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Embedded Views: Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu*

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Oh Mee Lee

2023

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Embedded Views: Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu*

by

Oh Mee Lee

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor David C. Schaberg, Chair

In the mid-ninth century, works of calligraphy and texts about calligraphy were exceptionally scattered at court, in its proximity, and in private homes in Tang China. This dissertation examines how Zhang Yanyuan compiled specific texts on calligraphy that embedded his views on the precarious state of preserving model works of calligraphy and how to properly evaluate them. While Zhang directly expresses his views on painting and painting criticism, his views on calligraphy and the underlying goals with which he selects and arranges pertinent texts are only implied.

Chapter One addresses the views Zhang explicitly discusses about the relationship between calligraphy and painting, and their shared relationship to the past and image making. Through careful reading of specific points in his essays and secondary sources, I find Zhang's

designation as the first historian of painting counterbalanced with his concerns for detailed records that both rely on and transcend historical time.

Chapter Two analyzes the numerous records that provide textual support for specific works once held in the Zhang family collection. These records rally around anonymous notes, one of which highlights how the court was no longer an honorable and safe place for the works to gather and be preserved. Another guiding principle for the texts depends on named authors who also confirm a lineage of calligraphers. Finally, specific records describing the works of the Two Wangs, in their sheer coverage of specific details, textually substantiate the importance of the works.

Chapter Three examines the specific developments in evaluating calligraphy that Zhang Huaiguan articulated, and that Zhang Yanyuan selected and supplemented with his collection of texts in the *Fashu yaolu*. Echoes of these specific evaluation methods can be found in Zhang's views on painting, both implicitly and explicitly, further connecting his two books. Through structural and textual analysis, I determine how a seemingly comprehensive reference book of complete texts put forward a paradigmatic agenda that had even more to say in its design and details, in addition to its widely accepted underlying concepts.

The dissertation of Oh Mee Lee is approved.

Hui-shu Lee

Ronald Egan

Richard E. Strassberg

David C. Schaberg, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2023

*In memory of my father, Seung Chan Lee (1937–2022)*

*For my boys*

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## VITA

### Degrees

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BA: Bates College, Lewiston, ME. Art History. 1996. BA Thesis on Cy Twombly (1928–2011)

### Presentations

“Zhang Yanyuan’s 張彥遠 (c.815-880) Compiled Texts for an Anticipated Audience,” Rocky Mountain Modern Languages Conference, Spokane, WA, October 13, 2017.

“Xianyu Shu’s 鮮于樞 (1246-1302) Ode to Calligraphy Masters: Han Yu’s ‘Song of the Stone Drums’ 韓愈石鼓歌 in Cursive Script,” 1301, Mellon Chinese Object Study Workshop, National Museum of Asian Art, November 22, 2014.

### Publications

Chen Jiru (1558-1639), Zhang Heng (78-139)’s “Returning to the Field,” p. 140-143, and Da Chongguang (1623-1692), “Floating Jade Mountain,” p. 201-02. In Sturman, Peter C. and Susan S. Tai, eds. *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China*. Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2012.

“Min Yeongik (1860-1914): A Korean Literati Exile’s Modern Painting and Traditional Place among Artists in Shanghai at the Turn of the Century.” In *NMK Networking Fellowship Research Papers*. Seoul, Korea: National Museum of Korea, 2014.

## Introduction Records of Calligraphy, Notes on Painting

### 0.1 Overview: the *Fashu yaolu* and the *Lidai minghua ji*

About a half century before the fall of the Tang dynasty, circa 847, Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (courtesy name Aibin 愛賓, c. 815-880), compiled and published two volumes of writings on painting and calligraphy, the *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (On Famous Paintings through the Ages) and the *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄 (Essential Records on Model Calligraphy), respectively. His exact dates unknown, Zhang obtained the rank of Chief Minister of the Court of Judicial Review 大理寺卿 and died roughly midway through the reign of Tang Emperor Xizong 唐僖宗 (873-888). Some sources trace Zhang's family to the celebrated poet, official, and writer, Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300) of the Jin 晉 dynasty (266–420).<sup>1</sup> Others indicate that Zhang Yanyuan's great-great grandfather Zhang Jiazhen 張嘉貞 (666–729) was not originally of the scholar class (*shizu* 士族) and that Zhang's family was also known as the Zhangs of Fanyang 范陽, or Qinghe 清河, modern Beijing, as well as the Zhangs of Wu commandery 吳郡, or Hedong 河東.<sup>2</sup> During this later period of the Tang, these uncertainties in genealogies increasingly blurred family and

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<sup>1</sup> Zhang Hua authored the *Bowu zhi* 博物志, variously translated as the “Record of Diverse Things.”

<sup>2</sup> Shi Rui concludes that either the Zhangs consistently changed their name, or they were not actually concerned about their name, see Shi Rui 史睿, “The Calligraphy and Paintings Collections and the Circle of *shiren* of the Two Capitals of the Tang dynasty: with Zhang Yanyuan's family at its core” (*Tangdai liang jing de shuhua jiancang yu shiren jiaoyou – Zhang Yanyuan jiazhu wei hexin* 唐代兩京的書畫鑒藏與士人交游—張彥遠家族為核心) in *Tang yanjiu*, juan 21 《唐研究》第二十一卷, (2015), p. 126.

class lines.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, sufficient evidence demonstrates that Zhang Yanyuan indeed descended from a distinguished line of high government officials, well known for their art collecting.

This dissertation will examine how Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu* though presented as a comprehensive compilation of essential records on model calligraphy, also confirmed his family's legacy as art collectors and substantiated his specific views on calligraphy works and their proper evaluation. These records not only tie model calligraphy works to famous pieces previously owned by generations of Zhang's illustrious family, but also present the standards for evaluating calligraphy that Zhang applies to his approach to painting in the *Lidai minghua ji*. These specific ways in which the *Fashu yaolu* places his family's collection in the history of calligraphy and provides an evaluative, not just textual, foundation for looking at both calligraphy and painting have largely been overlooked. Zhang's family background, the shifts in collecting practices at court, and one particular theorist from the mid to late-eighth century play critical roles in defining Zhang Yanyuan's views on calligraphy and painting. Through an analysis of the selection and contents of the major texts in the *Fashu yaolu*, this dissertation will show how the *Fashu yaolu* serves both a personal and critical agenda with specific implications in the development of studying the history of calligraphy and painting.

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<sup>3</sup> Given the disarray of namesakes toward the end of the Tang, such uncertainties were common. For reference, see Nicholas Tackett, "Great Clansmen, Bureaucrats, and Local Magnates: The Structure and Circulation of the Elite in Late-Tang China," in *Asia Major* 21, no. 2 (2008): 101–52.

The thirty-nine texts of the *Fashu yaolu* date from the Eastern Han dynasty through the Tang, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (see Appendix A). Approximately half of the texts provide accounts of specific works of calligraphy. These texts take the form of direct letters to the throne, records of specific works, transcriptions of letters, descriptions or lists of different scripts, and appraisals. The first *juan* includes eleven texts beginning with Zhao Yi’s 趙一 (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century) “Against the Cursive Script” 非草書; two texts attributed to Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361); a text attributed to his teacher, Madam Wei 衛夫人(272-349); and texts written by immediate followers of the Wang clan: Yang Xin 羊欣 (370-442), Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485), Wang Yin 王愔 (dates unknown), and Xiao Ziyun 箫子雲 (487-549); in addition to an anonymous note, “Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods” 傳授筆法人名. *Juan 2* covers eight texts, most of which come from the Liang 梁 (502-557) courts, consisting of evaluations, memorials, letters, and a colophon. The writings of Tang officials at court or in government positions fill *juan 3*, including a note by Zhang Yanyuan’s grandfather, Zhang Hongjing 張弘靖 (Yuanli 元理, 760-824), the Duke of Gaoping 高平公. These Tang texts focus on specific works of calligraphy as they passed through official and unofficial spaces. Texts by Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690 – after 760) fill *juan 4*, supplemented by another anonymous note, “A Narrative Record of Calligraphy in the Tang Court” 唐朝敘述錄, followed by two texts by lesser known figures from the Tang dynasty. Dou Ji’s 竇泉 (d. 787) “The Rhapsody of Calligraphy” 述書賦, dated 775, in parallel prose, takes up *juan 5* and 6, and Zhang Huaiguan’s “Critical Reviews on Calligraphy” (*Shuduan* 書斷), fills *juan 7* through 9. Finally, the anonymous “Record of Calligraphic Works by Youjun” 右軍書記, which includes a transcription of 465



letters by Wang Xizi and 16 by his son, Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (Zijing 子敬, 344–386), completes the final *juan*, *juan* 10. Four texts are listed but not transcribed. And only three texts, mentioned above, have no named author. Each of the texts are offered in complete form with the exception of Wang Yin’s “The Table of Contents for the Monograph on Writing in Three *Juan*” 文字志目三卷, which provides only the table of contents of a longer text. Five of the texts, accounting for nearly four of the ten *juan*, were written by Zhang Huaiguan, who is the only theorist represented more than twice.

Modeled after the standard histories, the *Lidai minghua ji* begins with fifteen essays separated into three *juan* detailing historical developments and specific technical topics (see Appendix B). Seven *juan* filled with biographies of painters arranged by their respective dynasties follow these introductory essays. The book opens with Zhang’s essay “On the Origins of Painting” 敘畫之源流 in which he establishes image makers among the legendary sovereigns. This essay is followed by “On the Vicissitudes of Painting” 敘畫之興廢, which outlines a general history of circumstances of painting across successive dynasties and finishes with an account of the loss of the Zhang family collection. This first *juan* overall charts Zhang’s approach to painting. In addition to the names of the painters for which he later provides biographies, this *juan* includes the critical “Discussing the Six Principles of Painting” 論畫六法, which adopts fundamental terms from Xie He’s 謝赫 (fl. 6<sup>th</sup> century) *Guhua pinlu* 古畫品錄, and a seminal essay on landscape painting, “On Mountains and Waters, Trees and Rocks” 論畫山水樹石. *Juan* 2 shifts to discussing different schools of painting, brushwork of specific artists, painting materials, rankings, and issues of connoisseurship and preservation. The last *juan*

of Zhang's commentaries looks even more closely at actual works by describing inscriptions, specific seals, and methods of backing and mounting scrolls, as well as providing first-hand notes on painted murals on the walls of temples in Chang'an and Luoyang. *Juan* 4–10 bring together biographies of more than 370 skilled painters, arranged chronologically from the legendary Xuanyuan 軒轅, also known as the Yellow Emperor 黃帝, to the Tang.

Although Zhang was working on the *Fashu yaolu* and the *Lidai minghua ji* at the same time, drawing from many of the same sources, the extent to which Zhang comments on the topics and the format in which he arranges his views differ, significantly. These volumes were the first such complete compilations on painting and calligraphy of their kind, their specialized contents indicating the surfeit of texts on painting and calligraphy, and painters and calligraphers, circulating separately at the time. Both the *Fashu yaolu* and *Lidai minghua ji* are comprised of ten *juan*. Both books utilize references to the histories, as well as an array of other official and unofficial writings. Zhang persistently gathered information, anecdotes, and in the case of the *Fashu yaolu*, full texts, to produce ten *juan* on calligraphy and ten *juan* on painting. The volume on calligraphy compiles complete records (*lu* 錄) without Zhang's commentary, while the *Lidai minghua ji* consists of topical notes (*ji* 記) on painting written by Zhang. For the *Fashu yaolu*, Zhang writes only a brief preface providing his family's background. He does not write about his own views on calligraphy, though he demonstrates his command and authority, as well as his priorities and preferences on the subject by carefully selecting from Tang and pre-Tang texts that provide what he deems as accurate and comprehensive coverage. For his treatise on painting, in contrast, Zhang writes personal essays, instructions, and commentaries on painting, its history,

schools, brushwork, and its appreciation, which directly reveal his views and concerns about the status of painting and its evaluation. The presentation of the *Fashu yaolu* and the *Lidai minghua ji* together, then, highlights these differences, at the same time it reinforces specific relationships between them.

The study of writing and calligraphy had already reached scholarly status, evident in the named connoisseurs at court and their writings, as well as the market for works and forgeries by renowned calligraphers, such as Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (Yishao 逸少, 303–361). Painting, on the other hand, though significant studies had been written and names of famous painters known and collected, did not yet enjoy the lofty status of calligraphy, particularly in how a corpus of works might be evaluated. Zhang's comments in the *Lidai minghua ji* about the status of painting and its relationship to calligraphy emphasize this uneven relationship and indicate his aims to raise the status of painting and to correct the available evaluations of painting. In this vein, Zhang purposefully expounds in the *Lidai minghua ji* upon the way the brush is used in the same way in both painting and calligraphy.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he insists on reframing the evaluation of painting by asserting a direct correspondence to calligraphy, emphasizing the connoisseurship of calligraphic line. Using his familiarity with the methods of calligraphy, Zhang characterizes painters according to their brushwork.<sup>5</sup> These are the views Zhang clearly expresses, but the relationship

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<sup>4</sup> See for example, Zhang Yanyuan 张彦远, *Lidai minghua ji* 历代名画记, 1st ed (Hangzhou: 浙江人民美术出版社, 2019), hereafter *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.26-2.27; and Acker, William Reynolds Beal, *Some T'ang and pre-T'ang texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954-74), p. 178 and 179.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.27-2.28; Acker, pp. 183-184.

between the two arts and the two books goes even deeper than Zhang articulates even in these details.

Zhang joined the two media not only through their origins and brushwork, but also through their common ability to convey the spirit of the calligrapher or painter and ultimately connect the viewer through “spirit resonance” (*qiyun* 氣韻), or the life force essential to a work of art, to the ancients. Zhang does not state these views about calligraphy, directly. Instead, his selection of writings on calligraphy, without comment or correction, suggest his espousal of specific authors and their ideas. This careful arrangement and selection of Tang and pre-Tang writings communicate the views he deemed essential to transmit about calligraphy. His reference to these views and his application of them to painting in the *Lidai minghua ji*, furthermore, confirm his careful reading and preference for these select, reprinted views on calligraphy. This confirmation of a specialized compendium of texts on calligraphy, in turn, bolstered both the study of calligraphy and painting. With the emphasis on seeing the artist in the work, for example, the writings on calligraphy and painting share a concern and emphasis on viewing works in person as much as possible. Zhang’s expressed joy of appreciating art and deciphering the seals of connoisseurs and collectors in the *Lidai minghua ji*, however, contrasts with the collection of texts that constitute his *Fashu yaolu*, which transmits the experiences of others in this regard.

With these clear efforts to establish the relationship between painting and calligraphy, their comparable mark making, their origins, and seeing the artist in both forms of art, it is easy to overlook the disparate roles the books play and how crucial, after all, it was to present them

together. Zhang confirms the connections between the media and the books primarily through his comments in the *Lidai minghua ji*. What he does not explicate is how the design of the *Fashu yaolu* directly bolsters and informs the *Lidai minghua ji*. Zhang's direct comments in the *Lidai minghua ji* on the shift in the practice of collecting and appreciating painting and calligraphy highlight the urgency and reception of his project, but it is the selection and arrangement of complete texts in the *Fashu yaolu* that confirm his family's personal place in this larger history. Later compilations and compilers do not reveal these connections. This dissertation examines how Zhang builds upon the specific history of painting and calligraphy to include the history of his own family's collection, which serves to establish his authority on the subject matter and emboldens his undertaking. In terms of critical views of calligraphy, Zhang Yanyuan asserts his own views on calligraphy, implicitly, through Zhang Huaiguan's writings and pertinent supplementary texts, but not through his own direct explanation of his agreement with Zhang Huaiguan's views on calligraphy or how he borrows from them. This dissertation will show how Zhang Yanyuan embeds support for the views of Zhang Huaiguan and his family's place in the history of painting and calligraphy through specific texts compiled in the *Fashu yaolu*.

Overall, the contribution of Zhang's compilation of texts on calligraphy to the writing and activities of subsequent art histories has remained less defined. Scholars have granted significantly more attention to the *Lidai minghua ji*, and the ideas Zhang directly expresses in his essays on painting, while only citing excerpts from the primary sources he provides in the *Fashu yaolu*, ignoring the design or its specific contents, as they relate to Zhang Yanyuan's unarticulated views and related practices. Zhang adopted a format of organizing records from the

past and evaluating both painting and calligraphy that strengthened the development and evaluation of these arts, connected them solidly to each other and the ancients, but also opened them up to individual expressiveness and new ideas. He presents foundational ideas in the *Fashu yaolu* on calligraphy through other authors who he actively selects. This dissertation investigates the details of the texts Zhang chose – the records focused on his family’s collection and the theories that lead to more expressive calligraphies, which Zhang leaned on to inform his evaluation of painting, not only to raise its scholarly status, but also to evaluate it in specific ways related to calligraphy. The views embedded in the *Fashu yaolu* prove crucial to understanding how Zhang was able to establish a paradigm for the serious study of Chinese painting and calligraphy.

## **0.2 The Tang Urge to Anthologize**

In an era that saw the rise of printing and the expansion of published texts, Zhang Yanyuan’s task of anthologizing the available views and texts on painting and calligraphy was the first of its kind. In the world of literature and other subjects, on the other hand, individual authors were increasingly gathering collections for preservation and circulation.<sup>6</sup> Zhang supplemented the resources he found amongst his family’s book collection with records and letters he could find in other libraries. As the first known compendium of sources focused on painting and calligraphy, Zhang set a precedent with his volumes, and in this respect established a textual corpus for independent study of painting and calligraphy, comparable to other

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<sup>6</sup> Christopher Nugent, “Literary Collections in Tang Dynasty China,” *T’oung Pao*, vol. 93 (2007), p. 26.

compilations on such subjects as the Confucian classics or Buddhist and Daoist religion. For this, Zhang has been held up as the first art historian.

By the mid-Tang, literary scholars actively compiled writings in their effort to preserve otherwise scattered works by single authors. Creating anthologies was one way to ensure the preservation of individual texts, such as the occasional poetry that was socially circulated and often lost. This practice grew in popularity with the “wide availability of paper and an increasing understanding of the role such publications played in establishing a writer’s reputation,” according to Christopher Nugent, who observes, “the compilation of individual literary collections became the norm rather than the exception.”<sup>7</sup> Early anthologies provided source texts for later compilations, and Zhang’s anthologies served a similar function. Subsequent volumes on calligraphy cite texts from Zhang’s collection and supplement and organize excerpts, not complete texts, from them in specialized categories.

Prior to the rise of printed publications, readers were accustomed to textual variations. Two notable writers during the Tang, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831), reveal a concern with preserving and circulating authoritative versions of literary texts. Before print, obtaining handwritten copies of many individual texts was costly and difficult. Their poems were at risk of falling out of circulation or completely disappearing. Nugent finds that these Tang sources “reveal a literary world in which the fluidity of poems and of their textual manifestations was accepted as the norm,” which is “a very different world from the one

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<sup>7</sup> Nugent (2007), p. 2.

that was produced by the expansion of print technology and the advent of a more scholastic attitude toward poetry in later periods.”<sup>8</sup> In this vein, Zhang’s anthologies, by similarly attempting to stabilize disparate texts arranged in comprehensive volumes, provided a major scholarly resource and encouraged a more scholastic attitude toward painting and calligraphy.

Zhang’s concern for preservation of texts about calligraphy was two-fold: he sought to preserve records that documented lost works, as well as writings that evaluated and legitimized them. Since writings about calligraphy were similarly scattered and diverse in content, Zhang collected these records of works submitted to the court that were copied and lost. By gathering them together and presenting them then in an anthology, Zhang laid the groundwork for a scholastic attitude towards calligraphy texts parallel to the appreciation of individual writers, as well as painters.

“Interested persons” or “enthusiasts” (*haoshizhe* 好事者), with recognized scholars among them, were crucial to the survival of works by specific literary figures, calligraphers, and artists. According to the preface of his collection, Wang Ji 王績 (586-644) often wrote in a state of spontaneous drunkenness, his poems recorded and circulated only through the efforts of “those who enjoyed them” 好事者.<sup>9</sup> The implication is that without these readers who are assumed to possess the necessary appreciation and enjoyment of his poetry, his works may have disappeared. This anecdote points to the important role of these enthusiasts. They were active collectors of texts, not just admiring readers.

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<sup>8</sup> Nugent (2007), pp. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> See Nugent (2007), pp. 4-5.



Zhang uses the same term, *haoshizhe*, to identify the intended readers of his *Fashu yaolu*. These *haoshizhe* personify the necessary enthusiasm for the subject matter, as well as the need for a comprehensive collection of writings to elevate its study. When Zhang proposes that his compilation provides the *yaolu* or “essential records,” or “all they need to know,” he asserts both the comprehensive nature of the documents, as well as his authority to determine those that are credible. By the mid-ninth century, as the *Fashu yaolu* suggests, a substantial number of writings on calligraphy had been presented to the throne but had not yet been gathered into a single publication. Many of these writings are connected to the court and address the movement of calligraphy works in and out of individual family and court collections. Zhang’s seemingly lighthearted gesture to the *haoshizhe* contrasts with the extensiveness and urgency of his designs. During his time, model calligraphy works were in disarray, and painting, according to Zhang, was in decline. Zhang’s books set out to confirm the scholarly study of both painting and calligraphy, which entailed the carefully gathering the texts on calligraphy and new writing on painting that would be mutually beneficial.

Unsurprisingly, scholars have devoted more attention to the *Lidai minghua ji*. Unfortunately, until recently, the *Fashu yaolu* was cited predominately for specific texts or excerpts alone, ignoring the design and impact of the compilation as a whole. The majority of the texts in the *Fashu yaolu* have not been evaluated as complete works or translated into English.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Only two of the works are considered fake or misattributed. See Richard Barnhart, “Wei Fujen’s Pi-chen T’u and the Early Texts on Calligraphy,” in *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 18 (1964), 13-25.

The contribution, then, of Zhang's anthology of texts on calligraphy to subsequent art history remains unspecified.

## 0.2 Scholarship on Zhang Yanyuan, the *Lidai minghua ji*, and the *Fashu yaolu*

Many studies cite the close relationship between the *Lidai minghua ji* and the *Fashu yaolu*<sup>11</sup> and indicate how both volumes have contributed to the culture of collecting paintings and calligraphy,<sup>12</sup> especially considering that some of these earlier texts might otherwise have been lost. By this time, about a half century before the fall of the Tang dynasty, many famous works of calligraphy and painting had been lost or scattered among collectors and the court. In 845, at the height of Tang Emperor Wuzong's 唐武宗 (814–846) persecution of Buddhism, many murals painted on temple walls in the capital city, Chang'an, were destroyed. Zhang describes a number of these paintings in his *Lidai minghua ji*. Both the *Lidai minghua ji* and the *Fashu yaolu*, furthermore, stem from personal ties to the Zhang family collection and its losses. Besides Zhang's own articulated intent and audience for his publications, he reveals in his comments on painting and through his selection of texts on calligraphy the necessity he placed on textually preserving these works of art by personally handling, evaluating, and transmitting essential records of the actual works in his own personal history.

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<sup>11</sup> Wei Bin 韦宾. "'Fa shu yao lu' dui 'Lidai minghua ji' hua lun de yingxiang" 《法書要錄》对《历代名画记》画论的影响." *Meishu guan cha* 美术观察, 02 (2005): 86-88.

<sup>12</sup> Wang Xiang 王祥. "Cong *Lidai minghua ji*, *Fashu yaolu* kan Tang dai she hui de shu hua feng shang" 从《历代名画记》,《法書要錄》看唐代社会的書画风尚." *Shu fa* 書法, 05 (2008): 90-95.

Besides translations and analysis of the *Lidai minghua ji*, scholars attempt to identify specific aspects of Zhang Yanyuan's social status and intellectual outlook through close reading of his treatise on painting. The Taiwanese scholar Bai Shiming 白適銘, for instance, writes about the *Lidai minghua ji*'s relationship to the formation of the scholar's (*shiren* 士人), view of painting.<sup>13</sup> Studies in both Chinese and Japanese expound upon the relationship of Zhang and his contributions to the development of painting studies.<sup>14</sup> William B. Acker provided an early translation of the *Lidai minghua ji* with lengthy annotations that are still used today.<sup>15</sup> No such translation of the *Fashu yaolu* exists in English in its entirety though a number of the texts are

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<sup>13</sup> Bai Shiming 白適銘. *Zhang Yanyuan "Lidai minghua ji" de cheng shu yu shi ren hui hua guan zhi xing cheng*. 張彥遠<<歷代名畫記>>的成書與士人繪畫觀之形成. Master's Thesis, National Taiwan University, 1995.

<sup>14</sup> These studies include but are not limited to: 1) Bi Fei 毕斐. *"Lidai minghua ji" lun gao* 历代名画记"论稿. Hangzhou: Zhongguo mei shu xue yuan chu ban she, 2008; 2) Lu Fusheng 卢辅圣 and Shijun Shu 舒士俊. *"Lidai minghua ji" yan jiu* 《历代名画记》研究. Shanghai: Shanghai shu hua chu ban she, 2007; 3) Okamura, Shigeru 岡村繁, and Yanyuan Zhang. *Lidai minghua ji yi zhu* 歷代名畫記譯注. Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2002; 4) Okamura, Shigeru 岡村繁. *Chō Gen'en "rekidai Meigaki" No Senjutsu Katei* 張彥遠「歷代名畫記」の撰述過程. Fukuoka: Kyūshū Daigaku Chūgoku Bungakukai, 1980; 5) Su Bai 宿白. *Zhang Yanyuan he "Lidai minghua ji"* 張彥遠和《历代名画记》. Beijing: Wen wu chu ban she, 2008; 6) Tian, Cun 田村. *Jiedu Lidai minghua ji* 解读历代名画记. Hefei: Huang Shan shu she, 2011; 7) Yuan, Yougen 袁有根. *"Lidai minghua ji" yan jiu* 《历代名画记》研究. Beijing Shi: Beijing tu shu guan chu ban she, 2002; 8) Zhang, Yanyuan, and Zai Cheng 承载. *Lidai minghua ji quanyi* 历代名画记全译. Guiyang: Guizhou ren min chu ban she, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Acker, William Reynolds Beal. *Some T'ang and pre-T'ang texts on Chinese Painting*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954-74.

included in subsequent studies,<sup>16</sup> and some of the individual texts have been translated.<sup>17</sup>

Generally, research on the *Fashu yaolu* has focused on textual and literary analysis.<sup>18</sup> In 1987,

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<sup>16</sup> Other studies that include specific investigations of texts in the *Fashu yaolu* focus on aspects of brushwork or the development of specific scripts, such as the draft script *gaoshu* 稟書, as revealed in the *Fashu yaolu*, such as 1) He Wenrong 贺文荣, “*Lun Zhongguo gudai shufa de bifa chuanshou puxi yu guannian* 论中国古代書法的笔法传授谱系与观念,” in *Meishu guan cha* 美术观察, 08 (2008):101-104; 2) Zhao Huawei 赵华伟 looks closely at Dou Ji’s 景 旿 (d. 787) “*Shu shu fu*” 述書賦 tracing several editions and considering the context in which it was written and commented on, Zhao Huawei 赵华伟. “Research on “*Shu shu fu*”’s circulation and its editions” (“*Shu shu fu*” chengshu ji banben yuanliu kao 《述書賦》成書及版本源流考, in *Journal of Ancient Books Collation and Studies* 古籍整理研究學刊, 02 (2009): 55-58. 3) Zhang Weiwei 张薇薇 isolates the Yu He’s 虞 穌 (Liang dynasty, 502-557, “*Lun shu biao*” 論書表 with different editions and research, collated and annotated to evaluate the calligrapher biographies and calligraphy writing methods as they relate to calligraphy theories and the study of art history, Zhang Weiwei 张薇薇, “*Lun shu biao*” *jiao zhu yu yan jiu* 《论書表》校注与研究, China Academy of Art 中国美术学院, MA thesis, 2010. 4) A study on Yu Jianwu’s 庾肩吾 (487-551) “*Shu pin*” 書品 similarly considers the importance of the ranking method, and the numerous mistakes in transmitting the text; looking at the origins of the edition and the relationship between 6 dynasties literature and painting theories, Xu Jing 徐晶, “*Shu pin*” *jiao kan ji qi xiang guan wen ti* 《書品》校勘及其相关问题, China Academy of Art 中国美术学院, MA thesis, 2018. 5) Chen Junji 陈俊吉 looks more closely at one of the texts attributed to Zhang Huaiguan, “*Shugu*,” 書詁, Chen Junji 陈俊吉, “*Fashu yaolu*” *yanjiu (shang)* 《法書要绿》研究(上),” in *Yi shu gong zuo* 藝術工作, 06 (2018):77-82; and Chen Junji 陈俊吉, “*Fashu yaolu*” *yanjiu (xia)* 《法書要绿》研究(下)” in *Yi shu gong zuo* 藝術工作, 02 (2019): 76-81. 6) Much of the Tang calligraphy literature studies focus on technique, brush method transmission or authenticity. Cong Sifei points out that while ancient and modern scripts developed to different degrees, the regular script changed significantly, for example, and that while the seal and clerical scripts were popular in the High Tang, the flying white script received attention in the court. Furthermore, while the seal and clerical script were related to governance, the regular script had its own technical system. Cong Sifei 丛思飞, *A Study on the Calligraphy Literature of the Tang Dynasty (Tang dai shu lun wen xian yan jiu* 唐代書法文献研究), PhD Dissertation, Jilin University, 2013.

Amy McNair published a brief guide to the compendium, noting the general contents of each of the texts.<sup>19</sup> More recent comprehensive studies on the literature of calligraphy, including one focused on the literature of the Tang dynasty, delve into a textual analysis of the *Fashu yaolu*. A 2012 master's thesis from the China Academy of Art by Qian Naijing 钱乃婧, for example, discusses earlier research on the *Fashu yaolu* as well as the origins and developments of other overlooked editions of the *Fashu yaolu*.<sup>20</sup> Two lengthy 2013 dissertations include the *Fashu*

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<sup>17</sup> Some of the translations of and focused studies on individual texts in the *Fashu yaolu* include 1) Translation and discussion of Zhao Yi 趙一 (fl. C. 178-184), 非草書, "Against the Cursive Script," in William Reynolds Beal Acker, *Some T'ang and pre-T'ang texts on Chinese Painting*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954-74); 2) Exegesis of Lady Wei (272-349) 衛夫人(衛鑠), "Diagram of the Battle Array of the Brush" 筆陣圖, in Richard Barnhart, "Wei Fujen's Pi-chen T'u and the Early Texts on Calligraphy," in *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 18 (1964), 13-25; 3) He Yanzhi 何延之 "Notes on the Orchid Pavilion" 蘭亭記, after 722, in Han Chuang (John Hay). "Hsiao I gets the Lan't'ing Manuscript by a Confidence Trick," 2 parts, in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, 5, no.3 (July/August 1970) and 5, no. 6 (January/February 1971). 4) Zhang Huaiguan's *Shudian* in Yolaine Escande, "Classements et evaluations à partir du Shudian," in *Études Chinoises*, Vol. XVI No. 2, Automne 1997; 5) Shan Xuelin's 单雪琳 looks at the terminology of the *Fashu yaolu*, Shan Xuelin 单雪琳, "*Fa shu yao lu*" ci hui yan jiu 《法書要錄》 词汇研究, Wenzhou University 温州大學, MA thesis, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> See for example, Liu Fenglin. "A Survey on the Research of Zhang Yanyuan in the Last Decade." In *Journal of Shangluo University*, 2014 (04), pp. 79-83

<sup>19</sup> Amy McNair, "*Fa shu yao lu*, a Ninth-Century Compendium of Texts on Calligraphy." In *T'ang Studies* 5 (1987), p. 69-86.

<sup>20</sup> Qian Naijing 钱乃婧. *Fashu yaolu yanjiu* 《法書要錄》 研究. China Academy of Art 中国美术学院, MA thesis, 2012.

*yaolu* in their research on Tang dynasty calligraphy literature.<sup>21</sup> Chang Yunhe's 畅运合 *Research and Exp[osition] of the Tang Dynasty Callig[ra]phy Literature* 唐代書學文献考論 (*Tangdai shufa wenxian kaolun*) attempts to organize the literature on calligraphy from the Tang dynasty as a reference for further study, while Cong Sifei's 丛思飞 *A Study on the Calligraphy Literature of the Tang Dynasty* 唐代書法文献研究 (*Tang dai shu lun wen xian yan jiu*) argues for the special status of Tang dynasty calligraphy literature between the Six Dynasties and the Song dynasty. In contrast to focusing on aesthetics, explaining theories, investigating origins of scripts, or understanding collecting or calligraphy education, Cong carefully considers the organization and characteristics of the literature to determine how particularities of the theories, evaluations, language, literary style, and technique reflected specific changes in the Tang dynasty. Cong lays the groundwork for the basics in studying calligraphy literature including consideration of what is included in the discipline, the lost works, origins of the Tang and Song compilations and individual works. The dissertation covers four compilations: Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu*, Wei Xu's 韋續 (dates unknown, Tang) *Mosou* 墨薈 (Assembly of Calligraphies), Zhu Changwen's 朱長文 (1039–1098) *Mochibian* 墨池編 (On the Ink Pool), and Chen Si's 陳思 (1225–1264) *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華 (Splendor of the Calligraphy Garden). These literary

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<sup>21</sup> Chang Yunhe 畅运合. *Research and Exp[osition] of the Tang Dynasty Callig[ra]phy Literature* *Tangdai shufa wenxian kaolun* 唐代書學文献考论. PhD dissertation, East China Normal University, 2013; and Cong Sifei 丛思飞. *A Study on the Calligraphy Literature of the Tang Dynasty* (*Tang dai shu lun wen xian yan jiu* 唐代書法文献研究). PhD Dissertation, Jilin University, 2013.

studies, however, do not connect the texts on calligraphy to Zhang Yanyuan's specific views on calligraphy or painting.

According to bibliographic records, Zhang's *Fashu yaolu* maintained a prominent position in both official and private bibliographies. The text is included under "Minor Studies" 小學 in both the *Yiwenzhi* 藝文誌 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) of the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New Tang History) as well as that of the *Song shi* 宋史 (History of the Song).<sup>22</sup> The *Fashu yaolu* is also listed in Zheng Qiao's 鄭樵 (1104–1162) *Tongzhi* 通志 (Comprehensive Treatise), *juan* 64, under the "Arts" (*yiwen* 藝文), and "Calligraphy Models" (*fashu* 法書) section. Listing of the *Fashu yaolu* appears, too, in private Song dynasty collections, such as You Mao's 尤袤 (1127–1194), *Suichutang shumu* 遂初堂書目, in the "Miscellaneous Arts" category 雜藝類, and Wang Yinglin's 王应麟 (1223–1296) *Yuhai* 玉海 (The Jade Sea), *juan* 45, *Yiwen* 藝文, under the "Minor Arts" section (*xiao xue lei bie* 小學類別). During the Ming dynasty, the *Fashu yaolu* is listed in Lu Shen's 陸深 (1477–1544) *Yanshan waiji* 儼山外集, *juan* 2 under "Calligraphy Collections" 書輯類, as well as Tao Zongyi's 陶宗儀 (c.1329–1410) *Shuofu* 說郛 (Persuasion of the Suburbs), *juan* 10. These merged official and private bibliographies, encyclopedias, or anthologies also included Wei Xu's *Mosou* and Zhu Changwen's *Mochibian*.<sup>23</sup> Zhang's *Fashu yaolu* was clearly valued from the onset but perhaps did not stand out for its specific preferences.

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<sup>22</sup> Zhang Huaiguan's *Shuduan* is also listed separately here, in *juan* 57, see Cong Sifei, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Chen Shuo 陈硕. "Fa shu yao lu" jiao du zha ji 《法書要錄》校读札记." *Yi shu gong zuo* 藝術工作, 05 (2016): 80-85.

More recent textual studies of the *Fashu yaolu* compare different printed versions.<sup>24</sup> Chen Liangliang's 陈亮亮 2017 master's thesis approaches the Tang dynasty texts through the *Quan Songwen* 全宋文 (Complete Texts of the Song), isolating the calligraphy texts, as well as stone inscriptions and compares errors in the received texts.<sup>25</sup> Chen Zhiping 陈志平 investigates and compares three Ming transcribed copies 抄本 of the *Fashu yaolu*: the Wu Xiu 吴岫 copy, Wang Shimao 王世懋 copy, and the Taipei *Gugong* copy 臺北"故宫"藏舊抄本. Chen concludes that they each belong to the same system of editions and show discrepancies with the printed editions, namely the Jiajing 嘉靖, *Wang shi shuyuan* 王氏書苑, and *Jindai mishu* 津逮秘書 editions. The Wu Xiu is the earliest handwritten edition. It seems the Wang Shimao and Taipei *Gugong* editions have received some influence from the Ming block-printed edition. The three Ming block-printed editions seem to show a clear transmission relationship and influence from the Song block-printed *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華, whereas according to Chen, the *Maojin* 毛晋 edition of the *Jindai mishu* implemented revisions to the *Fashu yaolu*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Chen Junji 陈俊吉. "《Fashu yaolu》 yanjiu (shang) 《法書要錄》 研究(上)." *Yi shu gong zuo* 藝術工作, 06 (2018):77-82; and Chen Junji 陈俊吉. "《Fashu yaolu》 yanjiu (xia) 《法書要錄》 研究(下)." *Yi shu gong zuo* 藝術工作, 02 (2019), pp. 76-81.

<sup>25</sup> Chen Liangliang 陈亮亮. "《Quan Song wen》 suo zai Bei Song qian Zhong qi shu xue wen xian jie ti yu shu zheng 《全宋文》 所载北宋前中期書學文献解题与疏证. Central China Normal University 华中师范大学, MA thesis, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Chen Zhiping 陈志平, "Fa shu yao lu" de liang ge ban ben xi tong ji xiang guan wen ti kao shu 《法書要錄》 的两个版本系统及相关问题考述," in *Yi shu yan jiu* 文艺研究, 02 (2018): 130-145. The *Maojin Jin dai mishu* 毛晋 《津逮秘書》 is the version used by historian and collector Fan Xiangyong's 范祥雍 (1913–1993), whose annotations according to Chen contain



These studies make significant contributions to the study of Tang texts, calligraphy and literary history, and our understanding of Zhang Yanyuan, but do not look at the *Fashu yaolu*'s structure or priorities, or its underlying relationship to Zhang's family collection or the *Lidai minghua ji*. This dissertation reconsiders the arrangement and selection of texts on calligraphy to determine how Zhang Yanyuan purposefully selected and arranged them to set a precedent dependent on the prominent place of his family's collection and to tacitly indicate his own views on calligraphy which fundamentally informed his views on painting.

#### **0.4 Zhang Yanyuan, the Records, and Specific Evaluations: Chapter Summaries**

In approaching the *Fashu yaolu* as more than a reference book, each chapter of this dissertation examines layers of Zhang Yanyuan's views as revealed directly or indirectly through his selection of texts. Each of the chapters focuses on an analysis of core texts contextualized and bolstered by an examination of supplementary texts. The first chapter focuses on the background of Zhang's family and the views Zhang expresses in his *Lidai minghua ji* related to the status of his family and evaluating painting and calligraphy. The anecdotes in the *Lidai minghua ji* about viewing and collecting, written by Zhang, help to articulate the climate in which Zhang so tirelessly compiled the texts and his own writings in his efforts to preserve a legacy and the materials he so esteemed. In this opening chapter, I explore specific ways in which Zhang

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related mistakes, see Zhang Yanyuan, *Fa Shu Yao Lu* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1984), which includes annotations by Fan Xiangyong, 1962, and Qi Gong 啟功 and Huang Miaozi 黃苗子, 1964.

decided on a version of a history of Chinese paintings and calligraphy, based on a genealogy of names and the relationship between painting and calligraphy. The urgency of Zhang's project is tempered by his perceived decline of painting, as well as his direct experience of losing a personally prized collection of both painting and calligraphy, and his devotion to raising or maintaining the status of the serious study of both painting and calligraphy. With his specific upbringing, Zhang demonstrates the authority and wherewithal to accomplish this lofty task, while self-effacingly making light of the situation by referring to his fellow connoisseurs and collectors as *haoshizhe*.

Zhang's expressed concerns for transmitting records of his family's collection of painting and calligraphy influence his specific selection of texts and give a seemingly comprehensive compilation of texts on calligraphy personal weightiness, as well as authority. Specific letters, memorials, and inscriptions about works once held in the Zhang family collection provide the focus of the second chapter. Zhang shows considerable concern for relaying the "essentials" – the names and historical records – through which his family's legacy would be preserved. Zhang organizes his *Fashu yaolu* as a comprehensive reference book to bolster this lineage through the identification and history of works that once belonged to his family. About half of the texts in the compilation provide records of actual works from the Zhang family collection or more general reference to past collections and works, mainly by the Two Wangs, Wang Xizhi and his son Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (Zijing 子敬, 344–386). An additional breakdown of the texts shows that about ten of the texts focus their attention on listing, comparing, evaluating, and establishing a lineage of calligraphers. Just three to four texts provide instructions or advice about writing

calligraphy. Personal notes about specific works formerly in the Zhang family collection are not isolated in later compilations on calligraphy, but rather are subsumed into generalized categories of texts on collecting treasures or praising works. By including them with such prominence, Zhang displays his personal stake in the specific works and practices, while bolstering the study, overall, with his direct link to past works and the authority it grants him. The arrangement of these records highlighting specific works reiterates and legitimizes both the value of his family's collection and the accepted lineage of calligraphers.

Chapter Three reveals specific preferences for evaluating calligraphers that informed Zhang's selection of texts. Besides lineage, Zhang gives considerable attention to the histories and qualities of the various scripts, which, in turn, open the evaluation of calligraphy to more possibilities. Rather than one calligraphy sage ranked as the highest in all the scripts, individuals are weighed differently in different scripts. Zhang Yanyuan places prominently in the *Fashu yaolu* Zhang Huaiguan's 張懷瓘 (before 690-after 760) *Shudian* 書斷 ("Critical Reviews on Calligraphy"<sup>27</sup>) written from 725 to 728, which ranks calligraphy works according to scripts. In support of more systematically evaluating calligraphers and their writing in different scripts, this method of evaluation allowed for the evaluation of individual works, rather than automatic praise for a work based on the reputation of the calligrapher. At the same time, additional categories, or dichotomies of evaluation, such as ancient and modern, skilled or natural, recognized growth and

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<sup>27</sup> This is the translation used in Wang Youfen, trans. and ed., *Chinese Calligraphy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2008). Amy McNair uses "Divisions of Calligraphy" in Amy McNair, "Engraved Calligraphy in China: Recension and Reception," in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (March 1995), pp. 106-114.

innovation in newer works of calligraphy. Along these lines, Zhang Yanyuan includes evaluations contrary to Tang Taizong's 唐太宗 (r.626–649) singular reverence for Wang Xizhi. Zhang Yanyuan, by prominently placing Zhang Huaiguan's views, acknowledges that Wang Xizhi's son, Wang Xianzhi, may have surpassed his father in some respects.

The *Fashu yaolu* is organized largely chronologically. As well, the catalogued works make cross references, so that writer, work, and recognition serve to define Zhang's version of the canon of calligraphy. Though most of the texts are brief, this arrangement of individual calligraphers and attention to a selection of calligraphy scripts supply the basis for Zhang Yanyuan's selection of longer texts. The longer texts, in turn, propose systematic evaluation methods largely based on individuals and scripts, as well as comparably convenient dichotomies, which are reinforced by the shorter texts. In particular, Zhang Huaiguan's later texts offer truncated ranking systems relevant to buying calligraphy works. These texts show a shift in the collecting and evaluating climate from the 720s to the 750s of the Tang dynasty. The *Shuduan* in its entirety occupies three of the ten *juan* of the *Fashu yaolu*, *juan* 7 to 9. Zhang includes four other texts written by Zhang Huaiguan in *juan* 4, in addition to transcribing complete texts that Zhang Huaiguan cites at the end of his *Shuduan*.

Compilations that follow Zhang's *Fashu yaolu* categorize excerpts from the same texts and additional texts according to such topics as "Brush Methods" 筆法, "Praise Accounts" 贊述, or "Collecting Treasures" 寶藏, indicating that calligraphy studies had become more specialized. I discuss these comparisons briefly in my conclusion. These subsequent compilations do not necessarily reprint complete texts, pointing to the importance of Zhang's efforts to create a

corpus of unredacted texts that defined the discipline. The *Fashu yaolu*, may have begun as a personal endeavor to gather records of his family collection and complement his writing on painting, but resulted in a crucial, foundational reference for calligraphy studies without attention to its underlying biases.

This dissertation will show how Zhang Yanyuan's selection of texts on calligraphy point to a moment in calligraphy history in which the evaluation of calligraphy could bolster the status of painting, while expanding its own discipline of study and necessarily preserving relevant names and texts for posterity. In some cases, without the *Lidai minghua ji* or the *Fashu yaou lu*, information about specific Tang and pre-Tang painters or calligraphers would have been lost. The destruction of many temple walls and mural paintings in the capital cities around 845, likely prompted the urgency of Zhang's writing of the *Lidai minghua ji*. In terms of calligraphy, many famous works, like those once in his family's collection, had already been forcibly donated to the court and subsequently lost. During Zhang's time, one could no longer rely on the court to safeguard these paintings and calligraphy works, so a significant part of the cultural legacy could only be passed on, selectively, through these material records of individual names, histories of works, and an evaluative language that continued to connect the present to past works, in a particular manner that Zhang espoused and adopted without explicitly saying so.

## Chapter One Zhang Yanyuan's Expressed Views

### 1.0 “All One Needs to Know”

In the *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang Yanyuan offers explicit statements about his goals for both books, the *Lidai minghua ji* and the *Fashu yaolu*, both of which he completes circa 847. He signs the *Lidai minghua ji*, for instance, boldly with:

From Shihuang<sup>28</sup> to the present, the first year of the Huichang era (841) of the Great Tang dynasty, there are more than three hundred and seventy men in all. There are no discrepancies in the order of compilation, and the critical evaluations are now practically settled. Moreover, I have searched far and wide and synthesized many intricacies. All that has been mirrored in my mind or eye I have spoken of without reserve. If one who comes hereafter is able to write on this subject, let him write a continuation of my book. At the time of the first year of the Dazhong era (847) in the cyclical year Dingmao.

自史皇至今大唐會昌元年，凡三百七十餘人，編次無差，銓量頗定。  
此外旁求錯綜，心目所鑒，言之無隱，將來者有能撰述，其或繼之。  
時大中元年，歲在丁卯。<sup>29</sup>

According to Zhang, his extensive research and organization of the critical evaluations of paintings provided an end-all for his time. As he describes, he took advantage of his days of leisure to compile notes, pour through critical judgments, and delve into the histories.<sup>30</sup> With the result that “there are no discrepancies in the order of compilation, and the critical evaluations are

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<sup>28</sup> *Shihuang* 史皇, or the age of the divine rulers.

<sup>29</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.10; see also Acker, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> For reference, see *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.9; and Acker, pp. 143-144.

now practically settled,” so that the next person to write about painting might simply pick up where he left off. The implications of this statement and the foundational ideas that Zhang expresses in his work I discuss in this opening chapter.

I begin by examining the status and practices of Zhang’s family, which gave Zhang specific access to both works of art and extensive viewpoints. In contrast to the companionship his ancestors enjoyed, Zhang was active during a time when ownership and appreciation of paintings and calligraphy was less stable, as he describes in his commentary in the *Lidai minghua ji*. Zhang counteracts these specific circumstances with his expertise and preferences that stem from his lifelong experiences, and by doing so sets the history of Chinese painting and calligraphy on fundamentally elevated pathways. Distinct from the second and third chapter of this dissertation, this first chapter looks more closely at the views that Zhang expressed in the *Lidai minghua ji*, in contrast to those that are merely implied in his selection of records of the *Fashu yaolu*.

### **1.1 Zhang’s Family Status and His Extensive Searches**

In the late Tang dynasty, the status of elite families declined. Nicholas Tackett’s scholarship demonstrates specific instances in which merit building took the place of lineages. One could advance one’s family name with favorable exam results or increased land rights, for example.<sup>31</sup> In other words, one’s own accomplishments, rather than the background of one’s

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<sup>31</sup> Tackett discusses this at length in Nicholas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).

family, could have a direct influence on additional opportunities.<sup>32</sup> By the mid-ninth century, Zhang Yanyuan's family line, including their personal collection, had declined. The merits of Zhang's scholarship, arguably, maintained his family's high standing.

Zhang elaborates on details about his family's collection in the *Lidai minghua ji* pertinent to establishing his authority on the history of painting and calligraphy. Of his family's generations of collectors, Zhang's grandfather, Zhang Hongjing, formerly the Duke of Gaoping 高平侯, who served Tang Xianzong 唐憲宗 (r. 805–820) as a chancellor from 814–816, had the largest collection, and also suffered the greatest loss. A contemporary of Zhang's grandfather, Wei Hongjian 魏弘簡 (757-804), vengefully exposed the extent of the Zhang family collection to authorities, who demanded its presentation to the court. In “On the Vicissitudes of the Art of Painting” 敘畫之興廢 of his *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang documents the exchange between his grandfather and the court and provides a sketch of its contents as well as a detailed account of how his family's collection was implicated:

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<sup>32</sup> A perceived shift from an aristocracy to a meritocracy, however, provides only a partial explanation for the rise and fall of particular families from this period. Recent studies of tomb inscriptions and new tomb finds point to exceptions, such as evidence of families migrating from the south or other provinces, newly wealthy merchants increasingly gaining acceptance, or families forging elevated backgrounds. See for example Alexei Kamran Ditter, “Authoring One's Own Epitaph: Self- Authored Epitaph, by Wang Ji 王績 (590?–644) Inscription Dictated While Near Death, by Wang Xuanzong 王玄宗 (633–686),” in *Chinese Funerary Biographies: An Anthology of Remembered Lives*, edited by Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Ping Yao, and Cong Ellen Zhang (University of Washington Press, 2019), pp. 47–58.



In the thirteenth year of the Yuanhe era (818), when the Duke of Gaoping was Military Governor of Taiyuan,<sup>33</sup> he was unable to serve to the satisfaction of the court officials and was hated by the Metropolitan Military Inspector Wei Hongjian. There was nothing which he could point out as a fault: the more so did he hasten to say to Emperor Xianzong that the Zhang family possessed a wealth of calligraphy and painting. And presently there descended the Imperial Brush, demanding the things that they greatly treasured. Surprised and alarmed, my grandfather did not dare to keep them sealed and hidden away and, making a selection, he presented them without delay. Thus, he chose one scroll each by Zhong, Zhang, Wei, and Suo:<sup>34</sup> five genuine scrolls each by the Two Wangs<sup>35</sup>; miscellaneous works of the Wei, Jin, Song, Qi, Liang, Chen, and Sui,<sup>36</sup> a scroll for each, and paintings by Gu, Lu, Zhang, Zheng, Tian, Yang, Dong, Zhan,<sup>37</sup> famous masters reaching current dynasty, thirty scrolls in all.

元和十三年，高平公鎮太原，不能承奉中貴，為監軍使內官魏弘簡所忌，無以指其瑕，且驟言於憲宗曰：「張氏富有書畫。」遂降宸翰，索其所珍。惶駭不敢緘藏，科簡登時進獻。乃以鐘、張、衛、索真跡各一卷，二王真迹各五卷，魏、晉、

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<sup>33</sup> In present-day Shanxi 山西 province.

<sup>34</sup> Zhong You 鍾繇 (151–230), Zhang Zhi 張芝 (d. 192), Lady Wei 衛夫人 (272–349), and Suo Jing 索靖 (239–303) were each well-known calligraphers.

<sup>35</sup> Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (Yishao 逸少, 303–361) and his son Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (Zijing 子敬, 344–386) are often referred to as the Two Wangs.

<sup>36</sup> Wei 魏 (386–535), Jin 晉 (266–420), Song 宋, or Liu Song 劉宋, also referred to as the Song of the Southern dynasties 南朝宋 (420–479); Qi 齊 (550–577), Liang 梁 (502–557), Chen 陳 (557–589) and Sui 隋 (581–618) dynasties.

<sup>37</sup> Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (345–406), Lu Tanwei 陸探微 (d. c. 485), Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (b. 479), Zheng Fashi 鄭法士 (late 6<sup>th</sup> century), Tian Sengliang 田僧亮 (late 6<sup>th</sup> century), Yang Qitan 楊契丹 (late 6<sup>th</sup>–early 7<sup>th</sup> century), Dong Boren 董伯仁 (late 6<sup>th</sup>–early 7<sup>th</sup> century), and Zhan Ziqian 展子虔 (late 6<sup>th</sup>–early 7<sup>th</sup> century).

宋、齊、梁、陳、隋雜跡各一卷，顧、陸、張、鄭、田、楊、董、展。洎國朝名手畫合三十卷表上。<sup>38</sup>

These details of the Zhang family collection reveal the canonical works of calligraphy, as well as paintings, that they had in their possession. Zhang notes that the court greatly treasured the works, and that his grandfather though surprised by the request did not dare to keep them from the throne. In this historical account, Zhang displays both his confidence in the ultimate value of the works and his family's propriety.

Whether the court was the safest and most informed repository for these works was not guaranteed. Still, Zhang emphasizes the renown his family enjoyed and the lofty goals with which they studied and collected painting. In the *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang Yanyuan records the contents of the accompanying letter his grandfather, Zhang Hongjing, wrote to Emperor Xianzong, presumably attached to the submission of these works to the court. Providing more details of his grandfather's endeavors and his expertise, Zhang records:

In a memorial to the emperor, he wrote: 'I humbly submit that many of the emperors and kings of former dynasties sought rare works that have been handed down, and that in contemplating them day and night, they would derive instruction from them. Now, Your Majesty, endowed with intuitive wisdom and virtuous understanding, has fixed your heart upon the appreciation of antiquity, and, in your hours of leisure from presiding over the affairs of government, You intend to delight your spirit. The aforementioned writings and paintings have been treasured by dynasty after dynasty and may well be called works of

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<sup>38</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.8. See also Acker, pp. 138-139.

the utmost rarity. The “Painting of Xiao Shi”<sup>39</sup> by Lu Tanwei is the very finest of its period, and it occupies the highest rank. It is my hope that Your Majesty’s perspicacious vision will favor it with an especially attentive examination.

表上曰：「伏以前代帝王，多求遺逸，朝觀夕覽，收鑒於斯。陛下睿聖欽明，凝情好古，聽政之暇，將以怡神。前件書畫，歷代共寶，是稱珍絕，其陸探微《蕭史圖》，妙冠一時，名居上品，所希睿鑒，別賜省覽。」<sup>40</sup>

Separately, Zhang’s grandfather sent a painting to the Emperor entitled “Genuine Picture of the Emperor Xuanzong Engaged in Archery on Horseback” 玄宗馬射真圖 by Marshal Chen Hong 陳閔 (n.d.) of the Palace of the Prince of Yong 永王 (Li Lin 李璘, d. 757). In the letter accompanying this painting, which Zhang also records in the *Lida minghua ji*, Zhang Hongjing acknowledges that he could not keep the painting, though he “treasured and loved” (*baoxi* 寶惜) it, from the Emperor, who was “searching far and wide for rare works wherewith to fill the (Pavilion of the) Stone Canal” 陛下旁求珍迹，以備石渠。<sup>41</sup> Acknowledging Zhang Hongjing’s father and offering considerable praise, the Emperor replied:

You minister, in succeeding trust have thereby inherited your father’s career. Your virile prose is the glory of your age; your profound learning embraces a thousand years of

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<sup>39</sup> Xiao Shi 蕭史 was one of the immortals, good at playing the mouth organ 簫 *xiao*.

<sup>40</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.8. Acker, p. 139.

<sup>41</sup> The Stone Canal 石渠 refers to the Imperial Library of the Tang. The pavilion of the Stone Canal was allegedly built by Xie He 謝赫 (fl. 6<sup>th</sup> century). Beneath it was a canal made of broken stone to carry off flood waters. It was used for storing maps and books of the Jin 晉 (266–420). See Acker p. 140, note 3; also see p. 76, note 2. *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.8.

antiquity. A collector of calligraphy as well as of painting, your accuracy and breadth of knowledge are both perfect.

卿慶傳台鉉，業嗣弓裘，雄詞冠於一時，奧學窮乎千古，圖書兼蓄，精博兩全。<sup>42</sup>

The Emperor, too, confirms his desire “to view these symbols in order to examine one’s self, and by no means should We enjoy thing merely out of a love for the curious” 欲觀象以省躬，豈好奇而玩物？況煩章奏，嘉歎良深。<sup>43</sup> Both Zhang’s grandfather and the emperor, notably, indicate how the works are used to “derive instruction” or to “examine one’s self,” respectively. Zhang Yanyuan would likely agree that a mere passion for the works was insufficient though at the same time it could provide the necessary basis for preserving the works in the right hands, simply because “barbarians have no love of such things,” 非戎虜所愛。<sup>44</sup>

Zhang emphasizes that the loss of the Zhang’s family collection was out of their control. The few pieces remaining in the Zhang family collection after the 813 donation, as Zhang records, were lost when his grandfather met with the rebellion of Zhu Kerong 朱克融 (d. 826) in Youzhou 幽州 in the first year of the Changqing era (821). While Zhang does not show disdain toward the imperial court, he notes that since their reception into the Imperial collection, these works were not seen again; Zhang also remarked that he never saw these family treasures as he was still a child when they were presented to the emperor.<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere Zhang writes about

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<sup>42</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.8; Acker, p. 140-141.

<sup>43</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.9; See also Acker, p. 141, note 2; and Acker, p. 67, note 3.

<sup>44</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.9; Acker, p.142.

<sup>45</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.9; Acker, p. 142.

personally viewing notable works, however, and that he had the opportunity to study them.

Despite the loss of his family's collection, many of the texts included in the *Fashu yaolu* refer to these works.

This personal account of his family's collection up to his time is placed at the end of the account of painting over successive dynasties, serving to characterize his family's significant relationship to this larger history. In "On Vicissitudes of the Art of Painting," Zhang provides a brief account of the circumstances of painting from the Qin 秦 (221–206 BCE) to the Tang dynasty. He begins by describing the shared history of records of paintings from the Qin and Han 漢 (202BCE–220 CE) dynasty and records of "brilliant men" (*xian* 賢) of the Jin 晉 (266–420 CE) and Wei 魏 (386–535) dynasties. In this history of painting, Zhang lists names of famous painters and periods of time when prized works accumulated at court. He notes when rulers took pains to discuss the classification of works and had works copied, as for example during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705). During the An Lushan rebellion (755–757), in stark contrast, many works were scattered and destroyed. Before segueing from this state history to his family's specific history, Zhang describes certain individuals, including sovereigns, who had fondness and admiration (*haoshang* 好尚) or curiosity (*haoqi* 好奇) for painting.<sup>46</sup> And though this time when emperors cherished and protected works was now regrettably lost, Zhang credits the intermittent rulers who had "prized the works" and "made wide searches,"<sup>47</sup> as well as

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<sup>46</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.4; and Acker, pp.115-116.

<sup>47</sup> Zhang writes "if rulers had not at times prized them, then no wide searches would have been made for them 儻時君之不尚，則闕其搜訪, *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.6; see also Acker, pp. 129-130.

the “adepts” or “those who have arrived” (*zhiren* 至人) for their appreciation and enjoyment, without whom “the beautiful and the ugly would never have been distinguished” 非至人之賞玩，則未辨妍蚩。<sup>48</sup> In this way, Zhang contextualizes his family’s and his own experiences in the early ninth century. This inclusion of his family’s related experience connects Zhang solidly and advantageously to those who distinguished between prized works and to both celebratory and tumultuous eras of the past.

Through even more detailed anecdotes about his ancestors, Zhang shares his admiration for the status of his family, as model connoisseurs and leisurely scholars. He writes about his family with details of not only their collection but also their friendships with likeminded patrons of the arts, describing his family as among the *haoshang* 好尚, or esteemed “amateurs,” who seem to have had slightly higher status compared to the generalized and anonymous *haoshizhe* 好事者, or “enthusiast.” Unlike the *haoshizhe*, who arguably are skilled at affairs (discussed below), Zhang’s great grandfather was skilled at esteem, a loftier goal. Zhang writes about this generations of collectors, naming in particular his great great-grandfather, the Duke of Hedong, Zhang Jiazhen 張嘉貞 (d. 729), and his great grandfather, the Duke of the Principality of Wei 魏國公, Zhang Yanshang 張延賞 (723-787), who successfully collected famous works of art.<sup>49</sup>

Zhang’s description of his great grandfather, Zhang Yanshang, demonstrates the extent to which his family could spend time pursuing their shared interests with their companions. Zhang

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<sup>48</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.6; Acker, p. 130.

<sup>49</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.7; Acker, p. 132.

Yanshang's friendship with Li Mian 李勉 (717–788), the Duke of Qian 汧公, emphasizes the depth of their dedication to each other as much as to the arts:

Because they held the same office, the Duke of Wei and the Duke of Qian presently vowed eternal friendship... By nature, they were suited in inmost thought and spirit, and approached one another through psaltery and calligraphy. The Duke of Qian was widely versed in the learning of antiquity and also versatile in the arts. Studying the best works exhaustively he collected rare things, and famous works of the Wei and Jin dynasties filled his chests and boxes.

魏公與汧公因其同寮，遂成久要，。 。 。雅會襟靈，琴書相得。汧公博古多藝，窮精蓄奇，魏晉名蹤，盈於篋笥。<sup>50</sup>

This degree of mutual understanding, “by nature suited in inmost thought and spirit” points toward the social and personal ideal of being known.<sup>51</sup> They could spend whole days discussing nothing but the *qin* and painting, and as Zhang describes in detail, even when they were apart, they would treasure the letters and specialized writings on the *qin* that they exchanged between them.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> LDMHJ (2019), 1.7; Acker, pp. 132-133.

<sup>51</sup> This is a reference to *zhiyin* 知音 or “recognizing the sound,” signifying deep understanding. The set phrase comes from the *Springs and Autumns* period, when Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期 who was skilled at listening to the *qin*, heard his dear friend Bo Ya 伯牙 play and could understand his thoughts. When Zhong Ziqi died, Bo Ya stopped playing the *qin* because he did not feel he had anyone that would understand him.

<sup>52</sup> LDMHJ (2019) 1.7; see also Acker, pp.134-135.

The close relationships between friends and works of art continue in the next generation with Zhang's grandfather, the Duke of Gaoping, Zhang Hongjing, and his younger brother Zhang Shen 張諗 (fl. late 8<sup>th</sup>–early 9<sup>th</sup> century), who vowed intimate friendship with the Duke of Qian's son Zuan 纘 (fl. late 8<sup>th</sup>–early 9<sup>th</sup> century) and his younger brother Li Yue 李約 (fl. late 8<sup>th</sup>–early 9<sup>th</sup> century), and “refused high office in order that they might continue to enjoy themselves with *qin* and wine, and spend whole days in congenial pleasures...” 高謝榮宦。琴尊自樂。終日陶然。 As Zhang describes, “after this, ten thousand scrolls of calligraphy” found their way to them and “whole cabinets full of paintings” were entrusted to them,<sup>53</sup> echoing the belief that worthy works eventually fall into the right hands. Zhang clearly reveres the years his ancestors and their friends spent together indulging in their learned discussions, explorations, and collected works. Through them, he makes meaningful references to well-known adepts (*zhiren* 至人) with analogous friendships and notable shared literary and artistic endeavors of cultivation. This description of generations of his ancestors gives evidence of the elevated status in which his family once had the leisure to indulge in and amass large collections of works with their companions. Once his family relinquishes large parts of their collection, in the early ninth century, Zhang, turns to records and notes, specifically to record names and histories of works once in his family's collection.

Zhang's background and experience make his critical scholarship possible. For painting, he includes commentary on the criticism he collects. Zhang read through the histories, and

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<sup>53</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019) 1.7; see also Acker, pp.136-137.



poured over, collected, and published records on both painting and calligraphy to present views he deemed essential to pass on. For works from the remote past, he depended on textual references. For more recent works, at times, he indicates that he personally observed them. With regard to his concern for painters of recent antiquity, who may have been overlooked due to carelessness of the critics whose work Zhang describes as severely lacking, he exclaims,

When one looks in detail at the recent past,<sup>54</sup> one finds that many painters have been left out. This was no doubt because their works had not yet been seen in the world at large or also simply because those who wrote about these works did not make extensive searches. Alas! How from ancient times have the loyal and filial, righteous and upright passed into oblivion unsung in the records of excellence, not to mention calligraphers and painters!

詳之近古，遺脫至多。蓋是世上未見其蹤，又述作之人，不廣求耳。  
嗚呼！自古忠孝義烈，湮沒不稱者，曷勝記哉，況書畫耶！<sup>55</sup>

While Zhang blames the critics before him for being lackadaisical, he also points to his own, more thorough methods, which included access to records and works that his own family once possessed. This background provides him the necessary experience and skills to evaluate and validate more recent works. Zhang describes his own appreciation of, attention to, and passion for buying works of art to the dismay of his own wife and children:

Ever since my childhood I have been a collector of rare things, and have been assiduous day and night in the appreciation and enjoyment of them, and in mounting them and putting them in good order. Whenever I hunted down a handscroll or ran across a wall

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<sup>54</sup> To Zhang, according to Acker, the recent past, or “recent antiquity” (Acker’s translation) meant the Sui 隨 (581–618) and the early centuries of the Tang, Acker, p. 145, note 2.

<sup>55</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.10; see also Acker, pp. 144-145.

scroll, I would be sure to mend and repair it, diligently, and spend whole days gloating over it. When there was a chance of getting something, I would even sell my old clothes and cut down (the allowance for) rice and other foods. My wife and children and the servants nag and tease me, saying sometimes: “what good does it do, after all, to spend all day doing useless things”? At which I sigh and say, “But if one does not do these useless things, then how can one find pleasure in this life which is so limited?”<sup>56</sup> And so as my passion grows more and more violent it comes near to being an irresistible craving.

餘自弱年，鳩集遺失，鑒玩裝置，晝夜精勤，每獲一卷，遇一幅，必孜孜葺綴，竟日寶玩。可致者必貨弊衣，減糲食。妻子僮僕切切嗤笑。或曰：「終日為無益之事，竟何補哉？」既而嘆曰：「若複不為無益之事，則安能悅有涯之生？」是以愛好愈篤，近於成癖。<sup>57</sup>

Zhang is thorough in his dedication to appreciating and preserving works, a huge task. The works and related activities are integral to his life. Through such comments, he offers these insights in his *Lidai minghua ji*.

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<sup>56</sup> Alludes to Zhuangzi, “there is a limit to life, but knowledge has no limit” 吾生也有涯，而知也無涯, the complete text from Zhuangzi’s *Neipian* 養生主 (“Nourishing the Principle/Master of Life”)第三 reads:

There is a limit to life, but knowledge has no limit. Using what is limited to pursue what has no limit is dangerous. If we proceed even when knowing this, it is certainly dangerous. Doing what is good should not anticipate fame, nor should doing harm approximate punishment. Taking what is predestined to determine what we undergo is the way to protect our body, to complete life, to nourish our parents, and to finish our years. 吾生也有涯，而知也無涯。以有涯隨無涯，殆已；已而為知者，殆而已矣。為善無近名，為惡無近刑。緣督以為經，可以保身，可以全生，可以養親，可以盡年。

<sup>57</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.36; Acker, pp. 211-212.

His description of the changed circumstances reveals both his views and expectations, as well as potential resolutions and solutions. With lack of access to famous works of the imperial court, at times, Zhang found he had to depend on a wide variety of writings and paintings in private hands, which were variably reliable:

It is my constant regret that I have never been able to examine personally the famous works of the Imperial Repository, and so derive instruction from the extensive calligraphy and paintings, but even *haoshijia* had difficulty lending them. Moreover, since I am lacking genuine works of calligraphy, my calligraphy does not obtain the brush methods, and cannot form characters.<sup>58</sup> That I have thus allowed the fame of my family to fall, is my lifelong sorrow.

常恨不得竊觀御府之名跡，以資書畫之廣博。又好事家難以假借，況少真本。書則不得筆法，不能結字，已墜家聲，為終身之痛。<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Because of this supposed lack of access to famous works, Zhang modestly notes that he has not been able to learn good brush methods. Elsewhere scholars have contested Zhang's modesty suggesting that he had the opportunity to study actual works and pointed to actual writings attributed to him and praiseful descriptions of his accomplishments to suggest that Zhang likely saw more of his family's collection and learned to become a skillful writer through them. It is also quite possible, however, that in his searches, he was able to view and work with copies. The *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜 from the Xuanhe era (1110–1125) of Emperor Huizong 宋徽宗 (r. 1100-1125) records a number of Zhang Yanyuan's works in the cursive script, copies of *Chuyue tie* 初月帖, *Huaiwen tie* 還問帖, *Sixiang tie* 思想帖, *Danyang tie* 丹陽帖, *Qinghe tie* 清和帖, and *Biezhi tie* 別紙帖, all of them except *Biezhi tie* can be found in the early record of works by Wang Xizhi 右軍書記<sup>58</sup> included in Zhang Yanyuan's compilation, *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜 (2019), *juan* 20, p. 188.

<sup>59</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.36; Acker, pp. 212-213.

With the esteemed experience of his ancestors behind him, this shift in hands draws Zhang's attention. Zhang acknowledges those who might now handle the works and those who might be trusted, overall, to at least maintain decorum in viewing them:

One who is not a *haoshizhe* should not be foolishly entrusted to transmit calligraphy and paintings. If one is near a fire or candle, in wind or sunlight, or has just eaten, drunk, spit, or blown one's nose, or has not washed their hands, then they should never be allowed to look at calligraphy and paintings.

非好事者，不可妄傳書畫。近火燭不可觀書畫，向風日、正飡飲唾涕，不洗手，並不可觀書畫。<sup>60</sup>

This reference is to the infamous Jin dynasty warlord Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369-404), who was known to have “held a great exhibition of model works of calligraphy and famous paintings” 盛陳法書名畫.<sup>61</sup> In a famous anecdote showing just as much Huan Xuan's personality and interests, Zhang relays how the avid collector reacted to the unfortunate traces left behind by a guest of one of his viewing parties:

In former times, Huan Xuan loved and esteemed pictures and calligraphy and always showed them to his guests. Once there was a guest who was not a *haoshizhe* and as he ate

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<sup>60</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.35; Acker, p. 210.

<sup>61</sup> See Acker, p. 211, note 3. Also Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 and Wu Liangcheng 武良成 and Zhou Xu 周旭 eds., *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄, 1st ed (Hangzhou: 浙江人民美術出版社, 2019), hereafter *FSYL* (2019), 7.221-9.315; and 2.35-44.

*hanju*,<sup>62</sup> grabbed the calligraphy and paintings and made large dirty spots with his hands. Xuan was full of regret and put out over this for some time. From that day on every time he brought out fine pieces of calligraphy, he would immediately order his quests to wash their hands.

昔桓玄愛重圖書，每示賓客。客有非好事者，正飡寒具。以手捉書畫，大點污，玄惋惜移時。自後每出法書，輒令洗手。<sup>63</sup>

The admirers of this earlier period and the ones Zhang visits to look at past works could be minimally trusted to protect the works and provide basic care. Zhang's sharing of these details indicates his specific views and concerns about these works now returning to private, interested but less-informed hands.

## 1.2 Making Light of Lofty Goals

Zhang's family background of collectors set him apart from the common scholar or collector. Zhang may no longer have owned famous works, but his family had, and he, moreover, labored over compiling past records connected to his family's collection (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two).<sup>64</sup> In near-matching lines found in both the *Lidai minghua ji* and the

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<sup>62</sup> *Hanju* 寒具, a type of donut-like pastry fried in oil.

<sup>63</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.35; Acker, pp. 210-211.

<sup>64</sup> This compulsion to gather texts and writings on specialized topics follows a literary and historical tradition that often references a *haoshizhe* figure, such as Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* or The *Mencius*. Looking more closely at these figures in other genres prior to Zhang's time could help focus the attention on his designs to be comprehensive and corrective for a cause personified by the *haoshizhe*. With references in calligraphy evaluations to literary works such as Zhong Rong's 鍾嶸 (ca. 468-518) *Shipin* 詩品 (Classification of Poetry), Lu Ji's 陸機 (261-300) *Wenfu* 文賦

*Fashu yaolu*, Zhang connects the volumes to each other and celebrates their vetted and thorough finish. At the end of *juan 2* of the *Lidai minghua ji*, before the individual artist entries, Zhang writes “I, Yanyuan, am now also compiling besides this collection, the *Fashu yaolu*, making together twenty scrolls. If the *haoshizhe* obtains my two books, then he will have all one needs to know about calligraphy and painting”<sup>65</sup> 今彥遠又別撰集《法書要錄》等共為二十卷，好事者得余二書，則書畫之事畢矣。<sup>66</sup> It is through this mention that we learn Zhang was working on the volumes at the same time, circa 847. In the preface to the *Fashu yaolu*, he offers a compatible mention of the companion text:

thereupon, I have collected from the ancient essays hundreds of pieces, put together they consist of ten *juan*, that is called *Fashu yaolu*. And, besides I have composed the *Lidai minghua ji* in 10 scrolls. The *haoshizhe* that obtains these two books has all one needs to know about calligraphy and painting. How could one dare speak of this competence!

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(The Poetic Exposition on Literature), or Liu Yiqing’s 劉義慶 (403–444) *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A New Account of the Tales of the World), and their overlapping spheres, as well as the calligraphy and calligraphers as subject matter in many of the anecdotes and even poetry of Tang and pre-Tang times, Zhang and his circle of collectors and connoisseurs would have been familiar with the term *haoshizhe*, and thus his use of the term connects his work to these earlier uses. Indeed, the similarity in some of the related practices indicate direct parallels, not discussed here.

<sup>65</sup> Acker translates 書畫之事畢矣 as “then his troubles with calligraphy and painting will come to an end,” Acker, p. 215.

<sup>66</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.36; Acker, pp. 214-215.

因採掇自古論書凡百篇，勒為十卷，名曰《法書要錄》。又別撰《歷代名畫記》十卷。有好事者得余二書，書畫之事畢矣，豈敢言具哉！<sup>67</sup>

Through these prefatory notes, Zhang refers the reader to both volumes and presents them as a set of up-to-date, authoritative writings on calligraphy and painting. He also presents the volumes, in passing, to a nominal audience he calls, the *haoshizhe* 好事者. Zhang's use of this term, *haoshizhe*, alludes to historical and literary precedents of interacting with such personifications of curiosity and excitability and the way in which reputable thinkers and scholars seemingly responded to this articulated sentiment by producing grand treatises, like Zhang's.

While Zhang's use of the term, *haoshizhe*, alludes to these “enthusiasts,” placing his audience or companions among them is likely Zhang's way of making light of a serious topic and situation.<sup>68</sup> The translation that best captures the *haoshizhe* tied to painting and calligraphy

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<sup>67</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 1.1.

<sup>68</sup> Studies focused on the *haoshizhe* have uncovered a wide range of the figures' characteristics and functions, from the *haoshizhe* as actual purveyors in history to essential figures in literary texts that instigate the key events of a story. Although the term is variously translated as “those fond of strange things,” “curiosity-seekers,” “wondermonger,” “meddlers,” “amateurs,” “dilettantes,” “aficionados,” “enthusiasts,” “busybodies,” or “one who has nothing better to do,” this so-called individual or group throughout the texts predating the Tang sustain certain traits over time and across genres. Through one set of specific examples, the *haoshizhe* appears determined to enjoy themselves. See for example, Chen Nanguai 陈南贵, “*Tang Wudai xiaoshuo xuba yanjiu*” 唐五代小说序跋研究. Doctoral Dissertation, Liaoning University, 2014. Another slant on the figure in literary texts shows how the *haoshizhe* character intervenes in a story to the extent that their role directly influences the reader's experience. See for reference, Chen Jing 陈

collecting activities is “enthusiast” or “interested persons.” These individuals exhibit enough interest to collect works and texts but may lack areas of knowledge. They are enthusiastic

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静, “*Jianxi Mingdai baihua xiaoshuo zhong de haoshizhe*” 简析明代白话小说中的“好事者”, in *Sangming xueyuan xuebao* 三明学院学报, 2017.5.

Shi Shufang 石树芳 focuses specifically on how the *haoshizhe*, or “meddlers,” variously collected poetry, sought out poets, wrote or spread poems, intentionally or unintentionally, during the Tang dynasty. Largely anonymous, their wide-ranging and pervasive activities complicated but also opened up the spread of folk writing, according to Shi. See Shi Shufang 石树芳, “Meddlers: A bridge for the Spread of Tang Poetry in Folk Writing” 好事者 — 唐诗民间书写传播的桥梁 in *Du Fu Research Studies*, 杜甫研究学刊, 2021.2. Chen Yuwen 陈毓文 discusses the *haoshizhe*’s enthusiasm toward poetry, their relishing in receiving, talking about, and passing on poetry, in Chen Yuwen 陈毓文, “*Lun Tang Song shige chuanbo Zhong de haoshizhe* 论唐宋诗歌传播中的“好事者,” in *Yichun xueyuan xue bao* 宜春学院学报, 2019.11.

Yang Shi’s 杨师 study investigates the *haoshizhe* in history and in literary works, specifically in “brush notes,” (*biji* 筆記). In historical materials, Yang emphasizes how the *haoshizhe* not only read and transmitted poetry, but also in specific cases perpetuated the copying of mistakes. Yang points out that prior to the proliferation of printing in the Song dynasty, when poetry and literature were copied by hand, the copier was free to actively select from texts and produce works for a particular reader, changing a text, editing it, embellishing it, or correcting it. Yang points to the *haoshizhe* as one such active reader taking part in recreating these texts directly or indirectly, lowering the value of the text in the name of making it more appealing. In a damning example, as written in the biography of Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (c.160–93 BCE) in the *漢書 Hanshu* (Book of Han), the *haoshizhe* are blamed for muddling his record. Because they added strange or unfounded information about Shuo, Ban Gu 班固 (32–92CE) of the Eastern Han dynasty in his efforts to use only reliable sources in order to guarantee the accuracy of his information, had no choice but to leave his record considerably less detailed. Relatedly, Yang describes how the *haoshizhe* provides inroads for the readers. In stories, they guess, doubt, ask questions, have hopes, but they also make things happen. See Yang Shi 杨师, “The characterization and use of *haoshizhe* in light historical and notes” 浅谈史料，笔记中的“好事者”形象及其作用, in *Shanxia daxue xuebao* 三峡大学学报, Renwen shehui kexueban 人文社会科学版 2017.1, pp. 98-99. Shuo’s reputation as the court jester 滑稽 *huaji* to the court of Emperor Wu (孝武皇帝, r. 141–87 BCE) may also have influenced Ban Gu’s selectiveness.



enough to make considerable effort to preserve works but may not know all the proper methods. The *haoshizhe* that Zhang mentions in the *Lidai minghua ji* may exist in different strata of society, as amateurs or collectors. With such loose parameters, Zhang's mention of them and potential connections to other literary sources is likely one that is lighthearted. Though Zhang's concerns for the status of evaluating both calligraphy and painting were serious, his attention to these *haoshizhe* may be seen as self-effacing, as he did not in actuality depend on these meddlers to preserve works of painting and calligraphy and their histories but felt it appropriate to make light of his efforts and goals. At the same time, reference to the *haoshizhe* recalls a common literary convention or scholarly foil that provided an audience and nominal cause for extensive, specialized studies so that scholars seemed to be fulfilling the needs of others by filling in considerable gaps in knowledge. Placing Zhang's scholarship in this tradition of addressing an audience, such as the *haoshizhe*, fellow connoisseurs, and philosophers, situates his comprehensive study of painting and calligraphy amongst those of comparably grand distinction.

Even with the loss of his family's collection and the lack of assurances of cherishing and protecting works at court, Zhang expresses faith in the works that even the "vulgar of the world" (*shisu* 世俗) would recognize.<sup>69</sup> He writes in the *Lidai minghua ji* that since "things have their own destinations" 物有所歸, "they collected together in the houses of amateurs" 聚於好事之

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<sup>69</sup> In "On the Vicissitudes of the Art of Painting" 敍畫之興廢, *juan* 1, section 2 of the *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang indicates that the existence of painting of fine quality 圖畫之妙 began in the Qin and Han dynasties. He then lists "brilliant men" 賢 of the Jin and Wei, and the many "skilled masters" 哲匠 of the North and South, "men so illustrious that even the vulgar of the world know how to value them" 此蓋尤所烜赫也, 世俗知尚者, *LDMHJ* (2019), p. 4; Acker, pp. 111-112.

家.<sup>70</sup> This is where the earliest mention of *haoshizhe* falls, roughly in the middle of section 2 of the first *juan* near the end of Zhang’s historical account of painting, as it turns more personal. At times when the emperors did not cherish or protect such works, according to Zhang, the *haoshizhe* occupied the homes to which the lost works of art naturally returned after being neglected by those unworthy.<sup>71</sup> These *haoshizhe* were worthy enough or possessed adequate interest to receive works in their homes.

Embedded in the subsequent accounts that detail his family’s collection (discussed in Chapter Two) the *haoshizhe* plays a similarly crucial role in saving a number of works after they were lost in the upheaval of the Zhu Kerong 朱克融 (d. 826) rebellion. The rebellion began around 821, in You Prefecture 幽州, where Zhang Yanyuan’s grandfather, Zhang Hongjing, was sent to govern. Zhang writes, “since barbarians have no love of such things, after the affair was settled, *haoshi* were able to buy quite a number of things” 非戎虜所愛，及事定，頗有好事購得之。<sup>72</sup> At the time, Zhang was quite young and indicates that very few of the works originally in his family’s collection survived, and he had no hope of getting them back. As he laments, “even if one were a person of great influence there would be no possibility of getting them back” 雖有豪勢，莫能求旃。<sup>73</sup> In this instance, Zhang locates himself between the barbarians, who “have

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<sup>70</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.6; Acker, p. 112.

<sup>71</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.34; Acker, p. 129.

<sup>72</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.9; Acker, pp. 141-142.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

no love of such things,” and those of great influence. Zhang concludes this entry with a warning for those who might succeed him to maintain their vigilance.

In their role as actual collectors, the *haoshi* were found carting away sections of the painted walls of temples destroyed during the Huichang era, just before Zhang’s publication of both the *Lidai minghua ji* and the *Fashu yaolu*. In his introduction to the section in the *Lidai minghua ji*, “Notes on the Wall Paintings in the Buddhist and Daoist temples of the Two Capitals and in the Provinces” 記兩京外州寺觀畫壁, Zhang writes, “although most of these have been recently destroyed in the Huichang era, even so I have included them here. And there are also instances where enthusiasts have got possession of such painted walls which are now kept in their houses” 會昌中多毀拆，今亦具載，亦有好事收得畫壁在人家者。<sup>74</sup> Tang Wuzong initiated what later became known as the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism as part of his campaign to rid Tang China of foreign influences and regain military funds. Zhang records his direct experience with the destruction of Buddhist temples and the *haoshizhe*’s role in preserving wall fragments:

In the fifth year of the Huichang era (845), the Emperor Wuzong destroyed all the temples and pagodas, leaving only two or three places at each of the two capitals. Accordingly of all the famous paintings which were on the walls of temples only one or two remain. But at the time when this happened there were some *haoshi* who had some of them taken out and removed to be reset in the walls of their homes. (But even so) only a very few of those noted above have been preserved (in this fashion).

會昌五年，武宗毀天下寺塔，兩京各留三兩所，故名畫在寺壁者，唯存一二。當時

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<sup>74</sup> From the *LDMHJ*, *juan 3*, p. 38, in *Huashi congshu* 畫史叢書, p. 42; *LDMHJ* (2019) does not include this commentary; Acker, p. 254-255.

有好事，或揭取陷於屋壁。已前所記者，存之蓋寡。<sup>75</sup>

Zhang's mention of the *haoshi* shows the extent of their efforts. The *haoshizhe*, as described by Zhang, were the heavy lifters, the hands-on preservers, acting with great enthusiasm, displaying extracted temple murals in their own homes. They knew the value of the works and expended direct efforts to preserve them. They are acknowledged for the active role they played in transmitting works, including writings and fragments of temple walls.

Zhang recognizes the *haoshizhe* for their important role in preserving works and for their zealous collecting practices in at least three of the biographical entries that make up the bulk of the book on painting. It was the *haoshi* who transmitted the work of Zhu Baoyi 朱抱一, one of the assembly of worthies (*jixian* 集賢) of the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the Kaiyuan era (734), for instance. Zhang notes that his ““Likeness of Old Zhang Guo” was transmitted by the *haoshizhe*” 寫《張果先生真》為好事所傳。<sup>76</sup> In the case of Bi Hong 畢宏, a middle official in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Dali 大歷 era (767), Zhang writes of the pines and rocks he painted on the walls of the Left Sheng Hall 左省廳 and how “all the *haoshizhe* praised them” 好事者皆詩之。<sup>77</sup> An expert painter of trees and rocks, Bi Hong is credited with beginning the classical tradition of painting trees. On this occasion, the *haoshi*'s judgement is noted. The *haoshi* in the biographical entry for

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<sup>75</sup> LDMHJ (2019), 3.62; Acker, p. 366-368.

<sup>76</sup> LDMHJ (2019), 9.149. Zhang Guo 張果 (c. 596–735) a famous Daoist immortal.

<sup>77</sup> LDMHJ (2019), 10.160.

the Kuaji Monk Daofen 道芬 (mid-Tang dynasty) were responsible for passing along his “Record of Painting Landscape” 畫山水錄, which amounted to documentation of over 100 pieces of all who had painted on silk.<sup>78</sup> The Monk Daofen himself, according to Zhang’s commentary, excelled at painting landscapes. These *haoshi* collected and transmitted writings.

The *haoshizhe* or “enthusiasts in the *Lidai minghua ji*, however, were not always connoisseurs, but no less enthusiastic about calligraphy and painting, and the writings about them.<sup>79</sup> They do not seem to pursue these topics to improve themselves or necessarily for their own material gain, but for the subject matter’s own sake. Based on the anecdotes in his *Lidai minghua ji*, the *haoshizhe* of painting and calligraphy lacks the complete range of skills of the “connoisseur collector” (*bieshi shoucang zhiren* 別識收藏之人), one who can discern the value of works and collects them. In the final section of *juan 2*, “On Connoisseurship, Preservation, Collecting, and Appreciation” 論鑒識收藏購求閱玩, Zhang begins by describing the “connoisseurs of calligraphy” (*shishuren* 識書人), who “judged paintings” (*shihua* 識畫) and explains how “now connoisseurs of calligraphy are generally judges of paintings as well” 夫識書人多識畫. Applicable to both painting and calligraphy, Zhang outlines degrees of skills or specialization, and identifies the *haoshizhe* as lacking in some area:

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<sup>78</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 10.165.

<sup>79</sup> In the *Lidai minghuai ji*, Zhang makes reference to the *haoshi* as follows: *haoshizhe* 好事者, five times; *haoshijia* 好事家, three times; *haoshi zhi jia* 好事之家; *haoshi suo bao* 好事所寶, *haoshi gou de zhi* 好事購得之; *haoshi er ji* 好事而跡, *haoshi huo* 好事或, and *haoshi* 好事 twice.

And among them were some who collected works without being able to act as connoisseurs; some who were connoisseurs without being skilled in looking at and enjoying them; some who could look at and enjoy them but were not skilled in the technique of mounting and backing, and still others who understood mounting but were entirely without any system of arranging them in order. All these are the weaknesses found among such enthusiasts.

則有收藏而未能鑒識, 鑒識而不善閱玩者, 閱玩而不能裝褫, 裝褫而殊亡銓次者, 此皆好事者之病也。<sup>80</sup>

The enthusiast according to Zhang was not accomplished in all the tasks ranging from connoisseurship to mounting or arranging works in order. They did not possess all the skills or ease with preserving, evaluating, or collecting paintings.

Still, well-known court calligraphers and “scholar officials” (*shiren* 士人), Yu Shinan 虞世南 (559-638) and Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (597–658) of the Early Tang dynasty, “thoroughly and widely learned and loved the arts” 精博而好藝,<sup>81</sup> might also be considered *haoshizhe*. Zhang praises the era in which they were active, the Zhenguan era 貞觀 (627-649) of Tang Taizong 唐太宗, as well as the Kaiyuan era 開元 (713-741) of Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗, as the most flourishing, when “the emperors were divinely inspired and had many talents” 貞觀開元之代, 自古盛時, 天子神聖而多才。<sup>82</sup> In this light, Zhang provides the names of those who presented

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<sup>80</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.33; Acker, p. 203.

<sup>81</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.33; Acker, p. 203.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

pictures and paintings to the emperor, or who were ordered to “go through the collection” (*jianyue* 簡閱); and others who were appointed to “search for writings and paintings” (*suofang shuhua shi* 搜訪書畫使), such as Yu Shinan and Chu Suiliang. Xu Hao 徐浩 (703-782) was appointed Imperial Commissioner for the Finding of Pictures and Paintings 圖畫使.<sup>83</sup> These individuals figure prominently in his *Fashu yaolu* and stand amongst the *haoshizhe* with their well-rounded and established expertise, not to mention their official status at court.<sup>84</sup> They have names, while other *haoshizhe* do not. Zhang dedicates his volumes to this loose group, lightly. This term usually refers to an amateur, but Zhang’s scholarship mandated a lofty scholar. His reference to the *haoshizhe* provides acknowledgement of this fine balance between his own endeavors, status, and attempted self-effacement.

### 1.3 Names and “Spirit Resonance” Transcending History

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<sup>83</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.33-34; Acker, pp. 204-205

<sup>84</sup> At the same time, another type of *haoshizhe* was the amateur collector and donor to the court. With works in the class of the great officials, these named experts and dealers regrettably could not keep their works. At least one individual that Zhang names was able to obtain office by presenting writings and paintings to the Emperor. Zhang pities these *haoshi* for their professions – experts and dealers – despite their admirable works 此輩雖憐業好事，而跡類藩身, *LDMHJ* (2019), p. 34; Acker, pp. 205-206. Even though the works of these individuals received praise, their professional activities as experts (*bieshi* 別識) and dealers (*fanmai* 販賣) were looked down upon. These individuals used their discerning eye for material gain. Connoisseur collectors (*bieshi shoucang zhiren* 別識收藏之人), by contrast, were expected to maintain the quality of each of the works in their collections, and in the right hands these works were guaranteed to be preserved, *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.34; Acker, p. 209.

Zhang's expressed views or resolution to raising the status of painting and maintaining the status of calligraphy involved recording names and connecting past to present, which proved to be a critical step in recognizing Zhang, as "the progenitor of the history of Chinese painting as well as painting history par excellence."<sup>85</sup> In Zhang's volumes on painting and calligraphy, named connoisseurs, names of painters and calligraphers, and authors of texts on calligraphy and painting corroborate their lofty focus of study. Besides raising the status of the practitioners and connoisseurs, Zhang seems to have been the first scholar to distinguish historical periods based on developments in painting (High Antiquity 上古, Middle Antiquity 中古, and Lower Antiquity 下古, or Recent Antiquity 近古, for instance),<sup>86</sup> rather than dividing the periods, politically.<sup>87</sup> As well, his *Lidai minghua ji* takes as its model the standard of histories, the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian) written by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (Western Han dynasty, 202 BCE–9CE). The *Lidai minghua ji*'s organization into three introductory *juan* followed by seven *juan* of collective biographies (*lie zhuan* 列傳) recalls the design of the *Shiji*. Zhang's specific views of calligraphy

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<sup>85</sup> Yu Shaosong's 余紹宋 (1883–1949) states this in 1932, in his *Shuhua shulu jieti* 書畫書錄解題 (Compendium of calligraphy and painting catalogues) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1982), 1.6. First published in 1932 by the National Beijing Library.

<sup>86</sup> According to Zhang Huaiguan, the Han and the Three Kingdoms 三國 (220–280) period are considered High Antiquity 上古; Jin 晉 (255–420) and the Liu Song 劉宋 (420–479) make up Middle Antiquity 中古; and the Sui 隨 (581–618) and early Tang, beginning 618, are what constitute Recent Antiquity 近古 or Low Antiquity 下古, *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.31-32; see also Acker, pp. 196-198.

<sup>87</sup> See Wu Hung. *Chinese Art and Dynastic Time* (Princeton University Press, 2022), pp. 155-161.



and painting though parallel to historical, literary, and philosophical precedents, however, transcend historical developments.

Specifically, the connection Zhang draws between the study of calligraphy and painting relies on their ability to connect to the past. Calligraphers and painters had to retain specific qualities to achieve this. Furthermore, proper evaluation methods served to connect painting and calligraphy. Thus, the history insists on the importance of names: names of calligraphers, names of painters, and names of theorists, thus constructing a lineage of masters that connects past to present. Zhang presents this history of transmission of teachings and schools for both calligraphy and painting, which looks like a history of the subjects, but more importantly determines how painting and calligraphy are evaluated across time and space. In this crucial way, Zhang is more than a compiler of records.<sup>88</sup> He participates in how the history is written and elevates and maintains both the status of painting and calligraphy, the relationship between them, as well as how they are evaluated from past to present. What seems historical turns out to fundamentally transcend time and space.

Adopting Xie He's "Six Principles of Painting" (*Huihua liufa* 繪畫六法),<sup>89</sup> particularly "spirit resonance" (*qi yun* 氣韻), Zhang evaluates painting, not historically, but rather according

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<sup>88</sup> Xiaomeng Ning makes reference to this distinction, see Xiaomeng Ning, "The Concept of Famous Painting in the Tang Dynasty: The Case of Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai minghua ji*," in *Culture and Dialogue* 6, 2 (2018), p. 222.

<sup>89</sup> From Xie He's *Guhua pinlu* 古畫品鑒: "spirit resonance" (*qi yun* 氣韻), "bone method" (*gu fa* 骨法), "reflecting the object" (*ying wu* 應物), "appropriateness to type" (*sui lei* 隨類), "divisions and planning" (*jing guan* 經管), and "transmission and conveying" (*chuan yi* 傳移),

to how successfully a painting connects the viewer to its image maker. In particular, by using the criteria that the artist transmits “spirit-resonance” through their work, Zhang distinguishes between ancient (*gu* 古) and modern (*jin* 今), or present-day painting, for instance. Zhang determines that “in modern paintings, even if by chance they achieve formal resemblance, a spirit-resonance does not arise. If they had but used spirit-resonance in their pursuit of painting, then formal resemblance would have been immanent in their work.”<sup>90</sup> This attention to “spirit-resonance” is key to the evaluation of calligraphy, as well. Nearly a hundred years before Zhang Yanyuan, Zhang Huaiguan indicated that “a man with deep understanding of calligraphy pays attention only to its spirit and is not distracted by the character’s form” 深識書者，惟觀神彩，不見字形。<sup>91</sup> This coincided with the idea that if writing did not proceed from the heart, the result would lack spirit.<sup>92</sup> A major component of spirit resonance was connecting with the past and at some level the first image makers. Both calligraphy and paintings are considered “heavenly patterns,” or images formed in the mind. As Wen Fong puts it, “the Chinese perceived both calligraphy and painting as having at once a representational and presentational function.” This presentational or expressive function depended on the individual calligrapher or painter. Further,

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see for reference, Acker, pp. xiv-xliii.

<sup>90</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.16; and Acker, pp.148-149.

<sup>91</sup> Zhang Huaiguan expands upon his discussion of the origins of calligraphy in his undated *Wenzi lun* 文字論 (“On Writing” or “On the Written Language”), *FSYL* (2019), 4.130; see also Wang Youfen, *Chinese Calligraphy*, note 12, p. 40.

<sup>92</sup> Wang Youfen, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 423.

“rather than color or light, the key to Chinese painting lies in its calligraphic line, which bears the presence, or physical “trace” (*ji*) of its maker.”<sup>93</sup> In sum, this idea of traces of the maker is how Zhang connected painting and calligraphy to each other, to the original image makers, and from past to present.<sup>94</sup>

Arguably, this focus on expressiveness or presentation is not tied to historical time, at least not necessarily representing certain times, but rather qualities of individuals. Most importantly the work presented the painter or calligrapher’s experiences or ideas through painting or calligraphy. Zhang Yanyuan and Zhang Huaiguan, before him, describe painting as presenting the image maker, rather than as representing the objective world. This approach to image making and art history connects but also supersedes historical moments. Pictorial methods might change with time, but the judgment of painting or calligraphy remains attached to how the work presents the maker. It follows that when these methods of presenting the maker have been exhausted, painting may decline. This is what Zhang suggests of his time when he describes modern painting as purposeless.<sup>95</sup> In Zhang’s view, painting had progressed from simple to

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<sup>93</sup> Wen C. Fong, “Why Chinese Painting Is History.” *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003), p. 259.

<sup>94</sup> In “On Origins of Painting” in the *Lidia minghua ji*, Zhang sought to connect painting and calligraphy to early roots: “When the Sages of Antiquity and the First Kings accepted Heaven’s command and received the [divine] tablets they thereby came to hold the magic power in the Tortoise Characters and the proffered treasure of the Dragon Chart... Then Creation could no longer hide its secrets... At that time writing and painting were still alike in form and had not yet been differentiated...” *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.1, see Acker, pp. 62-64.

<sup>95</sup> Fong (2003), p. 263.

complete and then exhausted new possibilities of expression. In this way, Zhang determines the inadequacies of modern painting and thus outlines the ideal, ancient painter, of noble descent. Modern painting falls well below the status and quality of ancient painting.<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, Zhang's history of painting is not just one of records. His statements emphasize criteria for painting, an evaluation and classifying of painters, and thus Zhang participates in how painting and tastes in painting develop, not to mention how one studies the history of painting.<sup>97</sup> Zhang's art history is the determination of painting and calligraphy as communing with the ancients. Only certain individuals can do this. These are Zhang's expressed views about painting, which he was compelled to articulate, given his interest in raising the status of painting, when it was already applied to evaluating calligraphy.

In theories of calligraphy, Zhang Huaiguan was one of the first to judge a person's moral character by taking into account the artistic quality of his calligraphy – vulgar or refined: those who have “spirit” (*shen* 神), “bone” (*gu* 骨), or “life energy” (*qi* 氣) are ranked high; and those showing “prettiness” (*yan* 妍), beauty (*mei* 美), merit (*gong* 功) or utility (*yong* 用) are ranked low” 且以風神骨氣者居上，妍美功用者居下。<sup>98</sup> The exterior or physical was valued less than the spiritual and innate (discussed in Chapter Three). Zhang Yanyuan begins to show in a handful of his individual biographies that evaluation of paintings was also based on social

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<sup>96</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.17; and Acker, p. 152.

<sup>97</sup> Ning (2018), p. 194.

<sup>98</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.125.

identity and moral integrity. He reveals his expectations most clearly in his conclusion to the section, “Discussing the Six Principles of Painting” in the *Lidai minghua ji*: “from ancient times those who have excelled in painting have all been robed and capped and of noble descent, rare scholars and lofty-minded men who awakened the wonder of their own time and left behind them a fragrance that shall last a thousand years. This is not a thing that humble rustics from village lanes could ever do” 自古善畫者，莫匪衣冠貴胄，逸士高人，振妙一時，傳芳千祀，非閭閻鄙賤之所能為也。<sup>99</sup> The judgment of good painting and calligraphy depended just as much on the quality of the painters and calligraphers, as those who evaluated them. These “robed and capped and of noble descent, rare scholars and lofty-minded men” were the ones who could be evaluated amongst the earliest image makers and thus connect past to present. While the *Lidai minghua ji* focuses mainly on listing over 370 names of famous painters, Zhang’s *Fashu yaolu* includes not only names of calligraphers, but also names and complete texts of many of the crucial critics. The importance placed on naming calligraphers, painters, and theorists is a fundamental aspect that stands out across the volumes and points to the specific criteria of both producing and evaluating painting and calligraphy that entailed lofty expectations of being in the world, of individual experience, and images from the mind, or the spirit resonance, conveyed through calligraphy and painting.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

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<sup>99</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.17; and Acker, p. 153.

With assuredness rooted in his family background, Zhang offers his views in both the *Lidai minghua ji* and the *Fashu yaolu*, as all one needs to know, portraying himself as the ultimate authority on painting and calligraphy of the time. He makes bold corrections with regard to painting but seems satisfied with simply choosing and publishing the texts on calligraphy, without revisions. His volumes advanced the study of painting related to calligraphy and related to the ancients confirming that both media revealed the specific, elevated individuals and spirit resonance. These volumes ultimately raised the overarching goals of connoisseurship of both painting and calligraphy. The records and notes on both painting and calligraphy indeed cover a broad range of topics and individuals over time, but the comprehensiveness is not located solely in these extensive details. Zhang provides an all-encompassing view connecting painting and calligraphy to each other, but also to the past, by looking for the “spirit resonance” or the image maker in the work of calligraphy or painting, beyond form. Still these works necessitated named authors, painters, and calligraphers, and it is their records that Zhang transmits. One who recognized this was worthy, and the works that made it into their hands proved both their worth and that of the painting or calligraphy. Whether they knew it or not, those who came to possess Zhang’s volumes on painting and calligraphy, might not only begin to understand how they might see these ancient masters in actual works, but also help to continue Zhang’s legacy and these underlying expectations. Zhang addresses the books to the *haoshizhe*, an “enthusiast,” as a means of making light of his status and his expectations, though in actuality his scholarship and his dedication to painting and calligraphy set an everlasting precedent of lofty expectations in their histories.

## Chapter Two

### Embedded Views: Records and Anonymous Notes Delineating a Legacy

#### 2.0 When It Was an Honor to Donate Works to the Imperial Court

At the end of one of three anonymous texts included in the *Fashu yaolu*, the unnamed author of “A Narrative Record of Calligraphy in the Tang Court” 唐朝敍書錄, undated, comments, “in those days it was considered an honor to present works to the court” 當時舉朝以為榮也.<sup>100</sup> This anonymous note, which falls midway through the compilation toward the end of *juan* four, consists of a handful of anecdotes about collecting and discussing calligraphy in the courts of Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626-649), Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683), and Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-705). Whether Zhang personally wrote this note or recorded the words of another, the sentiment implies that the significance of donating to the court had changed. Unlike the rulers in the mid- to late-Tang, earlier Tang emperors had the resources to build upon imperial collections of paintings and calligraphy. Faced with fiscal, political, and military demands in the provinces, the central seat of government in the later Tang was stretched to quell uprisings and economic challenges. Even if these rulers indulged in the arts, they could not guarantee the safety of the revered works. Zhang’s family collection suffered major losses as a direct consequence.

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<sup>100</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.133-135; (1986), 4.131-132. Referencing the loss of the family collection, Amy McNair suggests that the author of this text may very well have been Zhang Yanyuan himself. She notes how Zhang Yanyuan’s “grandfather’s great collection was ravaged by imperial greed,” in Amy McNair, “*Fa shu yao lu*, a Ninth-Century Compendium of Texts on Calligraphy,” in *T’ang Studies* 5 (1987), pp. 83-84.

Structured around three anonymous notes: 1) “A Narrative Record of Calligraphy in the Tang Court” 唐朝敍書錄, undated, *juan* 4; 2) “Names in the Transmission of Brush Method” 傳授筆法人名, *juan* 1; and 3) “Record of Calligraphic Works by Youjun” 右軍書記, *juan* 10, this chapter shows how Zhang’s arrangement and selection of specific texts supported specific concerns about collections, the lineage of calligraphers and theorists, and details about specific works of calligraphy, respectively. The first section of this chapter scrutinizes the texts in the *Fashu yaolu* that directly record and emphasize the value of the works known to have formerly been part of the Zhang family collection, which were preserved in disparate spaces, namely 1) the compiled colophons on Wang Xizhi’s transcription of the *Yue Yi lun* 樂毅論 (“On Yue Yi), 4<sup>th</sup> century, originally composed by Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209–254); 2) the short, personal notes and records about Xiao Ziyun’s 蕭 “*xiao*” character; and 3) the account of the *Lanting xu* 蘭亭序 (“Orchid Pavilion Preface”) in semi-cursive script. To highlight the emphasis on lineage, the second section of this chapter shows how select texts and their authors support those listed in the anonymous, “Names in the Transmission of Brush Method.” Finally, Zhang’s concern for transmitting details of letters and scrolls by the Two Wangs are confirmed through the transcription of hundreds of letters by the Two Wangs attached to the “Record of Calligraphic Works by Youjun” 右軍書記, *juan* 10, as well as the extensive lists of works by Wang Xizhi and his son, Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344-386) put together by Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (597-658) and Zhang Huaiguan. This chapter does not investigate the longer evaluative texts or texts that focus on scripts, which are discussed in Chapter Three.



Even earlier than the Tang, Zhang and his collected theorists celebrate rulers, such as the infamous Jin dynasty warlord, Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369-404), who tried to gather all of the masterpieces of calligraphy and famous paintings as his own and exhibited them (discussed in Chapter One). Later the collection was taken by the founding emperor of the Liu Song dynasty 劉宋 (420-479), Emperor Wu 武帝 (363-422), and classified by Emperor Gao 高帝 (479-482) of the Southern Qi dynasty 南齊 (479-502), who made a list of the famous painters, compared them, and gave each of them their own grade.<sup>101</sup> In the *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang describes how Emperor Gao “day or night, whenever he had leisure from hearing the counsels of government, he would open and enjoy them“ 聽政之餘, 旦夕披玩. He describes how Emperor Wu of the Liang 梁武帝 (r. 502–549)<sup>102</sup> “accumulated precious and rare things to an even greater extent, and sought and searched over again” 尤加寶異, 仍更搜葺.<sup>103</sup>

Later in this section on the “Vicissitudes of Painting” in the *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang shifts to accounts of the collecting histories of works secretly stored in the capitals, lost, and then collected again by Tang Taizong, who bought them from private individuals. Zhang further

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<sup>101</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.4; Acker, p. 117-118.

<sup>102</sup> Liang Wudi, personal name Xiao Yan 蕭衍, founded the Liang dynasty, one of the most stable of the Southern dynasties. He created universities and extended the Confucian civil service exams – demanding that sons of nobles study the classics, but he also embraced Buddhism. Many courtiers from this time period are included in Zhang’s compilation. See Tian Xiaofei on writing in the Liang court. Tian Xiaofei, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star: The Literary Culture of the Liang (502-557)* (Cambridge, MA: the Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

<sup>103</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.5; Acker, p. 119.

acknowledges the works assiduously copied during the reign of Wu Zetian the originals of which later succumbed to fire. In the *Fashu yaolu*, the anonymous note highlights how Wu Zetian had coerced the court official Wang Fangqing 王方慶 (d. 702), in 697, into giving up scrolls of calligraphy by his famous ancestors, among them the illustrious Wang Xizhi.<sup>104</sup> In the early Tang court, officials such as Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558–638) and Chu Suiliang took great care in authenticating works and noting specific details. These are the times to which the anonymous comment refers when it may have been considered an honor to contribute one’s works of painting or calligraphy to the court. By the mid-eighth century, many works were destroyed during the An Lushan rebellion (755-757), were distributed among members of the imperial clan, or in the case of the reign of Emperor Suzong 唐肅宗 (r. 756-762), out of the emperor’s lack of interest, they were “sold off to unworthy hands” 鬻於不肖之手.<sup>105</sup>

Recalling the days when donating to the court was an honor, Zhang’s *Fashu yaolu* provides both supporting and damning examples of imperial family members playing a role in transmitting the works. Zhang tirelessly gathered what information he could from those who had contact with his ancestors, as well as the descendants of these acquaintances.<sup>106</sup> For painting, he took notes on the remains of painted murals of the targeted temples. He pored through historical

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<sup>104</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.134.

<sup>105</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.6; Acker, p. 129.

<sup>106</sup> Shi Rui 史睿, “The Calligraphy and Paintings Collections and the Circle of *shiren* of the Two Capitals of the Tang dynasty: with Zhang Yanyuan’s family at its core” (*Tangdai liang jing de shuhua jiancang yu shiren jiaoyou – Zhang Yanyuan jiazou wei hexin* 唐代兩京的書畫鑒藏與士人交游- 張彥遠家族為核心), in *Tang yanjiu, juan 21* 《唐研究》第二十一卷 (2015), p. 113.

sources, and painting and calligraphy criticisms, perhaps with particular works from his family's collection in mind. In the end, the Zhang family collection can be pieced together through the *Fashu yaolu*, *Lida minghua ji*, *Xin Tangshu* and Li Chuo's 李綽 (ca. 805–ca. 862) *Shangshu gushi* 尚書故實 (Accepted Matters on the *Shangshu*).<sup>107</sup> Based on these textual records and confirmed through specific texts in the *Fashu yaolu*, Zhang's family once possessed in their collection Wang Xizhi's "On Yue Yi" (*Yue Yi lun* 樂毅論) in small standard script; a copy of Wang's "Orchid Pavilion Preface" (*Lanting xu* 蘭亭序) in semi-cursive script, and Xiao Ziyun's 蕭子云 (487–549) "xiao" 蕭 character in flying-white style. Acting as a spotlight on the texts in this companion volume, he documents in the *Lidai minghua ji* specific details of these losses through an exchange of letters between Emperor Xianzong and his grandfather, Zhang Hongjing, in 813. The recent loss of specific works from his family's collection seems to guide Zhang's selection of many of the texts included in the *Fashu yaolu*. The preface to his *Fashu yaolu* outlines his family's collection and its demise, as a major impetus for the compilation (discussed in Chapter One) but not otherwise articulated by Zhang.

Like the anonymous "A Narrative Record of Calligraphy in the Tang Court," the anonymous "Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods" has no attribution and is undated. Both notes stand out for their contribution and contrast to the more extensive, named authored texts that fill the *Fashu yaolu*. The format of these anonymous notes and the lengthy transcription of letters attached to the anonymous "Record of Calligraphy Works by Wang Xizhi" in *juan* 10 further separates them from the compilation, which, moreover, sets Zhang's *Fashu*

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<sup>107</sup> Shi Rui (2015), p. 120; and Acker, p. xlviiii.

*yaolu* apart from later compilations. Zhang's *Fashu yaolu* follows his agenda, even if he does not explicitly state one. Zhang selected and presented together texts that record a time when it was an honor to donate to the court and shows his family's clear connection to this time and how their collection once prominently upheld the established lineage of calligraphers. The climate had clearly changed, but Zhang had access to extensive records and the authority to decide the essentials for the study of calligraphy, which he used to confirm the lineage and firmly connect them to his family through direct and detailed records and notes. This is implied through the selection and arrangement of the anonymous notes that punctuate the compiled texts with named authors.

### **2.1 Losses and Copies at Court: The Case of the *Yue Yi lun***

Soliciting much attention on its own, Wang Xizhi's transcription of the *Yue Yi lun* finds an emphatic six texts in Zhang's *Fashu yaolu* that serve to show the importance of this famous work of calligraphy, which is documented to have stayed in the Zhang family collection until the early ninth century. In the *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang even mentions having held and viewed a copy.<sup>108</sup> An essay composed by Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (205–c. 254), the *Yue Yi lun* discusses the virtuous conduct of Yue Yi 樂毅 (c. late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE), a general of the Warring States period (5<sup>th</sup>c.–221 BCE) and a loyal minister from the state of Yan, who went into exile after being

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<sup>108</sup> This mention comes in the *Lidai minghua ji*, *juan 2*, section 4, “On Grading by Name and Price” 論名價品第, following a discussion of how an artist might shift ranks depending on a day's work: “I once saw the I once saw the *Yue Yi lun* written in the small standard script, which was in the class of Yu Shinan and Chu Suiliang.” 余會見小楷樂毅。虞褚之流, *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.33; Acker, p. 201.

unjustly incriminated. Wang Xizhi transcribed the essay in a small standard script (*xiao kai* 小楷).<sup>109</sup> The earliest account of this transcription known to date is found in the exchange of letters between Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty and the famous hermit Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536), his “aesthetic advisor.”<sup>110</sup> Zhang records their “Nine Letters on Calligraphy” (*Lunshu jiushou* 論書九首) in his *Fashu yaolu*, along with five other texts that confirm the importance of the *Yue Yi lun*. These are the *Fashu yaolu* texts that discuss the *Yue Yi lun* in considerable detail:

- 1) The hermit Tao Hongjing and Emperor Wu of the Liang discuss its authenticity in their “Nine Letters on Calligraphy” 論書九首,<sup>111</sup> *juan* 2; 2) Zhiyong 智永 (fl. c. 557–617) writes a

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<sup>109</sup> Very little of Xiahou Xuan’s literary works survive. These include opinions and letters and a few fragmentary texts, including lines from a “Rhapsody on the Imperial Heir” (*Huang yin fu* 皇胤賦), part of an essay on corporal punishment, “Rouxing lun” 肉刑論, and an excerpt from a discourse on music, “Bian yue lun” 辯樂論. The only other complete text that survives is his essay on Yue Yi, because copies of the text written by Wang Xizhi were preserved in later collections as an exemplary model of Wang’s regular script, *Early Medieval China: A Sourcebook*, p. 143, n. 23. For the complete texts see *Quan San guo wen* 21.1265b-1168a. Lu Huiwen 盧慧紋 writes about these texts and those from the Song dynasty to piece together the intricate relationship between eighth and ninth-century copies and their potential relationship to the original(s), Lu Hui-Wen 盧慧紋, “A Paradigm Redefined: Wang Xizhi’s (303–361) Calligraphic Masterpiece Essay on Yue. Yi (Yue Yi lun) in the Age of Printing” 唐至宋的六朝書史觀之戀：以王羲之《樂毅論》在宋代的摹刻及戀貌偽例, in *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 故宮學術季刊 31:3 (2013).

<sup>110</sup> Harrist uses this term in the catalog entry for a Yuan dynasty copy of the *Yue Yi lun*, in Robert E. Harrist and Wen C. Fong, *The Embodied Image, Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection* (Princeton, NJ: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1999), p. 138.

<sup>111</sup> These letters are not included in the *Mosou*, see Wei Xu 衛續, *Mo sou* 墨藪 (Beijing: Beijing Erudition Digital Research Center, 2009). The letters are included in *juan* 4, *Mochibian* under “miscellaneous arts one” 雜議一 and in the *Shuyuan jinghua*, *juan* 14 (書表) and 15 (書啟). See

“Colophon to Youjun’s Essay on Yue Yi” 題右軍樂毅論後, *juan* 2; 3) Chu Suiliang gives an account of its famous copying and distribution from the Tang court in “Notes on the Copies of the Essay on Yue Yi” 搨本樂毅論記, *juan* 3;<sup>112</sup> 4) Xu Hao’s 徐浩 (703–782) “Notes on Ancient Traces” *Guji ji* 古跡記, *juan* 3, and 5) Wu Pingyi’s 武平一 (fl. 684–741) “Notes on Mr. Xu’s Calligraphy” *Xushi fashu ji* 徐氏法書記, *juan* 3, provide details of their appreciation of the calligraphy work, its loss and return; and finally, 6) court historian, Wei Shu 韋述 (d. 757), confirms earlier accounts in his “Narrative Record of Calligraphy” 敘書錄 *Xushu lu*, *juan* 4.<sup>113</sup> While these accounts do not all discuss the *Yue Yi lun* exclusively, the details provide a specific example not only of a connection to a title known to have been in the family’s collection, but also one that reveals the shifts in the court and the precarious circumstances in which a work might not be treasured, appropriately, one of Zhang’s major concerns that had an immediate impact on him.

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Chen Si 陳思. *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華 (Beijing: Beijing Erudition Digital Research Center, 2009).

<sup>112</sup> Chu Suiliang’s account, is not included in the *Shuyuan jinghua* or *Mosou*. The text is included in the *Mochibian*, *juan* 14, under “collecting treasures” 寶藏之一 with Zhiyong’s colophon, Chu Suiliang’s “List of Calligraphy Works by Wang Xizhi;” Wang Fangqing’s 王方慶 (d.702), “Memorial on Submitted Calligraphy Works” 進書疏 *Jinshu shu*; He Yanzhi’s 蘭亭序記; Wei Shu’s “Record of the Kaiyuan” 開元記 (called 敘書錄 in the *FSYL*); Wu Pingyi’s 徐氏法書記 ; Xu Hao *Guji ji* 古跡記; Zhang Huaiguan’s *Er Wang shulu* 二王書錄 and Lu Yuanqing’s 跋尾記, *MCB*, 14.393-429.

<sup>113</sup> Xu Hao, Wu Pingyi, and Wei Shu are not included in *Mosou*. In the *SYJH*, Wu Pingyi’s record and Xu Hao’s notes can both be found in *juan* 13 “calligraphy notes” 書記; Wei Shu’s record is located in *juan* 7 “calligraphy records” 書錄;

Through these texts Zhang conveys examples of direct connoisseurship at the highest levels. The letters between Emperor Wu and the hermit Tao, *Lunshu jiu shou* 論書九首, *juan 2*, display their direct encounter with the work and their criteria for evaluation and determining authenticity. In their first letters, the Liang emperor questions the authenticity of the *Yue Yi lun* text, which the Hermit Tao, on the other hand, believes to be authentic. Tao writes, “although this writing is not among the models of method, it is still devoted to using uniform principles, hidden amidst it is fine regular script that at the same time restores the play between the two” 此書雖不在法例，而致用理均，背間細楷，兼復兩玩。<sup>114</sup> Here Tao acknowledges a slight shift from but reminiscences with the models. Tao then discusses other examples of Wang’s calligraphy that he has seen, even his flying-white style. This exchange shows the breadth of their knowledge of calligraphy and specifically Wang’s accomplishments in different scripts. In a subsequent letter, Tao compares the small standard-script characters of *Yue Yi lun* to those written more casually on fans. The emperor’s interest in authentication encourages donations of, as he describes it, an overabundance of scrolls, some of them likely not authentic. Still, this provides another instance when scrolls appear in front of those who appreciate them. As connoisseurs, Hermit Tao and the Liang Emperor indulge in distinguishing the authentic writings among works that look like copies. This exchange of letters demonstrates a model conversation on connoisseurship at court, as well as an early example of how donations were been received and viewed. In addition to these letters, Emperor Wu’s “Twelve Concepts about

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<sup>114</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.38.

Viewing Zhong You's Calligraphy" (*Guan Zhong You shufa shi'er yi* 觀鍾繇書法十二意)<sup>115</sup> demonstrates his status as a connoisseur and a time in history in which works were evaluated, ideally.

Complementing this level of appreciation, the *Yue Yi lun* proving its own worth survived into the Sui dynasty (隋, 581–618). Written as a colophon attached to the *Yue Yi lun*, *juan 2*, Zhiyong 智永 (fl. c. 557–617), a monk calligrapher active between the Chen 陳 (557–589) and Sui 隋 (581–618) dynasties,<sup>116</sup> records how the transcribed essay was praised and treasured. Zhang's largely chronological arrangement of his collection of records on calligraphy places Zhiyong's "Colophon to Wang Xizhi's *Yue Yi lun*" 題右軍樂毅論後 after the texts from the Liang dynasty (502–557) in *juan 2*. Zhiyong describes how the Liang and Chen elite searched for the work. According to Zhiyong, Emperor Wen of the Chen dynasty 陳文帝 (r. 560–66) received a copy of the *Yue Yi lun* during his reign, and then gave a copy to his son, the Prince of Shixing 始興王 (d. 568). After Shixing's death, the copy passed to Emperor Fei 廢帝 (r. 566–68) and then to the Yuhang Princess 餘杭公主 (exact dates unknown).<sup>117</sup> Once the state was unified under the Sui, they found that "the way this piece retained intent and harnessed skill, it

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<sup>115</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.36-37.

<sup>116</sup> Seven generations removed from his ancestor Wang Xizhi, Zhiyong had the name Wang Faji 王法極. One of his many students was Yu Shinan. He is best known for his hundreds of copies of the "One-Thousand-Character Essay" 千字文, composed of no repeating characters. The characters were written in the style of Wang Xizhi. Zhiyong wrote 800 copies in both regular and cursive script.

<sup>117</sup> *FSYL* (2019): 2.61; (1986), 2.62; see also Doran, p. 433, note 8.



singularly attained every kind of divine marvelousness” 此書留意運工，特盡神妙。<sup>118</sup> Zhiyong finishes his colophon by quoting Hermit Tao’s evaluation of the *Yue Yi lun*, “the brush strength fresh and charming, the paper and ink fine and new” 筆力鮮媚，紙墨精新。<sup>119</sup> Zhiyong’s colophon not only traces the history of the work among the imperial families, but also embeds in it records and descriptive observations for cross reference. Zhang Yanyuan made a point of including this entire colophon as part of his essential records.<sup>120</sup>

Tracing the essay to the Tang dynasty, when the *Yue Yi lun* reaches Tang Taizong’s court, it is famously copied. Chu Suiliang’s brief “Notes on the Copies of *On Yue Yi*” 搨本樂毅論記, dated 639, *juan* 3, specifically describes Tang Taizong’s command to produce from the inner storehouse the *Yue Yi lun* by Wang Xizhi, so that Feng Chengsu 馮承素 (617–672), a well-known professional copyist at the Hongwen guan 弘文館, could make six copies of the work to be presented to important officials at court. Chu records the names of the recipients: Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (c. 594–659), Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579–648), Gao Shilian 高士廉 (575–647), Hou Junji 侯君集 (d. 643), Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643), and Yang Shidao 楊師道 (568–647), recognizing these individuals and elevating the status of their work. Significantly, at least these

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<sup>118</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.61.

<sup>119</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.61.

<sup>120</sup> Zhiyong’s colophon is included in *Mochibian*, *juan* 14 on the first of three sections on “collecting treasures” 寶藏, *MCB* (2019), 14.393; and in *Shuyuan jinghua*, *juan* 20, but not the *Mosuo*.

six copies were known to exist outside the court.<sup>121</sup> The details of this account could potentially allow a connoisseur to find and identify specific copies.

Zhang outlines an extended history that also includes warnings of what might happen when works get into the wrong hands. Those who made copies, owned copies, and lost copies of the *Yue Yi lun* continued their activities during the reigns of Wu Zetian, and those of her sons, Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684, and 705–710) and Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 684–690), and grandson Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756). Continuing the praise of Taizong’s choices, Wu Pingyi writes a colophon to a collection of Xu Hao’s calligraphy *Xushi fa shu ji* 徐氏法書記.<sup>122</sup> Wu Pingyi, a member of the Wu clan, was active in the courts of Zhongzong and Ruizong. Having grown up in the palace, he is able to give a first-hand account of viewing the imperial collection.<sup>123</sup> His colophon provides

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<sup>121</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.107; 3.131-132; and Stephen J. Goldberg, “Court Calligraphy of the Early T’ang Dynasty,” in *Artibus Asiae* 49 (1988–1989), no. 3-4), p. 198.

<sup>122</sup> Given the mismatched dates (Wu’s death by 741), it is unlikely that Wu Pingyi could have praised Xu Hao’s calligraphy in the 750s.

<sup>123</sup> Although the attribution to Wu has been questioned, the colophon places the author and the works at the palace. Emphasizing his personal upbringing in the palace setting, Wu embellishes his account with detailed descriptions of his direct observations of the scrolls in close proximity to him: “many adorned with engraved ivory rollers and purple silk mountings” 多裝以鏤牙軸紫羅襪 *FSYL* (2019), 3.94; (1986), 3.90. Wu even records moments of watching the empress read over the scrolls and the palace ladies taking many cases out to be shown. As a connoisseur, he distinguishes the scrolls mounted during the reign of Tang Taizong from the others showing the traces of the Liang. The text markedly situates Wu amongst the cases and scrolls and so close to the “female scholars in charge” (*zhu nü xue* 主女學) that he can ask directly whether there were more. Their answer, “there are others, but we don’t know exactly how many” 答云: 尚有. 未知幾許, *FSYL* (2019), 3.94.

details of works entering and leaving the imperial collection, particularly works of the two Wangs from the Liang dynasty through the reign of Emperor Xuanzong. *Xushi fashu ji* describes the destruction of the Liang palace collection during the rebellion of Hou Jing 侯景 (d. 552), as well as efforts at rebuilding the imperial library during the Sui.<sup>124</sup> Specifically, Wu discusses Tang Taizong's collection of works by Wang Xizhi, including the *Lanting xu* and *Yue Yi lun*, as well as the copies made and leaked outside the palace:

Taizong held Youjun's works in particular esteem and appreciation. At the beginning of the Zhenguan era, he sent down an edict to purchase and search for his works and gathered almost all of those that were scattered. Whenever he had free time from the many machinations of state, he would fully take them in and admire them. The *Lanting xu* and *Yue Yi lun* were the best known and most treasured. He often ordered text-rubbing experts Tang Puche<sup>125</sup> and others to make rubbings of the *Lanting* to give to the Duke of Liang Fang Xuanling and eight others. Puche stole rubbings and took them out, thereupon they were transmitted outside.

太宗於右軍之書，特留睿賞。貞觀初，下詔購求，殆盡遺逸。萬機之暇，備加執玩。蘭亭，樂毅尤聞寶重。常令搨書人湯普徹等搨蘭亭，賜梁公房玄齡已下八人。普徹竊搨以出，故在外傳之。<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Zhang Yanyuan only includes the latter half of Wu's inscriptions, which begins in the Liang and reaches into the Tang with anecdotes of court collections and projects. The first section is included in the subsequent *Mochibian* and includes an evolution of script types, *FSYL* (2019), 3.93.

<sup>125</sup> Tang Puche 湯普徹 (active early 7<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>126</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.93; see also Doran, p. 438.

This excerpt not only exemplifies Tang Taizong's admiration for the works of Wang Xizhi, but also the efforts and leisure he spent seeking out the works and enjoying them. Importantly, as well known, the emperor's admiration extended to having tracing copies made and distributed as gifts. This practice allowed for, notably, unauthorized acquisition of copies and subsequent additional, numerous renderings. Wu can attest to many of the details as well as the stakes of the courts of Zhongzong and Ruizong. In this vein, such a record highlights the urgency of spreading knowledge of and preserving such works, as well the contrast between courts that protect or lose valuable works of painting or calligraphy.

According to Wu's *Xushi fashu ji*, *juan 3*, Taizong, Gaozong, and Wu Zetian appreciated and protected calligraphy works, but as he describes, Zhongzong's court failed to maintain control of the collection. During Zhongzong's decidedly short reign, 705–710, Wu writes, “high-ranking imperial family members enjoyed lavish favor and palace restrictions was not strict, so many treasures of the imperial repository entered private residences” 貴戚寵盛, 宮禁不嚴, 御府之珍, 多入私室.<sup>127</sup> This contrast in the protection of treasures had a direct impact on transmitting the *Yue Yi lun*. Apparently, the imperial family of this time coveted the works of calligraphy for augmenting their own personal status rather than for the works' own value as masterpieces of art. The Taiping Princess 太平公主 (662–713) was one of the named culprits, who seems to have disregarded the value of the works, even those marked by the hand of Tang Taizong. According to Wu's account, she was more concerned with possessing prized works and

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<sup>127</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.93; see also Doran, p. 440.

stole them away to her private residence. This greed eventually resulted in the work falling into the wrong hands. Wu's record finishes with a personal encounter with the Taiping Princess' son:

When I, Pingyi, served in Chenzhou, I worked continuously with the Taiping Princess' son Xue Chongyin<sup>128</sup> and cousin Chongyun.<sup>129</sup> They said that when the Taiping Princess fell out of favor, Chongyin held onto seven scrolls of *Yue Yi lun* and other works. He asked Chongyun to entrust them to his uncle, Jing, the imperial son-in-law,<sup>130</sup> to present to the Prince of Qi<sup>131</sup> so as to avoid disaster; thereupon the works made their way to the establishment of the imperial prince. Chongyin's younger brother Chongjian<sup>132</sup> married the daughter of the Liang prince Xuan,<sup>133</sup> and the prince's household also possessed some of these works. Later, he committed a crime and was banished to Wuxi, and the calligraphy works made their way back to the imperial repository, where court officers and aristocrats in many cases obtained them.

平一任郴州日，與太平子薛崇胤，堂兄崇允連官，說太平之敗，崇胤懷樂毅等七軸，請崇允託其叔駙馬璿貽岐王，以求免戾，此書因歸邸第。崇胤弟崇簡娶梁宣王女主家，王室之書亦為其所有。後獲罪謫五溪，書歸御府，而朝士王公，亦往往

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<sup>128</sup> Xue Chongyin 薛崇胤 (c. 683).

<sup>129</sup> Xue Chongyun 薛崇允 (684–738).

<sup>130</sup> Uncle Jing 璿 (dates unknown).

<sup>131</sup> Prince of Qi 岐王, or Tang Ruizong 唐睿宗 (r. 684–690).

<sup>132</sup> Xue Chongjian 薛崇簡 (680–724).

<sup>133</sup> The Liang Prince Xuan 梁宣王, posthumous name for Wu Sansi 武三思 (d. 707), was a powerful chancellor during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian, his aunt, and her son Emperor Zhongzong. He was killed in a failed rebellion.

Wu Pingyi gives a detailed first-person recollection of his viewing of actual works and conversations about them, as they precariously shifted from the court to private, inappropriate quarters, but then presumably returned to their proper place. As a record on Xu Hao's calligraphy, Wu's colophon about the prized work, furthermore, deepens his praise of Xu for carrying on the legacy of the Two Wangs. This legacy is exemplified in the works that he describes in detail. Zhang's inclusion of this account places Xu in line with the Wangs, and Wu Pingyi provides a connection to the lost works.

Providing another layer of legitimation, in line with Wu Pingyi's "Note on Xu's Calligraphy," Xu Hao himself writes his own "Notes on Ancient Traces" (*Guji ji* 古蹟記), dated 783, *juan* 3.<sup>135</sup> Xu Hao, a celebrated court calligrapher under Xuanzong and Suzong, acted as Junior Preceptor to the Heir Apparent. During his lifetime he became the most favored to transcribe edicts, announcements of office, and stele inscriptions. Xu passes on his teachings to his sons and grandsons in his "On Calligraphy" 論書, which discusses aesthetics specific to the Tang.<sup>136</sup> Zhang Yanyuan also includes this essay in the *Fashu yaolu*. Xu Hao's record briefly discusses famous calligraphers before providing an account of the palace collection from

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<sup>134</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.93-94; see also Doran, p. 432.

<sup>135</sup> This would have been a year after Xu Hao's death. In this case, McNair explains that this might be an error of the copyist, see McNair (1987), p. 79. Between Wu Pingyi's text and this record by Xu Hao, Zhang Yanyuan inserts Xu Hao's *Lunshu*.

<sup>136</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.95.

Taizong's reign through the mid-eighth century. Building upon Chu Suiliang's evaluation of the collection in 639, Xu adds anecdotes about the collection thereafter through the reign of Emperor Suzong.<sup>137</sup> Xu's version of the movements of the *Yue Yi lun* strays from Wu Pingyi's conclusion, however: after the failures of Zhongzong's second reign, Xu's account leaves the manuscript lost rather than returning to imperial hands. Still, Wu Pingyi and Xu Hao, and much later Zhang Yanyuan, unsurprisingly agree on the praiseworthiness of the strong, central control of the collections from Taizong through Wu Zetian. Upon hearing of the Head of the Chancellery, Di Renjie's 狄仁傑 (630–700), lament for not having ever seen fine examples of calligraphy, Empress Wu reportedly had 20 scrolls of genuine traces (*zhen ji* 真迹) of the Two Wangs brought from the palace collection to show all of the chancellors, but then had them promptly taken back.<sup>138</sup> This note confirms the exclusiveness of the Imperial collection and its oversight. Zhang Yanyuan makes a similar remark about how, once works entered the imperial storehouse, they were not seen outside the court. As documented throughout, however, copies were made for study and thus explain how in subsequent dynasties traces of these works have survived. Wu Zetian's court, laudably, secures the original works again in the collection after they are viewed or copied.

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<sup>137</sup> According to Xu, during Gaozong's reign, six officials received court-commissioned copies of Wang Xizhi's *Yue Yi lun* and other works. Furthermore, copies of the *Yue Yi lun* existed outside the palace. This note points out this distinction between the court and the larger public. *FSYL* (2019), 3.93; see also Doran, p. 424.

<sup>138</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.98; see also Doran, p. 435.

In contrast, during Zhongzong's second reign, 705–710, the imperial collection was not so carefully tended, which ultimately reflects on the ruler. Xu Hao with even more intrigue records that during Zhongzong's rule, Secretariat Director Zong Chuke 宗楚客 (d. 710) convened a great banquet of high-ranking and important people to display authentic scrolls by Wang Xizhi that he had obtained out of imperial favor and had mounted on screens. Shortly thereafter the Anle Princess' 安樂公主 (684–710) husband Wu Yanxiu 武延秀 (d.710), who had seen the works, questioned how much the Princess' father Zhongzong favored her. To prove her father's esteem, she visited Director Zong to view the calligraphy works and then reproached her father, who opened up the treasury for her. As a result, the works were “scattered about the court and were no longer treasured” 分散朝廷, 無復寶惜.<sup>139</sup> Essentially, the scrolls were devalued and subsequently lost. This anecdote places the Anle Princess at the turning point of a collection that is subsequently scattered. Rather than value the works for their mastery or their instructions, the Princess uses them as tokens to prove her father's regard. With this lapse in regard for the collection and instead allowing an individual to use a work for personal gain, the integrity of the collection crumbles.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> *FSYL* (2019) 3.98; see also Doran, p. 440.

<sup>140</sup> Rebecca Doran writes succinctly about this shift in meaning granted the scrolls of calligraphy among the high-ranking officials and imperial family members, specifically how their appreciation for the beauty of the calligraphy is overtaken by using the works or desiring the works as tokens of imperial favor. She uses these examples to show how female collectors, specifically, were blamed for these losses, Doran, p. 441.



In Xu Hao's account, *Guji ji*, individual greed leads to the loss of Wang Xizhi's *Yue Yi lun*, specifically:

The Taiping Princess took out five satchels and fifty scrolls and had made new four-character seal tear-offs in archaic tadpole script. She gave thirty scrolls each to the prime ministers and ten each to the generals and imperial sons-in-law. From this point, the genuine traces of the palace storehouses were scattered and lost amongst various households. The Taiping Princess loved the *Yue Yi lun*. She had it wrapped in an embroidered pouch and placed in a chest. When she fell from power, there was an old woman from Xianyang who smuggled it out in her sleeve. A district official was searching for her and was hot on her trail. The old woman got scared and tossed it under the stove. The fragrance could be smelled for miles, never to be gotten again.

太平公主取五帙五十卷，別造胡書四字印縫。宰相各三十卷，將軍駙馬各十卷。自此內庫真蹟，散落諸家。太平公主愛樂毅論，以織成袋盛，置作箱裏。及籍沒後，有咸陽老嫗竊舉袖中。縣吏尋覺，遽而奔趨。嫗乃驚懼，投之竈下，香聞數里。不可得。<sup>141</sup>

Xu describes how the Taiping Princess, whose dates overlap with the Anle Princess, newly stamped fifty scrolls, which she gifted to powerful personages. Through her actions, genuine works, according to Xu, were distributed and lost outside the palace. The *Yue Yi lun*, however, had to be stealthily removed. Notably, this did not happen until the princess had fallen from power. Still, the eventual destruction of the work punctuates the princess' larger role in scattering the contents of the imperial collection.

Even though Xu's account of the loss of the *Yue Yi lun* and that of Wu Pingyi's differ, both versions of the story relay the easy access to Zhongzong's collection and its careless

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<sup>141</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.99; see also Doran, pp. 442-43.

dissemination. Xu affords the Taiping Princess a decidedly more active role, both in distributing the collection and in losing the *Yue Yi lun*. Tragically, after the Princess' fall from power, the work was stolen, then burned.<sup>142</sup> These records coincide with Zhang's claim about an era, now past, when it was an honor to donate one's works to the court. Zhang Yanyuan's inclusion of these accounts casts no doubt on the value placed on the *Yue Yi lun*, both official and personal. But at the same time, it heeds warning from a time when the emperor too lax or those in the imperial household too greedy that generated precarious circumstances for the work and its dramatic loss. Despite these trials, a copy of this work made it into his family's collection, another instance in which worthy works meet worthy owners.

In *juan* 4 of the *Fashu yaolu*, the second *juan* of Tang texts, Zhang includes an even more specialized and detailed, eighth-century account that mentions the *Yue Yi lun*. Wei Shu 韋述 (d. 757) was a court historian who recorded details about the imperial collection of calligraphy under Tang Taizong and Xuanzong. In his *Xushu lu* 敘書錄 (“Narrative Record on Calligraphy”), Wei Shu describes how authentic works of the Two Wangs, Zhang Zhi 張芝 (d. 192), and his brother, Zhang Chang 張昶 (d. 206), were copied. He outlines attempts to search for and purchase works, as well as to “distinguish between the authentic and fake” 定其真偽. His inventory accounts for authentic scrolls marked on the seams with “Zhenguan” 貞觀. In his details he also notes how the works in cursive were transcribed in regular script. This is where Wei also briefly records the transmission of copies of the *Lanting xu* and the *Yue Yi lun*. He

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<sup>142</sup> Doran's article further argues about the specific gendered attribution of these losses. As well, she shows how this lore of loss became even more popular in later recounting of the stories.

writes that the Taiping and Anle princesses requested to borrow and take these works out to be copied, and this is the reason the *Yue Yi lun*, in particular was lost. These specific details of transcriptions in a different script in addition to a rubbing, as well as the reign seals and written characters, make Wei's account more specialized. He specifies practices in the Kaiyuan era 開元 (713–741) in which following imperial orders, certain officials liberally changed the scroll covers, separated one scroll to make two, got rid of excess writing, and replaced some signatures with their own and marked the scrolls with the characters “Kaiyuan,” as a seal. Later Zhang's interest in such details could help connoisseurs authenticate or even forge works. According to Wei, the court had in its possession a number of scrolls by both Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi, in regular and semi-cursive script (*zhen xing shu* 真行書), including fans.<sup>143</sup>

Together these records of and notes on the *Yue Yi lun* provide details of historical circumstance, as well as material context that show how the work was recognized, revered, and lost. The textual evidence of these movements, coupled with any remaining copies, subsequently carry the potential remaining worth of the work to new connoisseurs, collectors, and historians. Zhang picked out these detailed texts to include in his *Fashu yaolu* without commenting on them. They provide in considerable unfiltered detail, how the *Yue Yi lun*, was marked and remarked upon at court and in the imperial household. It was discussed, copied, gifted, fought over, and lost, and bears the literal touch of history, thus must fall into the right hands. Indeed, ink copies and rubbings of the *Yue Yi lun* survived through the Song and Yuan dynasties, as did

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<sup>143</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.135-135.

copies of the equally famous *Lanting xu*.<sup>144</sup> Without these complete accounts and details of the work's background, one would have difficulty imagining its importance from the past to the present. A similar textual trail carries the *Lanting xu* and the “*xiao*” character across time and space though in different documentary forms.

## 2.2 Preserving Works Outside the Court: the *Lanting Xu* and the “*xiao*” character

The story of the *Lanting xu* 蘭亭序 (“The Orchid Pavilion Preface”), written in the semi-cursive script by Wang Xizhi, c. 353, gives robust evidence, not in the form of inventory lists or a discussion between connoisseurs at court, but through a compelling sketch.<sup>145</sup> No less important, this account places the work firmly back in imperial hands and secures its value in history, after a precarious existence outside the court. Immediately following Wu Pingyi and Xu Hao's writings in *juan* 3, Zhang Yanyuan inserts He Yanzhi's 何延之 (dates) “Notes on the Orchid Pavilion” (*Lanting ji* 蘭亭記), written in 714. The notes describe the famous theft of the *Lanting xu* from the monk Biancai 辨才 (early 7<sup>th</sup> century Tang, exact dates unknown) by one of Taizong's censors. This story shows how through much effort the work returns to its rightful and celebrated owner, Tang Taizong. Before Taizong's acquisition of the work, the original had passed down through Wang Xizhi's family to Biancai, who had learned calligraphy from Zhiyong, a distant Wang descendant. Zhiyong is also known for writing a colophon on the *Yue Yi lun* (discussed above), and crucial to the established lineage of calligraphers discussed below. As

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<sup>144</sup> For a Yuan dynasty copy of the *Yue Yi lun*, see *Embodied Image*, p. 138-39.

<sup>145</sup> Not included in the *Mosou*, but included in the *Mochibian*, *juan* 14, under “collecting treasures” 寶藏 *baozang*; and the *Shuyuan jinghua*, *juan* 13 on “calligraphy notes” 書記 *shuji*.

the story goes, the *Lanting xu* was the last work to complete Tang Taizong's collection of all of Wang's works, and the emperor treasured the *Lanting xu* above all other works, even famously requesting to be buried with it. We know, too, from these anecdotes, records, and inscriptions that Taizong had many copies made, including those by Feng Chengsu.<sup>146</sup> Arguably, these well-known legends increased the value of the *Lanting xu*, as well as interest in collecting practices, and allow scholars to connect the original to later copies.

He Yanzhi's "Notes on the Orchid Pavilion" presents the praiseworthy lengths one might take to obtain a prized work. After many failed attempts to obtain this coveted "Orchid Pavilion Preface," Senior Vice Prime-Minister Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579–648) recommended that the Investigating Censor, Xiao Yi 蕭翼 (fl. 626–49) make a fourth and final attempt to retrieve the masterpiece.<sup>147</sup> Upon this recommendation, the emperor summoned Xiao Yi, who requested to conduct the mission privately. Xiao disguised himself as a traveling Confucian scholar in a yellow, broad-sleeved cloak. With him, he took three to four works by Wang Xizhi borrowed from the emperor's vast collection. In his efforts to put Biancai at ease, he played chess and listened to music with him, chatted about history and literature, and drank and composed poetry. He Yanzhi describes how, effectively, Biancai felt young again. On a subsequent visit, Xiao Yi brought a painting to share, and their conversation shifted to painting and calligraphy. This is

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<sup>146</sup> See for reference Wu Pingyi, in *FSYL* (2019), 3.93-95.

<sup>147</sup> Xiao Yi was the grandson of emperor Yuandi of the Liang, which had controlled the area where Biancai's monastery sat.

when Xiao Yi was able to view works by Wang Xizhi, including the *Lanting xu*, but proceeded to challenge Biancai to show him even better and more authentic works. This prompted Biancai to leave Xiao Yi alone with the *Lanting xu*, Xiao Yi's ultimate goal, as he was then free to take it. After his success, Xiao Yi revealed himself to Biancai. Both Fang Xuanling, who recommended Xiao Yi, and Xiao Yi were generously rewarded – Xiao Yi, with jewels, two fine imperial steeds with precious equipment, silver vase, gold-inlaid vase, agate dish, and a town mansion and country estate. Biancai, too, received satin and grain, which he used to erect a new pagoda.<sup>148</sup> Taizong proves a welcome role model for preserving works of calligraphy. He not only secured the status of this specific work, but also the circulation of copies, not to mention the lore that further celebrated writing, calligrapher, and collector. The retelling of these events

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<sup>148</sup> Importantly, a lesser known account of this trick suggests that Li Shimin, that is, Taizong, when he was still a prince, retrieved the work in 621 through his court official Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641). Liu Su 劉鋹 wrote an account of this scheme. While He Yanzhi indicated that Zhiyong gave the *Lanting xu* directly to Biancai, Liu records that it was first given to emperor Xuandi of the Chen (r. 569–583) and that during the Sui dynasty it reached the hands of the monks, Zhiguo 智果, then Biancai. More notably, He's account has Taizong, the emperor, successfully retrieving the manuscript from Biancai, after he ascended the throne in 627, but Liu states that Ouyang Xun retrieved the work in 621, while Li Shimin was still prince. This version of the story would give the role of the imperial court in preserving such works less prominence, the role of the prince versus the emperor, see John Hay's translation in Han Chuang (John Hay), "Hsiao I gets the Lan't'ing Manuscript by a Confidence Trick." 2 parts. *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, 5, no.3 (July/August 1970); 5, no. 6 (January/February 1971). *FSYL* (2019), 3.101-107.

shows important elements of connoisseurship and appreciation: only Wang Xizhi's works could compete with one of his masterpieces; certain individuals could be swept away by viewing such works, and finally, not just anyone could succeed in stealing away a treasure, for the emperor, no less. This clever individual would be generously rewarded for bring a work back to a rightful owner.

By Zhang Yanyuan's time original or copies of such famous works would be further scattered and difficult to trace. Between the *Fashu yaolu* and the *Lidai minghua ji*, at least four independent texts spotlight praise and physical placement of another work of calligraphy important in the lineage, the character “*xiao*” 蕭, written by Xiao Ziyun 蕭子云 (487–549) in the flying-white style (*feibai* 飛白) and mounted on the wall of a studio named after it. The accounts of this specific example of an inscribed work not only place the Zhang family more directly amidst the collecting histories and perpetuate the canonical lineage from Wang Xizhi to Xiao Ziyun, but also give credence to Zhang's concern for inserting his family's records in the larger context or vice versa. He devotes unusual attention to this one character for this reason.

Zhang's great grandfather and two others write about preserving Xiao's “*xiao*” character in the flying white style. These three complete texts record and praise this one character written by Xiao Ziyun: 1) Cui Bei's 崔備 (747–816) “Note on the Flying White Mural Calligraphy of the Character *xiao*” 壁書飛白蕭字記; 2) Li Yue's “Encomium on the Flying White Mural Calligraphy of the Character *xiao*” 壁書飛白蕭字贊; and 3) “Note on the Xiao Studio” 蕭齋記 by Zhang Hongjing (張弘靖, 760–824), the Duke of Gaoping 高平侯. These first-hand accounts of the physical transfer of Xiao Ziyun's “*xiao*” character illustrate an instance of saving an

important work of calligraphy outside the ownership of the imperial family.<sup>149</sup> They appear in order at the end of *juan* 3. Later compilations of texts on calligraphy do not isolate this of texts.

Xiao Ziyun, a scholar of the Liang dynasty, mastered all styles of calligraphy, such as small seal, cursive, and semi-cursive scripts, but is most notable for creating a small-seal flying-white style (*zhuan shu fei bai* 篆書飛白). The flying-white style stands out for its quick, wispy lifting and skipping of a relatively dry brush that highlights the strands of paper (the white) unmarked by the ink as the brush flies. Tang Taizong and Empress Wu Zetain are known for their own writing in this style. When Zhang Huaiguan and Zhang Yanyuan point to the value of studying the standards embodied in the physical character, particularly when original writings were not readily available. Zhang Huaiguan isolates Xiao Ziyun in the “capable category” (*neng pin* 能品) of his *Shudian*:

For example, the effects of Xiao Ziyun’s calligraphy, although childish, its effects lasted for several days. Those who saw it could not say they didn’t study Xiao’s calligraphy. Wanting to peek at Zhong You, this wall was several *ren* tall, and it was rare for one to obtain this entry to its gate. Young Wang then was like a crazed wind uprooting a tree, with great strength to move a mountain and this desire to imitate him, he stood and looked stiff and prostrate, able to know but not obtain it.

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<sup>149</sup> None of these texts appear in *Mosou*. Cui Bei’s note is included in the *SYJH*, *juan* 13 “Calligraphy Notes” 書記 *shu ji*, with Zhang Hongjing’s note, followed by Taizong’s comments on the flying-white style 飛白書記, as well as a Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) on the tadpole script *kedou* 科斗書後記; Li Yue’s encomium is included separately in *juan* 19 of the *SYJH* under “Calligraphy Appraisals” 書贊. All three of these texts on the *xiao* character are included in the *Mochibian*, *juan* 13, under “Appraisal Narratives” 贊述 *zanshu*, with many others listings including Han Yu’s “Song of the Stone Drums 石鼓歌 calling for the preservation of the ancient Stone Drums, which preserved carvings in an ancient seal script from the fifth century BCE.



假如効蕭子雲書，雖則童孺，但至効數日，見者無不云學蕭書。欲窺鐘公，其牆數仞，罕得其門者。小王則若驚風拔樹，大力移山，其欲効之，立見僵仆，可知而不可得也。<sup>150</sup>

The effects of Xiao Ziyun's calligraphy, if afforded a rare peek, could last for days. Still, imitations though important for their inspiration could not capture his playfulness. Xiao Ziyun's elegant and light turns of the brush showcase his models in the Wang tradition. The Liang Emperor Wu praised his calligraphy as rivalling Zhong You 鍾繇 (151–230), while Xiao claimed his models to be both Wang Xizhi and Zhong You but also in his own, different style. Of note, in the regular script (*zhenshu* 真書), Xiao Ziyun is believed to have learned from Wang Xianzhi first, and later modeling his work after Zhong You. He continues the Wang lineage, none the less, and his works were sought after for copying.

The first account of the discovery of one of Xiao's characters found in a Buddhist Temple in the south comes from Cui Bei, who held various posts in the capital<sup>151</sup> and served in the courts of both Dezong (781) and Xianzong (811). In his "Notes on the Flying White Mural calligraphy of the Character *xiao*," Cui writes about how the *xiao* character, written in the flying-white style by Xiao Ziyun, was specifically found on the wall of Jianye Buddhist Temple 建業佛

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<sup>150</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260.

<sup>151</sup> Courtesy name Shunzhi 順之, of Xuzhou 許州, present-day Xuchang in Henan province, of the Qinghe Cui clan. Upon his death in Chang'an, he requested that the reburial of his displaced ancestors in the capital region. His father had fled south to Yangzhou during the rebellion. See Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), p. 100, note 46.

寺, located south of the Yangzi River.<sup>152</sup> Cui details how although other officials insisted that the character be plastered over, one official insisted on protecting it and had rubbings made in order to continue studying it. Through these copies, scholars elevated the status of the character, and when this scholar left office, the character was placed in the residence of a lesser official. Cui recalls how Li Yue obtained it and left it in a neighborhood where it could be appreciated. Its value that much more inflated for having survived in the old capital after 300 years, Cui's memorial documents this affair. He writes, "only this "xiao" character is still in the old capital, after 300 years it still has not crumbled. So that it can be passed on to later generations, like a secret it has been preserved" 惟此「蕭」字在乎舊都，三百年間竟無頹圯，俾後之傳授，似陰有保持。<sup>153</sup> Indicative of his time period, late 8<sup>th</sup> to early 9<sup>th</sup>, Cui describes how the character made it to Li's home and how his skilled neighbors and friends could appreciate it and feel the Jin master (Wang Xizhi) might be perceived in it.

Li Yue was both a member of the Tang ruling house and served as Vice Director in the Ministry of War.<sup>154</sup> The status of these writers and their corroborating accounts leave the legend of this written character undeniable. According to historical records, Li like his close friend, Zhang Hongjing, amassed a collection of calligraphy that included works by famous

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<sup>152</sup> Jianye 建業 was the name for Nanjing, the capital during the Six dynasties period.

<sup>153</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.108.

<sup>154</sup> Li Yue was the son of a close family friend. He and his father, the Duke of Qian 汧公, Li Mian 李勉 (717–788), are mentioned in Chapter One for their precious rock collection. Li Mian and Zhang's great grandfather Zhang Yanshang 張延賞 (723-787) are described to have been like kindred spirits.

calligraphers, such as Huang Xiang 皇象 (Eastern Wu 吳 dynasty, 222–280) and Yang Xin 羊欣 (359–442).<sup>155</sup> Li Yue writes a four-character verse about the *xiao* character, “Encomium on the ‘Flying White’ Mural Calligraphy of the Character *xiao*,” which references Cui’s note and touts the piece as the only surviving example of the script. Li describes the flying white as a lighter *bafen* 八分, another name for the Han dynasty clerical script known to finish with a heavy tail. His emphasis on the rarity of the piece accentuates its value. He writes about how he obtained the treasure and brought it to Luoyang. Framing his account, Li writes, romantically, in his preface about how he plays with these ancient marks and paintings as if meeting with the ancients, as if acquiring a new companion:

In the past, the worthies bequeathed to us examples of unperishing works of art, knowingly transmitting the treasures to later generations. Later generations gazed at their wondrous traces and saw how they had achieved their aims of their time. Their names were on par with sun and moon; their inner feelings connected the ancient past and the present.

昔賢垂不朽之藝，知傳寶於後世；後人睹(觀)妙絕之跡(迹)，見得意於當時。名齊日月，情契古今。<sup>156</sup>

Li’s verse evokes Cai Yong’s 蔡邕 (132-192) alleged discovery of the “flying-white” style and draws on nature metaphors to describe the writing: “the wall in twilight, sea serpent on silk” 壁昏蜃素 “turning over in flight to expose the white” 翻飛露白, “a green jade reed screen

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<sup>155</sup> See Shi Rui, “Two Capitals,” p. 110, note 106.

<sup>156</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.110-111.

reflecting snow” 翠箔映雪, “gauze in the wind” 羅衣從風, “the collapsing clouds,” 崩雲委地 “wandering fog” 游霧 and “pools frightening whales...” 昆池駭鯨.<sup>157</sup> As mentioned above, in a subsequent compilation of texts on calligraphy, Li’s encomium, categorized under “praise,” instead of “collecting,” is separated from Cui Bei and Zhang Hongjing’s writing about the same work.

Sharing their appreciation for fine calligraphy, both Li Yue and Zhang Hongjing, Zhang Yanyuan’s grandfather, were compelled to write about beholding Xiao’s character. By extension, Zhang Yanyuan unsurprisingly included these accounts in the *Fashu yaolu*. A close acquaintance of Li’s, Zhang Yanyuan’s grandfather, Zhang Hongjing, the Duke of Gaoping, in his account, describes how Li Yue took care of the piece, set it in the wall, and built a fine room for it in order to return it to its original intention. Zhang Hongjing’s account includes a description of the brush flying – “the dragon and phoenix intertwining” 龍鸞縈動.<sup>158</sup> Zhang Hongjing and Cui Bei thought the “*xiao*” character was the most valuable because it was a rare piece from the Southern dynasties. In addition to Zhang Hongjing’s record in the *Fashu yaolu*, Zhang Yanyuan provides another cross reference in the *Lidai minghua ji* when he records how his great uncle played a role in bringing the work to Luoyang:

Li Yue of the Board of War also obtained in Jiangnan a (section of a) wall with the character 蕭 *xiao* written on it in flying white style. He had it boxed to bring it

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<sup>157</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.111.

<sup>158</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.112.

back home to Luoyang, and presented it to my great uncle (Zhang Shen), who had it taken to Xiushanli,<sup>159</sup> where he put up a pavilion for it, which he called the Xiao Studio.

李兵部又於江南得蕭子雲壁書飛白「蕭」字，匣之以歸洛陽，授余叔祖，致之修善里，構一亭，號曰「蕭壘」。<sup>160</sup>

Zhang Yanyuan comments,

When Wang Ya<sup>161</sup> became Prime Minister, relying on his authority and power, he simply picked it up and took it away. Later, towards the end of the Taihe era (827-835) it was destroyed by rioting soldiery. All the particulars concerning this character *xiao* are given in full in my book *Fashu yaolu*.

王涯相倚權勢，負之而趨。太和末，為亂兵所壞，其蕭字本末，具餘所撰《法書要錄》中。<sup>162</sup>

Li Yue brought the piece to Luoyang and had the Xiao studio made to house it. Records indicate that the character was passed down to the Zhang family, and there was a Xiao studio, but it is unclear whether this studio was at the Zhang family residence.<sup>163</sup> The account by Zhang's

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<sup>159</sup> A neighborhood in Luoyang.

<sup>160</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.7-1.8; and Acker, pp. 137-138.

<sup>161</sup> Wang Ya 王涯 (d. 835) served Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805).

<sup>162</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 1.7-1.8; and Acker, pp. 137-138.

<sup>163</sup> Cited in the *Taiping Guangji*, the *Shangshu gushi* 尚書故實 records how the “*xiao*” character was passed on to the Zhang family as guest protectors. In the eastern capital (Luoyang) there was an old residence with a Xiao Studio. Prefaces and postscripts are all written by famous gentlemen 嘗大書蕭字，後人匣而寶之。傳至張氏賓護。東都舊第有蕭齋。前後序皆名公之詞也。出《尚書故實》。 Furthermore, the next entry in the *Taiping Guangji* on the same

grandfather brings the family collection and a canonical work closer to Zhang. Presented together, the accounts exemplify Zhang's concern for this particular work, records of it, its preservation, and its direct connection to his family. As a response to the comments made in the anonymous note "A Narrative Record of Calligraphy in the Tang Court" about unfortunate changes to the stewardship of such works, these accounts highlight another celebratory instance of protecting a model work of calligraphy and serve to illustrate the passion with which one might protect such works. Such details provide textual and material substance to further bolster the significance of studying the history of calligraphy.

### 2.3 Names of those Transmitting Texts and Brush Methods

Besides securing his family's place and the value of the works from their collection among historical precedents, Zhang arranges significant supplementary texts that reinforce the canonical lineage of calligraphers. Zhang's attention to this effort reinforces the lineage through an anonymous listing of the chronological transmission, which acts as a guide to many of the famed calligraphers in succession, particularly those from the 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. This

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topic cites the *Guo shi bu* 國史補, which suggests that it was the Emperor Wu who commissioned the original work:

When Emperor Wu built a temple, he had Xiao Ziyun write a large "xiao" character in the flying white style, until now that "xiao" character that he wrote has been preserved. Li Yue painstakingly bought it and returned it from Jiangnan to the Eastern Capital, where he erected a small pavilion for enjoying it. This pavilion was called Xiao Studio.

武帝造寺，令蕭子雲飛白大書蕭字，至今蕭字存焉。李約竭產，自江南買歸東洛，建一小亭以翫。號曰蕭齋。出《國史補》。TPGJ 207.4561

anonymous list, “Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods” 傳授筆法人名, has no attribution and is undated. In the compilation, it falls in the first *juan* just after the entries attributed to Wang Xizhi, Lady Wei, and Yang Xin, and before those by Wang Sengqian. The list of names is concise, simply noting the lineage, beginning with Cai Yong who “received [the brush methods] from spiritual beings”:

and then passed them on to Cui Yuan<sup>164</sup> and Lady Wenji.<sup>165</sup> Wenji passed this on to Zhong You. Zhong You passed this on to Wei Furen. Wei Furen passed it on to Wang Xizhi. Wang Xizhi passed it on to Wang Xianzhi. Wang Xianzhi passed it on to his nephew Yang Xin. Yang Xin passed this on to Wang Sengqian. Wang Sengqian passed this on to Xiao Ziyun. Xiao Ziyun passed this on to the monk Zhiyong. Zhiyong passed this on to Yu Shinan. Shinan passed this on to Ouyang Xun. Xun passed this on to Lu Jianzhi.<sup>166</sup> Jianzhi passed this on to his nephew Lu Yanyuan,<sup>167</sup> Lu Yanyuan passed this

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<sup>164</sup> Cui Yuan 崔瑗 (c.77–142), Eastern Han, known for his skills in calligraphy and mathematics.

<sup>165</sup> Lady Wenji 文姬, Eastern Han, daughter of Cai Yong, both literary scholars.

<sup>166</sup> Lu Jianzhi 陸柬之 (585-638), from Suzhou, a nephew of Yu Shinan, with whom he first studied. Later studied the works of Ouyang Xun, and the Two Wangs. Very few of his works survive. Zhou Mi’s 周密 (1232-1298) records include his “Orchid Pavilion Poems,” and his *Wenfu* 文賦. According to Zhou Mi, “Yuan-dynasty collectors knew several versions of the *Orchid Pavilion Poems*, all attributed to Lu Jianzhi,” from Ankeney Weitz, *Zhou Mi’s Record of Clouds and Mist Passing before One’s Eyes: An Annotated Translation* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2002), p. 274.

<sup>167</sup> Lu Yanyuan 陸彥遠 of the Qi 齊 dynasty (550–577) from Suzhou is listed as Lu Jianzhi’s 陸柬之 (585-638) son.

on to Zhang Xu.<sup>168</sup> Xu passed this on to Li Yangbing.<sup>169</sup> Yangbing passed it on to Xu Hao, Yan Zhenqing, Wu Rong,<sup>170</sup> Wei Wan, Cui Miao.<sup>171</sup> Altogether there are twenty-three people. The pattern passed finally to this.

蔡邕受於神人，而傳之崔瑗及女文姬。文姬傳之鐘繇。鐘繇傳之衛夫人。衛夫人傳之王羲之。王羲之傳之王獻之。王獻之傳之外甥羊欣。羊欣傳之王僧虔。王僧虔傳之蕭子云。蕭子雲傳之僧智永。智永傳之虞世南。世南傳之歐陽詢。詢傳之陸柬之。柬之傳之侄彥遠。彥遠傳之張旭。旭傳之李陽冰。陽水傳徐浩、顏真卿、鄔彤、韋玩、崔邈。凡二十有三人。文傳終於此矣。<sup>172</sup>

This list provides a handy connection from the Eastern Han (25-220) to the late ninth century that matches the bulk of the texts in the compilation. Zhang's compilation supports this list with the texts he attributes to the same authors in the same order, from Wei Furen to Wang Xizhi, Yang Xin, Wang Sengqian, Xiao Ziyun, Zhiyong, and Yu Shinan. They are located near the beginning of the list, just after Zhong You 鍾繇 (151–230), who is listed fourth. Zhang does not

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<sup>168</sup> Zhang Xu 張旭 (ca. 675-759), a native of present-day Suzhou. He held an official post in the residence of the Tang crown prince and was well known for his performative calligraphy and poetry, especially standard and cursive scripts.

<sup>169</sup> Li Yangbing 李陽冰 (c.721–785), leader in the seal script during the Tang dynasty. Yan Zhenqing asked Li to write the titles of most of his stele inscriptions, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 209.

<sup>170</sup> Wu Rong 鄔彤, along with Yan Zhenqing, transmits the methods of Zhang Xu. He was related to Huaisu.

<sup>171</sup> The last two lesser-known names, Wei Wan 韋玩 and Cui Miao 崔邈, are paired in other texts and are credited with accomplishments in the standard and semi-cursive script in harmony with ancient writers, see *Shuyuan jinghua*, *juan* 19, *SYJH* (Qing), 19.721, *SYJH* (Song), 19.159.

<sup>172</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 1.17-1.18.



include any writings by Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641) or any of the calligraphers that follow. Chu Suiliang or Xue Ji 薛稷 (649-713), later among the four known as the early Tang masters, are not included in the lineage note. Two texts by Chu Suiliang, however, appear in the *Fashu yaolu*, pointing to recognition of his scholarship but not necessarily his calligraphy. The other, latter calligraphers, Lu Jianzhi, Lu Yanyuan, Zhang Xu, Li Yangbing, Yan Zhenqing, Wu Rong, Wei Wan, and Cui Miao do not afford their own texts in Zhang Yanyuan's compilation. Of the earlier half, only Wang Xianzhi does not contribute his own note, record, or essay, though he is frequently acknowledged in the contents of many of the texts, as well as by the title of a text that is listed but not transcribed, Wang Xizhi's "Teaching Zijing the Brush Methods" 教子敬筆論, *juan* 1. Still, this note and the corresponding texts that Zhang includes work together to reiterate the accepted lineage from Lady Wei to Yu Shinan.

As I will show, Zhang emphasizes the beginning of the textual lineage with texts attributed to Wang Xizhi and Lady Wei, though only the short note, "My Discussion of Calligraphy" (*Zilun shu* 自論書) by Wang Xizhi appears to be authentic. The second text attributed to Wang is another text that is listed but not transcribed, and the subsequent two: The *Bizhen tu* 筆陣圖 ("Diagram of the Battle Array of the Brush"), attributed to Lady Wei, and a postscript attributed to Wang Xizhi are likely later creations attributed to the famous figures.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Barnhart researched the question of authenticity of this text. It is not recorded in the *Xin Tangshu* or *Jiu Tangshu*. Yu Shaosong suggested that it was forged during the Six Dynasties, because although questioned by Sun Guoting, it was probably still pre-Tang. See Barnhart and Yu Shaosong, note 2. The earliest version of this text traces back to Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashuyaolu*. It is also included in *Shuyuan jinghua* (*Juan* 18, Biography of Jin Wang Xizhi 晉王羲之別傳) and *Peiwenzhai shuhuapu*. From the Song dynasty the text is called 自論. See

Zhang's inclusion of these texts is important in marking the beginning of the lineage, as the authors of the text hold their place in the narrative, and the content of the texts provides comparisons and instructions, as well as legitimization and reminders of their importance.

At the same, these texts identify the calligraphers as critics and thinkers, who can also use words to make their case. Wang Xizhi's *Zilun shu* begins with his own calligraphy's comparison with that of Zhong You and Zhang Zhi, noting that some people suggest his writing surpasses that of Zhang Zhi. Wang presumes if he was as diligent as Zhang, famous for blackening the pond with his constant writing, that he would easily surpass him. Wang, notably, also sought to emulate past masters, purportedly, the first to do so, and personally searched through old works to determine that Zhong You and Zhang Zhi were the most excellent. With this, he places himself next in line.

My calligraphy compared to that of Zhong You and Zhang Zhi is even with them, some people say mine surpasses theirs. Zhang Zhi's cursive script is still equal with mine. Zhang Zhi's spirit and experience surpass others. He practices calligraphy by the pond until the pond water is filled with ink. If I were to indulge in calligraphy like him, it would not be necessary for me to demure to him. Later those who clearly understood this, knew this evaluation was not false. I have also exhausted my heart producing fine works for a long time. And having searched through all of the old works, only Zhong You and Zhang Zhi indeed are beyond compare. The others have lesser fine qualities, insufficient to consider. Besides these two worthies, my calligraphy is second only to theirs.

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Barnhart, Richard M., "Wei Fu-jen's *Pi Chen T'u* and the Early Texts on Calligraphy," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 18 (1964), p. 13-25, and Yu Shaosong 余紹宋 (1883-1949), *Shuhua shulu jieti* 書畫書錄解題 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1982).

吾書比之鍾、張：（鍾）當抗行，或謂過之，張草猶當雁行。張精熟過人，臨池學書，池水盡墨。若吾耽之若此，未必謝之。後達解者，知其評之不虛。吾盡心精作亦久，尋諸舊書，惟鍾、張故為絕倫，其餘為是小佳，不足在意。去此二賢，仆書次之。<sup>174</sup>

With “Teaching Zijing the Brush Methods,” which is attributed to Wang Xizhi, the listing in the *Fashu yaolu* highlights the line of teaching. Wang Xizhi taught his son, Wang Xianzhi, the brush methods, which places his son next in line, textually and calligraphically. It was important for Zhang Yanyuan to at least list this text to assert Wang Xianzhi’s prominent place in the lineage. Wang Xizhi’s teacher, on the other hand, claims her spot in the *Fashu yaolu* through a text, likely only attributed to her.<sup>175</sup>

Lady Wei’s 衛夫人, or Wei Shuo 衛鑠 (272-349) text, the *Bizhentu* 筆陣圖 “Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush,” compares movements of the calligrapher to one performing martial arts. The essay attributed to Madam Wei describes physical forms, such as “bone” and “sinew,” and the kinesthetic qualities of writing. The text famously reads:

Those skilled at imparting strength to their brush have much bone, while those not so skilled have much flesh. Calligraphy with much bone and little flesh is called sinewy; that which has much flesh and little bone is called ink pig. Writing that displays great

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<sup>174</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 1.7.

<sup>175</sup> Chronologically, this text is first mentioned in Sun Guoting’s *Shupu* of 687, who attributed it to Wang Xizhi. Zhang Yanyuan was the first to attribute it to Lady Wei. It is not recorded in the *Xin Tangshu* or *Jiu Tangshu*. Yu Shaosong suggested that it was forged during the Six Dynasties, because although questioned by Sun Guoting, it was probably still pre-Tang. For a full discussion see Barnhart (1964), pp. 13-25.

strength and a richness of sinew is sagelike; that which has neither strength nor sinew is defective.

善筆力者多骨，不善筆力者多肉，多骨微肉者謂之筋書，多肉微骨者謂之墨豬。多力豐筋者聖，無力無筋者病。<sup>176</sup>

The writing alone attained the visual and physical qualities of the sage, which was possible through teaching and study. This language endows the brush with expressive physical qualities that one can grasp and appreciate as much as the visuality or physicality of the calligraphy itself. For its instructive language, scholars have determined this text to be written in the Tang, rather than earlier.<sup>177</sup> The text is first mentioned in Sun Guoting's *Shupu* of 687, who attributed it to Wang Xizhi. By Sun's time, the text was already widely circulating. Zhang Yanyuan was the first to attribute it to Lady Wei. His attribution provides not only a nominally legitimate approach to the physical writing of calligraphy but also a clear lineage invested in Wang Xizhi through his alleged teacher.

As the transmission note indicates, Yang Xin 羊欣 (370-442) allegedly studied calligraphy with Wang Xianzhi, his uncle. His text, "A Collection of Names" 采古來能人書名 follows Wang Xizhi's postscript in *juan* 1. As a figure of the Southern Liu Song dynasty, Yang Xin provides a direct link to the Jin (or Wang) tradition of calligraphy. Yang's text provides playful commentary, anecdotes, and descriptions of 69 individual calligraphers from the Qin

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<sup>176</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 1.8-9; see Barnhart, p. 16.

<sup>177</sup> Barnhart, p. 16.

(221-206 BCE) to the Jin (266-420) dynasties. Comparisons, as well as identified teachers, work handily to establish a historical lineage. In some instances, Yang merely indicates the scripts which a given calligrapher wrote well. Notably, he adopted a style of describing calligraphy and calligraphers from his contemporary Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), who compiled and edited the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A New Account of the Tales of the World). In this vein, Yang offers tidbits about his calligraphers that animate potential views of their calligraphy, such as in the case of Cheng Miao 程邈 (exact dates unknown) of the Qin dynasty, his criminal record, or the boastfulness of Shi Yiguan 師宜官 (active c. 168-189) and how he improved the sales of a wine shop by donning its walls with his grand characters.<sup>178</sup> The individuals in Yang’s “Collection of Names,” as in the *Shishuo xinyu*, enjoy close relations, many of them fathers and sons, a number of them of the Wang clan. They talk about each other and reference how others may have referred to their calligraphy.<sup>179</sup> For the purposes of Zhang’s compilation, Yang Xin’s entry provides both an important connection to contemporary literary accounts and personalities, as well as a continuum in the lineage of practitioners. Zhang Huaiguan also highlights Yang Xin’s evaluations at the end of the *Shuduan*, which also support Zhang Yanyuan’s inclusion of his complete text (discussed in Chapter Three).

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<sup>178</sup> “Sometimes in his spare time he stopped at a wine shop and would first write on its wall. The people who saw it would gather, thereupon the wine sold grandly. After he drank enough, he would scrape off his writing and take leave” 或空至酒家，先書其壁。觀者雲集，酒因大售。俟其飲足，削書而退，*FSYL* (2019), 1.12. This anecdote portrays a performative Shi with an enthusiastic audience for his creations.

<sup>179</sup> Yang is the first theorist to use the terms – “fat” 肥 and “skinny” 瘦 – to describe calligraphy, when he compares Zhong You to Hu Zhao (胡昭, 162-250), *FSYL* (2019), 1.14.

According to the note on transmitting the brush methods, Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485) received them from Yang Xin. Following Yang Xin's work, then, Zhang Yanyuan includes two works by Wang Sengqian, another descendant of the Wang clan. Wang's "Letter on Calligraphy in Answer to Emperor Taizu of the Qi dynasty" 答齋太祖論書啓 lists the scrolls he offered to the throne and Wang's "On Calligraphy" (*Lunshu* 論書) offers select evaluation of generations of calligraphers.<sup>180</sup> Like the founding Emperor Gao 齊高帝 (r. 479-482), Wang Sengqian was active in both the Liu Song and Southern Qi dynasties. His father Wang Wanshou 王曇首 (394-430), a prominent statesman in the early Liu Song, which also placed the young Wang, a calligrapher, scholar and writer in a close relationship with the court. Sengqian was

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<sup>180</sup> Zhang Yanyuan does not include Wang Sengqian's other more theoretical writings, like *Biyi zan* 筆意贊 ("Eulogy on the spirit of the brush") or *Shufu* 書賦 ("Rhapsody or Poetic Exposition on Calligraphy"). The "Eulogy" first appears in the *Shuyuan jinghua*, *juan* 18.151 without an author; the *Peiwenzhai shuhua pu*, in *juan* 5, identifies Wang Sengqian as the author. In the eulogy, Wang discusses "the wonder of the brush, and the primacy of dynamic energy over form," 書之妙道，神彩為上，形質次之. Furthermore, that the in order to continue the work of the ancients, one must have both energy and physical form, and "one must let the heart forget there is a brush at work; the hand should forget it is writing, and the heart and hand will reach an emotional pitch" 必使心於筆，手忘於書，心手達情. Quoted in Ouyang Zhongshi, "Introduction," in Wang Youfen, in *Chinese Calligraphy*, p 40; Cong Wenju, in *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 433; and Tseng Yuho, *A History of Chinese Calligraphy* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1993), p. 253.

The *Shufu* follows a literary model, Lu Ji's 陸機 (261-300) *Wenfu* 文賦 (The Poetic Exposition on Literature). It is included in the *Mochibian* and *Shuyuan jinghua*. In the "Rhapsody of Calligraphy," Wang Sengqian, like Lu Ji, prioritizes "inner spirit" (*shencai* 神彩) over "outward appearance" (*xingzhi* 形質), but seems to take a lenient view of connecting what's in the heart to how the brush follows the hand. That beauty comes from achievement, *MCB* (2019), 11.319 and *SYJH* (Song) 20.165; *SYJH* (Qing) 20.750-751.

known to have mastered the clerical script. Emperor Wen of the Song (宋文帝, r. 424-453) was fond of him and appointed him to assistant in the palace library and secretary to the heir designate. In the late Yuanjia era 元嘉 (424-453) of Emperor Wen, Wang Sengqian served as academician to Liu Chang 劉昶 (436-497), Prince of Yiyang 義陽.<sup>181</sup> Wang's letter to the emperor reviews a few of the names already presented in texts above, as well as named works passed on to the throne, including those of past emperors. The letter attached to 20 scrolls of calligraphy offered to the throne provides material evidence for the friendly competition between the theorist and the emperor documented in the histories and reprinted in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 completed in 978.<sup>182</sup> Sengqian presents to the new emperor works from the Wu Emperor

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<sup>181</sup> *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature* (vol. 2): *A Reference Guide*, p. 1219.

<sup>182</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 1.18. The *Taiping guangji* entry reads:

the Qi Emperor Gao once competed with Wang Sengqian in calligraphy. The Emperor said: who is number one? Sengqian responded saying: among the calligraphy of servants, my calligraphy is number one, your majesty's calligraphy is number one among the emperors. The Emperor laughed, you are one who could be called good at your own scheme. From the *History of the Southern Dynasties*.

齊高帝嘗與王僧虔賭書畢，帝曰。誰為第一。僧虔對曰。臣書人臣中第一，陛下書帝中第一。帝笑曰。卿可謂善自謀矣。出《南史》。TPGJ 207.4560

Jing<sup>183</sup> and Jin Emperor An,<sup>184</sup> and three of his ancestors Wang Dao 王導 (276-339),<sup>185</sup> Wang Qia 王洽 (323-358)<sup>186</sup> and Wang Min 王珉 (351-388).<sup>187</sup> The submission is bolstered by works by Zhang Zhi, Suo Jing, Wei Boru,<sup>188</sup> and Zhang Yi.<sup>189</sup> This exchange exhibits the gestures and content of Wang's relationship with the emperor and the specific works that they both viewed with a high-level of connoisseurship.

In a similar vein, Wang Sengqian's "On Calligraphy" 論書 collects anecdotes about individual calligraphers, following Yang Xin's list above. Wang is also in the position to

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<sup>183</sup> Emperor Wu Jingdi 吳景帝 (r. 258-264), personal name Sun Xiu 孫休, ruler of the Wu dynasty (222-280), known for sponsoring the Confucian Classics.

<sup>184</sup> Emperor An of the Eastern Jin 晉安帝 (r. 397-419, is the emperor from whom Huan Xuan briefly took the throne, 403-404. Emperor An was the oldest son of the Jin Emperor Xiaowu 晉孝武帝 (r. 372-396).

<sup>185</sup> Wang Dao 王導 (276-339) was Wang Xun's grandfather. Wang Xun 王珣 (349-400) was an influential court official to the Jin Emperor Ming 晉明帝 (r. 323-325), personal name Sima Shao 司馬紹 (299-325).

<sup>186</sup> Wang Qia 王洽 (323-358), father of Wang Min 王珉 (351-388) and Wang Xun 王珣 (349-400), 3<sup>rd</sup> and most distinguished son of Wang Dao 王導 (276-339).

<sup>187</sup> Wang Min 王珉 (351-388) the younger brother of Wang Xun 王珣 (349-400).

<sup>188</sup> Wei Ji 衛覬 (Boru 伯儒, c. 155-229), was known as an official, writer, and calligrapher of the early Wei period 曹魏 (220-265), skilled at all four scripts. Only a few of his inscriptions and letters have survived. He is thought to have written the first draft of the *Siti shushi* 四體書勢 ("Configurations of Four Forms of Calligraphy"), completed by his grandson Wei Heng 衛恆 (d. 291), whose father was Wei Guan 衛瓘, courtesy name Boyu 伯玉, (220-291), see *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature*, vol. 2, p. 1290.

<sup>189</sup> Zhang Yi 張翼 (Bogong 伯恭, d. 264) of the Shu Han 蜀漢 (221–263) became a top general.



preserve and forward the names of his immediate ancestors, such as his great grandparent, the senior minister Wang Dao, whose calligraphy he included in his letter to the throne. Indeed, a great deal of this essay compares individual calligraphers to their fathers and focuses mainly on calligraphers closely associated with the Wang family. He compares each of the calligraphers to either Wang Xizhi or Wang Xianzhi, often using the pair as a measure for ranking.<sup>190</sup> This essay, like the simple listing of works for the emperor, provides a clear lineage of calligraphers.

Xiao Ziyun is listed as receiving the brush methods from Wang Sengqian. The next entry in the *Fashu yaolu* is Xiao Ziyun's letter to the throne attached to his copy of the "Thousand Character Essay" 千字文.<sup>191</sup> Xiao Ziyun's "Letter to the Throne" discusses his own practice of calligraphy and expresses his difficulty in deciding on a model. While the Liang Emperor Wu praised Ziyun's calligraphy as rivaling that of Zhong You, Ziyun himself evaluates his own calligraphy as "with the effects of Zhong You and Wang Xizhi, but with slight changes in character forms." Xiao Ziyun was recognized for his cursive and clerical styles and wanted to write a discussion of the cursive and clerical methods but stopped with a discussion of the

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<sup>190</sup> Wang Sengqian, furthermore, discusses essential terms, such as "natural" (*tianran* 天然) in contrast to "skilled" (*gongfu* 工夫), which are developed in later texts.

<sup>191</sup> Zhou Xingsi 周興嗣 (d. 521) allegedly composed the *Thousand Character Classic* 千字文 *Qianzi wen* at the behest of Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502-549). See Francis W. Paar, ed. *Ch'ien Tzu Wen the Thousand Character Classic: a Chinese Primer* (New York: Frederic Ungar, 1963). Nearly 32 copies of the text were found in Dunhuang, indicating its rise in popularity in the Tang dynasty. By the Song, it was well known enough to be used as a system for organizing documents, Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), p. 295 and p. 601.

“flying white.”<sup>192</sup> This is the script he creates and for which he becomes famous for writing the “*xiao*” character.

Xiao’s letter plays at least a dual role of activating the lineage of calligraphers from Wang Xianzhi, Yang Xin and Wang Sengqian to Zhiyong and the Tang court calligraphers, Yu Shinan and Ouyang Xun. The letter also serves to emphasize this lineage and the importance of Xiao’s singular written character the preservation of which Zhang Yanyuan’s grandfather was directly involved. In the late eighth century to early ninth century, as well as later in the compilation of texts, Xiao Ziyun and his famous “*xiao*” 蕭 character enjoy considerable attention in isolated entries (discussed above) describing the physical transmission and appreciation of this one character.

In the anonymous “Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods,” Zhiyong learns from Xiao Ziyun and passes on the brush methods to Yu Shinan, which brings the lineage into the Tang dynasty. Zhang includes Zhiyong’s colophon to the *Yue Yi lun* though separated in the *Fashu yaolu* by memorials, essays, and letters written by Yu He, the Liang Emperor, Tao Hongjing, Yu Yuanwei, Yu Jianwu, and Yuan Ang (see Appendix A). The third *juan* of the *Fashu yaolu* gathers all the texts from the Tang dynasty, besides those written by Zhang Huaiguan and Dou ji, as well as the lesser known Wei Shu 韋述 (dates unknown) and Lu Yuanqing 盧元卿 (dates unknown), whose texts fill *juan* 4 to 9. Referring to the transmission note, these texts include one written by Yu Shinan, but not Ouyang Xun.<sup>193</sup> Chu Suiliang is not

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<sup>192</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 1.25.

<sup>193</sup> Ouyang Xun’s 歐陽詢 (557-641) “Eight Knacks” 八訣 is well documented in subsequent

included in the transmission list though two of his texts are included in the *Fashu yaolu* (discussed above). Yu Shinan's brief guide is discussed below.

By the early Tang dynasty, the records of evaluation shift to ones that are more explanatory and less descriptive, at least in Zhang Yanyuan's selection of the representative texts. Yu Shinan's 虞世南 (558-638) "A Narrative Guide to Calligraphy" (*Shuzhi shu* 書旨述)<sup>194</sup> presents a short history of the main script types and famous calligraphers presented as a conversation between a guest and Yu. Yu studied calligraphy with Zhiyong and represented the Wang Xizhi tradition. He was a connoisseur in Tang Taizong's court and taught the emperor calligraphy directly. The highest position he held was Director of the Palace Library. As a calligrapher, Yu's firm tenderness is often described as a complement, even superior to Ouyang Xun's "tendon and bones."<sup>195</sup> The question-answer format of Yu's guide imitates the format of the Han *fu*, or rhapsody, which allows him to provide basic lessons about the scripts and writing.

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compilations, and according to Zhu Guantian, Ouyang Xun played a crucial role in normalizing the standard script. The "Eight Knacks" in particular outlined ways in which to resolve conflicts in the standard script in order to attain harmony, including acknowledging the beautiful formal qualities of the standard script of the Northern dynasties, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 198.

<sup>194</sup> This text mimics the Han *fu* writers' question-answer format with a theoretical guest, "Mr. Communicates with the Mysterious," who takes after Zixu 子虛 "Mr. Vacuous," for example, in Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (c. 179–117 BCE) "*Fu* on Mr. Vacuous" *Zixu fu* 子虛賦.

<sup>195</sup> Under the entry for Yu Shinan, the *Xuanhe shupu* notes, "Yu's calligraphy internalizes strength and suppleness, Ouyang's exterior has tendon and bones. The gentleman harbors his devices, so Yu is superior 虞則內含剛柔，歐則外露筋骨，君子藏器，以虞為優, *Xuanhe shupu* (清文淵閣四庫全書本), 8.34.

This is in contrast to Yu's more-involved essay, the *Bisui lun* 筆隨論, which discusses calligraphy in more philosophical terms and discusses it in terms of its "profound" (*xuanmiao* 玄妙) qualities, as well its dependence on the uprightness of one's mind.<sup>196</sup> Zhang Yanyuan does not include the *Bisui lun* in the *Fashu yaolu*.

Keeping in line with Zhang's focus on representing the lineage and evaluating calligraphers based on different scripts (Chapter Three), the text that Zhang chooses, Yu's *Narrative* provides very practical advice through a conversation he has with a guest who is named Mr. Communicates with the Mysterious 通玄先生. This guest asks a number of basic questions about calligraphy, which allows Yu to relay accessible details and instructions for learning. Yu proceeds with his version of the origins of writing and explains how the various scripts – the Zhouwen 籀文, or the great seal script 大篆, the small seal script 小篆, the clerical and cursive scripts, and the standard or current script – were developed and used. Zhang Huaiguan's system of evaluation also focuses on scripts (discussed in Chapter Three). In terms of evaluating calligraphers, the gentleman concludes with how glorious and unmatched both Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi remain:

The gentleman said, "Ah. Three talents (heaven, earth and man), each have been examined for the position, the sun and moon illuminate, so there must be a strange person to layout and change the resources at once. If there is no one like this, how can we achieve the most marvelous? There is no one who can compete or compare with the united father and son pair, forever the standard followed by the subsequent generations."

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<sup>196</sup> *Lidai shufa lunwenxuan* 歷代書法論文選 (Anthology of essays on calligraphy of successive dynasties), vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1979), pp. 100-103.

先生曰：「於戲！三才審位，日月燭明，固資異人，一敷而化。不然者，何以臻妙？無相奪倫，父子聯鑣，軌範後昆。」<sup>197</sup>

Yu's pairing of both Wangs is remarkable considering his sovereign, Tang Taizong's preference for the father alone.

These brief entries, inscriptions, lists, and letters coincide with the core of the lineage of individual calligraphers that the anonymous "Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods" lists. Zhang's inclusion of these specialized notes and records, largely in chronological order, connects his focus on actual works with specific calligraphers. While this anonymous note does not mention writing in specific scripts, it emphasizes and attempts to assert a lineage to which one specialized in the study of calligraphy should refer. The inclusion of this list raises multiple questions for further study, as many of the calligraphers listed close to the end were from present-day Suzhou area and writing in various scripts, including the seal script. Furthermore, this transmission note excludes both Chu Suiliang and Xue Ji 薛稷 (649-713), who are later recognized as two of the Four Masters of the Early Tang. Xue Ji learned from both Yu Shinan and Chu Suiliang but was more faithful to the latter. A grandson of Wei Zheng, a court official under Empress Wu and Emperors Zhongzong and Ruizong, Xue worked as a connoisseur but was ultimately implicated in the attempted coup of Taiping Princess and allowed to commit suicide. This celebration of Ouyang Xun, Yu Shinan, Chu Suiliang and Xue Ji evidently was not an automatic grouping in the mid-Tang. Chu Suiliang along with Xue Ji were not favored during their time, rather "only later, when expressiveness, informality, and learning from

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<sup>197</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 3.71.

contemporaries became acceptable again, did connoisseurs consider Chu Suiliang and Xue Ji as models of the same rank as Ouyang Xun and Yu Shinan.”<sup>198</sup> The critics Dou Ji, Zhang Huaiguan, and Xu Hao, apparently, had a distaste for both Chu and Xue, even though they acknowledged their historical importance. Compared to the regular script of Ouyang Xun and Yu Shinan used in public monuments, which was regarded as true to the script type and the classical tradition, Chu and Xue mixed more informal running script into their regular script and loosened the structure of their characters. This view acts as a metaphor for not only their written characters but also their lesser standing in politics and distance from the Wang style, as well as their violations of orthography.<sup>199</sup> Still, Zhang Yanyuan includes texts by Chu Suiliang and Yu Shinan, even though the transmission note does not mention Xue Ji or Chu Suiliang, and the list includes Ouyang Xun but the *Fashu yaolu* does not transmit his writings.

## 2.4 Listings for the Two Wangs and The Transcribed Letters

Zhang’s implied views about the lineage of calligraphers and the value of textually preserving specific works extends from the anonymous notes and selection of records above to the even more detailed records in the *Fashu yaolu* that expand upon the holdings and accounts of

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<sup>198</sup> Amy McNair writes about how “bone,” “sinew,” and “flesh” were particularly invested with public values in the Tang, in calligraphy, orthography, and characterolgy. See Amy McNair, *The Upright Brush: Yan Zhenqing’s Calligraphy and Song Literati Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), pp. 269-273.

<sup>199</sup> See for reference, McNair, *Upright Brush* and Amy McNair, “Public Values in Calligraphy and Orthography in the Tang Dynasty,” in *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995), pp. 263-278.

works by the Two Wangs, exclusively. Three records, in particular, including the entire tenth *juan* of the *Fashu yaolu* attest to this. Chu Suiliang’s “List of Calligraphy Works by Youjun (Wang Xizhi)” *Youjun shumu* 右軍書目, c. 627–650, and Zhang Huaiguan’s “Record of the Calligraphy of the Two Wangs and Others” *Er Wang deng shulu* 二書等書錄, dated 760, are two of the earliest catalogs specializing in the arts.<sup>200</sup> While Chu Suiliang’s list and Zhang Huaiguan’s record provide details sufficient for potentially authenticating works, the unattributed, “Notes on Calligraphic Works by Youjun (Wang Xizhi)” 右軍書記 that takes up *juan* 10, provides direct transcriptions of hundreds of letters by both Wangs. These lists are important for the sheer amount of detailed information they contain.

In his “List of Calligraphy Works by Youjun (Wang Xizhi),” Chu lists 266 separate items, 30 of which can still be identified in later collections of rubbings or handwritten copies.<sup>21</sup> Arranged into 5 *juan* of the standard script, and 58 *juan* in the cursive, for identification purposes, Chu provides a title or the first few lines of each work. For the many letters, Chu provides the opening date and greeting, as well as the number of lines. With few pieces outside the palace for comparison, Chu’s judgment could stand unchallenged. His first entry, taking up the first scroll, is Wang Xizhi’s *Yue Yi lun*, for which in a separate note he also provides a separate account recording its imperial copies (discussed above).

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<sup>200</sup> Ledderose suggests that Chu Suiliang’s list is the oldest list of Wang Xizhi’s works, Lothar Ledderose, *Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 28. Zhang Weiwen 張偉文 asserts that Zhang’s catalog of these records initiated a wave of subsequent compilations, Zhang Weiwen 張偉文, “*Fa shu yao lu*” *ji lu zhi yi shu zhuan men mu lu xiao kao* 《法書要錄》輯錄之藝術專門目錄小考 in *Tu shu guan jie* 圖書館界, 03 (2020): 38-40+44.

Zhang Huaiguan's "Record of the Calligraphy of the Two Wangs and Others," *Er Wang deng shulu* 二書等書錄, dated 760, provides detailed accounts of the number and state of original scrolls in the imperial collection over time. He describes how the Two Wangs were well known in their own generations. Anecdotally, he writes about how Huan Xuan 桓玄 of the Eastern Jin (265–420) treasured the works of both of them, always keeping one at his side, even when he fled to the South. He describes in detail how because the Jin 晉 paper used to mount the calligraphy would wrinkle, Emperor Xiaowu of the Song of the Southern dynasties 宋孝武帝 (r. 453-464) had ten pieces protected in one scroll. The Song emperor Ming 宋明帝 (r. 466-472), furthermore, had named officials who were also recognized calligraphers search the area for calligraphy pieces. Zhang Huaiguan provides an equally detailed inventory and description of the cases of scrolls in the imperial collection, including the material of the scrolls, cases, and holders, and when some were lost, evaluated, or remounted by named specialists. He notes, for instance, how after the attack of Western Wei on Jingzhou 荊洲, many scrolls were lost in a fire, and four thousand scrolls were taken to Chang'an. In 639, the Tang emperor Taizong had Chu Suiliang and Wang Zhijing (王知敬, 684–704) search for any remaining pieces, determine their authenticity, and organize them according to script types. These works all received the Zhenguan 貞觀 reign seal. With this thorough search for the works of the Wangs in the early Tang, it was believed that the works of Wang Xianzhi could be found only in the palace, and not for sale. Writing in the mid-eighth century Zhang Huaiguan, demonstrating his own authority, summarizes though that the current imperial collection had fewer than 10 scrolls in the standard script, a few dozen in semi-cursive, and hundreds in cursive, 210 scrolls in all, including one



each by Zhang Zhi and Zhang Chang, with sandalwood rods and cotton embroidery for borders. Because they were not esteemed during their time they were scattered among the people, or possibly piled up in the Hanlin academy, where he once held a position. In sum, they could be found outside the palace.<sup>201</sup> Parallel to Zhang Yanyuan's time, Zhang Huaiguan directly experiences the precarious movement of works from inside the palace to less secure quarters outside the palace.

Filling the tenth *juan* of the *Fashu yaolu*, the very last text in Zhang Yanyuan's compilation contains a transcription of 465 letters written by Wang Xizhi and 16 by Wang Xianzhi though the title refers only to the elder. The unattributed, "Notes on Calligraphic Works by Youjun (Wang Xizhi)" 右軍書記 brings the collecting history up to Zhang's present by documenting the imperial collection from between the Kaiyuan era (713–741) and 847. The record indicates that the 12-foot scroll of Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi's calligraphy came from the Zhenguan imperial collection. Based on other records, the Zhang family likely had at least seven copies of Wang's letters in the cursive script, copies of the originals known to be in the Zhenguan collections. Based on an actual scroll in the early Tang collection, the contents bring the reader closer to the actual work, including the letters once owned by Zhang's family. This close view of the contents of what was written provide detailed evidence of real, ancient works, much like the details of the mounting, rollers, or seals. The history of these letters

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<sup>201</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.120-123.

provides proof in their details and numbers to substitute for the loss of the actual items.<sup>202</sup> This lengthy transcription proves their existence. Those who possess this textual record witness and behold a connection to the actual writing.

## 2.5 Conclusion

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<sup>202</sup> Zhu Changwen's *Mochibian* reprints this text in *juan* 15 on "collecting treasures" 寶藏, under the title "Calligraphy Writings of the Two Wangs" 二王書語, *MCB* 15.430-494; with one separate section of the Younger Wang's calligraphy 小王書. Zhu offers these comments at the end of the transcribed letters:

Master Zhu says: Zhang Yanyuan, the grandson of a household of three Tang chancellors. The Tang history called his family's collection a preeminent secret repository of painting and calligraphy. Now observing Zhang Yanyuan's records, one believes there were many works. Thus, why weren't copies made of all the ink marks? Those recording the phrases written in calligraphy, although there are many categories and omissions beyond compare, there are many beneficial changes, without obtaining the original, all of it has been properly published, also much hearsay and deficiencies suspect its meaning. Now the official model calligraphy of the Two Wangs, many are like these, some approach those gathered by Zhang Yanyuan, some were transmitted through other Tang copies, one cannot yet know. Therefore I preserved the text of the letters that can be used to prepare scholars to discuss and inspect them, and can mutually test and deceive. Yanyuan's marks are hidden in the valley's monument, the strokes are sparse and slow, they can be collected but cannot be studied, thus this is the *haoshi's* ultimate harm. With Yanyuan's broad knowledge and essays, during the Qianfu era (874–879), he obtained the rank of Chief Minister of the Court of Judicial Review.

朱子曰：張彥遠，唐室三相之孫。唐史稱其家聚書畫俊秘府。今觀彥遠所錄，信其多矣。然未必皆墨跡，蓋模搨者爾。所錄書語，類多脫誤不倫。雖頗有改益，未得善本盡為刊正，亦多闕疑之義也。今官法帖二王書，頗多同此者，或即彥遠家所蓄，或唐世別本所傳，未可知也。故存其語，以備學者之討閱，而可以互攷其謬焉。彥遠之跡，存於山谷之碑陰，筆畫疏慢，能藏而不能學，乃好事之大弊也。彥遠博學文辭，乾符中仕至大理卿，“Er Wang shu yu,” in *Mochibian*, (2019), 15.494.

Taizong, Gaozong, and Wu Zetian properly preserved the cultural heritage by maintaining control of collecting practices and ordering the invaluable, official copying of works, while Zhongzong lost control through favoritism and negligence. Certain imperial family members received special favors, and the palace was not disciplined, as a result many of the treasures reached private residences. While many high officials and imperial family members may have appreciated the works, others used them as means to demonstrate their power or greed. Proper appreciation might bring a work into the right hands, but ulterior motives resulted in their loss. Zhang Yanyuan experiences and addresses the confusion that takes place when the works leave the court, or public, and furthermore the works risk entering a non-imperial and under-appreciative private sphere where adequate records are no longer kept and the authority confirming their value is similarly scattered and unregulated. With Zhang's publication of these anecdotes and records, he sought to preserve and highlight this history, thus providing the necessary historical precedent and works and texts to study. These records give evidence of their value and the worthiness of those who evaluate and appreciate the works. Zhang sustains the life of the works by providing records of their continuous human ownership, material presence, and authentication. Without these close and colorful accounts of the background of select works, their value throughout history to the present may have been questioned.

A significant number of the texts Zhang includes in his *Fashu yaolu* give claim to the value of works by the Wangs and Xiao Ziyun. The records include instances when copies of the works were acquired and lost by the court, tracing infamous shifts in ownership. Zhang's personal experience and his selection of texts for the *Fashu yaolu* echo the consequences of such

incidents. The works known to have been in the Zhang family collection have direct connections to these stories, interwoven in the details of numbered and mounted scrolls, insiders at court, and finally relocated officials. Rather than piece together or write a narrative, however, Zhang presents the texts in their complete form. This allows the reader a similar access to the corpus of works for a complete view of the activities and to make their own possibly disparate connections. Arguably, the numerous records that Zhang includes in the *Fashu yaolu* would not be as crucial to a general understanding of the collecting and evaluation history of calligraphy. Indeed, a number of the shorter records pertinent to Zhang's family collection are later relegated to separate categories and intermixed with many other examples of records or notes on collecting or praising calligraphy. Their isolated inclusion in the *Fashu yaolu* points to Zhang Yanyuan's personal connection to specific works and perhaps one of his underlying motivations for bringing the texts about them together. The works established a canon of the tradition and with it, direct evidence of private and court collecting practices that were now in disarray.

This chapter examined how Zhang implicitly situated records related to his family's collection in the *Fashu yaolu* to emphasize the value of the specific works and sustain his family's legacy in the larger history of painting and calligraphy, which had reached a juncture of uncertainty. The anonymous note, "A Narrative Record of Calligraphy in the Tang Court," in *juan* 4, laments the shift away from the time when donating works to the court was an honor. Zhang's collection of texts about specific works known to have been in his family's collection, combined with texts confirming the lineage of calligraphers and theorists, as well as providing an abundance of details about scrolls and individual letters written by the Wangs, attest to this need

for an alternative way to preserve these works. In addition to this comment on the changes at court, the anonymous “Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods,” *juan 1*, and the anonymous, “Record of Calligraphic Works by Youjun,” *juan 10*, act to bookmark the selection of texts to these ends.

Through these specific texts, Zhang creates a community between his contemporaries and the great practitioners of the past. The lineage emphasizes the intense study of past masters and the potential of their methods to continue through new calligraphers. This connection not only extends the lore, fame, and reverence for these masters, but also deeply roots the tradition in the past. The possibility of considering new calligraphers opens even further depending on the evaluation system one uses. Notably, the evaluations Zhang highlights attempt to systematize ranking, for example, according to script, so that individuals and calligraphy attain a level of objectivity and new calligraphers can indeed be considered in new ways. No longer is one sage the master of all styles, which leaves room for reevaluations and development of differing views. Zhang Huaiguan, from his *Shuduan* through his shorter texts written 20 years later, plays a key role in leaving room for such reassessments that Zhang Yanyuan tacitly espouses, as I show in the next chapter.

## Chapter Three

### Borrowed Views: Critical Calligraphy Reviews for Advanced Comparisons

#### 3.0 An Artist on a Given Day Painting Only Figures

Nearly the entire section “On Grading by Name and Price” 論名價品第 of Zhang Yanyuan’s *Lidai minghua ji* quotes Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (active mid to late eighth century). The segment begins with someone asking Zhang Huaiguan why he did not write a “Painting Appraisals” (*Huagu* 畫估) to correspond to his “Calligraphy Appraisals” (*Shugu* 書估) of 754. Zhang Huaiguan responds at length about the difference between painting and calligraphy, explaining that the ways in which to determine the merits of painting were not nearly as defined as those of calligraphy, for which a single, finite character could delimit the negotiated value.<sup>203</sup> Still, he proceeds to compare the painters and to assign values in gold or jade to paintings from the later Han to the early Tang dynasties, roughly second to eighth centuries. Importantly, he leaves room for gradations in the ranks, so that at times “those of Middle Antiquity may reach the price level of High Antiquity... and those of Lower Antiquity may reach the same level as Middle Antiquity 其間有中古，可齊上古... 下古可齊中古.”<sup>204</sup> Zhang Huaiguan applies this

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<sup>203</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.33; “The negotiated value of calligraphy is delimited by the character” 書即約字言價; see also Acker, p. 194. Dou Ji 竇泉 (active, mid to late eighth century), whose *Shushu fu* 述書賦 (“Rhapsody on Describing Calligraphy”) takes up *juan* 5 and 6 of the *Fashu yaolu*, adds a twist to this comparison between painting and calligraphy by contrasting the relationship a calligrapher might have with the objective world with that of a painter, who could have a specific form of reference in the world. Dou celebrated the way a calligrapher could convey ideals that did not refer to phenomena in the world, *FSYL* (2019), 5.143-6.186.

<sup>204</sup> See note on Antiquity in Chapter One; for reference, *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.31-32; see also Acker, pp. 196-198.

potential for traversing between levels to the rankings of painters and calligraphers on a given day or in a particular script:

Now when an artist of the middle grade has a favorable working day, he can rise to the level of a high-grade artist. And when a high-grade artist faces a day in which he lacks rigor, he may happen to fall to the middle grade. But men of the low grade, even though they may happen to work favorably, cannot even approach the high grade. But in the case of a man of extensive understanding and experience, the beauty or ugliness must be judged in an instant. Just for example, Zhang the Madman<sup>205</sup> became famous for his mastery of the cursive script, so that his standard and clerical scripts are not necessarily prized by people, and yet I once saw the *Yue Yi lun* written in small standard script which was in the class of Yu and Chu.<sup>206</sup> And since Wei Yan<sup>207</sup> got his reputation by painting horses, people do not necessarily value his human figures, yet I have seen human figures painted by him that are in a class with Gu<sup>208</sup> and Lu.<sup>209</sup>

夫中品藝人，有合作之時，可齊上品藝人；上品藝人，當未適之日，偶落中品。唯下品雖有合作，不得廁於上品，在通博之人，臨時鑒其妍醜。只如張顛以善草得

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<sup>205</sup> This is Zhang Xu 張旭 (fl. 8<sup>th</sup> century), who was well known through anecdotes for his cursive script and performances in which he might throw off his cap in excitement.

<sup>206</sup> Yu Shinan and Chu Suiliang.

<sup>207</sup> Wei Yan 韋鸞 (active in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century) was from a family of painters.

<sup>208</sup> Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (c.344–406) was important court official, painter, and poet, who served Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404). Though only surviving in later copies, the “Scroll of the Admonitions of the Court Instructress” 女史箴圖 is thought to retain specific aspects of Gu’s style particularly in the flowing drapery forms.

<sup>209</sup> Lu Tanwei 陸探微 (circa late 5<sup>th</sup> century) was a later contemporary of Gu Kaizhi.

名，楷隸未必為人所寶，余曾見小楷《樂毅》，虞、褚之流。韋鷗以畫馬得名，人物未必為人所貴，餘見畫人物，顧、陸可儔。<sup>210</sup>

Notably, the painters Zhang Huaiguan names were active during his time, and he refers to works he has personally seen. With this, he can propose that the evaluator must judge each master's work, individually, and thus in his words, for the person with "extensive understanding and experience, the beauty or ugliness must be judged in an instant." This sentiment applies both to the accomplished painter or calligrapher, as well as to the evaluator. By extension, in the *Lidai minghuai ji*, Zhang Yanyuan shows his disdain for those who only recognize a painter for the primary aspect in which they excel, "when one is said to excel, it is because he is capable at any subject he encounters, but among all the subjects in which he excels, it is the most exemplary that the vulgar will all commend" 所言勝者，以觸類皆能，而就中尤所偏勝者，俗所共推。<sup>211</sup> Both Zhang Huaiguan and Zhang Yanyuan, then, acknowledge that even one who excels at calligraphy or painting might fall short at times. Furthermore, it is those that have extensive knowledge or who are not vulgar, who are able to distinguish between these works.

In this chapter, I will show how Zhang Yanyuan's selection of texts for the *Fashu yaolu* supports and supplements Zhang Huaiguan's systems of evaluating calligraphy. While Zhang Yanyuan was not explicit about his views on calligraphy, the way he interacted with Zhang Huaiguan's texts suggests his preferences. Focusing on Zhang Huaiguan's three texts that

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<sup>210</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.33; see also Acker, p. 200-201.

<sup>211</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.25.



discuss rankings of calligraphers: the *Shuduan* 書斷 (“Divisions of Calligraphy” or “Critical Reviews on Calligraphy”<sup>212</sup>), dated 725–728; *Shugu* 書估 (“Calligraphy Appraisals”), 754; and *Shuyi* 書議 (“A Critique of Calligraphers,”<sup>213</sup> or “Commentaries on Calligraphy,”<sup>214</sup> or “Consultations on Calligraphy”<sup>215</sup>), 758, this chapter will show how Zhang Yanyuan’s texts respond to foundational points Zhang Huaiguan makes about ranking calligraphers, particularly according to script, and not necessarily in unmovable categories.<sup>216</sup> He indicates his support both through the supplementary texts in the *Fashu yaolu* and through inclusion of Zhang Huaiguan’s words in the *Lidai minghua ji*.

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<sup>212</sup> This is the translation used in Wang Youfen, trans. and ed., *Chinese Calligraphy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2008), p. 40.

<sup>213</sup> Amy McNair uses this title in Amy McNair, “*Fa shu yao lu*, a Ninth-Century Compendium of Texts on Calligraphy,” in *T’ang Studies* 5 (1987), p. 82.

<sup>214</sup> This title is used in Wang Youfen, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 163.

<sup>215</sup> *Yi* 議 referring in the Han dynasty to high-level consultations presented in dialogue format with the purpose of settling matters.

<sup>216</sup> With this focus, I do not discuss in the body of this dissertation the other lengthy texts in the *Fashu yaolu* that include supporting points and do not otherwise contradict what Zhang Huaiguan puts forth, namely, Yu He’s 虞龢 (fl. c. 465–471) “Memorial on Calligraphy” (*Shu biao* 書表) of 470, Dou Ji’s 竇泉 (active, mid to late eighth century) *Shushu fu* 述書賦 (“Rhapsody on Describing Calligraphy”), or Li Sizhen’s 李嗣真 (d. 696 or 697) “A Latter Classification of Calligraphers” (*Hou shupin* 後書品).

Using another example from calligraphy, Zhang Huaiguan explains that even with the various scripts in which Wang Xizhi excelled, the depth of his work could vary at a given moment:

In just this example of the calligraphy of Wang Youjun, of course, there are a number of scripts. Among them, the various semi-cursive and cursive, in each case the shallowness or depth depended on the structure and thoughts in an instant.

只如王右軍書乃自有數體，及諸行草，各由臨時構思淺深耳。<sup>217</sup>

In this explication for which Zhang Yanyuan designates its own section in the *Lidai minghua ji*, Zhang Huaiguan attempts to assign monetary value to paintings based on their antiquity and relationship to well-known works of calligraphy. Through this ranking he points out the potential fluidity between and within rankings. In particular, with regard to Wang Xizhi's writing in different styles, Zhang Huaiguan leaves room for "the structure and thoughts in an instant," that is, Wang Xizhi's individual works in different scripts, written at different times in his life or in an instant, may be ranked differently. Zhang Yanyuan shows his interest in transmitting Zhang Huaiguan's evaluation method not only by quoting him at length here in the *Lidai minghua ji*, but also by devoting nearly four of the ten complete *juan* of the *Fashu yaolu* to his writings.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> *LDMHJ* (2019), 2.33; also Acker, p. 202.

<sup>218</sup> As a means for augmenting the study of painting and the number of painters evaluated, Zhang Yanyuan seems to have emulated Zhang Huaiguan's approach by suggesting that even painters who only mastered one genre might still be recognized and studied. So, while one might be careful to judge a calligrapher only by his most exemplar work, one might also recognize a painter who was accomplished in only one area. See *LDMHJ* (2019) 1.10; see also Acker, p. 146:

By using Zhang Huaiguan's texts as another organizing principle for the *Fashu yaolu*, this chapter will show how Zhang Yanyuan's complete texts expanded upon the authors and ideas mentioned by Zhang Huaiguan and how Zhang Yanyuan's cross referencing between Zhang Huaiguan and select theorists provided an internal system of legitimation that both refined the evaluation methods and left room for additional comparisons. This attempt to systemize the evaluation of calligraphy would have been of heightened importance during the time of Zhang Huaiguan's second wave of writing after his *Shuduan*, which coincided with the An Lushan Rebellion, 755–763, as well as during Zhang Yanyuan's time nearing the end of the Tang dynasty, in the mid- to late-ninth century. Works of calligraphy were dispersed during both these distinct periods, and new, perspective owners and readers emerged who showed considerable interest in acquiring pertinent details, background, and skills for boosting their knowledge of and evaluations methods for the calligraphy they could now collect.

### 3.1 Zhang Huaiguan's Separate Ranking of Scripts and the Two Wangs

As early as his first study, the *Shuduan*, Zhang Huaiguan evaluates calligraphers differently according to their works in different scripts. While he was not the first to call attention to the different scripts of individual calligraphers,<sup>219</sup> his ranking system separates out an

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“Thus I have even selected those who are only good at one branch. This is to say either painting figures, houses, landscape, saddled-horses, demons and spirits, or bird and flowers, each had something in which they excelled” 但取一技可采。謂或人物、或屋宇、或山水、或鞍馬、或鬼神、或花鳥，各有所長。

<sup>219</sup> Before Zhang Huaiguan, Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (487-551) wrote extensively about numerous scripts (see note at end of this chapter). Zhang Huaiguan, specifically, gives credit to Yu He 虞

individual calligrapher's writing in different scripts and ranks them, accordingly. This initial ranking system provides a systematic approach to ranking the calligraphers up to Zhang Huaiguan's time. It also provides a system that increasingly encourages close looking at individual works, as he shows in his subsequent texts. In the *Fashu yaolu*, Zhang Yanyuan presents Zhang Huaiguan's complete study and supplements it by expanding on this discussion of scripts. As well, Zhang Yanyuan includes full texts that Zhang Huaiguan references at the end of his *Shuduan*. The *Shuduan* establishes for both Zhang Yanyuan and Zhang Huaiguan the groundwork for Zhang Huaiguan's later texts, as well as a reference point for Zhang Yanyuan with regard to the other texts he includes in his *Fashu yaolu*. By bringing these texts together and providing supplementary texts and context for the evaluative language Zhang Huaiguan highlights, Zhang Yanyuan's compilation shows his support for Zhang Huaiguan's designs.

Zhang Huaiguan receives disproportionate attention from Zhang Yanyuan in his selection of texts both authored and referenced by the earlier Zhang. Of the 39 texts in Zhang Yanyuan's

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龢 (fl. c. 465–471) and Li Sizhen 李嗣真 (d. 696 or 697), who ranked works that had been considered lost. Zhang Yanyuan includes Li Sizhen's complete text, "A Latter Classification of Calligraphers" 後書品 in the *Fashu yaolu*. Coinciding with Zhang Huaiguan's rankings according to scripts, Li organizes his descriptions according to writer in particular scripts though he does not separate them out and rank them under each script like Zhang Huaiguan. Li served Empress Wu (r. 690–705) as a Vice Censor-in-chief. His "A Latter Classification of Calligraphers" is significant for discussing the function of calligraphy and calligraphy criticism and classifying 82 calligraphers into 10 classes, including, for the first time, "the untrammelled class" 逸品. Zhang Yanyuan indicates his high regard for Li Sizhen's classification for "establishing more direct rankings, rather than choosing words from past experience" 過事詞採不如直置評品, *FSYL* (2019), 3.82.

*Fashu yaolu*, nearly four of the ten *juan* are dedicated to five writings by Zhang Huaiguan.

Zhang Huaiguan's *Shuduan* alone comprises three *juan*, numbers seven through nine. The four shorter and later works by Zhang Huaiguan, *Shugu*, *Shuyi*, *Er Wang shu lu* 二王書錄 (“Record of the Calligraphy of the Two Wangs”), 760; and *Wenzi lun* 文字論 (“On Writing” or “On the Written Language”), undated, fill most of *juan* 4. Zhang Yanyuan's compilation lists another text attributed to Zhang Huaiguan, *Liu ti shulun* 六體書論 (“On Six Scripts of Calligraphy”), but does not transcribe it.<sup>220</sup> Zhang Huaiguan is the only theorist whose work is represented more than twice in the *Fashu yaolu*, and contributes the longest work, the *Shuduan*, which subsequently stands out as a principal text and potential guide to the larger selection of texts.

While little is known of Zhang Huaiguan's dates or family background, his lengthiest and earliest treatise on calligraphy, the *Shuduan*, is often cited in calligraphy histories to this day.<sup>221</sup> Records indicate that Zhang was from Hailing 海陵, in present-day Jiangsu province, and held a post in the Hanlin Academy 翰林院 during Emperor Xuanzong's 唐玄宗 (r. 712–756) Kaiyuan era 開元 (713–41).<sup>222</sup> The Hanlin academy was an important literary and editorial institution newly established in the eighth century with considerable influence in court politics and the arts.

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<sup>220</sup> I discuss the *Er Wang shu lu* 二王書錄 (“Record of the Calligraphy of the Two Wangs”), 760, in Chapter Two. The *Wenzi lun*, undated, acts as a continuation of the *Shuduan*, starting with a “discussion,” (*lun yue* 論曰). This text discusses the relationship between writing and calligraphy.

<sup>221</sup> His biography does not appear in the Tang histories.

<sup>222</sup> This title is recorded in the “Monograph on Classics and Books” of the *Xin Tang shu*, 57.1450.

Zhang Huaiguan was also known to have been a calligrapher. Examples of his calligraphy, however, do not survive.<sup>223</sup> Active roughly a century before Zhang Yanyuan, Zhang wrote the *Shuduan* over a period of approximately three years from 725 to 728. These dates coincide with his tenure in the Hanlin academy.

With such high esteem for the loftiness of calligraphy, in the preface to the *Shuduan*, Zhang Huaiguan expresses his frustration with the critics of his time and those before him who prized the past over the present, looked most favorably at beauty, or simply indulged in works that fit their own personal tastes. With his comprehensive review and editing out of the unsubstantiated theories, Zhang Huaiguan elevates not only his own credentials but also the task at hand. According to Zhang Huaiguan, there is no standard for evaluating calligraphy, so that critical assessment has no consensus, and the situation is unregulated. Furthermore, the critics maintain a misconception that new calligraphy cannot compare to that of the ancients, or they merely evaluate works with regard to their outward beauty or their own taste. Zhang, as he states, sets out to transmit only the instructions that he deems reliable:

I am simple and ignorant. My knowledge is not sensible or quick-witted yet because only a small fraction of the instructions that have been passed down by the ancestors has been

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<sup>223</sup> In the comprehensive Qing dynasty *Shulin zaojian* 書林藻鑑 8.140a, Zhang's entry cites mention in *Lü zongxu shuping* 呂總續書評, a Tang dynasty text, stating that Zhang's cursive script continued the *zhangcao* 章草 "draft cursive", with his own innovations. The *Mochibian* of the Northern Song states that his *zhenxing* 真行 ("semi-cursive standard script") could compare to that of Yu Shinan (虞世南, 559-638) and Chu Suiliang (褚遂良, 597-658) well-known calligraphers and officials of the Early Tang. The Ming dynasty *Shushi huiyao* 書史會要 includes his skill in *zhenxing*, small seal and *bafen* (or clerical), Qing dynasty *Shulin zaojian* 書林藻鑑 8.140a.

recorded, I would like to eliminate those that have no basis, and advance the main points from past to present, weed out those with doubtful origins, and loosen the entanglements. 懷瓘質蔽愚蒙，識非通敏。承先人之遺訓，或紀錄萬一。輒欲芟夷浮議，揚權古今。拔狐疑之根，解挈之結。<sup>224</sup>

Like Zhang Yanyuan, Zhang Huaiguan does extensive research, encourages direct observation, and discourages evaluators from relying on hearsay. Specifically, by evaluating each of the different scripts in which one could excel, Zhang attempts to view the writing and skill more objectively as capable of representing different levels or facets of one calligrapher.<sup>225</sup>

In format, the *Shudian* follows a tradition of gathering historical references and commentaries and adding “appraisals” (*zan* 讚) and a “discussion” (*lun* 論). Complete with an introduction and three *juan* – *shang* 上, *zhong* 中, *xia* 下, the text offers a survey from the origins of writing through a ranking of calligraphers. Like Zhang Yanyuan’s *Lidai minghua ji*, the bulk of the *Shudian* consists of biographies of individual calligraphers. Besides these biographical entries, the *Shudian*’s descriptions of ten script types provide a much-cited reference for subsequent compilations and histories on calligraphy. Following the preface in which he discusses the origins of calligraphy and the power of calligraphy, Zhang introduces the ten different scripts still practiced during his time: ancient script (*guwen* 古文), large seal (*dazhuan* 大篆), Zhou writing (*Zhouwen* 籀文), small seal (*xiaozhuan* 小篆), *bafen* 八分, clerical (*lishu* 隸

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<sup>224</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 7.195.

<sup>225</sup> See for reference Chen Zhangxi 陳章錫, “Sun Guoting yu Zhang Huaiguan shufa meixue sixiang zhi duibi” 孫過廳與張懷瓘書法美學思想之對比, in *Wenxue xinlun* 文學新論 (第二期 2004.7), p. 77.

書), draft (*zhangshu* 章書), semi-cursive (*xingshu* 行書), flying white (*feibai* 飛白), and cursive (*caoshu* 草書).<sup>226</sup> He provides descriptions of their respective origins and development that stand independently from the rankings of the calligraphers but provide a crucial framework for the three ranks of calligraphers that he proposes: *shen* 神 (“divine”), *miao* 妙 (“marvelous”), and *neng* 能 (“competent”). Although Zhang does not provide specific criteria for the three ranks, he includes 25 listings under *shen*, 98 ranked at *miao*, and 107 as *neng*.<sup>227</sup> A given calligrapher can be ranked differently in different scripts. Wang Xizhi is ranked *shen* in all scripts except *bafen*.

By shifting away from general praise of an individual calligrapher, the divisions into accomplishments in individual scripts attempt to parse aesthetic, rather than idiosyncratic standards. This focus on individual achievements in a particular script refines attention to the writing of calligraphy, as well as its evaluation, and allows for more development and specialization of individuals, scripts, and evaluations. Moreover, this enhanced attention to a calligrapher’s potential strengths in one script over another broadens the field for calligraphers and heightens the individuality that one may detect in a single script or other more specific aspects of calligraphy.

More than twenty years later, Zhang Huaiguan wrote his *Shugu* 書估, “Calligraphy Appraisals” (754), which extends this system of evaluation and provides considerably practical

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<sup>226</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 7.196-215.

<sup>227</sup> Dou Meng’s 竇蒙 (exact dates unknown, active eighth-century) glossary to his brother Dou Ji’s *Shushu fu* includes definitions of these terms. Dou Ji died in 787, which likely places his text after this first text by Zhang Huaiguan. *FSYL* (2019) 6.187-189. Cong Wenjun includes a partial translation of some of these terms, Cong Wenjun, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 422.



advice that attempts to set a standard one might easily understand. Like Zhang Yanyuan, Zhang Huaiguan indicates that he provides this guidance to a “noble one who enjoys calligraphy” (*haoshi gongzi* 好事公子), calling attention to a shift in the potential collectors of the works just before the onset of the rebellion against the imperial government in 755. This shorter, more straightforward text also simplifies the evaluation methods by using the calligraphy of Wang Xizhi to set its standards. Prior to the Tang and up to this period in the middle of the Tang, Wang Xizhi’s works were well known through originals and copies of copies, as well as through literary and historical lore. Given the shift in potential owners and their presumably simpler needs, Zhang Huaiguan adopts his evaluation methods to values in the market:

There is a noble one who enjoys calligraphy and often condescends to visit me. He asks about famous works of calligraphy from the past, hoping to determine their ranks. He says, “Truly you can be called one who understands calligraphy.” People’s utterly sincere and pure hearts have their own preferences. Their likes and dislikes are rarely the same. If their assessments are not completely thorough and convincing, and each one guards their own fixations, consequently, public views will be too numerous and chaotic. How can we not establish a standard for the quality of calligraphy works, and thus rid the uncertainties of those people? For the time being, this noble one looked favorably upon this way of thinking, and I, moved by his appreciation, provided him with this appraisal, and distinguished between worthy and lowly, indicating strengths and weaknesses thus. In order to allow the common people to easily understand, I thereupon used Wang Xizhi as a standard.

有好事公子，頻紆雅顧，問及自古名書，頗為定其差等。曰：「可謂知書矣。」夫丹素異好，愛惡罕同，若鑒不圓通，則各守封執，是以世議紛糅。何不制其品格，豁彼疑心哉！且公子貴斯道也，感之，乃為其估，貴賤既辨，優劣了然。因取世人易解，遂以王羲之為標準。<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.116.

This *Shugu* attempts to provide appraisals to dispel what Zhang Huaiguan describes as the chaos of evaluation methods. He begins with a description of how one appraises calligraphy, “knows calligraphy” 知書 *zhishu*.<sup>229</sup> While Zhang Huaiguan acknowledges that one will have his own preferences, he insists that appraisals must be thorough and convincing so as to avoid this chaos of diverse and confused views.

With Zhang Huaiguan’s belief that there should be a set standard, he suggests a bold and straightforward price list according to the value of works of Wang Xizhi’s calligraphy in different scripts: “100 characters of the Elder Wang’s cursive script matched with 5 characters in a line of semi-cursive script; and 3 lines of semi-cursive matched with one line of standard script” 如大王草書字一百，五字乃敵一行行書，三行行書敵一行真正。<sup>230</sup> With this, Zhang seems to address an audience much less versed in appreciating fine writing and among those who might benefit from a simplification of the evaluation process. At the same time, he concedes that a complete work would be a “state treasure” (*guobao* 國寶) “not calculated according to number of characters, whether 1,000 or 10,000, but only distinguished between the refined and unrefined” 不可計以字數，或千或萬，惟鑒別之精粗也。<sup>231</sup> In this same passage, Zhang reveals the extent to which some officials will spend great fortunes to obtain prized pieces of

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<sup>229</sup> See note on *zhiyin* 知音 or “recognizing the sound,” in Chapter One.

<sup>230</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.116.

<sup>231</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.116.

calligraphy. In part, to temper this zealousness, Zhang seems to warn these buyers that not all the works of Wang Xizhi's calligraphy are equal. He specifies that Wang Xizhi's calligraphy ranked differently in different scripts, specifically, his standard script ranked above his semi-cursive script, and both of these ranked well above his cursive script. While Zhang Huaiguan insists that evaluation of calligraphy might be standardized, what he proposes here seems oversimplified, and he offers little explanation for his methods. The clear standards for appraisal that he presents, however, suggest an environment in which many inexperienced buyers needed significant help figuring out which works had value on the market.

Besides this critical view of Wang Xizhi, Zhang Huaiguan reveals in his *Shugu* strong support for reconsidering the younger Wang, Wang Xianzhi. In his retelling of a conversation between Wang Xianzhi and his father, Wang Xizhi, Zhang extends the separate evaluation of scripts to new ways of approaching calligraphy in general:

When Xianzhi was fifteen or sixteen years old he often told his father saying, “The draft and cursive of ancient times were not yet able to attain great freedom, but they were quite different from all the other scripts. Now I have exhausted false and approximate principles to develop the cursive qualities to the extreme, so it is not as good as the works in draft and semi-cursive script. It is better to write in a way different from past norms. It might be suitable for you to change your form.”

子敬年十五六時，常白逸少云：「古之章草，未能宏逸，頗異諸體。今究偽略之理，極草縱之致，不若稿行之間，於往法固殊，大人宜改體。」<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.117. This dialogue is recounted in Zhang's *Shuyi* with the addition of “since there are no fixed rules, it is better to make changes according to the conditions. Moreover, the rules of the past are rigid and have their limitations” 且法既不定，事貴變通，然古法亦局而執, *FSYL* (2019), 4.127.

In this anecdote, the younger Wang, as Zhang Huaiguan seeks to point out, focused his attention on developing ways different from past norms and boldly suggests that his father change his ways. The younger Wang reached his fame at a younger age than his father, and as illustrated in such anecdotes, displayed a bold and outspoken persona. Zhang Huaiguan, in turn, praises Xianzhi's accomplishments and laments that the young Wang was not deemed as worthy as his father. He explains that people were critical of Xianzhi for how he overlooked his own flaws and shortcomings:

After Xianzhi completed his studies, the vigor of his capabilities alone exceeded expectations. His natural talents were especially distinguished, his writing fluid, smooth, easy, and simple. He pursued the startling and strange, the extremely lofty and deep brushwork arose from this son. Yet at times his work has weaknesses, but he paid no attention to these flaws. Consequently, the value of his work was lower than that of Xizhi's semi-cursive script.

及其業成之後，神用獨超，天資特秀，流便簡易，志在驚奇，峻險高深，起自此子。然時有敗累，不顧疵瑕，故減於右軍行書之價。<sup>233</sup>

Zhang's description of Wang Xianzhi's calligraphy includes mention of its distinctiveness and naturalness, its ease and strangeness, which are also reasons other critics dismiss it, especially when they preferred the more agreeable writing of his father, Wang Xizhi. When Zhang continues with a comparison between the father and son, he states that "the son's brush could be said to be robust and the father's, harmonious. The standard and semi-cursive of both father and

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<sup>233</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.117.

son became long-standing models of calligraphy for hundreds of generations” 可謂子為神俊，父得靈和。父子真行，固為百代之楷法。<sup>234</sup> When it comes to the cursive script, however, Wang Xizhi’s rank drops, significantly, according to Zhang Huaiguan.

With this, Zhang Huaiguan directly criticizes unsophisticated evaluations for assuming all Wang Xizhi’s works were equal. With comparisons from antiquity, Zhang attempts to show that in the past critics did not distinguish between high and low, but rather grouped works according to “high antiquity” 上古, “middle antiquity” 中古, and “recent antiquity” 近古. Cui Yuan 崔瑗 (c.77–142), and Zhang Zhi 張芝 (d. 192), were considered pearls and jade, while Wang Xizhi was like gold and silver. Accordingly, those with greater fortunes valued the jewels, while the small merchants (*xiao shang* 小商) valued the gold. This, Zhang explains, is how the petty ones came to rely on what they heard and only took Wang Xizhi as the best, and do not distinguish between his standard and cursive script. With these general categories of antiquity, Zhang suggests, it is difficult for them to understand that Wang’s calligraphy, fundamentally, should be divided into five different ranks.<sup>235</sup>

This is how Zhang Huaiguan justifies his ranking of ninety-six calligraphers into five levels according to Wang Xizhi’s scripts. Wang Xizhi is listed at the top for his standard script with eight others. It is in the subsequent rankings that he provides monetary value equivalent to works in different scripts by Wang Xizhi. The six calligraphers in the second rank are equated

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<sup>234</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.117.

<sup>235</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.117.

with Wang's semi-cursive script.<sup>236</sup> The forty-three calligraphers ranked third are matched with Wang Xizhi's cursive script, which Zhang clearly places below his semi-cursive script. The fourth and fifth ranks are equated with one third and one quarter of Wang's cursive script, respectively. Earlier in the *Shuduan*, Zhang ranked all of Wang Xizhi's scripts as *shen*, with the exception of his *bafen*.

In this later text, Zhang has taken a step toward improving upon evaluations of calligraphy that were based on hearsay and focused on a single calligrapher, Wang Xizhi. At the same time, he exploits this recognizable standard and establishes himself as an authority by specifying and organizing a quantifiable hierarchy. In this way he offers some consolation to the "small merchants" he mentions, who are quite different from the former court collectors. Besides comparisons between calligraphers and with Wang Xizhi's writing in different scripts, he does not offer other suggestions or criteria for the direct evaluation of calligraphic works that he esteems. At the very least Zhang Huaiguan is making a bold statement about the need to discuss the state of evaluating calligraphy and recognize the worthy, especially outside of their own assumed accomplishments based on their renown. That said, what Zhang makes clear through his evaluation of the younger Wang, Xianzhi, is the esteem placed on creating something different and bolder, rather than presenting something merely harmonious, like his father, Wang Xizhi. Zhang Huaiguan develops these views in his last dated commentary or consultations on calligraphy, the *Shuyi*.

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<sup>236</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.116-117.

In Zhang Huaiguan's *Shuyi* of 758, written just four years after the *Shugu*, he expands on this reverence for innovation and clarifies his views of the cursive script and where Wang Xizhi in particular ranks. To set up this argument, the *Shuyi* begins with a history of the development of writing and the various scripts, as well as the esteem for calligraphy, and emphasizes the necessity to look beyond form. In the opening, Zhang reaffirms calligraphy's relationship to the ancient rulers, beginning from Yao 堯 and Shun 舜,<sup>237</sup> and traces it through the Qin and Han dynasties to establish how calligraphy mirrors the sage. As in his earlier writings, Zhang is careful to acknowledge the limits of language to emphasize the marvels of calligraphy. At the same time, he confirms that it is this depth of what calligraphy embodies that necessitates his writing about it. Zhang proceeds to criticize earlier critics for their insufficient and flawed use of terms and standards. Because of the “deeper meaning manifest beyond the outward appearance of myriad things” 玄妙之意，出於物類之表, Zhang asks “how can one use everyday sentiment to discuss it, use common knowledge to estimate its capabilities? Unless one has the acuity to hear it for oneself and the clear-sightedness to see it for oneself, one cannot join in speaking of the meaning of sound without sound, a likeness without form” 豈常情之所能言，世智之所能測。非有獨聞之聽，獨見之明，不可議無聲之音，無形之相。<sup>238</sup> While grasping the connection between past and present and the deeper meaning of things require internal realization, they also rely on the sound or form through which these things are delivered.

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<sup>237</sup> Legendary rulers of China traditionally dating to the third millennium BCE.

<sup>238</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.124-125.

Explanations are insufficient, as one needs to go beyond the surface to get to the essence. At the same time, without the form (or sound), one cannot make a judgment. Zhang proposes, then, a way to connect these different forms and talent:

Now although I am recording their quality and style, could I only be praising their talents? In every case I have put their natural talents first and the results of their practice and learning after this, so that even for different forms and scripts, there is a single principle running through it all. In the end it does not extend beyond ignorance, it must not separate from between skilled and unskilled. In this way, wisdom has no limit, and methods are undoubtedly not fixed but those who have “spirit” *shen*, “bone” *gu*, or “life energy” *qi* are ranked high; and those showing “prettiness” *yan*, beauty *mei*, merit *gong* or utility *yong* are ranked low

今雖錄其品格，豈獨稱其才能。皆先其天性，後其習學，縱異形奇體，輒以情理一貫，終不出于洪荒之外，必不離于工拙之間。然智則無涯，法固不定，且以風神骨氣者居上，妍美功用者居下。<sup>239</sup>

In sum, the appraiser must approach the work with the knowledge that the work necessitates and transcends its own form. Even Zhang acknowledges that it is possible to confuse a writer’s talents with the work itself. Nevertheless, even though the works might be difficult to embody in words, they can be evaluated according to identifiable standards. Put simply, the works with higher value convey an inner strength of “spirit” (*shen* 神), “bone” (*gu* 骨) and “breath” or “vitality” (*qi* 氣), while the inferior pieces will look “pretty” (*yan* 妍) and “beautiful” (*mei* 美) and have at least “merit” (*gong* 功) and “purpose” (*yong* 用).<sup>240</sup> The spirited and structured with

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<sup>239</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.125.

<sup>240</sup> These terms have a long and varied history shifting with values of a given time period. One of



vitality are superior to the outwardly pleasing and goal-achieving. This is the criteria Zhang uses to rank 19 calligraphers under now only four script types – the standard, semi-cursive, draft-cursive, and cursive. He lists only 19 individuals from the Han to the Jin dynasties for whom there were extant works. He does not provide detailed evaluations of these nineteen calligraphers but merely lists them.

With this approach, though not explained in detail, although Wang Xizhi is ranked first in standard and semi-cursive scripts, he is ranked fifth in draft cursive and now eighth in cursive. In the form of a conversation, Zhang defends his reasons for ranking Wang Xizhi eighth in cursive:

Someone asked, “In this ranking, how can all in all cases exceed Wang Xizhi?” I responded, “People’s talents and abilities each have merits and shortcomings. All in the cursive script, each have natural gifts and power of understanding, as if transcendent,

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the earliest mentions of spirit” (*shen* 神) with regard to painting or calligraphy comes from Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之(345–406) when he describes figure painting that “captures the spirit through form” 以形寫神. Wang Sengqian and Lu Ji, on the other hand, prioritize spirit over form. “Breath” or “vitality (*qi* 氣) and “bone” are discussed at length in Xie He’s 謝赫 (active in the 6<sup>th</sup> century) *Guhua pinlu* 古畫品錄 (Record of the Classification of Ancient Painters) and studies of the “Six Principles of Painting,” 繪畫六法 that he outlines in the preface, specifically, such as John Hay, “The Human Body as a Microcosmic source of Macrocosmic Values in Calligraphy,” in Susan Bush and Christian F. Murck, eds., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton University Press, 1983), and Acker. Cong Wenjun discusses “bone” (*gu* 骨) historically and specific to calligraphy studies, p. 432-433, first used along with flesh, muscle, power and spirit and other words related to life forces. Cong cites Liang Wudi’s reference to the term as matched by *li* 力 (power or strength), and Yang Xin’s comparison of the work of Wang Xianzhi and Wang Xizhi. “Bone” could produce “spirit” and thus refers to inner essence, power, and robustness, and firmness. Qualities of *mei* 美 (“beauty”), *gu* 古 and *jin* 今 (“ancient” versus “modern”), *ya* 雅 and *su* 俗 (“refined vs. “vulgar”), *tianran* 天然 and *gongfu* 功夫 (“natural” versus “practiced”), come to encapsulate terms used in final evaluation of a work “with respect to its aesthetic quality, style, and so on,” see for reference Cong, in *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 421.

expression of spirit issues forth. Wang Xizhi's conventions are not high, and his skill is also limited, and although his writing is consistently full of beauty, it lacks spirit and vitality; it cannot awe like the sharpness or acuteness of sharp dagger-axes or halberds, it cannot amaze like the life and movement of things and images, thus it is inferior to the others.

或問曰：「此品之中，諸子豈能悉過於逸少？」答曰：「人之材能，各有長短。諸子於草，各有性識，精魂超然，神彩射人。遺少則格律非高，功夫又少，雖圓豐妍美，乃乏神氣；無戈戟銛銳可畏，無物象生動可奇，是以劣於諸子。」

He gained great fame because of his standard and semi-cursive script. Throughout the world there is none who can be clear about this, and all think that his standard script and his cursive script are the same. If all can be the same as all those they encounter, then why be bothered with having discussions?

得重名者，以真行故也。舉世莫之能曉，悉以為真草一概。若所見與諸子雷同，則何煩有論？<sup>241</sup>

At this point, Zhang explains that the cursive script, in particular, depends on spirit and vitality, or in other words, its impression, and determines Wang's cursive inferior because it lacks fierceness and movement. Zhang again refutes how people have evaluated Wang Xizhi's calligraphy in different scripts as the same. Because he became famous for his standard and semi-cursive script, people assumed his cursive script was of the same value. Furthermore, without deciding for themselves, these evaluators simply agreed with what had already been predetermined and subsequently transmitted.

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<sup>241</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.126.

Other writers including Zhang Yanyuan, like Zhang Huaiguan, lament this lack of a discourse and direct experience of calligraphy.<sup>242</sup> In this description of the cursive script, Zhang Huaiguan defends his evaluation of the cursive script by demonstrating what one might see by looking closely and how one might capture what is essentially between form and meaning:

Thus regarding the difference between cursive and standard script, the meaning of the character in standard script ends when its writing is complete, for cursive the force of the line does not end when its writing is complete. Some collect like vapor or gather like fogs, some flash like lightning or fall like stars, taking vigor of style as its form, taking transformations as its purpose. They resemble morning and evening clouds coming together and parting, forming shapes where they by chance make contact; they resemble the might and spirit of dragons and tigers, gaining force as they fly. Where cliffs and ravine lean toward each other towering and rugged, mountains and streams each give themselves over to the heights and depths.

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<sup>242</sup> Dou Ji and other writers also emphasize and describe personal observations and holding a work in one's hand. Han Yu's 韓愈 (768–824) "Song of the Stone Drums" (*Shigu ge* 石鼓歌), for example, begins with the author holding a rubbing of the Stone Drums, allegedly from the late bronze age, 770–221 BCE; dear friends, Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元(773–819) and Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772–842) exchange poems and letters written out on paper. This close looking at both calligraphy and content one might argue was at its first peak in this period prior to widespread printing of publications and the separate praise and collecting of poetry and works of calligraphy. That is, poetry and calligraphy had largely not been appreciated together. What was written in the different scripts did not necessarily correspond with the actual calligraphy, for example, of the *Lanting xu* or Huaisu's 懷素 (737–799) *Zixu tie* 自敘帖 ("Autobiographical Essay"). When Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–785) is recognized for the content of his writing and the writing itself, it is when specific social values shift in the Song dynasty, see McNair (1998). In this regard, Wang Xizhi's personality played a role in the appreciation of his calligraphy (his love of geese or his encounter with the old lady who sold fans), but the content of the writing even in his many letters was largely separate from the style of writing.

然草與真有異，真則字終意亦終，草則行盡勢未盡。或烟收霧合，或電激星流，以風骨為體，以變化為用。有類雲霞聚散，觸遇成形；龍虎威神，飛動增勢。岩谷相傾于峻險，山水各務於高深。<sup>243</sup>

With regard to the standard script, the form or, as Zhang states, the writing is complete with each stroke and at the end of writing a single character, while with the cursive script, much of the energy of the characters and the strokes is held or implied between the marks on paper, as Zhang describes, like lightning flashing or stars shooting across the sky. The cursive forms have bone or structure that anticipates or builds upon the changes preceding and following their careful placement. The language that Zhang uses to convey these forces shows his engagement with a close viewing of cursive calligraphy: the bravery of dragons and tigers in the heavier or firmer strokes in contrast with the light, faster flying movements before or after the brush presses again on the paper. The varying heights and depths of the mountains and streams recall not only the way one might look up and down or through a text, a landscape, or nature itself, but also the physicality of moving through such extremes, here in a single character or down a line of calligraphy. With these variations, Zhang acknowledges the seeming trivialities of writing the cursive script:

Individual characters bring together myriad difference. They are tailored to become one image. Some characters are attached to ambitions of hurrying and moving with great ease, some entrust the heart that disperse sadness; even if the most exalted viewers cannot restrain their loftiness, and even if one marvelous at calculations cannot measure their

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<sup>243</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.126-127.

ability. In this way, great utility is created out of no useful action, similar to the achievements of nature.

囊括萬殊，裁成一相。或寄以騁縱橫之志，或托以散鬱結之懷；雖至貴不能抑其高，雖妙算不能量其力。是以無為而用，同自然之功。<sup>244</sup>

This artful expression of great utility originates in a seemingly trivial movement of the brush that is profoundly moving. Zhang identifies qualities of will or sadness, lack of restraint, emptiness, negative space, or the space between forms and the ink on paper, to allude to how something so natural can be so moving. He does this by, in some respects, tracing the act of writing with his words, so that when he returns to addressing those who attempt to evaluate works in the cursive script, he can reiterate the extremes one must be willing to experience in order to fathom its logic:

Things that resemble their form have obtained the principle of the Maker of Things.<sup>245</sup> They do not all know that this is how they were formed. They use the heart to understand, but they cannot use words to proclaim it. They observe it as if entering a temple and meeting a spirit, or like peering into a bottomless ravine. One bows down to the teeth and claws<sup>246</sup> of a ferocious beast, one forces the cutting edge<sup>247</sup> of the sharp sword. Solemn thus, and precarious, one at last realizes the subtle marvelousness of the cursive script.

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<sup>244</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.126-127.

<sup>245</sup> Maker of Things (*zaohua zhe* 造化者), or “Creator,” an allusion to Zhuangzi’s discussion of “The Great and Most Honoured Master” 大宗師.

<sup>246</sup> “Teeth and claws” (*yazhao* 牙爪) can also refer to a brave or fierce person.

<sup>247</sup> “The cutting edge” (*feng mang* 鋒芒) also means “one’s talents.”

物類其形，得造化之理。皆不知其然也。可以心契，不可以言宣。觀之者，似入廟見神，如窺谷無底。俯猛獸之牙爪，逼利劍之鋒芒。肅然危然，方知草之微妙也。<sup>248</sup>

In this description of the cursive script, Zhang reveals not only his utmost esteem for the form, but also his direct experience of its effects. He demonstrates how previous treatises that lacked the proper words might have alleviated their cause by deeper understanding or experience. Through the exposition above, he encapsulates both the energy and the effects of the brush, which he points out, continue beyond the written character, like lightning and change. The brush strokes are active in collecting together or in expressing the force of flying. They allude to both the cliff and the ravine and what is between, like the mountain's height and waters depth. The energy of the cursive relies on forces, only the effects of which are known, like the galloping of a horse or the tension released from one's heart. And while there exists a logic to these phenomena, they are created unconsciously, and experience of their meaning extends beyond the writing itself.

Following this involved description of the cursive script, Zhang offers his final evaluation of calligraphers, accordingly, while enhancing and adding to the criteria anew. He returns first to Wang Xianzhi's expressed disdain for the old ways of writing, which he found limited and restraining, and Zhang now more freely praises Wang Xianzhi's new script:

Wang Xianzhi's methods, not cursive and not semi-cursive, it flowed more easily in the semi-cursive, the cursive could also be placed in the middle of this, not complying with the old ways that preferred to be restrained by the system of rules; upright, thus,

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<sup>248</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.127.

producing refinement; execution simple and easy; emotions racing and the spirit given free reign; transcending escape and wandering at the highest level; taking from affairs what is appropriate, and following ideas that are suitable and convenient. As if when the wind circulates and the rain scatters, moistening the colors and bringing the flowers to bloom, amidst the form and force of the writing methods, these are the most outstanding.

子敬之法，非草非行，流便於行，草又處其中間，無藉因循，寧拘制則；挺然秀出，務於簡易；情馳神縱，超逸優游；臨事制宜，從意適便。有若風行雨散，潤色開花，筆法體勢之中，最為風流者也。<sup>249</sup>

In comparing Wang Xianzhi's semi-cursive and cursive scripts with those of his father Wang Xizhi, the son's brush, furthermore, is more robust:

Wang Xizhi (Yishao) grasps the essentials of the standard and semi-cursive script, Zijing holds the authority of the semi-cursive and cursive scripts. The father's writing is harmonious and contented, while the son's brush is robust, all from past to present no one can compare...

逸少秉真行之要，子敬執行草之權，父之靈和，子之神俊，皆古今之獨絕也。<sup>250</sup>

Zhang's final statement about Wang Xizhi's cursive script, in contrast, is harsh: "Wang Xizhi's cursive script has the quality of a young maiden, it does not have the air of a great man, it is not sufficient to treasure" 遺少草有女郎材，無丈夫氣，不足貴也。<sup>251</sup> Explained in terms of the change in tastes, Zhang offers an analogy with the way some use knowledge, more generally:

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<sup>249</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.127.

<sup>250</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.127.

<sup>251</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.128.

It is not that sages and gentleman are dumb in one field and wise in another, it is rather that they understand some specific action and don't understand another, or that they apply their understanding, differently. Calligraphy is also like this, although lowly in this or some are esteemed in that, recognized or not recognized. Although knowledge and ability are fixed, appreciation depends on the age.

賢人君子，非愚于此，而智於彼，知與不知，用與不用也。書道亦爾，雖賤于此，或貴于彼，鑒與不鑒也。智能雖定，賞遇在時也。<sup>252</sup>

Reflecting his own change in views, Zhang concludes this final essay with a praiseful description of the firm but natural quality of the cursive writing of Ji Kang 嵇康 (223–262), one of the famous Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove (*Zhulin qixian* 竹林七賢):

Ji Kang's height was 7 *chi* 6 *cun*, his voice beautiful, his appearance was grand. Although his person was unkempt like earth and wood, he had the grace and charm of a dragon seal, a heavenly quality that was natural. Additionally, he was filial, brotherly, warm and respectful. I admire his way of being. I always kept his one piece his *Juejiaoshu*<sup>253</sup> in the cursive script, which I greatly treasured. Someone wanted to give me two pieces of Wang Xizhi's calligraphy, but I did not make the exchange. Recently at Li Zao's<sup>254</sup> place, I saw a complete work, I clearly recognized the spirit of his fair life, as if meeting with him.

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<sup>252</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.128.

<sup>253</sup> This "Letter of Breaking of Relations" was written to Shan Tao 山濤 (courtesy name Juyuan 巨源, 205-283). The original is included in the *Wenxuan* 43.1992; translated by James Hightower in John Minford and Joseph S.M. Lau, ed., *An Anthology of Translations: Classical Chinese Literature*, Vol. 1, pp. 463-467.

<sup>254</sup> Li Zao 李造 (active during the 8<sup>th</sup> century).



Later, when one who has obtained understanding, reads this discussion, they should be wholehearted. Those who have knowledge, are wise, while those who know themselves are clear. Evaluating a person's skill, first one must look at the content *wen* of his calligraphy, then look at style of the brush *mo*. Wang Xizhi, Wang Xianzhi and the nineteen others, all had both *wen* and *mo*. Written by Zhang Huaiguan during the 4<sup>th</sup> month of 758.

嵇叔夜身長七尺六寸，美音聲，偉容色，雖土木形骸，而龍章風姿，天質自然；加以孝友溫恭，吾慕其為人，常有其草書《絕交書》一紙，非常寶惜。有人與吾兩紙王右軍書不易。近于李造處見其全書，了然知公平生志氣，若與面焉。後有達識者，覽此論當亦悉心矣。夫知人者智，自知者明。<sup>255</sup> 論人才能，先文而後墨。羲，獻等十九人皆兼文墨。乾元元年四月日，張懷瓘述。<sup>256</sup>

With his separating out of the evaluation of the cursive script, Wang Xizhi can still be the “sage of calligraphy” in other scripts, but at the same time Zhang Huaiguan has the freedom to comment on more specific physical effects of the necessarily vigorous cursive script. Zhang concludes his analysis by affirming that his judgment of calligraphers is based not only on a calligraphic style (*mo* 墨) but also on content (*wen* 文), which includes literary style, personality, as well as in Ji Kang's case, physical attributes and political and social leanings. Zhang's specific mention of Ji Kang's “Letter of Breaking of Relations” (*Juewen shu* 絕交書) with Shan Tao 山

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<sup>255</sup> “One who knows oneself is clear”自知者明, references the *Daode jing* 道德經, Chapter 33, “One who knows other men is discerning; one who knows oneself is clear. One who surpasses others is powerful; one who surpasses oneself is strong. One who is satisfied is fortunate; one who goes on acting with strength has aims. One who does not lose one's place lasts a long time. One who dies and yet does not perish, has longevity (based on James Legge's translation with my edits) 知人者智，自知者明。勝人者有力，自勝者強。知足者富。強行者有志。不失其所者久。死而不亡者壽, *Daodejing* 道德經, translations and annotations by Zhang Jing 張景 and Zhang Songhui 張松輝 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2021), 33.328

<sup>256</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 4.128-129.

濤 (205-283) might also reflect Zhang Huaiguan's attitude to the changing political climate of his generation and a specific situation in which one might become a gentleman through diverse paths and strive to, at the very least, be understood by one's friends, in contrast to Wang Xizhi's official, long-standing, standard, and popular recognition.

Zhang Huaiguan's differentiation of the cursive script shows a closer, more defined rather than all-encompassing look at individual calligraphers. While his earlier studies began by ranking works by individual calligraphers according to different scripts, Zhang's subsequent, shorter writings provide strong views of the importance of calligraphy, how to discuss it, and specifically how to carefully observe it through specific examples. In this way, Zhang Huaiguan perpetuates the study of calligraphy by allowing for a change in preferences, but only with deep understanding, as described in his writings, that provide specific instructions on how to view calligraphy and use the proper language that was becoming systemized. With Wang Xizhi's well-known fame, Zhang Huaiguan easily references his work to make his points. Although he does not rank Wang Xianzhi's work in the same way, he includes significant opportunities to defend the younger Wang's calligraphy. Furthermore, Zhang Huaiguan through his attention to the cursive script shows how his own interests developed in this direction.

### **3.2 Preempting a Category for the Appropriate Study of Scripts**

Through the selected texts of the *Fashu yaolu*, Zhang Yanyuan supports Zhang Huaiguan's evaluative approach. Zhang Yanyuan responds to Zhang Huaiguan's rankings according to scripts by including texts on scripts that highlight the cursive script and appropriate study and use of scripts. In later compilations and studies on calligraphy, descriptions and

histories of scripts or embedded in texts eventually develop into their own category. Zhang Yanyuan's attention to texts on scripts precedes this formal categorization of scripts. As the first comprehensive compilation of texts on calligraphy, the *Fashu yaolu* is not divided into such categories. Still, Zhang Yanyuan clearly selected specific texts on scripts that he deemed most crucial to serious study of calligraphy. The study of scripts may be a natural extension of the study of calligraphy, but, placed together with Zhang Huaiguan's texts so prominent in Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu*, they act as supplements to Zhang Huaiguan's evaluation methods in guiding the reader.

Most notably, as discussed above, Zhang Huaiguan expressed keen interest in the cursive script. Calling attention to the cursive script, Zhang Yanyuan's compilation opens with Zhao Yi's 趙一 (active c.178-184) now well-known memorial "Against Cursive" 非草書.<sup>257</sup> It is also

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<sup>257</sup> Zhao was outspoken about his disdain for the great clans and the eunuchs of his time and regularly butted up against the authorities though he was able to escape a death sentence. Zhao Yi's most famous work, "Fu on Satirizing the World and Denouncing Evil" 刺世疾邪賦, a satire, openly complains about the great clans and possibly the eunuchs. *Cambridge History of Literature*, vol. 1, p. 154. Zhao Yi declares he prefers not to live in this corrupt age. After visiting the capital in 178, he returned to his hometown and declined subsequent offers to take office, until his death in 185. The *Hou Hanshu*, compiled by Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445), in the early fifth century, includes Zhao Yi's biography. Among the mention of sixteen untitled writings, only two *fu* were recorded, not including "Against Cursive." Still, most scholars believe Zhao's essay warning against the unruly use of the cursive script must have been written by Zhao. Before Zhang Yanyuan preserved it in his mid-ninth century compilation, the essay was likely in circulation. Vincent Leung cites a series of three articles from the late 1990s to the year 2000, only one of which attempts to determine the essay a forgery, from Vincent S. Leung, "Bad Writing: Cursive Calligraphy and the Ethics of Orthography in the Eastern Han Dynasty," in Rothschild, N. Harry and Leslie V. Wallace, eds. *Behaving Badly in Early and Medieval China* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), p. 106-121.

the earliest dated text in the *Fashu yaolu*, which is arranged largely chronologically. Although the text on the surface seems to discourage diligent practice of the cursive script, it serves to call attention to the script's popularity and calligraphy's growing independence as an art form. While the polemic, "Against Cursive," derided those who diligently practiced the more expressive script in growing number, Zhao's traditionalist views of its lack of official purpose projected political and social values onto a way of writing. Zhao Yi's criticism of the cursive script coincided with those made against the Hongdu Gate School 鴻都門, which emphasized means other than the Confucian classics to advance in government, and their support of "insignificant" or "trivial" (*xi* 細) arts though we do not know whether the Hongdu Gate School scholars practiced the cursive script, specifically. Criticized for its unconventional selection of scholar-officials, the school focused on the insignificant arts of calligraphy, painting, and certain forms of poetry which the university or imperial academy regarded as mere technical skills.<sup>258</sup> Zhao's representation of the traditional voice against the cursive script, specifically, reiterates some of the arguments against the emphasis on the minor arts, while at the same time, makes the growth of the art form and its specialized forms influential enough to upset traditional values and order, and eventually set a new standard for using and viewing calligraphy.

An Accounts Clerk under Emperor Ling 漢靈帝(r. 168-189) of the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220), Zhao was clearly learned and was motivated to defend a moral standard of learning.

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<sup>258</sup> David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, eds, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*. Vol. 1 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), p. 25, note 85.

Although Zhao may not have been concerned with aesthetics and did not understand beauty for its own sake,<sup>259</sup> this trend, which Zhao feared, changed the aesthetic evaluation of written characters of the seal and clerical scripts toward one with flowing lines, appearing more spontaneous and without hesitation. The forcefulness of Zhao's voice suggests that the practice of the cursive script was so prevalent that he was compelled to remind people that writing cursive would not pay off in official career development. In the end, Zhao Yi's polemic did not have its intended effect, as people continued to treasure the cursive script and its practice increased, reaching its height in the Eastern Jin (266-420), not too long after Zhao's time. In retrospect Zhao invested a particular script of calligraphy with political significance and initiated judgments of who should use the script, for what purpose. And, as Zhang Huaiguan notes at the end of his *Shuduan*, "Zhao Yi who wrote the Essay Disparaging Cursive, was actually one who smiled at the importance of having a work of Zhang Zhi's calligraphy as a secret treasure" 趙壹有貶草之論，仍笑重張芝書為秘寶者！<sup>260</sup> Zhang Yanyuan may well have paid more attention

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<sup>259</sup> See Acker, p. LVIII.

<sup>260</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.263. Along with the criticism of the Hongdu Gate School, Zhao Yi's concerns about the cursive "reflect significant cultural changes that were occurring inside and outside the court at the end of the Eastern Han." Soon after, opposition decreased. As Knechtges writes, "in particular, we see in this next generation of literati less of an interest in the political function of literature, and the emergence of what is often called the age of literary and artistic self-consciousness," Knechtges (2010), p. 33. This self-consciousness certainly applied to Zhang Yanyuan and extended to his family's collecting practices, as well as the history of calligraphy that it represented and depended upon.

to Zhao's memorial because of Zhang Huaiguan's citation, which Zhang Huaiguan mentions to support his own discussion on scripts.

Supporting this attention to scripts, Zhang Yanyuan includes a text that recommends in a similar vein that one study a script that one understands. Falling after the texts by Liang Wudi in *juan 2*, Yu Yuanwei's 庾元威 (fl.c. early 6<sup>th</sup> century) "On Calligraphy" (*Lunshu* 論書), of the early sixth century Liang (502-557), provides decidedly practical advice, with an attention to appropriate script types. Yu Yuanwei was skilled at the tadpole script (*kedouwen* 蝌蚪文),<sup>261</sup> a form of the seal script, as well as other miscellaneous scripts. He transmitted one essay, this *Lunshu*, which advises the reader to study a structure of characters one understands rather than study the calligraphy of the two Wangs. He allegedly chose not to study the Wangs. The first half of his essay provides a short history of the scripts and who invented them. The second half of the essay discusses the scripts popular at the time and shows his knowledge of 90 miscellaneous script types, such as "suspended needle seal script" (*xuanzhen zhuan* 懸針篆), developed in the Tang. Yu concludes with a discussion on scripts in color and their relationship to painting.

Yu's essay emphasizes studying certain scripts for certain purposes – the standard script for memorials and official orders, and the cursive for everyday correspondences, for example. As he describes, these two scripts would be sufficient for everyday writing. Furthermore, he favored neat writing that followed the rules and harmonized the standards and chose models from current

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<sup>261</sup> Also referred to as *kedoushu* 科斗書 or *kedouzhuàn* 科斗篆.

times. Yu is important for his use of miscellaneous scripts and his assertive choice of contemporary models.<sup>262</sup> This interest in current or contemporary models in lieu of the Wangs, as well as his assigning of specific scripts for certain purposes, stands out in the context of the *Fashu yaolu* for its accessibility and opening up of possibilities.<sup>263</sup>

Zhang Yanyuan expands this attention to scripts northward and to the seal script with his inclusion of Jiang Shi's 江式 (fl. 512-523) "Memorial on Calligraphy" 論書表 *Lunshu biao*.<sup>264</sup> Jiang Shi was a well-known master of the seal script of the Northern Wei (386-534). Many of the palace name boards in Luoyang were written in his hand.<sup>265</sup> In contrast to other theorists who supported models from current times, Jiang criticized the messiness of forms of his time and advocated returning to earlier models. His "Memorial on Calligraphy" was written to correct the mistakes in the styles of the time. In this memorial, Jiang explains extensively the development of characters, then he points out that the Wei emperor continued the legacy, but the times changed, and the characters changed. As a result, the seal form acquired many errors, and the clerical script lost its authenticity. None of the writing was in harmony with ancient writing,

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<sup>262</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.45-50.

<sup>263</sup> Dou Ji also had this focus on mainly contemporary, in his case, Tang writers. To this end, Zhang Yanyuan's "Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods" also updates the listing to the mid-Tang.

<sup>264</sup> Included in the *FSYL* (2019), 2.62-69; *Mochibian*, and *Peiwenzhai*.

<sup>265</sup> Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval China* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2009), p. 280.

according to Jiang. Jiang also composed a collection of characters, the *Gujin wenzi* 古今文字, in 10 scrolls, which went unfinished. Zhang Yanyuan's attention to Jiang, a master of the seal script, and Jiang's particular concern over the proper models for seal and clerical script, provide a distinctly northern view. This memorial, furthermore, serves as a warning about possible errors in the development of scripts and points to the attention to character models. This attention and specificity in recognizing changes further elevates one's studies of writing in the various scripts.

Lastly, of the four texts of the *Fashu yaolu* that are listed but not transcribed, two of them refer to script types: Cai Yun's 蔡惲, "On Calligraphy of Indeterminate Script Type" 書無定體論 (no longer extant); and "On the Six Script Types" 六體書論 (still extant), attributed to Zhang Huaiguan. By listing the titles, Zhang Yanyuan holds a place for these texts, as a reminder to his readers of their subject matter, which might be consulted elsewhere, or were not crucial enough for Zhang to transcribe in their entirety.

### 3.3 Supplementing Select Evaluative Language by Providing Complete Texts

Zhang Yanyuan includes Zhang Huaiguan's complete *Shuduan* and four of his other writings as central to the *Fashu yaolu*. Besides this quantifiable support, Zhang Yanyuan selects for his *Fashu yaolu* many of the same texts that Zhang Huaiguan cites at the end of his *Shuduan*. By including complete texts for Zhang Huaiguan's citations, these texts act as supplements to the *Shuduan*. Examined more closely, Zhang Huaiguan's specific excerpts and Zhang Yanyuan's coinciding selection of texts provide much of the language prominent in subsequent studies of calligraphy and crucial to expanding the field of calligraphy works evaluated. By providing the complete texts, Zhang Yanyuan calls attention to the excerpts, as well as the names



of the original theorists and their complete texts. Without his expressed narrative, he leaves room for further study and interpretation of these texts.

Zhang Huaiguan's evaluation system, organized by script, promoted the evaluation of individual works even of renowned masters and required the observer to have the skills and knowledge to discern possible discrepancies in a master's work in different scripts. The emphasis was on viewing and being able to evaluate individual works. These concerns are further emphasized in Zhang Huaiguan's concluding "evaluation," or *ping* 評 of his earliest writing, the *Shudian*. By way of concluding his lengthy, three-juan treatise, Zhang Huaiguan strings together brief excerpts from the critics before him, summarizing specific views about evaluating earlier masters. As if designing a supplementary reference volume, the majority of Zhang Yanyuan's selection of complete texts in the *Fashu yaolu* coincides with the citations Zhang Huaiguan provides in this "evaluation" 評 and thus serves to legitimize the work of both author and compiler, as well as call attention to each of the writers of the cited texts. Read together, the texts confirm the established scholarship though at the same time attempt to elevate the status of Wang Xianzhi by isolating dichotomies that allow nuances in the comparisons between the Two Wangs, such as ancient and modern, skillful and natural, or harmonious or charming.

With regard to studying models other than the Two Wangs, Zhang Huaiguan excerpts from Wang Sengqian's 王僧虔 (426-485) "On Calligraphy" (*Lunshu* 論書), which coincides with sentiments expressed in Yu Yuanwu's text. In the excerpt, Wang Sengqian, a descendent of the Two Wangs, who was favored by Emperor Wen of the Song (宋文帝, r. 424–453) and served

as an academician to the court,<sup>266</sup> suggests that another one of his ancestors, Wang Min 王珉 surpassed that of Zijing, or Wang Xianzhi: 王僧虔云: 亡從祖中書令。筆力過子敬者。<sup>267</sup> In response, Zhang Huaiguan makes reference to the *Lunyu*: “‘the gentleman unifies and does not collude,’ indeed wasn’t he part of the family?” 「君子周而不比」，乃有黨乎?<sup>268</sup> In this way, Zhang Huaiguan, warns against betraying one’s family, in particular Wang Xianzhi. Wang Sengqian’s complete text, which Zhang Yanyuan includes in his *Fashu yaolu*, devotes considerable attention to comparing individual calligraphers to their fathers and focuses mainly on calligraphers associated with the Wang family. He compares each of the calligraphers to either Wang Xizhi or Wang Xianzhi. Wang Sengqian’s favor with the emperor gave him the liberty to recommend that the emperor study other members of his family and masters beyond

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<sup>266</sup> Like the founding Emperor Gao 齊高帝 (r. 479-482), Wang Sengqian was active in both the Liu Song 劉宋 (420-479) and Southern Qi 齊 (479-502) dynasties. His father Wang Wanshou 王曇首 (394-430), a prominent statesman in the early Liu Song, which also placed the young Wang, a calligrapher, scholar and writer in a close relationship with the court. He was known to have mastered the clerical script. Emperor Wen of the Song (宋文帝, r. 424-453) was fond of him and appointed him to assistant in the palace library and secretary to the heir designate. In the late *yuanjia* era 元嘉 (424-453) of Emperor Wen, Wang Sengqian served as academician to Liu Chang 劉昶 (436-497), Prince of Yiyang 義陽. From *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature* (vol. 2): *A Reference Guide*, p. 1219.

<sup>267</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260.

<sup>268</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260. Wang Sengqian’s comment attempts to place a different ancestor above the one that is generally accepted. Zhang Huaiguan’s comment suggests this may be an act of deception, but at the same time indicates that since Wang was part of the family, he might also be seen as maintaining that loyalty.

one's own immediate instructors. What Zhang Huaiguan's excerpt points out is the possibility of studying other models, including Wang Xianzhi or even another ancestor of the Wangs though he warns against the latter.

In his final appraisals, Zhang Huaiguan highlights how one will inevitably show one's self in one's writing. This reality, however, does not preclude acceptance of newer writers. In this vein, Zhang Huaiguan's excerpted lines from Liang Wudi's "Twelve Concepts" provide prescriptions for writers. The second part of this text is a seven-line discussion of the styles of Zhong You and the Two Wangs. The first part of the text outlines the twelve "concepts" of calligraphic aesthetics with one or two-character definitions.<sup>269</sup> The emperor makes it clear that Zhong You's calligraphy exhibited these twelve concepts, which describe the structure of individual characters as analogous to the writer's moral and social character: "stable," (*heng* 橫); "upright," (*zong* 縱); "spaced," (*jian* 間); and "organized" (*ji* 際), for example. One's freedom in directional change might be seen in a gently turning stroke, whereas one might show one's decisiveness in dragging or pulling.<sup>270</sup> These "concepts" describe as much as they prescribe for both the writer and the evaluator. Even though Zhong You's calligraphy demonstrates the twelve brush ideas, many study the Two Wangs. And although Wang Xizhi studied Zhong You's work

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<sup>269</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.36-37.

<sup>270</sup> Wen Fong provides a partial translation in Wen Fong, "Chinese Calligraphy: Theory and History," in Robert E. Harrist and Wen Fong, *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection* (Princeton New Jersey: Art Museum Princeton University, 1999), p. 34.

to the extent that he could write freely, Wang Xizhi's calligraphy unmistakably showed his own ways. Zhang Huaiguan's excerpt from Liang Wudi's "Twelve Concepts" reads:

Liang wudi said: "Zhong You's calligraphy method has twelve brush ideas. Many in this world who study calligraphy take the Two Wangs as their teacher yet Yuanchang's outstanding calligraphy was not disdained by those who took the Two Wangs as their model. They competed with each other to be talented, and fine and meticulous, almost equally marvelous. Although Yishao studied Yuanchang's brush force and skill, when he moved the brush on his own, the brush idea was loose and the character relaxed. For example, it's like the Chu sound practiced the Xia, but it cannot not be without Chu."

梁武帝云：「鐘繇書法，十有二意。世之書者，多師二王。元常逸迹，曾不睥睨。競巧趣精細，殆同機神。逸少至于學鐘勢巧，及其獨運，意疏字緩。譬猶楚音習夏，不能無楚。」<sup>271</sup>

While Zhang Huaiguan excerpted these few lines from the "Twelve Concepts," Zhang Yanyuan includes Liang Wudi's complete text in his compilation. In the subsequent seven lines from which Zhang Huaiguan excerpted the quote above, Liang Wudi acknowledges a diversity of opinions.<sup>272</sup> Immediately following his comment about Wang Xizhi studying Zhong's calligraphy, the emperor suggests that the discussions are still developing, "as well, discussions about Zijing (Wang Xianzhi) do not stop Yishao (Wang Xizhi), just as discussions about Yishao do not stop discussion about Yuanchang (Zhong You)又子敬之不迨逸少，猶逸少之不迨元

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<sup>271</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260.

<sup>272</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.36.

常.<sup>273</sup> Liang Wudi addresses what seems like uncertainty in accepting new but authentic works and evaluating them and suggests that one can discuss later works without taking away the value of earlier ones, that is, even though not many authentic works survive, through later works one might still detect aspects of those they studied.

This attention to who one studies and the way in which these choices do not limit the development and acceptance of later works serves to support praise for Wang Xianzhi.

Following Liang Wudi's acknowledgement of maintaining one's inherent qualities, Zhang Huaiguan offers his own positive comments about Wang Xianzhi, particularly his semi-cursive and cursive writing and his bravery:

Zijing was not yet skilled at the regular script and was also lacking in the draft cursive. However, observing the harmony of his semi-cursive and cursive, the spirit and bravery are unmatched. Moreover, compared to his father, it seems he tried to be his father's match; compared to Zhong You, Zhang Zhi, even though they were strong rivals, he still captured the brave force. As for his particular abilities under heaven, it is difficult for one to accomplish them all.

子敬之不逮真，亦劣章草。然觀其行草之會，則神勇蓋世。況之于父，猶擬抗行；比之鐘、張，雖勍敵，仍有擒猛之勢。夫天下之能事，悉難就也。<sup>274</sup>

Here Zhang Huaiguan is not quoting another source. Zhang's evaluation begins with a warning against straying from the lineage but proceeds with a professed need for flexibility in the discussions and in choosing one's models.

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<sup>273</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.37.

<sup>274</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260.

With this, Zhang Huaiguan's summative appraisals emphasize the value of viewing actual works and the power of their physical presence in his excerpt about Xiao Ziyun and his discussion of all those who desired to copy the master of "flying white." Xiao Ziyun figures prominently in Zhang Yanyuan's compilation (discussed in Chapter Two). Zhang Huaiguan insists that merely seeing Xiao's works would influence a calligrapher: "for example, the effects of Xiao Ziyun's calligraphy, although childish, its effects lasted for several days. Those who saw it could not say they didn't study Xiao's calligraphy" 假如効蕭子雲書，雖則童孺，但至効數日，見者無不云學蕭書。<sup>275</sup> In other words, the impact of Xiao's calligraphy was inevitable. Xiao, of course, was a crucial part of the lineage, which Zhang Yanyuan confirms through his texts.

In support of his own evaluation of Wang Xizhi's cursive script, his view of which declines over time (as shown above), Zhang Huaiguan quotes Wang Xizhi himself, who admits that his cursive script is second to Zhang Zhi's:

Youjun said, "my calligraphy compares to Zhong and Zhang, and in the end can be matched, others say it surpasses theirs. Zhang's cursive script is as if equal to mine." He also said, "My regular script surpasses Zhong's, but my cursive is less than Zhang's."

右軍云：「吾書比之鐘、張，終當抗衡，或謂過之。張草猶當雁行。」又云：「吾真書勝鐘，草故減張。」<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260.

<sup>276</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260. The earliest version of this text traces back to Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu*. It is also included in *Shuyuan jinghua* and *Peiwenzhai shuhuapu*. From the Song dynasty the text is called *Zilun* 自論.

At least the first line seems to come from Wang Xizhi's "My Discussion of Calligraphy" (*Zilun shu* 自論書), which Zhang Yanyuan includes in the *Fashu yaolu*.<sup>277</sup> The second line, however, is from a different text. Zhang Huaiguan was in complete agreement with Wang Xizhi's opinion about his cursive script, particularly in the rankings he presents in his later writings (above). But Wang Xizhi claims that, if he were as diligent as Zhang, famous for blackening the pond with his constant writing, he would easily surpass him. Wang, notably, also sought to emulate past masters, purportedly, the first to do so, and personally searched through old works to determine that Zhong You and Zhang Zhi were the most excellent. With this, he places himself next in line. Wang Xizhi concedes to Zhong and Zhang, generally, though only because he was not as diligent as Zhang.

To help distinguish between Zhang Zhi and Zhong You's writing, Zhang Huaiguan defers to comments by Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (487-551). Again, Zhang Yanyuan includes Yu Jianwu's<sup>278</sup> complete texts in *juan* two of the *Fashu yaolu*. While separation by scripts (above)

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<sup>277</sup> Zhang Yanyuan includes Wang's *Zilun shu* in the *Fashu yaolu*, along with mention of Wang Xizhi's postscript (not transcribed) to the *Bizhen tu* 筆陣圖 ("Diagram of the Battle Array of the Brush") attributed to Lady Wei. These latter two texts have been determined later creations, from the Tang dynasty.

<sup>278</sup> The earliest transmission of Yu Jianwu's 庾肩吾 (487-551) complete text, "A Classification of Calligraphers" (*Shupin lun* 書品論) comes from Zhang's *Fashu yaolu*. Contemporary with Liang Wudi's exchanges in his court, Yu Jianwu elaborated on some of the moralistic leanings in the crown prince, Xiao Gang's court. With closer ties to literary developments, Yu's classification proposes a ranking system comparable to those found in earlier histories. The

provides a crucial way of organizing evaluations and ranking calligraphers, Yu's dichotomy of "naturalness" and "skilled" or "practiced" further delineate the ranking of individual works according to ancient and modern, as well as natural or practiced:

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formal and inclusive nature of Yu Jianwu's "Classification of Calligraphers" in just one *pian*, provides a ranking of 128 calligraphers from the Han to the Qi Liang dynasty. This represents not only an expanded number of calligraphers but a contemporaneous system of evaluation comparable to that of poets. Yu was an influential member of Xiao Gang's court, and like his literary counterpart, Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (ca. 468-518), who wrote the "Classification of poetry" (*Shipin* 詩品), Yu divides his subjects into three ranks with three levels, *shang* 上 (high), *zhong* 中, and *xia* 下 to make 9 ranks. Zhong classified nearly the same number of poets 122, to Yu's 128 calligraphers. As in Zhong's *Shipin*, Yu Jianwu's *Shupin* focused on emotions rather than on biographical details. Yu describes theoretical principles or specific characteristics, rather than delving into the lives of the writers, while Zhong Rong evaluated poets who followed established precedents and literary conventions and who transmitted particular styles to the next generation. The highest ranked were those who produced intense emotion. This follows the *Han shu* "Gujin ren biao 古今人表" of prominent families ranked into 9 moral categories. Scholars have authenticated the attribution to Yu Jianwu based on this style of discussion that matches contemporary works, Zhong Rong's *Shipin*; Xie He's (謝赫, 479-502) "Classification of Ancient Painters" (*Gu huapin lu* 古畫品錄); and Yao Zui's (姚最, 535-602) "Continued Classification of Painters" (*Xuhua pin* 續畫品). See Wang Ping, *The Age of Courtly Writing: Wen Xuan Compiler Xiao Tong (501-531) and His Circle*, p. 79. Their writing alone is celebrated.

The most common versions of the *Shipin* are those included in the collectanea *Jindai mishu* 津逮秘書 and *Xuejin Taoyuan* 學津討原. Xu Wenyu 許文雨 has written a commentary called *Shipin jiangshu* 詩品講疏, Chen Yanjie 陳延杰 a commentary called *Shipin zhu* 詩品注. See Min Ze 敏澤. "Shipin 詩品", in: *Zhongguo da baike quanshu* 中國大百科全書, *Zhongguo wenxue* 中國文學, vol. 2, pp. 735-736. Beijing/Shanghai: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 1986. See also translations and discussion in John Timothy Wixted, "The Nature of Evaluation in the *Shih-p'in* (Gradings of Poets) by Chung Hung (A.D. 469-518)," in *Theories of the Arts in China*, Susan Bush and Christian Murck, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 225-264.



Yu Jianwu said: “Zhang’s technical skills are the top, his naturalness is second best; his naturalness does not approach Zhong, but his skills surpass his.”

庾肩吾云：「張功夫第一，天然次之。天然不及鐘，功夫過之。」<sup>279</sup>

Zhang Zhi showed more diligence and skills, while Zhong You displayed more naturalness, perhaps even more moral character. These distinctions allow one to appreciate both calligraphers for different traits. At the same time the comparison becomes more detailed.

In line with this focus, Yu Jianwu in his complete texts writes using nature metaphors – and suggests that the writing is divine – not learned. Higher regard for naturalness over skills follows. Yu concludes that “only Zhang has attained the Way, though Zhong You and Wang Xizhi are also like this” 惟張有道、鐘元常、王右軍其人也。<sup>280</sup> If the goal is to attain the Way (*dao* 道), Yu proposes measuring the standards of writing according to naturalness (*tianran* 天然) and practice (*gongfu* 工夫), respectively. In this regard, Zhang Zhi, Zhong You, and Wang Xizhi again receive the highest marks though not always the highest in one of the categories. The context for the excerpt from Yu’s original text, as transmitted in the *Fashu yaolu*, reads as follows:

Zhang’s skills are the best, his naturalness is second, he would use his clothing for writing first and was called the Sage of Cursive. Zhong’s naturalness was first, his skills were second...

張工夫第一，天然次之，衣帛先書，稱為草聖。鐘天然第一，工夫次之...

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<sup>279</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.260. 功夫 is used here, where as 工夫 is used in the original text *FSYL* (2019), 2.53, according to this version.

<sup>280</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.53.

Wang's skills do not measure up to Zhang's, but his naturalness exceeds his. His naturalness does not reach that of Zhong, but his skills surpass his.

王工夫不及張，天然過之。天然不及鐘，工夫過之。<sup>281</sup>

Arguably, these terms allow for clear reverence and careful looking at past masters but at the same time mindful evaluation of potential newer productions.

Zhang Huaiguan's quick reference to these divisions continue in his excerpt from Yu He's 虞龢 (fl. c. 465–471) "Memorial on Calligraphy" (*Shu biao* 書表) of 470, which further characterizes ancient and present with "substance" (*zhi* 質) and "beauty" (*yan* 妍), respectively.

Zhang Huaiguan quotes:

Yu He said: "the past has substance, and the present has elegance. This is a constant in the world, yet people admire elegance and belittle substance. This is the sentiment of people. Zhong You and Zhang Zhi compared to the Two Wangs could be called ancient. So how could there not be a divergence between Zhong and Zhang's substance and the Two Wang's elegance? Between father and son, as well as past and present. It was absolutely fitting that Wang Xianzhi exhausted the elegance of calligraphy. Also taking Young Wang to be victorious, isn't this what the experts think?"

虞龢云：「古質而今妍，數之常，愛妍而薄質，人之情。鐘、張方之二王，可謂古矣，豈得無妍質之殊？父子之間，又為今古。子敬窮其妍妙，固其宜也。並以小王居勝，達人通論，不其然乎？」<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 2.53.

<sup>282</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.261-262.

If both Wangs are considered of the present compared to the elder Zhong and Zhang, but Wang Xianzhi more beautiful, then Yu He also seems to be placing the younger Wang above his father. In another passage he describes Xianzhi's fluid draft cursive as trying to surpass that of his father's:

Yu He says, "Xianzhi started by studying the calligraphy of his father, but his regular script was not like his. To the extent that his brush ended in the draft cursive, and very much appeared to compare in kind, the brush marks flowed like a pool, mellow and beautiful, still intending to surpass him."

虞和云：「獻之始學父書，正體乃不相似。至於筆絕章草，殊相擬類，筆跡流澤，婉轉妍媚，乃欲過之。」<sup>283</sup>

Through these comparisons between writers and evaluative terms, Zhang Huaiguan builds up to an argument to support Wang Xianzhi's calligraphy when he adds to Yu He's points that "Wang Sengqian said, 'Xianzhi's bone force did not reach his father's, but his charm passed him'" 王僧虔云，獻之骨勢不及父，媚趣過之。<sup>284</sup> Wang Xianzhi's flesh, charm, and elegance are recognized over his bone strength or substance, and this is the favored criteria of the present versus the past.

Yu He's complete text, included in Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu*, "Memorial on Calligraphy" (*Shu biao* 書表) of 470, provides appraisals, including Wang Xizhi's self-

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<sup>283</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.262.

<sup>284</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.262.

assessment placing himself on par with Zhang and Zhong, but slightly behind Zhang's cursive.<sup>285</sup>

In this memorial, Yu builds on the conversation Yang Xin quotes between Xie An and Wang

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<sup>285</sup> Yu He 虞龢 (fl. c. 465–471) presents to Emperor Ming 明帝 (r. 466–472) of the Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty (420–479) not only details and rankings of the imperial treasures, but also a brief history of calligraphy and important anecdotes about the early calligraphers. An early calligraphy connoisseur of Kuaji 會稽, which had also been the capital of the preceding Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420), Yu He begins his memorial with an abbreviated account of the origins of writing from “the trigrams” 爻畫 of the *Book of Changes* 易經, which allowed for the emergence of characters, to the “Six Arts” 六藝 and the “eight scripts” 八體, and eventually to a discussion of those who stood out from the masses: Zhang Zhi and Zhong You of the Han and Wei dynasties, respectively, and the Two Wangs of the Jin. In great detail, Yu He notes the number of characters as well as the condition of the copied works. He describes how he ranked and named the treasured chests of the court and received orders to search for and collect famous works of these great masters. Besides the works at court, Yu accounts for the works as they were lost and recovered among feudal allotments of the time. The *Fashu yaolu*, in turn, provides the earliest transmission of Yu's memorial and a number of the stories that other compilations and histories borrow.

Yu He relays many of the revealing anecdotes that would become famous in calligraphy history and inseparable from viewing the works and the activities of the calligraphers. For example, Wang Xizhi trying to prove the worth of his writing to an old lady selling fans. This anecdote contributes to later interpretations of Wang Xizhi's personality as well as his writing, equally spirited, playful, and bold. The reader also gets a glimpse of the presumed recognition and market for his writing to the extent that Wang even withholds further profit. Likely these fans, too, were copied, and the authenticity of the originals questioned. Yu's memorial also provides a well-known note about Xizhi's love for geese, and how he wrote out the *Daodejing* in order to acquire one. Yu includes the anecdote of Huan Xuan's donut-eating guest to which Zhang Yanyuan refers in his *Lidai minghua ji* (see Chapter One). Yu's rich account of these personalities and their writing and displaying activities includes Xizhi scraping the wall of his own writing; Wang Xianzhi writing in the flying-white script with a broom; Xianzhi's own students using the paper on which he had written to cultivate silkworms; as well as Xianzhi writing on Yang Xin's sleeves:

Xianzhi with regard to what the people think, adding that, customarily “the past has substance and the present has elegance” 夫古質而今妍, and concludes that Wang Xianzhi, not Wang Xizhi, at the same time was “the singular best of the remote past, and the model for hundreds of generations” 故同爲終古之獨絕，百代之楷式。<sup>11</sup>

Zhang Huaiguan wraps up his evaluation by reminding his readers that even Zhong and Zhang had their masters:

If one believes because one lived earlier they are more successful, Zhong and Zhang also had their masters. You cannot use the assumption that the earlier one is more substantial and the later one more elegant to make a fair evaluation of them.

若以居先則勝，鐘、張亦有所師，固不可文質先後而求之。<sup>286</sup>

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When Xin was 15 or 16, his calligraphy already had significance, so that Zijing knew about it. When Zijing went to the county and entered Xin’s studio, Xin was wearing a white skirt of new silk as he napped. Zijing thereupon wrote on his skirt hem and belt. When Xin woke up, he was happy to see what was revealed, and then treasured it. Later when he entered the court, it was fragmented and lost.

…欣年十五六，書已有意，爲子敬所知。子敬往縣，入欣齋，欣衣白新絹裙晝眠，子敬因書其裙幅及帶。欣覺，歡樂，遂寶之。後以上朝廷，中乃零失。FSYL (2019), 2.35-36.

This last anecdote points to Yang Xin reverence for his teacher, Wang Xianzhi.

<sup>286</sup> FSYL (2019), 9.262.

This statement indicates “those who continue to study calligraphy, although separated by hundreds of generations can still know them” 其或繼書者，雖百世可知。<sup>287</sup> Zhang Huaiguan settled on a system of evaluation that allowed individual works to traverse categories, including old and new, natural and skilled, with substance versus elegance.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Zhang Huaiguan’s specific descriptions of individual calligraphers and works of calligraphy have been transmitted and excerpted in subsequent histories of calligraphy. The details and elaborate lists that he provides gave him an authority in the field of calligraphy, for which he was acknowledged during his time, and which Zhang Yanyuan determined important to preserve and publish. Zhang Huaiguan’s differentiation of the scripts and separate ranking of individual works based on scripts required closer examination of each work written by a particular calligrapher. This system of evaluation, though at times bluntly matched to quantifiable worth, provided a means for refining comparisons between works of calligraphy, calligraphers past and present, naturalness versus skillfulness, and father and son. Zhang Huaiguan could celebrate Wang Xianzhi over Wang Xizhi and allow for more recent calligraphers to be recognized without forsaking those long gone.

Zhang Yanyuan’s showcasing of Zhang Huaiguan’s many writings indicates his alignment with the earlier Zhang’s views. Furthermore, Zhang Yanyuan supports Zhang Huaiguan’s *Shuduan* with texts similarly focused on scripts, as well as comparisons that could

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<sup>287</sup> *FSYL* (2019), 9.263.

highlight the Younger Wang. By including the complete texts that Zhang Huaiguan references, Zhang Yanyuan, at the same time, left the complete texts open to further scrutiny and in-depth reading that may have confirmed as much as opened the discussions to other views. The language of evaluating calligraphy had clearly developed to amass this volume of texts and could legitimate the importance of the works through those who had seen them in person and found so many ways to distinguish between them.

Ultimately, however, Zhang Huaiguan's belief in how a sagely person can be transmitted through writing provides a continuum through each of his texts. What the separate evaluation of the scripts later allows, on the other hand, is his singling out of the cursive script to voice his philosophical ideas, as well as his aesthetic preferences, which do not always coincide with the general, or official, consensus. Zhang Huaiguan's entries on individual calligraphers and his descriptions of the scripts are referenced in subsequent compilations and histories, but the way in which his evaluation system attempted to establish an aesthetic standard separate from the mastery of an individual calligrapher by separating out their individual works, mainly written in certain scripts, is a view easily overlooked by subsequent calligraphy histories but one that Zhang Yanyuan subtly highlights through his selection of texts. Zhang Yanyuan may not have particularly supported Zhang Huaiguan's specific evaluation of the Two Wangs, but through the texts he chose to constitute his *Fashu yaolu*, he seems to have supported Zhang Huaiguan's approach, overall, particularly his attention to the appropriateness of using particular scripts as well as critical attention to particular theorists. While Zhang Yanyuan proposes that his study be "all one needs to know," it seems to be largely rooted in Zhang Huaiguan's earlier study, the

*Shuduan*. The dichotomies that Zhang Huaiguan isolates at the end of his *Shuduan* become prominent in later evaluations of calligraphy, which may or may not have necessitated Zhang Yanyuan's legitimation of them by providing their complete texts in his *Fashu yaolu*. In contrast, later compilations categorize such evaluations, collecting practices, and praise, in some cases losing the voice of the original author, which points to Zhang Yanyuan's concern for not only preserving records and Zhang Huaiguan's texts, but also the names and original texts of these authors, as part of the essentials of the study of calligraphy in posterity.

Zhang Yanyuan quotes Zhang Huaiguan in his *Lidai minghua ji* to show the possible crossings between antiquities, genres, and works by an individual calligrapher in a given script. Zhang Huaiguan's initial comprehensive system of ranking calligraphers divided into three categories according to their works in different scripts allowed for evaluations of separate works. This attention to evaluations of individual works in an instant required deep understanding of what calligraphy could convey, as well as comparison tools between calligraphers and their works in different scripts. By separating out scripts and qualities, evaluating works became more involved and the study of calligraphy wider and ironically more accessible. That is, by distinguishing categories for comparison, the field leaves room for more works and more evaluations. This expansion or development of categories applies, too, to subsequent compilations, those that came after Zhang Yanyuan's *Fashu yaolu*, that attempt to organize the texts or excerpts into topics related to the study of calligraphy. What these later categories point out, however, is how Zhang Yanyuan was able to compile his essentials, records, evaluation systems in a way that indeed appears comprehensive, but at the same time favored records of his



family's collection and the ideas of Zhang Huaiguan, as well as the critical transmission of names of those writing about calligraphy. Furthermore, by providing the complete texts, he allows the reader, it seems, to read them independently, even if his texts in the end follow a particular design.

## Conclusion

Zhang's decision to present complete texts in one volume made possible the transmission and citation of these references in a diversity of reconfigurations that follow. In numerous cases, Zhang's compilation provides the earliest record of the texts, such as those of Zhao Yi, Yu He, and Zhang Huaiguan. The tenth-century *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, an extensive collection of anecdotes, notably, cites the *Fashu yaolu* almost exclusively for its description of the various scripts and anecdotes about calligraphers, which draw, in particular, from Zhang Huaiguan's *Shudian*. At the same time, Zhang's selection of certain texts over others and arrangement of them in the *Fashu yaolu* without comment carried out an overall agenda and conveyed both Zhang's implied and expressed views. As shown in Chapter Two, many of the memorials and records help to continue his family's legacy of having owned select works of calligraphy, as well as maintain the focus on the Wang tradition and a lineage of both calligraphers and theorists. Chapter Three shows how Zhang favored Zhang Huaiguan's views and methods and supported them in his selection and arrangement of relevant, supplementary texts. Through even a brief comparison with three compilations of texts on calligraphy that follow, these clear but mostly unstated purposes and specific qualities and contributions of Zhang's inaugural compilation become even more distinct.

The compilation that is nearly contemporaneous with Zhang's *Fashu yaolu* follows Zhang's choice to include complete texts, while subsequent anthologies and histories of calligraphy in the Song dynasty do not gather complete texts but rather excerpted parts of texts and categorize the truncated writings according to themes or purpose. Wei Xu's 衛續 (2<sup>nd</sup> half of

9<sup>th</sup> century), *Mosou* 墨藪 (Assembly of Calligraphies), a compilation of twenty-one texts on calligraphy mostly from the Tang dynasty includes some of the same texts as the *Fashu yaolu*, such as Lady Wei's *Bizhentu*.<sup>288</sup> Unlike Zhang, however, Wei includes his own description of fifty-six different scripts and a nine-rank system for classifying calligraphers, as well as Wei Heng's 衛恆 (d. 291) "Forces of Four Calligraphy Scripts" (*Siti shushi* 四體書勢). Not too long after the publication of the official encyclopedias of the early Northern Song dynasty, the Song scholar and educator, Zhu Changwen 朱長文 (1039-1098), compiled the *Mochibian* 墨池編 (The Ink Pool Discussions), which includes significantly more texts than the *Fashu yaolu* and for the first time categorizes them.<sup>289</sup> The *Mochibian* provides a quicker resource for readers looking, for example, for references in one of its six sections: 1. "Study of Characters" 字學門 and "Brush Methods" 筆法; 2. "Five Methods of Handling the Brush" 執筆五法 and "Miscellaneous Views" 雜議; 3. "Evaluations" 品藻門; 4. "Praise Accounts" 贊述; 5. "Collecting Treasures" 寶藏; and 6. "Stele" 碑刻 and "Writing Implements" 器用. The categories suggest distinct specializations and invite an expanded diversity of writing genres, most notably, the inclusion of poetry in the "praise accounts." Arguably, without designated categories to fill, Zhang's selection of texts, in contrast, seems more fluid, arbitrary, even narrative in its arrangement and selection.

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<sup>288</sup> Wei Xu 衛續, *Mosou* 墨藪 (Beijing: Beijing Erudition Digital Research Center, 2009).

<sup>289</sup> Zhu Changwen, *Mochibian* in Huang Jian 黃簡, ed. *Lidai shufa lunwenxuan* (1979). Zhu Changwen is also known for writing a "History of the Qin" 琴史.

The expanded categories subsequently influence one's search through the text, as well as one's expectations and interpretations. In the Southern Song dynasty, Chen Si 陳思, who lived in Lin'an 臨安 (modern Hangzhou), in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, compiled the *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華 (Splendor of the calligraphy garden), considered a sequel to the *Mochibian*. During the reign of Emperor Lizong 宋理宗 (r. 1224-1264), Chen was a secretary in the library of the Veritable Records Institute of the Dynastic History 國史實錄院. *Shuyuan* consists of 29 *juan* and includes 160 chapters, though the distinction between topics is not always clear, for example: "the methods of calligraphy" (*shufa* 書法), "the forces of calligraphy" (*shushi* 書勢), "the appearance of calligraphy" (*shuzhuang* 書狀), and "the forms of calligraphy" (*shuti* 書體), or "the aims of calligraphy" (*shuzhi* 書旨), "critiques of calligraphy" (*shuping* 書評) and "discussions on calligraphy" (*shuyi* 書議), as well as "writing treatises" (*shupu* 書譜), "writing inscriptions" (*shuming* 書銘), "writing rhapsodies" (*shufu* 書賦), "writing discussions" (*shulun* 書論), "writing notes" (*shuji* 書記), and "writing memorials" (*shubiao* 書表).<sup>290</sup> The development in calligraphy studies demonstrated by these compilations published within centuries of Zhang Yanyuan's texts point to the approach to concentrated calligraphy studies that Zhang set into motion. The complete and extensive records and notes of the *Fashu yaolu* confirmed essential groundwork upon which judgments, categories, and further discussions could elaborate and reorganize.

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<sup>290</sup> Chen Si 陳思. *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華 (Beijing: Beijing Erudition Digital Research Center 2009).

Besides the implied teachings of Zhang Huaiguan's rankings, Zhang Yanyuan's compilation does not predominately instruct. Zhang seems most concerned with passing down records of actual works and lists of names crucial to calligraphy history. He does not provide his own comments. He does, however, show personal biases. Most importantly, he expends a great deal of effort to gather records of the works formerly in his family's collection. Writing and collecting records in the mid-ninth century, he no longer had his own paintings or calligraphy works to donate to the court, nor was the court in the position to receive them, so he, personally, compiled the two volumes on painting and calligraphy to provide a sustainable view and the actual details to write a history. Zhang provided sufficient proof of the long history of valuing such works, details of the actual works, as well as evaluative tools that could reach back into the remote past and extend forward through new works and studies, further expanding the field. Without these pieces of history, a narrative could not be written. The continuous format of the *Fashu yaolu* matched Zhang's interests and his position as the first to bring such extensive records together in one volume.

While culling these complete texts on calligraphy from the many others, Zhang sustains their textual integrity, that is, he does not extract particular phrases or ideas to present his own narrative history. Still, the mere act of juxtaposing the select texts in one volume presents a statement about the connections between the texts and their overarching performance in concert. Through the *Fashu yaolu*, Zhang solidifies a canon of both calligraphy works and views on calligraphy by named authors. By providing records, lists, letters, and memorials to the throne in their entirety, he grants each author significant written space in the compilation and thus calls

attention to their names. Notably, these individual records are taken out of their individual historical or literary context. In some cases, Zhang does not include all the writings on calligraphy by a single author. Instead, Zhang's compilation provides a new, specialized context for these writings on calligraphy. The status and names of the authors solicit special attention merely by headlining major texts, and the act of bringing them together increases the status of the authors by putting them side by side and highlighting their exclusive relationship to the study of calligraphy. This is to say, the *Fashu yaolu* presumes, isolates, and bolsters a discipline of studying calligraphy in which the compilation immediately plays an integral part. This pronounced grouping may otherwise have remained scattered or undefined. At the same time Zhang's gathering of the texts included his own views on the history, lineage, and language of evaluation, even if he does not directly state them. Zhang's compilation was an important textual, material, personal connection that provided an invaluable foundation of names, works, texts, and ideas. Even more than the texts, through the works, his family, the calligraphers, and theorists he places so prominently, Zhang, after all, did make his views on calligraphy very clear: one can connect to the past through works that conveyed "spirit resonance," and given this principle, painters and calligraphers that excelled at just one subject or script could be recognized through a single work. With this, by looking more closely at the selected texts and their connections to his family and to specific ideas, the reader can better understand the way in which Zhang influenced how the history of both Chinese painting and calligraphy proceeded through his expressed, implied, and borrowed views, either written out or merely substantiated in his comprehensive collection of notes and records.

## Appendix A:

### The Texts of Zhang Yanyuan's 張彥遠 (c. 815-880) *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄 *Essential Records on Model Calligraphy*, in *FSYL* (2019)

#### *Juan 1* 卷一

Zhao Yi 趙一 (late 2nd century), Eastern Han (25-220), “Against the Cursive Script” 後漢趙一非草書, 1.5-1.7

Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361), Eastern Jin (317-420), “On Calligraphy” 晉王右軍自論書, 1.7-1.8

Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361), Eastern Jin (317-420), “On Teaching Zijing (Wang Xianzhi) the Brush” (not recorded) 王羲之教子敬筆論 (不錄)

Attributed to Madam Wei 衛夫人(272-349), Eastern Jin (317-420), “Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush” 晉衛夫人筆陣圖, 1.8-1.10

Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361), Eastern Jin (317-420), “Postscript to Madam Wei’s Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush” 王右軍題衛夫人筆陣圖後, 1.10-1.11

Yang Xin 羊欣 (370-442), Song 宋 (420-479), “List of Select Capable Calligraphers from the Past” 宋羊欣采古來能書人名, 1.11-1.17

Anonymous “Names in the Transmission of Brush Methods” 傳授筆法人名, 1.17-1.18

Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485), Qi 齊 (479-502), “Letters Answering Taizu” 南齊王特進答太祖論書啓, 1.18

Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426-485), Qi 齊 (479-502), “On Calligraphy” 南齊王僧虔論書, 1.19-1.24

Wang Yin 王愔 (dates unknown), Song 宋 (420-479), “The Table of Contents for the Monograph on Writing in Three *Juan*” 宋王愔文字志目三卷, 1.24

Xiao Ziyun 箫子雲 (487-549), Qi 齊 (479-502), “Letter to the Throne” 梁蕭子雲啓, 1. 25-1.28

## **Juan 2** 卷二

Yu He 虞龢 (unknown), Liang 梁 (502-557), “Memorial on Calligraphy” 梁中書侍郎虞龢論書表, 2.29-2.36

Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (464-549), Liang 梁 (502-557), “Twelve Concepts of Viewing Zhong You’s Calligraphy” 梁武帝觀鐘繇書法十二意, 2.36-2.37

Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (464-549), Liang 梁 (502-557), “Nine Letters on Calligraphy” 陶隱居與梁武帝論書啓, 2.37-2.44

Yu Yuanwei 庾元威, Liang, “On Calligraphy” 梁庾元威論書, 2.45-2.50

Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (487-551), Liang (502-557), “On Ranking Calligraphers” 梁庾肩吾書品論, 2.51-2.58

Yuan Ang 袁昂 (461-540), “Evaluation of Ancient to Modern Calligraphy” 袁昂古今書評, 2.58-2.61

Shi Zhiyong 釋智永 (Chen 陳, 557-589) “Colophon to Youjun’s Essay on Yue Yi” (陳釋) 智永題右軍樂毅論後, 2.61

Jiang Shu 江式 (d. 523), Eastern Wei (386-534), “Memorial on Calligraphy” 後魏江式論書表, 2.62-2.69

## **Juan 3** 卷三 (Tang)

Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558-638), “A Narrative Guide to Calligraphy” 唐虞世南書旨述, 2.70-2.71

Chi Suiliang 褚遂良 (596-659), “List of Calligraphic Works by Youjun (Wang Xizhi) 唐褚遂良右軍書目, 3.72-3.82



- Li Sizhen 李嗣真 (d. 696), Tang, “A Latter Classification of Calligraphers” 唐李嗣真書品後, 3.82-3.93
- Wu Pingyi 武平一 (fl. 684–741), “Notes on Mr. Xu’s Calligraphy” 唐武平一徐氏法書記, 3.93-3.95
- Xu Hao 徐浩 (703-782), “On Calligraphy” 唐徐浩論書, 3.95-3.96
- Xu Hao 徐浩 (703-782), Tang, “Notes on Ancient Traces” 唐徐浩古蹟記, 3.96-3.101
- He Yanzhi 何延之 (dates unknown), Tang, “Notes on the Orchid Pavilion” 唐何延之蘭亭記, 3.101-3.107
- Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596-659), Tang, “Notes on the Copies of the Essay on Yue Yi” 唐初河南拓本樂毅論記, 3.107-3.108
- Cui Bei 崔備 (747–816), “Notes on the ‘Flying White’ Mural Calligraphy of the Character ‘*xiao*’” 唐崔備壁書飛白蕭字記, 3.108-3.109
- Li Yue 李約 (fl. late 8<sup>th</sup>–early 9<sup>th</sup> century), “Encomium on ‘Flying White’ Mural Calligraphy of the ‘*xiao*’ Character” 唐李約壁書飛白蕭字贊, 3.110-3.111
- Duke Gaoping 高平公 (Zhang Hongjing 張弘靖, 760-824), Tang, “Notes on the ‘*xiao*’ Studio” 唐高平公蕭齋記, 3.111-3.115
- Cai Yun 蔡惲 (dates unknown), “On Calligraphy of Indeterminate Script Type” (not recorded) 蔡惲書無定體論 (不錄)

#### **Juan 4** 卷四

- Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645), “Commentary on the *Jijiu zhang*” (not recorded) 顏師古註急就章 (不錄)
- Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690-after 760), Tang, “Calligraphy Appraisals” 張懷瓘書詁, 4.116-4.119

Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690-after 760), Tang, “A Record of the Calligraphy of the Two Wangs and Others” 張懷瓘二書等書錄, 4.120-4.123

Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690-after 760), Tang, “A Critique of Calligraphers” 張懷瓘書議, 4.123-4.129

Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690-after 760), Tang, “On Writing” 張懷瓘文字論, 4.129-4.133

Zhang Huaiguan, 張懷瓘 (before 690-after 760), Tang, “On the Six Script Types” (not recorded) 張懷瓘六體書 (不錄)

Anonymous, “A Narrative Record of Calligraphy in the Tang Court” 唐朝敘述錄, 4.133-4.135

Wei Shu 韋述 (dates unknown), 敘書錄 “Narrative Record of Calligraphy” 唐韋述敘書錄, 4.135-4.136

Lu Yuanqing 盧元卿 (dates unknown), Tang, “A Record of Calligraphic Works,” dated to 808 盧元卿法書錄, 4.136-4.142

### ***Juan 5 to 6*** 卷五至六

Dou Ji 竇臯 (d. 787), “The Rhapsody of Calligraphy,” dated 775 竇臯述書賦 and Dou Meng 竇蒙, “Commentary,” dated 769 竇蒙注定, 5.143-6.192

### ***Juan 7 to 9*** 卷七至九

Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (before 690-after 760), Tang, “Critical Reviews on Calligraphy” 張懷瓘書斷, 7.193-9.268

### ***Juan 10*** 卷十

Anonymous, “Record of Calligraphic Works by Youjun” 右軍書記, 10.269-10.334

## Appendix B

Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (c. 815-880), *On Famous Paintings through the Ages*  
(*Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記), c. 847

The *Lidai minghua ji* sections are organized as follows. The citations follow *LDMHJ* (2019):

### **Juan 1** 卷一:

Section 1: On the Origins of Paintings 敘畫之源流, 1.1-1.4

Section 2: On the Vicissitudes of Painting 敘畫之興廢, 1.4-1.10

Section 3: List of Names of Men of the Successive Dynasties Who Were Skilled in Painting 敘自古畫人姓名, 1.10-1.15

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**Juan 4-10** of the *Lidai minghua ji* arranges skilled painter biographies, more than 370 of them,  
in chronological order, from Xuanyuan 軒轅, or the Yellow Emperor 黃帝 to the Tang.

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