prevailing at the court.<sup>53</sup> All who wanted to have the

Yan started his *Xuegubian* 學古編 [Study of antiquity] with an explanation of the tadpole script: "The first recommendation says: The *kedou* are the ancestors of the graphs. They resemble the form of the tadpoles. The people of today are ignorant, thus they cunningly draw (imitate) their form and appearance and have lost the original meaning." (一學曰：科斗為字之祖，象蝌蚪形也。今人不知，乃巧畫形狀，失本意矣) Ma Guoquan 馬國權 (ed. and commentary), "Zhuanke jingdian 'Sanshiwu ju' tushi" [The classic about seal script 'Study of Antiquity' explained, with illustrations] 篆刻經典〈三十五學〉圖釋, in: *Shupu* 書譜 (Hong Kong), vol. 1 (1983): pp. 62–73, *Shupu*, 2 (1983): pp. 62–69, and *Shupu*, 3 (1983): pp. 70–78; the quotation is from *Shupu*, 1 (1983): p. 64.

- 51 "Because of his bafen calligraphy, Han Zemu of the Tang gained a name during the time of Emperor Xiao: In this time Han Yunqing was eminent because of his compositions, Li Yangbing because of his seal script, [Han] Zemu because of his bafen; who in the world wanted to have the names of his ancestors inscribed [in tablets]—if he did not get [the support] of these three men, [the names of his ancestors] would not be praised in China" (唐韓擇木蕭代世以八分得名，時原作是，誤。)韓雲卿以文顯，李陽冰以篆顯，擇木以八分顯，天下欲銘其先人攻者，不得此三人，不稱三服。) Zhu Changwen 朱長文撰 (Song dynasty), *Mochibian* 墨池編 [Collection of texts on calligraphy], Wanli-period woodcut ed. 萬曆刊本, repr.: Taipei: National Central Library 國立中央圖書館, 1978, 2 vols.; vol. 1, p. 455 (biography of Han Zemu, and as well quoted by Zhou Zumo: pp. 808–9; Han Yu's "Postscript to Some Tadpole Writing" is not mentioned in the *Xu Shuduan*; as the author's name of *Xu Shuduan* there is only an indication: chenhan shu 宸翰述, "by imperial pen").
- 52 Ma Tongbo (1855–1930) 馬通伯校注, *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* 韓昌黎文集校注 [Collected prose literature of Han Yu], Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1975 (1st Hong Kong print: 1972; 1st printed ed. in 1957); originally compiled between 1894–1907; see as well Hartman: pp. 374–5). The *Kedou shu houji* is at pp. 54–55 in Ma's ed.. The text is numbered 435 in Hanabusa Hideki 花房英樹編集, *Kan Yu kashi sakuin* 韓愈歌詩索引—A concordance to the poems of Han Yu, Kyōto: Kyōto furitsu daigaku jimbun gakkai 京都府立大學人文學會, 1964. There are two quotations from this text by Hartman, pp. 21 and 250.
- 53 For Han Yunqing cf. Hartman, pp. 21–22, and pp. 284–5; altogether six compositions by Han Yunqing have been preserved in the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文—five in the *Quan Tang wen*, vol. 5, pp. 4499–4503 (*juan* 441, pp. 10b–17a) itself, and one in *Tang wen xu shi* 唐文續拾 [Continuation of the supplement to the *Quan Tang wen*], *juan* 4, pp. 4b–6a (*Quan Tang wen*, vol. 11, p. 11214).

merits and actions of their ancestors engraved to gain the trust of the following generations<sup>54</sup> asked Mr. Han to do it.

At that time the [vice] director Li Yangbing was the only one capable of doing seal script, whereas my uncle with the same surname<sup>55</sup> [Han] Zemu<sup>56</sup> excelled in the bafen script. Without the need for inquiries one had [already] learned from them. If this had not been the case they would not have been praised in the Three Domains (ie China).<sup>57</sup> Therefore these three masters could transmit [their art and tradition] to students to come thereafter.

韓愈撰，《科斗書後記》

愈叔父〈韓雲卿〉當大曆時。文辭獨行中朝。天下之欲銘述其先人功行取信來世者。咸歸韓氏。於時李〈少〉監陽冰獨能篆書。而同姓叔父〈韓〉擇木善八分。不問可知其人。不如是者不稱三服。故三家傳子弟往來。

During the *zhenyuan* reign period (785–805), when I served as a humble official in the private secretariat of Prime Minister Dong [Jin] (724–799),<sup>58</sup> I became acquainted in Bianzhou with the magistrate of Kaifeng,<sup>59</sup>

- 54 *Qixin* 取信, this sentence is one the sources quoted in the *Hanyu dacidian* for the meaning of *qude xinren* 取得信任 ("to obtain, acquire trust or confidence"); compare as well modern expressions such as *qu xin yu min* 取信于民 ("win the people's confidence or trust", cf. Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風主編 (gen.-ed.), *Hanyu dacidian*, 12 vols. plus 1 Index vol., Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe 辭書出版社 [vol.1] and *Hanyu dacidian chubanshe* 漢語大辭典出版社 [vol.2–13], 1986–1994).
- 55 As Ma Tongbo shows in his commentary, this diction is due to the fact that Han Yu is already five generations apart from Han Zemu. See *Liji* (Classic of Etiquette): 四世而緦，服之窮也；五世袒免，殺同姓也。六世，親屬竭矣， which is translated by Legge as follows: "7. For parties four generations removed (from the same common ancestor) the mourning was reduced to that worn for three months, and this was the limit of wearing the hempen cloth. If the generations were five, the shoulders were bared and the cincture assumed; and in this way the mourning within the circle of the same was gradually reduced. After the sixth generation the bond of kinship was held to be at an end."; cf. James Legge (transl.), Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (ed., introduction, and "Study Guide"), *Li Chi*, New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 2 vols. 1967; vol. 2, p. 63 (*Liji* 16, *Da zhuan* 大傳). There is only one literary composition by Han Zemu preserved in the *Quan Tang wen*, in the *Tang wen shi-yi* 唐文拾遺 [Supplement to the *Quan Tang wen*], *juan* 22, pp. 22a–22b (in the *Quan Tang wen*, vol. 11, p. 106119).
- 56 For an example of his calligraphy see plate 30 in the 2nd volume of the *Chūgoku shoron tai-kei*-series, in: Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎編 (ed.), *Chūgoku shoron taikei* 中國書論大系, vol. 2 (Tō 唐 1); Tōkyō: Nigensha, 1977.
- 57 *Sanfu*: the *Three Domains*: *Bu ru shi zhe bu cheng sanfu* 不如是者不稱三服: in Tong Dide's 童第德 (1894–1969), *Han ji jiao quan* 韓集校詮 [Additional commentary and editorial remarks to the works of Han Yu], 2 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986; vol. 2, p. 444f. contains a commentary to that passage; Xu Zhen 徐震 (1413–1490) explains with reference to the *Tribute of Yu* 禹貢: "this expression of the *Three Domains* is as to say 'China'" (此言三服猶言中國 [...]). As for the allusion to "The Tribute of Yu" cf. James Legge, *The Shoo King or The Book of Historical Documents*, 142ff. (*The Chinese Classics*, 3)
- 58 This was his first, but rather informal official position. He served in Bianzhou in the private secretariat (*mufu* 幕府) of Dong Jin 董晉 in the lowest possible position. His job started in

[Li] Fuzhi, who was a son of Li Yangbing. He gave me a copy of the Classic of Piety and the Book about the Officials by Wei Hong (fl. ca. 25 A.D.),<sup>60</sup> written in the tadpole script (*kedou=guwen*). The two texts were combined into one scroll.

I treasured and stored them, but I did not have the time to study them. When I later became an official in the capital (Luoyang), holding the position of a scholar of the Four Gates,<sup>61</sup> I became acquainted with Mr. Gui [Deng] 歸登.<sup>62</sup> Mr. Gui was fond of ancient writings and had a thorough comprehension of them. I said [to him]: If one could find a foundation of ancient writing, one could probably perfect one's [learning].<sup>63</sup>

貞元中，愈事董丞相幕府於汴州。識開封令服之者，陽冰子。授余以其家科斗孝經漢衛宏官書。兩部合一卷。愈寶蓄之而不暇學。後來京師。為四門博士。識歸公。歸公好古書。能通之。愈

796 and ended in 799 with the death of Dong Jin, see Hartman, p. 34ff. It was part of Han Yu's duties in Bianzhou, as Hartman, p. 36 points it out, to supervise the provincial examinations each autumn. In this capacity he was of importance for the local elite.

- 59 Kaifeng was a county of Bianzhou in Tang times. Han Yu had a cousin there who died while he served Dong Jin, see Hartman, p. 71.

- 60 *Guanshu* 官書: This text should be more or less identical with the *Han jiyi* 漢舊儀 [The ancient regulations for officials during the Han dynasty] by Wei Hong (included e.g. in the *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要). The *Han jiyi* is an ed. that reconstructs Wei Hong's writing according to quotations found in other works. Of course, it is more than unlikely that there existed a genuine tadpole copy of this work, as even during the Former Han dynasty what is called *guwen* or tadpole was definitely no longer in use: about this topic see as well Noel Barnard: "The Nature of Ch'in 'Reform of the Script' as reflected in archaeological documents excavated under conditions of control", pp. 181–213, in: David T[od] Roy and Tsien Tsuen-hsuin (eds.), *Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization*, Hong Kong: The Chinese Univ. Pr., 1978.

- 61 This was his first "real" position, which he occupied for two years, starting in 801, see Hartman, p. 47; cf. Hucker, no. 5719, who renders *simenxue* as "School of the four gates" (Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Pr., 1985).

- 62 This Mr. Gui cannot be identified with certainty. The poems of Han Yu as well seem to give no hints to an appropriate Mr. Gui, as far as I could judge from Hanabusa Hideki or the names listed in Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, Zhang Chenshi 張忱石, and Xu Yimin 許遺民, *Tang Wudai renwu zhuanji ziliao zonghe suoyin* 唐五代人物傳記資料綜合索引, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982. There is no Mr. Dong mentioned for his calligraphic achievements or his epigraphical knowledge for the time after 801 who would be appropriate, perhaps with the exception of Gui Chongjing's 歸崇敬 (712–799) son Gui Deng 歸登. Gui Deng is mentioned in Tao Zongyi's, *Shushu huiyao*, p. 181 (*juan* 5, p. 28a). The name of Gui Deng's son, Gui Rong 歸融, is also mentioned (p. 182, *juan* 5: 28b, without further information), but most probably he would be too young. Ma Tongbo seems to have taken the same considerations, for he identifies Mr. Gui as well with Gui Deng, but gives no arguments for that.

- 63 *Jiang* 講 – this reminds one of *xue bu jiang* 學不講 in the *Lunyu*, 7.3: "The Master said, The thought that 'I have left my moral power (*te*) untended, my learning unperfected, that I have heard of righteous men, but been unable to go to them; have heard of evil men, but been unable to reform them' – it is these thoughts that disquiet me." (Waley, *Analects*, p. 123) (*Zi yue: De zhi bu xiu, xue zhi bu jiang, wen yi bu neng cong. Bu shan bu neng gai, shi wu you ye.* 子曰:「德之不脩，學之不講，聞義不能徙，不善不能改，是吾憂也。」).

曰。古書得其據依。蓋可講。因進其所有書屬歸氏。元和來愈亟不獲讓。嗣爲銘文。薦道功德。思凡爲文辭宜略識字。

Because of this I entrusted to Mr. Gui all these books [written in the tad-pole script]. Since the *Yuanhe* 元和 reign period (806–821) I repeatedly<sup>64</sup> have not been able to refuse [the requests for writing tablets], and subsequently I have written inscriptions to recommend the merits and virtues. Ah, all who are writing compositions should have an overall knowledge about [the history] of characters. Accordingly I asked Mr. Gui if I might take a look at these two books, and I received them. I kept them for more than a month, and Zhang Ji (766–829?)<sup>65</sup> ordered the *jinshi* Heba Shu<sup>66</sup> to copy them for me to keep. Thus I obtained forty or fifty percent of them and returned the [original] books to Mr. Gui.

The eleventh year [of the reign period *yuanhe*], on the fourth day of the sixth month (July 2, 816), written by the imperial palace secretary of the right,<sup>67</sup> Han Yu.

因從歸公乞觀二部書。得之。留月餘。張籍令進士賀拔恕寫以留愈。蓋得其十四五。而歸其書歸氏。十一年六月四日。右庶子韓愈記。

#### 4. Shu Yuanyu

One of the most influential critics of Li Yangbing is Shu Yuanyu 舒元興, who died in 835 (*jinshi* 進士 of 813)<sup>68</sup> in the course of the Sweet Dew (*ganlu* 甘露)

64 *Qi* 亟. The *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典, vol. 1, p. 778 uses this sentence as reference for the meaning “repeatedly”, “more often than not”: 層次, 一再.

65 They had known each other for a long time, see e. g. Hartman, pp. 37–40, 69–70, 113–115.

66 I was not able to trace him back. There is a Heba Qi 賀拔其 mentioned in the *Shushi huiyao*, p. 182 (*juan* 5, p. 28 B; only his name). Because of the relative rareness of the surname of Heba a certain family tradition might be expected. But this is a field of speculation. Heba Shu is included in Yu Jianhua's 俞劍華 *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* 中國美術家人名辭典 [Biographical dictionary of Chinese artists], Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe 上海人民美術出版社, 1981, p. 1115, this entry, however, is derived from the above translated Han Yu text.

67 Rank 5 b; Hucker renders this title as “mentor”, see Hucker, no. 5468.

68 *Yuanhe* 8th year, according to his biography in the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 [Old dynastic history of the Tang] vol. 13, pp. 4408–9, (Liu Xu 劉煦 (887–946) et al. (comp.), *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 16 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975); the authors of his biography in the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書, vol. 17, pp. 5321–5322, merely say that he passed his examination during the *Yuanhe*-period. In Sima Guang's *Zizhi tongjian* [Comprehensive mirror for aid in government], vol. 17, pp. 7908, 3rd column from left, his rank is given as “*yushi zhongcheng* 御史中丞, vice director of the imperial board of censorship, and concurrently *xingbu dailang* 刑部侍郎.” (Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, 20 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976, 4th printing, (1st 1956).

incident.<sup>69</sup> He belonged to the intimates of Emperor Wenzong 文宗 (reg. 827–840). The following text, Shu's *Record of the jade-chop-stick script* (*Yuzhuzhuan zhi* 玉箸篆志),<sup>70</sup> has been echoed by several texts such as the *Random notes from the Rong studio* (*Rongzhai suibi* 容齋隨筆) by Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123–1203)<sup>71</sup> where the extraordinary beauty of the enclosed praise of Li Yangbing is characterized as “this inscription is of a beauty that cannot be expressed in words” (此銘有不可名言之妙).

The *Record of the jade-chop-stick script* has been included in many collections, thus the first half is to be found in the *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成.<sup>72</sup> Further quotations are found e.g. in the *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜,<sup>73</sup> where the amazing sentence “This shows directly how much heaven favours our Tang dynasty with omens of good luck by means of a treasure of characters!” is explicitly quoted:

Shu Yuanyu in his *Record on the jade-chop-stick script* indeed says: “[The following can be said about] the calligraphy of Li Yangbing: His style is excellent, his power vigorous, and his merits perfect. He extremely surpasses [Li] Si of the Qin! This shows directly that heaven favours our Tang

69 This incident has been described in the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, vol. 17, pp. 7905–7917 (his execution on: p. 7916, column 8–9). Curiously enough this passage was translated into French very early and was incorporated into the 16th volume of *Mémoires concernant (...)*, vol. 16, p. 206 ff. – his execution on p. 209 (17 December 835; the transliteration for Shu Yuanyu is “Chou-yuen-yu”: *Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, etc. des Chinois par les missionnaires de Pékin*, Paris: Nyon; later: Paris: Treuttel et Würtz 1777–1814; 16 vols.; the preface of vol. 1 is dated 1764. There is a German translation by Christoph Meiners of (only?) the first volume: *Abhandlung des sinesischen Jesuiten, über die Geschichte, Wissenschaften, Künste, Sitten und Gebräuche der Sinesen. Erster Band. Aus dem Französischen; mit Kupfern. Mit Anmerkungen und Zusätzen versehen von Christoph Meiners, Professor der Weltweisheit in Göttingen*, Leipzig 1778. See as well Tong Xigang 全晰綱著, *Zhongguo lidai guanhuo* 中國歷代官宦 [The eunuchs in Chinese history], Ji'nan 濟南: Ji'nan chubanshe 濟南出版社, 1993, pp. 106–110.

70 *Jade-chop-stick script* is a term especially used during the Tang for the small seal script and at the same time designates the calligraphic style of Li Si; see Gan Yang 甘陽 (about 1598), *Yinzhang jishuo* 印章集說 [Essence of the lore of Chinese seal]: (*Meishu congshu*-ed.), pp. 172–173: “Yuzhuzhuan fa” 玉箸篆法: “Jade-chop-stick that is the small seal script of Li Si [...]” (玉箸篆即李斯小篆). For ed.s of the text see e.g. Yao Xuan's *Tang wencui*, juan 77, p. 10B–11B; Zhu Changwen's *Mochibian*, vol. 2, pp. 534–587 (juan 4, pp. 44b–45a); Dong Gao's et al. *Quan Tang wen*, vol. 8, pp. 7497 (juan 727, pp. 24Bff.), Wu Zengqi's *Gujin wenchao*, vol. 7, p. 3773f. (cf. footnotes 27, 46, and 22).

71 Hong Mai (1123–1202), *Rongzhai suibi*, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 1978; 2 vols.; vol. 1, pp. 182–183: “Shu Yuanyu wen” 舒服元與文.

72 Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 (1651–after 1723), Jiang Tingxi 蔣廷錫 (1669–1732) et al., *Qinding Gujin tushu jicheng* 欽定古今圖書集成 (1725) [Illustrated classified encyclopedia consisting of extracts copied from works from ancient and modern times, edited by imperial command], repr. of the Zhonghua shuju-ed. of 1934: Taipei: Dingwen shuju 鼎文書局 1977, 79 vols.; vol. 63, p. 532a (ce 冊 647, p. 26bff.).

73 *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜 [The (graded)] catalogue of calligraphers whose works are kept in the Xuanhe-palace], juan 2: Hihara Toshikuni, *Senna shofu* [Xuanhe shupu], p. 44.

dynasty with omens of good luck by means of a treasure of characters!". This is wisely spoken!<sup>74</sup> Today there are three seal script calligraphies by Li Yangbing kept in the palace.

舒元興作玉箸篆，亦曰，陽冰之書，其力猛，其攻備，光大於秦斯倍矣。此直見上天以字寶瑞吾唐。其知言哉。今御府所藏，篆書三。

The *Record of the jade-chop-stick script* begins as follows:

The chancellor of the Qin, Li Si, changed Cang Jie's *zhouwen* and created thus the jade-chopstick-*zhuan* (i.e. the small seal). Its style belongs to the highest antiquity and has been regarded as so old as if this script came from a time in which men did not exist yet (i.e. only the sages lived during those times). At this time, the experts in script were all overwhelmed and admired Li Si. Thus he was able to found his own school of rules and patterns. Since the continuing exchange [of dynasties] from the two Han dynasties to the Sanguo and up to the Sui dynasty and since the eight clans have alternated successively, there has been no one who could surpass him.

Alas! It is the intention of heaven that the dao of the seal script will never end! Thus heaven handed it down to Li Yangbing from Zhaojun.

Yangbing was born during the time of the son of heaven in the *kaiyuan* (713–742) reign period of the august Tang dynasty. Without being heard of outside, he entered the inner rooms of seal script scholarship.<sup>75</sup> [In doing so] he alone was able to encounter the chancellor [Li] Si of the Qin, despite they were one thousand years apart. It can be said that due to him heaven's will was not deserted (because after Li Si of the Qin, Li Yangbing was the only one worthy enough to continue the dao of the seal script)!

At this time, the experts in script were all overwhelmed and admired him. Further, they called his style excellent, his power vigorous, and his merits perfect. He extremely<sup>76</sup> surpasses [Li] Si of the Qin!

This shows directly that heaven favours our Tang dynasty with omens of good luck by means of a treasure of characters! If this had not been the case, why would heaven then have changed the former dynasties (after the Qin) and why was it so quiet without any person (worthy enough for Heaven)?

74 知言, "to speak with wisdom" see *Zuozhuan*, Duke Xiang 襄公, 14th year, 3rd month: 秦伯以爲知言 vol. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan jijie* 春秋左傳集解, vol. 3, p. 908.

75 *Ru ... shi* 入室 to possess a profound scholarship, compare *Lunyu* 11.14 (rsp. 11.15 in some ed.s): "The disciples ceased to respect Zilu. The Master said: 'What concerns You is that he has ascended the guest-hall, but he has not yet entered the inner rooms.'" (門人不敬子路。子曰:「由也升堂矣，未入於室也。」).

76 *Bei* 倍 (*Quan tang wen*), the *Gujin tushu jicheng* has *baibei* 百倍, the *Mochibian* as well, vol. 2, p. 585 (*juan* 4, p. 45a).

舒元興撰，《玉箸篆志》

秦丞相斯變倉頡籀文爲玉箸篆，體尚太古，謂古若無人。當時議書者皆翰伏之，故拔乎能成一家法式。歷兩漢三國至隨氏，更八姓，無有出其右者。嗚呼！天意謂篆之道不可以終絕，故受之以趙郡李氏子陽冰。陽冰生皇唐開元天子時。不聞外獎躬入篆室，獨能隔一千年而與秦斯相見，可謂能不孤天意矣！當時得議書者亦皆翰伏之，且謂之其格峻，其力猛，其功備。光大於秦斯有倍矣！此直見上天以子寶瑞吾唐矣！不然，何綿更姓氏而寂寞無人？

The text eventually ends with a famous praise on Li Yangbing:

The praise song says: "[Li] Si, one thousand years ago – [Li Yang-] bing was born in the Tang. [Li Yang-] bing has already gone, who in the future will follow? If one thousand years later there should be someone else, who would be able to treat him?<sup>77</sup> One thousand years later – if there should be no one, the seal script will end here. Alas!"

You owner of genuine calligraphies by Li Yangbing, for my sake, keep them as a treasure!

詞曰：「斯去千年，冰生唐時，冰復去矣，後來者誰？後千年有人，誰能待之？後千年無人，篆止於斯。嗚呼！」主人爲吾寶之！

The reception of that praise must have been considerable. Lü Wuzhi 呂武志 found another text that obviously echoes the praise at the end of Shu Yuanyu's *Record of the jade-chop-stick*.<sup>78</sup>

The opening passage sounds rather strange in the first moment. We are told that the *dao* of the seal script is the concern of Heaven and that Heaven had to change one dynasty for another until it found a clan worthy enough for the mandate of heaven – due to the capability of Li Yangbing! Strange enough this last

77 Dai 待: the *Mochibian*, vol. 2, p. 587 (juan 4, p. 46a) has "dai zhi" 代之, represent him.

78 Lü Wuzhi 呂武志著, "Shu Yuanyu sanwen xilun" 舒元興散文析論 [An analysis of Shu Yuanyu's prose literature], pp. 455–479 in: *Zhongguo Tangdai xuehui* (ed.) 中國唐代學會主編, *Di erjie guoji Tangdai xueshu huiyi lunji* 第二屆國際唐代學術會議論文集 [Papers of the second international Tang conference], Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe 文津出版社, 1993; 2 vols. Lü Wuzhi quotes from the preface of the *Airizhai congchao* 愛日齋叢鈔 [Collected notes from the Airi studio] (Song dynasty; authorship unclear). There the imitation of the end caption of Shu Yuanyu's *Record of the jade-chop-script* is evident: 林肅翁序《樂軒詩筌》未云：「師學之傳，豈直以詩？詩又不傳，學則誰知？後千年無人，已而已而！後千年有人，留以待之！奈何！」Lin Suweng 林肅翁 (i. e. Lin Xiyi 林希逸; ca. 1210–ca. 1273) at the end of his preface to the *Lexuan shiquan*, the *Collected Poems of Chen Zao* 陳藻 (13th cent.; hao 號: Lexuan 樂軒) says: "The transmitting of the master's teachings (Lin Guangchao 林光朝 1114–1178) should this simply be done by poems? And if there should be no transmitting of [the teachings by] poems, his teachings, who will know them? If one thousand years later there should be no one, [the teachings] will have come to an end, will have come to an end! But if one thousand years later there should be someone, [for him] we have to keep [the teachings] and wait for the one [who is capable of grasping and transmitting this teaching]! What else could be done!" (*Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成 repr. of the *Shoushang congshu* 守山閣叢書 – ed., p. 105, juan 3).

sentence is the very passage that is quoted from Shu's record in the *Xuanhe shu-pu*!

But *si wen* 斯文 – "This way of Ours" (*Lunyu* 論語 6.15 rsp. 6.17 in some editions) – had already been transformed at the beginning of the Tang into "This *wen* of Ours".<sup>79</sup> And in 733 an imperial edict went even one step further when it stated: "The *dao* depends on *wen*" (*dao zai yu wen* 道在於文).<sup>80</sup>

Did Shu Yuanyu in his praise song not play with the connotations of "*si* 斯" either?

I will not overestimate the role and importance of the *zhuan*shu. Maybe the text by Shu Yuanyu shows some exaggeration. But one cannot deny that antiquity became a worth of its own – which scarcely can be overestimated – with the seal script as one of the most important symbols.

## 5. The magic and mystic

I think the text by Shu Yuanyu is in some aspects very typical. Art has had a twofold meaning for ever: it denotes a beauty that can be enjoyed privately, but in most prominent cases, it becomes evident that any extraordinary beauty is not an aesthetic event at all, but instead a sign of Heaven and therefore a political issue. Here it may suffice to mention the apology of the emperor who had appropriated the family collection of the Zhang clan: "Such calligraphy and paintings are treasures of all times and the prizes of the state."<sup>81</sup> Therefore a private person cannot be allowed to monopolize the possession of such treasures. The question, why the seal script is so outstanding, still remains.

79 Bol: 84; *Lunyu* 6.15 (6.17): "The Master said, Who expects to be able to go out of the house except by the door? How is it then that no one follows this Way of ours?" (A. Waley, *Analects*: 119; 子曰:「誰能出不由戶? 何莫由斯道也?」).

The correlation between *si dao* 斯道 and *si wen* 斯文 will become evident when compared with *Lunyu* 9.5: There Confucius claims that with the death of King Wen 文王 *wen* is "here with me" (文王既沒, 文不在茲乎?) and that therefore, "Heaven is not yet about to let this *wen* (斯文) perish 天之未喪斯文也!" (cf. Waley, *Analects*: 139).

80 Ibid., p. 84; originally quoted in Xu Song 徐松撰 (1781–1848), Zhao Shouyan 趙守儼點校 (ed.), *Dengke ji kao* 登科記考 [Study of the records of examination graduates (in the Tang)] ed. by Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2nd printing, 1993 (1st printing 1984); 3 vols.; vol. 1, p. 263 (*juan* 8).

81 Wai-Yee Li, "The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility", p. 271, *T'oung Pao*, 81.4–5 (1995): pp. 269–302. On the other hand we learn furthermore that there is a certain mistrust against persons (or rulers) who are too fond in collecting objects, a mistrust that is already expressed in the *Shangshu* 尚書 [Classic of Documents]: "trifling with men ruins virtue, taking pleasure in things undermines the will" (*wan wu sang zhi* 玩人喪德, 玩物喪志) Ruan Yuan 阮元校刻 (1764–1849) (ed.), *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, rev. repr. of the *Shijie shuju* 世界書局-ed.: *Shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokanji* 三經注疏附校勘記 in 2 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982, 2nd printing (1980); vol. 1, p. 195a; see Wai-Yee Li: 272f., footnote 6; cf. Legge, *The Shoo King*: 348f.

I believe the answer lies in the special character of that script that is a direct emendation of the sages. As Li Yangbing pointed it out in his letter to Li Heng, the characters or writing fonts are like the blueprints of the Creation. Not every font, however, is suited for that purpose. Only the ancient scripts are sanctioned by the sages. And of all ancient scripts the two seal scripts seem the most canonical ones.

## 6. The *chuanguoxi*

On the one hand there is the identity of both, and on the other hand there is the magical realm, which becomes obvious when one regards the famous *chuanguoxi* 傳國璽, the seal by which the succession of dynastic power is legally transmitted from the old dynasty to the new one.<sup>82</sup>

This seal which was felt as a very crucial token of dynastic legitimation at least until the Song dynasty, stems again from the Qin dynasty. It was Li Si who once created it out of the *bi* disk of Mr. He, the famous Heshi bi 和氏璧<sup>83</sup> (another designation is Jingbi 荆璧, *bi* from Jing) – that is to say Li Si was the one who allegedly composed the eight-character-legend on it: “Long life and eternal fame to the one who has received the mandate of heaven!” (*Shou ming yu tian, ji shou yong chang* 受命于天，既壽永昌). With this very seal the dynastic power of the Qin was transmitted to Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (Liu Bang 劉邦 B.C. 265–195) and from now on, from one dynasty to the other! Thus it became the symbol of legal dynastic power. We encounter that seal, e.g. in the 6th chapter of the novel *Sanguo (zhi) yanyi* 三國[志]演義,<sup>84</sup> where it magically preserved a long-dead body from decay. Apart from this one there are many other magical situations that could be narrated.

82 For a more detailed discussion of the *chuanguoxi* see Lothar Wagner, *Die ganze Welt in einem Zoll. Ein Beitrag zur chinesischen Siegelkunde*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International (U.M.I.), 1994 (1987), pp. 174–222.

83 It is e.g. mentioned in the *Hanfeizi*, 13 (*juan* 4, p. 3); see Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 (ed.), *Hanfeizi jishi* 韓非子集釋, 2 vols., Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1974 (originally published by Zhonghua shuju); vol. 1, pp. 238–244; “Heshi” 和氏, cf. Burton Watson (transl.), *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsin Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu*, (UNESCO collection of Representative Works. Chinese Series), New York & London: Columbia Univ. Pr., 1967 – “Han Fei Tzu”: pp. 80–83.

84 Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中撰 (14th cent.) *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義, 2 vols. (*Zengding Zhongguo xueshu mingzhu: Zhongguo tongshu xiaoshuo mingzhu, di yi ji*, 4–5 增訂中國學術名著：中國通俗小說名著第一集，第四到五冊) pp. 168–169, Taipei: Shijie shuju 世界書局, 1969, 2nd printing; 1st vol., pp. 33; cf. as well C. H. Brewitt-Taylor (transl.), *Lo Kuan-chung's Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. ‘*San kuo chih yen-i*’, Reprint: Rutland & Tōkyō: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1959 (3rd printing; 1st ed. Shanghai 1925), 2 vols.; vol. 1, p. 55ff.

This seal is constantly mentioned and described in the official documents.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, from the very beginning, this seal was a fake: as pointed out by Kurihara Tomonobu the *chuanguoxi* is presumably an invention of Emperor Guangwu 光武帝 (reg. 25–58) of the Later Han dynasty.<sup>86</sup> In the Tang there was a possibility that the *chuanguoxi* had been lost. Thus Shu Yuanyu in his above mentioned *Yuzhuzhuan zhi* expresses that the *chuanguoxi* has gone to heaven and is now no longer available. But fortunately there is now Li Yangbing who carries on the transmitting of the dao of the seal script (*zhuan zhi dao* 篆之道).

Shu Yuanyu in his praise of Li Yangbing adds:

Albeit, concerning the seal script my studies are not elaborated, I, nevertheless, know their dots and strokes. I have often had the intention to inquire after the authentic calligraphies of the chancellor of Qin (Li Si). It happens that the chancellor of Qin left long ago, but I have heard that there are the eight characters carved in the jade of Jing and that there is the huge stele erected on the peak of the Yishan. Now, the *bi* disk from Jing, out of which the [*chuanguo*] *xi* has been made, has already flown to heaven, and can certainly not be regarded anymore.

某道不工篆而識其點畫。常有意求秦丞相真跡，會秦丞相去久，聞其有八字刻在荆玉，有洪碑樹在嶧山嶺。今荆璧爲璽，飛上天矣。固不可得而見也。

Thus the revival of the seal script tradition is the proof for the Tang dynasty to be the *only dynasty worth* continuing the Qin (because all other dynasties, including the Han, were not in the possession of the genuine seal script tradition). The revival of this tradition proves on the one hand the authenticity of the dynasty. On the other hand, *because* there is Li Yangbing, whose *zhuan* tradition is even

85 To mention only some few examples, see *Jinshu*, vol. 9, p. 2928; *Xin Tangshu*, vol. 2, p. 524; *Songshi*, vol. 11, pp. 3583–3586 (gives a history of the *chuanguoxi*; Tuo Tuo 脫脫等撰 1313–1355, (*pro forma* ed., et al. ed.), *Songshi* 宋史 [Dynastic history of the Song]; 40 vols.; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1977). See as well the *Gegu yaolun* [The essential criteria of antiquities], which reproduces – at least in its augmented ed.s – three different Song dynasty renderings of the *chuanguoxi*, one of which is given as illus. 4: Cao Zhao 曹昭 (fl. 1387), *Gegu yaolun* 格鼓要論 ed., Wang Zuo 王佐 (2nd half of the 15th cent.) and Shu Min 舒敏 (Ming dynasty) (eds. and authors of the augmentation), *Xinzeng Gegu yaolun* 新增格鼓要論, first printed in 1387 (*Xiyinxuan congshu* 惜陰軒叢書 ed.; 4 ce 冊, after the facsimile ed. in the *Yuanke yingyin*) *Baibucongshu jicheng* 原刻影印百部叢書集成: Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 ed., Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, 1965–1970; 7950 ce 冊). For a translation of the *Xinzeng Gegu yaolun* see Sir Percival David (transl.), *The Chinese Connoisseurship. The Ko Ku Yao Lun. The Essential Criteria of Antiquities*, London: Faber and Faber 1971. Sir Percival David's translation contains on pp. 295–344 a facsimile of: "The Chinese Text of the O version of the *Ko Ku Yao Lun* by Ts'ao Chao the first unpublished unaugmented version of 1388, in three chapters, which was the first ed." is reproduced as a supplement after the first ed.. This ed. lacks the illustrations of the *chuanguoxi*.)

86 Kurihara Tomonobu 栗原朋信著, *Shin Kan shi no kenkyū* 秦漢史の研究, Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 4th printing 1977 (1st printing 1960); loc. cit., p. 143.

more refined than that of Li Si, the Tang surpasses the Qin dynasty. Therefore the Tang tradition is even more orthodox than that of the Qin.

Would this, eventually, not lead to the notion that the Tang tradition is genuine to such an extent that even the *chuanguoxi* is not necessary anymore?

This results in the conclusion that the genuine and orthodox transmission of *si wen* – of “this culture of Ours” and of “this script of Ours” – is a blessing for the dynasty and the concern of the scholar-official.

Here two realms coincide: the magical-religious as well as the orthodox-political concern. This combination must have been felt as most convincing and highly desirable. At least what concerns the Tang!

This impact of the magical and religious aspects is very common. Thus seals are used for magical purposes, the gods, like Guan Yu 關羽 (?–219),<sup>87</sup> communicate by means of seals – by means of official seals: besides the Daoist talisman seals (see illus. 7) there seems to exist no example of private seals that were used by gods or ghosts for communication with the human world (as it seems there is a preference of the communication by official channels). This combines the legitimation seal (*chuanguoxi*) with the official seal. The unique character of seal script is further evident when one regards the captions of steles, the *bei'e* 碑額 or the cover plates of tombs, (*zhuan*)*gai* (篆) 蓋, which as a rule (with only few exceptions) are always written in seal script. The example of Kong Yu 孔愉 will illustrate better how the communication was achieved:

Kong Yu became enfeoffed as marquis of Yubuting because of his merits at the suppression of Hua Yi. [This happened thus:] When Kong Yu was once passing Yubuting on his journeys, he saw some turtles caught in a basket on the street. Yu bought them and set them free in a brook. There were four turtles that swimming away looked back to the left. When it came to his (enfeoffment), one casted his marquis' seal. But the casting of his seal's knob, which had to be shaped like a turtle, failed in the way that the turtle was always looking back to the left. The casting was repeated thrice, but the result was always the same. When the craftsman responsible for the casting of the seal informed Kong Yu, he understood at once. From now on he wore such a seal (with a turtle looking back to the left) on his belt.<sup>88</sup>

[孔愉]以討華軼功，封餘不亭侯。愉嘗行經餘不亭，見籠龜於路者，愉買而放之溪中，龜中流左顧者數四。及是，鑄侯印，印龜左顧，三鑄如初，印工以告，愉乃悟，遂佩焉。

87 See e.g. Zhang Hao's 張濩 (1180–1250) *Yungu zaji* [Miscellaneous records by Zhang Hao] 雲谷雜記 in Tao Zongyi, Shuofu 說郭: *Hanfenlou yuanben Shuofu* 涵芬樓原本說郭, 1st printed 1927 repr.: Taipei: Commercial Press, 1972, 8 vols., vol. 4, p. 2117. Zhang narrates an episode in which the god Guan Yu by means of a seal communicates with human beings.

88 The story is told in his biography in the *Jinshu* 晉書, vol. 7, pp. 2051–2052.

The uses of seals as a talisman are well known e.g. from *juan* 17 in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–363) *Baopuzi* 抱朴子<sup>89</sup> (see illus. 7).

And in addition, there are still more direct religious connotations: In the poem by Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, *I lodge at night in the monastery in Lin'an* (Su Lin'an 宿臨安寺), we find the following line:<sup>90</sup>

The doors are closed, any movement has stopped.

Incense smelling *zhuan* (*shu*) ascends as threads of mist.

閉門群動息，香篆起煙縷

Now it becomes obvious that *zhuan* is far more than the mere designation of a font:

If the term *zhuan* bears such a religious and mythical meaning, is it consequently not understandable why the *zhuan*shu was taken as a token of Heaven? If the *zhuan*shu is the direct result of the creation of the sages, which in our times

89 Wang Ming 王明著, Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–363) *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋 [Commented ed. of the inner chapters of the *Baopuzi*], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980, pp. 273–295; see e.g. p. 287 the passage that has been translated on pp. 298–299 in James R. Ware (transl.), *Alchemy, Medicine & Religion in the China of A.D. 320. The Nei P'ien of Ko Hung* (1st printing: Cambridge/Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1966) repr.: New York: Dover Publications, 1981: "The divine process is normally carried out in mountains and forests which tend to abound in harmful tigers and wolves that one must know how to scatter. For this purpose the Ancients all wore from their belts Huang-shen and Yüeh-chang seals consisting of 120 characters on a four-inch square plaque, of which impressions were made in soft substances and placed at a distance of one hundred paces in each of the four directions from their abode, so that the tigers and wolves dared not approach within these confines. When fresh footprints of a tiger are seen in your travels, the tiger will leave immediately if you apply this seal to them and its impression faces in the direction the animal is traveling; however, it will return immediately if you stamp them in the wrong direction. If you wear these seals when traveling in the mountains and forests, you will have nothing to fear from tigers and wolves. But they will do more than merely put tigers and wolves to flight; when there is a vampire in any of the mountain or river shrines capable of causing either good fortune or bad, you can cut its route with impressions of this seal and it will lose its power. Long ago, there was a large tortoise inhabiting a deep pool in Sony River, so that the pool was known as Tortoise Pool. This creature could produce ghosts and demons that caused illness among the people. A Wu processor named Tai Ping, happening to notice this, made several hundred impressions of the Yüeh-chang seal and threw them throughout the pool from a boat. After quite some time a tortoise more than ten feet in diameter floated to the surface and dared not move. Then Tai Ping killed it with a pole, and immediately all the sick people got well. Further, a large number of small tortoises came out of the pool in series and died on the sand banks. If you suddenly encounter a tiger in the mountains, perform the sanwu charm and it will leave immediately. The method for performing the charm must be given orally, for it would be impossible to go into all its details in writing." (Ware's translation; *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋, pp. 287). For the above-mentioned *Huangshen* and *Yuezhang* seals see *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* pp. 283–285, and 288. (the latter illustration is reproduced here as illus. 7).

90 Wang Wengao 王文誥輯註 (ed. and commentary; 1764–?) ed. by Kong Fanli 孔凡禮點註, *Su Shi shi ji* 蘇軾詩集 [Collected poetical works of Su Dongpo] (Zhongguo gudian wenxue jiben congshu 中國古典文學基本叢書), 8 vols., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1982; vol. 2, p. 344 (*juan* 7).

still could be used and adored, is it *consequently* not evident that the possession of the real *zhuan*shu-tradition is a blessing of heaven?

I think, we find here a mixture that is very unique in this form. Consequently, the reason why the seal script could serve as a symbol of dynastic legitimization seems evident.

Furthermore I believe that the conception behind the interests in ancient scripts and seals, and antiquities is far broader and best to understand in connection with the *guwen* movement, if this movement is not seen as merely literary.

Therefore, it seems quite normal that Han Yu was acquainted with Li Fuzhi, a son of Li Yangbing, and that Han Yu himself wrote texts dealing with ancient graphs: the *Song on the Stone Drums* (*Shiguge*) and the above translated *Post-script to Some Tadpole Writing* (*Kedoushu hou ji*).

Finally, there is a message behind: we cannot lose the way of the ancients and of the sages as long as we possess the way of the *zhuan*shu. Moreover the *zhuan*shu is more authentic than everything else we possess: Resulting from the sad situation concerning the tradition of the ancients texts – e.g. the books out of the wall of Confucius' house and the texts from the tomb in Ji – even the tradition of the written words of the sages is uncertain. But there is still the script which precedes the texts and is even far more than a mere device for transmitting the texts of the sages: The script is a device, a programme for itself, because the script is nothing else but a thorough description of the world and the ten thousand beings, a kind of a *mandara* (*mandala*) used by the sages to put all things into order, to convey their commitment to culture, and eventually to make sure that we will enjoy the benefits of *si wen*, of "This Culture of Ours".

Thus the seal script is more authentic than the transmitted texts with their restricted reliability. Since on the one hand – after the Qin dynasty – the Tang is the first dynasty with an "authentic" seal script tradition, the Tang is after the Qin on the other hand the first dynasty that is in possession of the authentic tradition of the sages!

Hence the climax is evident: from *shengren zhi dao* 聖人之道, the way of the sages to *guren zhi dao* 古人之道, the way of the ancients to *zhuan*shu *zhi dao* 篆書之道, the way of the seal script. After the Tang, however, this view has changed. Instead we encounter a more sober, a more "civil" notion of things, all the enthusiasm and interest for magic has changed now into *jinshixue* 金石學, archaeology.

Albeit we have even more hints in the direction of that unique combination of the world of the ghosts and the magic with the world of human beings (i.e. the officials), it is clear that the arguments are now more laic and one gets the impression that the court and the scholars after the Tang dynasty just played with it and were no longer very serious about it – thus on the one hand producing more material, which on the other hand is less trustworthy.

## Illustration 1



Some examples of different scripts. Beneath every character, the right column gives the name of the script, whereas the left column gives the *kaishu* transcript of the character chosen as an example. Of course, most of the scripts are fancy, and are a late trial to give examples of the scripts mentioned in texts as Wei Xu's *Mousou*. Source: Kong Yunbai 孔雲白編著, *Zhuanke rumen* 篆刻入門 [An introduction to seal carving], reprint: Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店, ca. 1985 (1st published: Shanghai: Commercial Press 1936); loc.cit.: 68–70.

## Illustration 2



“Zuo Sima wenju xinyin” shows an impression in clay of a Zhangguo-period seal. The type of seal script is not what could be called *guwen*, but nevertheless, it is from a period when real *guwen* was still in use. The difference between the two seals in Illustration 2 and 3 shows to which extent the approach to antiquity was a time-bound reception.

Sources: Nishikawa Yasushi (ed.) 西川寧編, *Tenkoku 篆刻* (*Shodō kōza* 書道講座, 6), Tōkyō: Nigensha, 6th printing 1976 (1st printed 1973); p. 72, illus. 1. The modern *kaishu* transcript is found beside the illustration.

## Illustration 3



科斗文「泉石嘯傲」篆刻

This Song dynasty seal “Quanshi xiao ao” shows the characteristics of tadpole script as commonly understood during the Song dynasty. Source: Ma Guoquan, 1/1983: 64 (illus.2)

## Illustration 4



Calligraphy by Li Yangbing (Ryō Yōhyō), "Sanfenji" 三墳記 (Sanfunki); original height: 30 cm, in the possession of Nishikawa Yasushi 西川寧, source: Nishikawa Yasushi (ed.) 西川寧編, *Tensho* 篆書 (*Shodō kōza* 書道講座, 5), Tōkyō: Nigensha 1976 (1st printed 1972); p. 147. The modern *kaishu* transcription is found beside of the illustration.

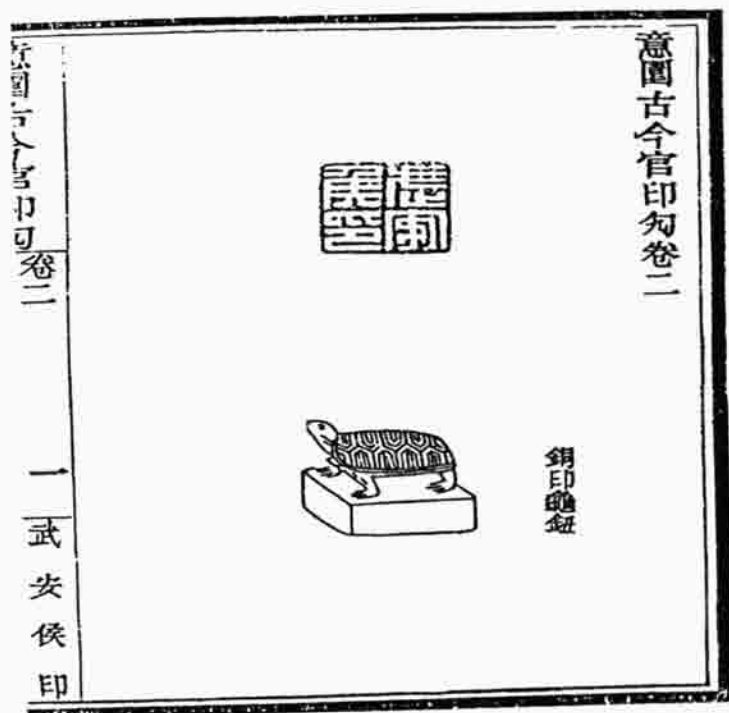
This is at the same time a good example for the so-called *yuzhuzhuan* 玉箸篆, "jade-chopstick-script", the style of the small seal as established by Qin Shihuangdi's 秦始皇帝 chancellor Li Si 李斯 and revitalized by Li Yangbing. Another detail of the "Sanfenji" is reproduced as plate 35 in the *Chgo ku shoron taikai* - series: Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎編 (ed.) *Chūgoku shoron taikai* 中國書論大系, vol. 2 (Tō 唐 1); Tōkyō: Nigensha 1977.

## Illustration 5



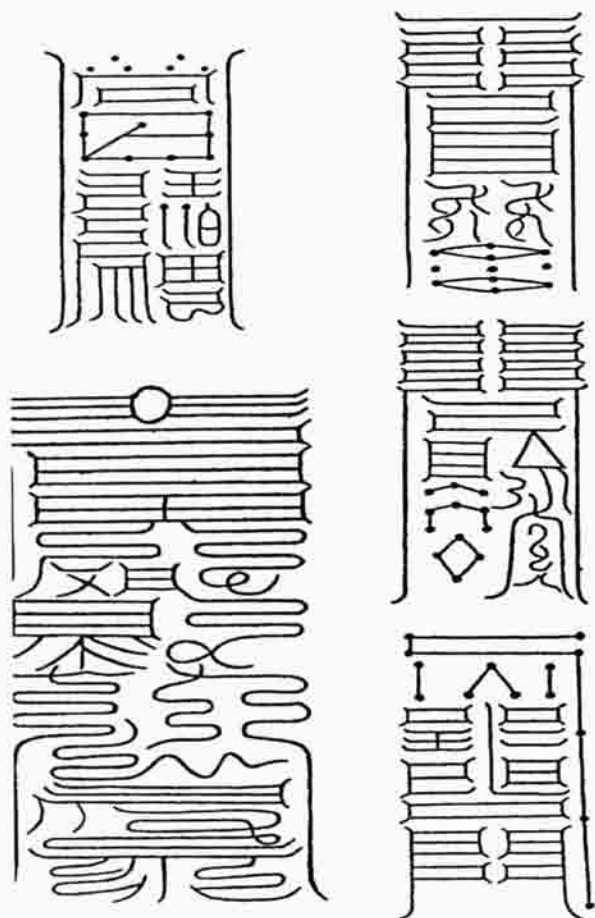
One of several (different) renderings of the *chuanguoxi*, here after Xiang Ju 向巨 of the Song dynasty (this rendering is taken from the *Gegu yaolu*). Albeit the characters seem at the first sight unreadable, they show on the one hand some resemblance with the so-called bird-and-insect script, *niaochongshu* 鳥蟲書; on the other hand they remind one of the daoist talisman seals, which are not readable either – for the not-initiated. There are no known renderings of the *chuanguoxi* prior to the Song. And they all use the same kind of script. This kind of seal script is very different from the *yuzhuzhuan*, the jade-chopstick script, of Li Si (see illus. 3 for an example of this tradition). Since the alleged “creator” of the *chuanguoxi* is Li Si, who is known as the “inventor” of the small seal script, one has to ask what the source for this kind of script is? Maybe the same tradition as the daoist talisman seals?

## Illustration 6



"Wu'anhou yin" Seal of the marquis of Wu'an, with a turtle as knob. The seal casted for Kong Yu must have been similar to this. The knobs of a seal were codified according to rank and position of its official bearer. The rules that should be applied are to be found in works like the above mentioned *Han jiu yi* by Wei Hong. The source for this illustration is the seal catalogue (*yinpu* 印譜) by Hou Rucheng 侯汝承, *Yiyuan gujinguanyin jiu* 意園古今官印句 from 1923. This illustration is from the copy kept in the library of the Chinese University in Hong Kong. For this *yinpu* see Yokota Minoru 横田實著, *Chūgoku yinpu kaidai* 中國印譜解題, Tōkyō: Nigensha 1976: 193.

## Illustration 7



A daoist talisman-seal as described in the *Baopuzi*. Source: Wang Ming 王明著, Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–363), *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子内篇校释:288. For further examples see the *Daozang* [Daoist Canon], e.g. vol. 17, pp. 33–38, and p. 53; *Daozang*, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 3rd printing 1994, 36 vols. plus 1 index-volume.