Acknowledgements

I have been a student almost all my life. Now, finally, I can tell my friends and family that I am no longer a student. However, this does not mean that I am reaching the finish line of my intellectual marathon, because this is just the beginning of my academic career. Despite the hurdles, I truly feel blessed that during these years I have never felt I was alone.

I am grateful to my parents, my sisters and my husband for their love and unfaltering support, without which the research in this thesis would never have come to fruition. It is to them, and especially to my husband Chong, that this thesis is dedicated. Chong was always there to listen to me across the miles.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Craig Clunas, for his guidance, patience, trust, insight and serious attitude toward research, all of which trained me to be a more serious scholar and led me into the fascinating world of Chinese art history. I am also very grateful to my former boss, Peter Y. K. Lam, for his feedback on my confirmation chapter and on earlier outlines of this thesis. His encouragement, tremendous support and never-ending guidance led me to study at Oxford. Without him, I would not have reached this stage of my life. He has always been the one to support me when I encountered difficulties. I will always be greatly indebted to him. My former academic supervisor, Harold Mok, stimulated me in terms of this thesis's direction, instilling my interest in calligraphic rubbings and book publishing. In particular, my erstwhile teacher and colleague at CUHK, Lee Yunwoon, always supported me and advised me about my thesis. I consider it a great privilege to have had the opportunity to be taught by these exceptional scholars.

One most important person to mention is Michael Sullivan, who was very influential in the completion of this thesis. His hard-working, humble passion for new knowledge and his boundless enthusiasm were always a considerable source of motivation. His kindness, caring and mental support kept me going. He always stood by me, supported me and helped me to regain my self-confidence during the long process of writing. Without him, I would have given up my study many times over. He will always be the most important and respected scholar and friend in my life. It was my great good fortune and honour to be friends with him. He is my role model, and he will be in my mind forever despite his recent departure.

I will always be thankful to my college advisor, Christine Jackson, for her caring, emotional support, guidance and useful information all the way through my doctoral study at Oxford. Without doubt, she is an excellent college supervisor. I need to thank my former teacher Jenny So, who gave me guidance about studying abroad and

opened the door to the source of funding for my study at Oxford. I must also thank my former teachers Flora Fu and Taksing Kam who showed me the wonders of Chinese Art History and Chinese History respectively in my undergraduate years, and who stimulated and encouraged me to pursue postgraduate studies. They made me realise the opportunity of this rewarding intellectual path.

I feel privileged to have spent my time at Oxford University with a number of incredibly kind and talented teachers and friends, particularly Jessica Rawson, Peter Ditmanson, Timothy Brook and Geraldine A. Johnson.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to many of my friends at Oxford who shared my joys and sorrows and gave me the strength to carry on, specifically Peter Lund, Beryl Knotts, Junko and her family, Jean Stolton, Annette Bygotts, Lorraine Irwin, Becky Dreher, Jiyeon Wood, Emma Flood, Ruobing Wang, Weimin He, my churchmates at Summertown United Reform Church, my archaeology and art history classmates Liu Yan, Yujen Liu, Yuping Luk, and others. Among my friends from outside Oxford, special thanks go to Kaming Ho and Brenda Li who always provided immediate help, emotional support and advice, and Gracelyn Chan, Vivian Mak, Virginia Lam, Derek Shao, Michelle Huang and Pedith Chan, who helped me survive some tough times in the UK. I would also like to acknowledge the following for their support, advice, love, help and companionship: May Cheng, Jenny Lim, YiHsin, Nicole Chiang, Miranda Shek, Elspeth, and many other good friends. Though they did not contribute to the content of this thesis, I am thankful to them. Their friendship has significantly reduced the burden of writing this thesis over the past few years.

Some chapters of this thesis were presented at conferences and workshops in Britain, Germany, Japan and Taiwan. I am lucky to have met a number of stimulating people, and would especially like to thank Shih Shou-chien and Wu Jen-su from the Academia Sinica, who were my mentors and whose probing questions helped me to shape a number of ideas contained in this thesis. Their encouragement, affection and support have been instrumental to the completion of this thesis. Last, and by no means least, special thanks are due to the Bei Shan Tang Foundation for their generous financial support throughout my entire study period, including a suspension period of one term due to a serious back injury sustained in Oxford. Without the Foundation's support, this thesis would never have been finished. I am also very grateful for the KS scholarship from Oxford University and for many other scholarships and travel grants in the UK, and to the Centre for Chinese Studies Fellowship for Foreign Scholars for their generous scholarships and travel grants.

Acknowledgement

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Introduction

In China, while the study of calligraphy has long been popular, the study of calligraphic rubbings (*tie* 帖 in Chinese, see Fig.0.01) has generally attracted less interest, even though it was the most common form of calligraphy reproduction. The term *tie* means either the originals or copies, but this thesis uses the word to refer to the copy of calligraphy in negative, otherwise known as calligraphic rubbing. As will be discussed later, another word, *fatie* 法帖, in most circumstances means model calligraphy. However, nowadays it is more often used to refer to the reproduction of calligraphy or to collections of rubbings. In particular this thesis studies *fatie*, rubbing collections (or *ketie* 刻帖 in Chinese), rather than model calligraphy alone. Although *tie* has a long-standing history of more than a thousand years, scholarly interest has always been concentrated on calligraphy and its hand-written copies, rather than on calligraphic reproductions in negative. This Chinese method of reproducing calligraphy by rubbing has never received a great deal of attention from either Chinese or Western scholars.

Édouard Chavannes (1865–1918AD), one of the earliest European sinologists, only paid attention to Chinese rubbings taken from stone monuments or stele inscriptions, *bei* 碑 in Chinese, and neglected rubbings of calligraphy.[1] One possible reason for this is that calligraphic rubbings are often understood as not being held in such high regard as the original calligraphy, and at best as a less than ideal alternative to the originals.

Calligraphic rubbings are mechanical copies of calligraphy, made by squeezing ink over an engraved stone slab or woodblock covered with paper. The resulting image is in negative and flows in the same direction as the original engraving.[2] Therefore, they differ from impressions made by printing, which creates a mirror image of the inscribed calligraphy (see Fig.0.02). In addition, *tie* originally referred to labels, notes, titles or small paper sheets and correspondence,[3] and this type of rubbing is fundamentally different in terms of history, functions and motives from other forms, such as those taken from stone steles and ancient bronzes. While rubbings of *tie* are usually made from horizontal stone slabs and woodblocks, rubbings of *bei* are usually made from standing vertical monumental stone steles. Also, another main difference between them lies in the final products. The value of *tie* is in the actual ink-imprint of the calligraphy on paper, but people valued *bei* in their

[1] Chavannes, Édouard published and translated a certain number of Chinese inscriptions with annotations, e.g. 'Les Monuments de l'ancien royaume coréen de Kao-Keou-Li', *T'oung Pao*, 2:9(1908), pp.236–65; *Mission archeologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, 3 vols. Paris, Vol.1(1909); Vol.2(1913); Vol.3(1915).
[2] For a detailed discussion about the techniques for making rubbings, see *CPA*, pp.86–101.
[3] *CPA*, p.159a.

original form of steles. Most *bei* were not intended to have rubbings made from them when they were originally carved. Rubbings from stele were often made not because of the aesthetic value of the calligraphy, but rather as a means of understanding the content of the inscriptions. However, in normal circumstances an engraved stone slab or woodblock would seldom be studied for its own sake, whereas rubbings or ink-imprints on paper would be. This type of rubbing of calligraphy is unique in this sense, differing from rubbings of objects with inscriptions made for other purposes, such as ritual and memorial. However, their uniqueness was usually overlooked and *tie* were often grouped and studied together with other kinds of rubbings, especially *bei*. In fact, owing to distinct differences in the nature and functions of the calligraphy involved, they should be studied as a separate category.

In fact, rubbing collections are often more than a handful of outstanding pieces of calligraphy. They usually include a large body of pieces of important calligraphy representing the styles of calligraphy in a certain period. They are useful for the study of the evolution of various styles of calligraphy from the distant past to the late imperial period of China. Therefore, rubbing collections are more than simple accumulations of calligraphy copies; they represent important contemporary records of the history of calligraphy. Even if the collections contain works only from a certain period or from particular calligraphers, they are still visual historical records showing different facets of the history of calligraphy. Most importantly, *fatie* were crucial for the transmission of canonical calligraphy in the past, since the original calligraphy may have been scarce and once it was lost or damaged, it became difficult to gather information about their past existence.

The canon of calligraphy, in Lothar Ledderose's terms as well as among most Chinese scholars, is the classical tradition of calligraphy which usually refers to the aesthetic and stylistic unity for which calligraphy of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420AD) masters were the source.[4] In particular, it refers to the calligraphy styles of Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303–61AD, or 307–65AD) and his son Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344–88AD), who are often known as the Two Wangs. These works were regarded as stylistic prototypes owing to their high standards.[5] The study of *fatie*, or in modern terms *congtie* 叢帖, which means rubbing collections of model calligraphy, has seldom been taken seriously as an individual subject, either at the societal level or in the world of calligraphy prior to the Qing dynasty. Therefore, my research will contribute to the study of this most traditional and influential form of calligraphy reproduction in Ming China.[6]

[4] *MFCT*, p.1.
[5] *MFCT*, p.1.
[6] *MFCT*, p.3.

Kenneth Starr, an expert on Chinese rubbings, explains that *fatie* was the calligraphic model.[7] As stated in the previous paragraph, *fatie* means more than merely model calligraphy, containing substantial selected calligraphy reproductions. My thesis studies rubbing collections that include calligraphy, ranging from the private collections of calligraphy by a single calligrapher to the imperial collections of calligraphy by numerous calligraphers from all dynasties. For example, the *Dongshutang jigu fatie* 東書堂集古法帖 (*Dongshutang*) of 1416AD, which was compiled by the King Xian of Zhou 周憲王 (1379–1439AD)[8] Zhu Youdun 朱有燉 (1379–1439AD), consists of twenty *juan* and includes calligraphy from all dynasties.[9] These collections were the most important way to preserve and transmit canonical works of calligraphy in the Ming (1368–1644AD).

In the Ming the variety of the content of rubbing collections increased. They did not merely include traditional canonical calligraphy, which was usually personal correspondence, but also contained literary works, religious texts, classics and even *muzhiming* 墓誌銘 (inscriptions on funerary tablets). In addition, the works did not necessarily reach the highest aesthetic standards of calligraphy. Later collections began to include calligraphy written in the copiers' own styles as well as writings by non-calligraphers. This became quite common in the late Ming. Emphasis on independent styles rather than on those of the classical tradition became a trend in the late Ming, which had an inevitable impact on Ming rubbing collections. There had never been such an extraordinary change in the history of rubbing collections, and the traditional calligraphy canon was challenged by the emergence of these new forms of collection in the Ming.

What caused this change? What might these developments tell us about Ming society? How did these various forms of rubbing collection influence the transmission and reception of the calligraphy canon in the Ming? It is essential not to simply defend existing institutional views, which means that a precise and complex picture of class relations is needed in order to understand the situation in Ming society, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. In this thesis, rubbing collections in book format, rather than scattered individual rubbings and collected copies of a single piece of calligraphy – for example, the *Lanting xu* 蘭亭序 (*Preface to the Orchid Pavilion, Lantingxu*) and the *Tianma fu* 天馬賦[10] – were chosen for study. This was not only because they were of a manageable size, but also

[7] *BT*.
[8] Craig Clunas is the first to use the word "king" to refer to the Prince who received the title *wang* from the emperor (*Wang* 王 in Chinese, denoting regional kings). He used this term in his lectures in 2011.
[9] *Dongshutang tie* was commissioned by the King of Zhou in 1416AD. The collection was made based on the structure and content of the *Chunhua getie*, but the calligraphy of Song calligraphers was also included. See *CTM*, v.1, p. 176.
[10] *Lanting xu* was written by Wang Xizhi in 353AD and *Tianma fu* was written by Mi Fu; both are short individual pieces of calligraphy. However, the former is the most famous piece of calligraphy in East Asia. According to the studies of the

because they often provided a body of work consisting of a range of selected calligraphy with different scopes, dates and collection strategies, all presented together for systematic study. While a single rubbing was easy to make, rubbing collections needed much more time and money to accumulate and put together. They also attracted more attention and may have had a wider impact on the world of calligraphy and society, a suggestion which will be analysed below.

There was a striking increase in the number of people who were interested in art and culture in the Ming. With the help of improved printing technology which facilitated the publishing of related texts – for instance, literature on collecting and connoisseurship – which in turn led to a greater awareness of rubbing collections among Ming people. However, people who were interested in rubbing collections appear to have been confined largely to the social elite: the scholar-officials, the bureaucratic gentry, and rich members of the merchant class.

More than half of the total Ming collections were concentrated in the Jiangnan region, where the centre of cultural and economic activities was, because they were mainly produced in Nanzhili. The high geographical concentration of collections promoted their circulation within the region and as a result increased their impact on the world of calligraphy and public awareness, a phenomenon which will be discussed further in Chapter Three. Moreover, Ledderose writes:

> "As in the West, art collecting in China conferred social status. Chinese collections were almost exclusively in the hands of the highest social group, with the emperor himself setting the foremost example."[11]

Although he was talking about art collecting in general, for example elite art such as literati paintings, the same was also true for *fatie* in the Northern Song. As mechanical reproductions, Ming collections were thought to be more accessible than the original calligraphy. Regarding the identity of their owners, if the highest social status refers to the emperors and members of the royal family, then high ranking officials and other social elites would hold middle social status, and individuals such as merchants and commoners would hold the lowest social status in the hierarchy. In fact, there was a shift in the social status of producers and owners of rubbing collections. In the very beginning rubbing collections were only available to privileged groups such as members of the royal family and selected high-ranking officials. Therefore, the collections would not be easily accessible to act as model calligraphy and for the transmission of the calligraphy canon, although they were eventually allowed to be made and circulated outside the court. However, there were not many collections in existence

Japanese scholars Uno Sesson 宇野雪村 and Nishibayashi, Shoichi 西林昭一, there are more than two hundred Chinese and Japanese titles about the *Lanting xu*. See *Showa Rantei kinenten* (Tokyo, 1980), pp.239–52.

[11] *MFCT*, p.43.

before the Ming period. As seen from the number of collections listed in a Southern Song text about the connoisseurship of antiquity, entitled the *Dongtian qinglu* 洞天清祿 by Zhao Xihu 趙希鵠 (active in 1231AD), there were twelve in total, and most of them were re-cuts of Northern Song collections except one Southern Song collection entitled the *Chunxi mige xu fatie* 淳熙秘閣續法帖.[12]

According to my research and as detailed below, there were at least a hundred and ten recorded rubbing collections made in the Ming, in comparison with about sixty made in the Song. The actual number of Ming collections may be much higher than this figure. This is because my figures are based on the number of titles made, excluding their various re-cuts and counterfeit collections. Although it is impossible to compare various collections according to the numbers of copies made during the Ming, an understanding of their collecting practices and circulation and the existence of Ming statements and commentaries about contemporary collections suggests that the actual number of Ming collections must be greater than those which are still extant today. Therefore, it is believed that they were becoming more accessible and even affordable as the dynasty progressed. Any individual with financial resources could own or make a collection, either highbrow or lowbrow, merchants as well as commoners.

In addition, aided by the steady expansion of literacy and the corresponding proliferation of a publishing and collecting culture, rubbing collections which were assumed to embody classical tradition became relatively more common than ever before. A scrutiny of many late-Ming collections reveals an interesting phenomenon, which was that their focus was no longer on traditional canonical calligraphy but was becoming much more contemporary. They were no longer exclusively devoted to the traditional canon, nor did they contain only calligraphy of high aesthetic value. Unfaithful copies and less significant calligraphy were made into rubbings. This new form of collection became more common and even began to outnumber the traditional ones.

Furthermore, many late Ming collections paid significant attention to the social status of the writers of the calligraphy. They often emphasised the glamour of the writers' or the calligraphers' names. For example, the *Jinling mingxian tie* 金陵名賢帖 (*Jinlingmingxian*) of 1615AD comprised mainly poems by a group of native scholars in Jinling. Most of the writers of this calligraphy were famous in the literary world and locally, but they were barely known in the calligraphy world. There

[12] Zhao Xihu 趙希鵠, the *Dongtian qinglu* 洞天清祿, *SKQS*, p.40.

were thirty rubbing collections of Dong Qichang's 董其昌 (1555–1636AD)[13] calligraphy produced in the late Ming period, most of which were his copies of former masterpieces or of his own writings, such as the *Shuzhongtang tie* 書種堂帖 (*Shuzhongtang*) of six *juan* of 1614AD.[14] In other words, almost one third of the known Ming collections were composed of his calligraphy or of calligraphy attributed to him. Since the choices of the calligraphy included in many late Ming collections rested upon how well-known the writers of the calligraphy were, and on the social relations between the owners and the writers of the calligraphy, the social function of the collections increased. They were no longer the only means of replicating calligraphy during the Ming, so why did they survive? Was their persistence related to their social roles? Furthermore, did people receive them in the same way as we might expect? Till now, no one has studied the Ming collections from a social historical and material cultural perspective; my thesis attempts to apply this approach and answer these questions.[15]

Regardless of these considerations, the development of this form of calligraphy reproduction in China is important alongside the study of the original calligraphy, in terms of how the history of calligraphy developed and was discussed. Especially in the Ming, rubbing collections had never undergone such an extraordinary change in their content and function, and I will attempt to find out the cause(s) of this change. An analysis of the content of collections will show how new collections challenged the calligraphy canon and facilitated social mobility among various social groups, including calligraphers, scholar-officials, merchants and commoners.

Overall, my main concerns are: 1) to study the features of Ming collections in terms of their physical properties, visual characteristics and content; 2) to study their craftsmanship, circulation and dissemination, and collecting preferences in relation to the social status of collectors or consumers of the collections; and 3) to find out how people received them, particularly in terms of their relation to the transmission of the calligraphy canon and how the classical tradition was challenged in the Ming period.

This thesis will examine significant Ming collections, e.g. the *Tingyunguan tie* 停雲館帖 (*Tingyunguan*) of 1560AD by the eminent calligraphers Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559AD)

[13] For his general biography, see *SLZJ*, p.73, or see *MZZS*, p.146. For a detailed study of the works of Dong Qichang, see Xu Bangda 徐邦達, 'Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's calligraphy', in Wai-Kam Ho and Judith G. Smith (eds.), *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, 1555–1636* (Kansas City, 1992), pp.105–32; *DQCSFL*, p.323.

[14] This was compiled by the grandnephew of Dong Qichang Dong Hao 董鎬, but was made under the command of Dong Qichang himself. It consisted of six *juan* which were mostly calligraphy written by Dong Qichang. For details, see the record in *CTM*, v.3, p.1235–6.

[15] Except recently, the Japanese scholar Masuda Tomoyuki 增田知之 published some articles about Ming collections, such as 'Mingdai de fatie kanhang yu Suzhou Wenshi yizu' 明代的法帖刊行與蘇州文氏一族, *Tōyōshi kenkyū bunken ruimoku* 東洋史研究, v.62.1(06.2003), pp.39–74.

and his son Wen Peng 文彭 (1498–1573AD), the *Xihongtang fashu* 戲鴻堂法書 (*Xihongtang*) of 1603AD by Dong Qichang,[16] and the *Qingshantang tie* 晴山堂帖 (*Qingshantang*) which was compiled by the famous Ming writer and explorer Xu Hongzu 徐宏祖 [Xiake 霞客, 1586–1641AD][17] in the late Ming.[18] In addition to new Ming collections, re-cuts and hand-written copies after canonical calligraphy by ancient masters will also be used as comparisons. There are a few published catalogues of rubbing collections from all dynasties, the most useful and highest quality of which is the *Zhongguo fatie quanji* 中國法帖全集 (17 vols., Wuhan, 2002), which records about sixty Ming rubbing collections and provides high-quality colour images of the entire content of six of the most famous ones. Other scattered catalogues of individual rubbing collections are also used as supplementary sources. Most importantly, my study benefits from using some crucial but as yet unpublished Ming collections and their colophons, which are mostly housed in museums and libraries in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong – for instance, the *Baohanzhai guochao fatie* 寶翰齋國朝法帖 (*Baohanzhai*) of 1569AD, kept in the Shanghai Museum.

Besides the above visual evidence, while there have been many texts about rubbings of stone steles,[19] there are only a few detailed and specific pre-modern studies about the history of calligraphic rubbings. Comprehensive studies specifically focusing on various rubbing collections did not appear until the early Qing dynasty. An example would be the *Xianzhexuan tiekao* 閒者軒帖考 of 1647AD, which recorded a total of thirty-eight rubbing collections, described their production and circulation, and ranked them according to their qualities and conditions. However, it did not contain much verification, and it was not an in-depth study.[20] Therefore, in this research an extensive number of primary texts are used. For example, commentaries and statements about Ming collections from the literature on calligraphy, notebooks (*biji* 筆記), manuals of collecting, colophons on rubbing collections, poems, encyclopedias (*leishu* 類書) and gazetteers are also used as sources of evidence in

[16] An alternate name is *Xihongtang fashu* 戲鴻堂法書, which has sixteen volumes and was made in 1603AD with calligraphic works ranging from the Jin to the Ming masters. Since Dong Qichang was very distinguished in calligraphy, this rubbing collection had a great impact on the Ming calligraphy world. For studies of this rubbing collection, see *CTM*, v.1, pp.262–72.
[17] *ZMRD*, p.83, or in *ZLRD*, p.1961.
[18] *ECCP*, pp.314–6.
[19] *SKSL*, a modern publication series which consists of most of the existing literature on rubbings of stone steles, has ninety-nine volumes.
[20] It was written by Sun Chengze 孫承澤 in one *juan*. It includes thirty-eight rubbing collections with a brief note on each title. Prior to the Ming Dynasty, a book entitled *The Genealogy of the Fatie* was written in the Song, focusing on the *Chunhua getie* and its lineage. However, this is a study on a single work and not a study on various rubbing collections and the history of such collections. Therefore, I do not count it as a comprehensive study of rubbing collections. In addition, another book entitled *Tie jian* 帖箋 by Tu Long of the Ming period was selected from a book entitled *Kaopan yushi* 考槃餘事, but was actually mainly copied from another Ming book *ZSBJ*. In theory, this is not a text solely for the study of rubbing collections either. In modern times, the first book written in English about Chinese rubbings is *Black Tigers* (2008) by Kenneth Starr, but it includes *bei* as well. In China, there was only one recent book was published, *Zhongguo fatie shi* 中國法帖史 (Jinan, 2010) in two volumes by Xinglin 杏林. It was an introductory book to the history of rubbing collections.

this thesis, because some collections were not recorded in other texts. For example, the *Guanfutang tie* 觀復堂帖, which was made by Dong Qichang's son only appeared in the *Hainingzhou zhigao* 海寧州志稿.

Secondary literature – for example, those texts which list rubbings of all dynasties and include transcriptions of colophons – is also used because many Ming collections no longer exist nowadays, or else they are inaccessible in private collections. For example, the *Congtiemu* 叢帖目 in three volumes by Rong Geng 容庚 (1894–1983AD), published in Taipei in 1992AD, mentioned that he had studied over three hundred extant rubbing collections, of which thirty-nine were from the Ming period, and this kind of secondary source is the only available textual material nowadays. Therefore, this text is one of the main sources for my study.

My thesis is divided into five chapters in addition to an introduction. The first chapter provides some background knowledge which is necessary in order to understand the later discussion. This includes the formation of the calligraphy canon and the first rubbing collection, followed by an overview of the study of rubbing collections. It will then analyse the physical properties, craftsmanship, content and scope of Ming collections. After that, it will discuss the features of Ming collections by comparing them with Song ones, in order to find distinctions and provide explanations. Next the thesis proceeds to study the impact of officialdom on the reception of the calligraphy canon and rubbing collections, which forms the core idea of this research. Last but not least, the roles and functions which the collections played in the succession and transmission of the calligraphy canon in Ming China will be discussed, through an understanding of the relative power of various agents including the dominant class, the traditions and elite culture among individuals and institutions, and the concerns of each social class.

Chapter 1 Calligraphy Canon Formation and Literature Review

1.1 The First Rubbing Collection and the Development of Rubbing Collections

Prior to a further discussion on calligraphic rubbings, is it necessary to know the most basic terms about the subject, since many people, even Chinese speakers, confuse the terms used to describe ways or methods of writing. They are *shufa* 書法 and *fashu* 法書 in Chinese. Some people use the two interchangeably with no differentiation. In fact, the term *shufa* refers to calligraphy, meaning beautiful writing; *fashu*, however, means model calligraphy or standard calligraphy, usually with a higher artistic value. In addition, *shufa* also means the rules practiced when writing. This includes, although it is not limited to, how to hold and use a brush, and the construction of characters.

As for *fatie* 法帖, the American rubbing expert Kenneth Starr, who collected and studied rubbings throughout his entire life, explains that it was a calligraphic model which was equivalent to the meaning of *fashu*.[21] In fact, *fatie* not only means calligraphic model, but also means model calligraphy carved on stone or wood, and the rubbings of model calligraphy or rubbing collections.[22] As with a woodblock print, this is a method to broaden the means of calligraphy dissemination.[23] Besides these terms, *moji* 墨迹 and *shoutie* 手帖 refer to the work written by a calligrapher with a brush on paper, or handwritten calligraphy (see Fig.1.01).[24] The term *zhenji* 真蹟 means the original and emphasises its genuine nature, especially with regard to authenticity. In contrast, *moben* 墨本 (ink edition) means calligraphic rubbings. Moreover, rubbing collections are called *congtie* 叢帖 or *huitie* 匯帖 in modern Chinese.[25] These are sets of rubbings of model calligraphy in a bound book or album, which is made up of numerous individual rubbings or *fatie*. In this thesis, the term *fatie* refers to rubbing collections of model calligraphy.

[21] See *BT*. Although this book provides information about the materials and techniques of making rubbings, and discusses the history of rubbings, one drawback is that the explanations of the terms used for rubbings and the related processes, which are included in the appendix of his book, are unfortunately too concise, to the extent that the reader may not be able to understand the difference between similar terms. Sometimes different Chinese terms have the same pinyin, and one pinyin or one term may have several meanings. Thus, readers unfamiliar with Chinese characters may find it difficult to fully grasp the meanings. In addition, little attention has been paid to addressing the subtle distinctions and shifts in meaning over time and even within the same dynasty.
[22] *SFDCD*, p.216.
[23] 'Preface to the calligraphic rubbings', in *SUZL*, p.1.
[24] For *shoutie* , see *SFCD*, pp.123, 206.
[25] Some scholars such as Amy McNair have used the word "compendium/ compendia" to refer to *congtie*, in 'The Engraved Model-letters Compendia of the Song Dynasty", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 114:2(1994), pp.209–25. Herefater, McNair(1994). Compendium means a brief summary of a larger work, and is not equivalent to a collection of variety of works. Therefore, to prevent confusion, this thesis uses the term rubbing collections for collections of model calligraphy or *fatie.*

Regarding the first rubbing collection, both past and present literature has discussed this issue.[26] This issue has been and still remains controversial, and there is no consensus on which rubbing collection was the first and the original. In general, there are three views on this issue. Firstly, some believe that the first collection was the *Hongwenguan tie* 弘文館帖 of the Tang Dynasty (617–907AD). Secondly, others believe that it was the *Shengyuan tie* 昇元帖 of the Southern Tang Dynasty (937–75AD). Finally, yet others are of the opinion that it might be the *Chunhua getie* 淳化閣帖 (*Getie*) of 992AD[27] because it is the only surviving collection, since the other two have been lost.

In Northern Song China the genesis of rubbing collections was rarely considered to be an issue for study.[28] With more rubbing collections emerging in Southern Song China, scholars started to be mindful of the collections' origins and the relationship between existing collections. The emergence of the *Fatie puxi* 法帖譜系 written by the Southern Song epigrapher Cao Shimian 曹士冕 (date unknown) proved that there was a need to identify the relationships between the collections of their time. Tracing the origin was always one of the main concerns in ancient Chinese ideology.[29] This need was actually rooted in the concept of "respecting the ancestors", a key concept in Confucian studies in China. The *Shike puxi* 石刻鋪叙 by Zeng Hongfu 曾宏父 (active during the Chunyou reign, 1241-52AD) stated that one can consider *Getie* of 992AD as the first paradigm of rubbing collections 能視淳化草創之始.[30] In general, *Getie* was regarded as *zuke* 祖刻 (the ancestor of rubbing collections) in the Song Dynasty (960–1279AD).[31]

[26] Many scholars have discussed the issue of the first calligraphic rubbing collections. They are Zhou Mi 周密 (1232–1308AD) in *Yunyan guoyan lu* 雲煙過眼錄 (Shanghai, 1993), Dong Qichang in *Rongtai ji* 容臺集 (17 *juan*, Beijing, 2000), Li Rihua in *Liuyanzhai biji* 六研齋筆記 (12 *juan*, Shanghai, 1987), Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1732–1815AD) in *Xibaoxuan wenji* 惜抱軒文集 (Shanghai, 1995), and Zhou Xingren 周行仁 (Qing) in *Chunhua mi ge fatie yuanliu kao* 淳化祕閣法帖源流考 (Taibei, 1989). Contemporary scholars are still discussing this issue; the most significant studies are, for instance, Lin Zhijun 林志鈞, *Tie kao* 帖考 (Taibei, 1985), Zhang Boying 張伯英, *Zhang Boying beitie lungao* 張伯英碑帖論稿 (Shijiazhuang, 2006), *Rong Geng*, 'Chunhua mige fatie kao 淳化秘閣法帖考' in Ceng Xiantong 曾憲通 (ed.) *Rong Geng wenji* 容庚文集 (Guangzhou, 2004), pp.320–86, Zhu Jia 祝嘉, 'Fatie de qiyuan ji liuchuan 法帖的起源及流傳', in *Linshu congtan* 臨書叢談 (Hong Kong, 1977), pp.53–64, Li Runhuan 李潤桓 in '*Chunhua getie* chuanshi Song ben bian 淳化閣帖傳世宋本辨', in *MGHF*, pp.66–100, etc. Most of them have different views, but modern scholars including Sir Percival David tend to use the word "official" to emphasise and describe the *Chunhua getie* as the first official rubbing collection so as to avoid any further counter-arguments.

[27] It has ten *juan*, and each *juan* has about forty calligraphies, executed by between one and twenty calligraphers. Amy McNair translated the title of the *Chunhua getie* as 'Model Letters in the Imperial Archives in the *Chunhua* era', see McNair(1994). Patrick de Vries translated the title as 'Chunhua Palace Anthology' in his D.Phil thesis 'The Aesthetics of Emptiness in Northern Song China: A Case Study of the Work of Huang Tingjian (1045–1105AD)' (University of Sussex, Ph.D. thesis, 2004), p.19.

[28] Huang mentioned the *Shiqi tie* of the Tang Dynasty in his *Dongguan yulun* (Shanghai, 1987), v.1, p.875; Li Liu Qi 劉跂 (*jinshi* 1079AD) talked about a rubbing collection made in the Baoda era (943–57AD) in *Xiari ji* 暇日記. However, neither of them emphasise these works as being the oldest. This shows that finding out which rubbing collection came first was not a concern.

[29] For example, in Arthur F. Wright, *The Confucion Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960), pp.125–40.

[30] *SPX*, *juan shang*, p.9.

[31] *SPX*, *juan xia*, pp.37–56. Also, since most Song texts on rubbing collections mainly discussed the *Getie*, it is reasonable to suppose that this was the original and the only available and accessible rubbing collection during the Song Dynasty. For further studies of whether *Chunhua getie* was the first rubbing collection, see Wang Kui 汪逵, *Getie bianji* 閣帖辨記, in *CHKZ*, p.614; or in *CGL*, *juan* 15, p.4. For studies of the *Chunhua getie* in the West, see McNair(1994).

In the Ming, the Southern Tang origin was widely accepted among the above three views. For example, the *Yanxian qingshang jian* 燕閒清賞箋 by Gao Lian 高濂 (active in the sixteenth century)[32] of 1591AD looked at rubbing collections with a different view on their origins. The item *Chunhua zushike* 淳化祖石刻 suggests that the *Shengyuan tie* predated *Getie*.[33] Another piece of evidence supporting this view relates to the remains of the *Chengqingtang tie* 澄清堂帖 (*Chengqingtang*). Xing Tong 邢侗 (1551–1612AD) discovered *Chengqingtang* by accident and included it in his *Laiqinguan fatie* 來禽館法帖 (*Laiqinguan*) of 1600AD. Later, Dong Qichang also included this in *Xihongtang*. In Dong's colophon to *Xihongtang*, he singled out *Chengqingtang* as a collection made in the Southern Tang Dynasty. Henceforth, most people believed his statement due to his influential political and artistic status in the Ming. Only a few renowned rubbing enthusiasts and collectors, such as Gu Congyi 顧從義 (1523–88AD)[34] and Wang Kentang 王肯堂 (1553AD, c.1589AD, or 1549–1613AD)[35], cast doubt on Dong's statement and suggested other collections as contenders for the first rubbing collection. Nevertheless, the question of which was the first rubbing collection became a controversial issue in the Ming Dynasty and has remained so until the present day.[36] Whatever their views, the origin of rubbing collections became a core issue in the study of rubbing collections, including recent studies of Ming collections.

1.2 The Calligraphy Canon and the *Chunhua getie* 淳化閣帖

The canon, a word religious in its origins, is variously interpreted as being made by dominant social groups, institutions of education, and traditions of criticism.[37] The canon of calligraphy in China, a usage which does not imply the religious sense of canon, is made up of calligraphy which was regarded as being of the highest quality and which was accepted generally as representing prototypes or models for learning calligraphy. The term can refer to particular calligraphers or to calligraphic pieces, as well as to styles both in terms of script-type and individual calligraphy style.

[32] Gao Lian 高濂 (active in the sixteenth century) held no degree, and had problematic social status and cultural connections. For a brief biography of Gao, please refer to *ST*, pp.13–4.
[33] *ZSBJ*, *juan* 14, p.53.
[34] Gu Congyi 顧從義 was appointed as a *zhongshu sheren* 中書舍人 (the Secretary of the Ministry) because of his outstanding calligraphy skills during the Jiajing reign. He was good at appreciating and making distinctions between art objects, and collecting books. He had a library called *Yuhongguan* 玉泓館, which housed remarkable paintings, model calligraphy and calligraphic rubbings. He was notable because he made the *Chunahua getie'*s re-cut with positive comments in the Ming Dynasty. His biography can be found in *MZSY*, pp.954–5; *Siku tiyao* 四庫提要 by Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 in *Weng Fanggang zuan siku tiyao gao* 翁方綱傳四庫提要稿 (Shanghai, 2005). *ZMRD*, p.1541.
[35] He was a *jinshi* in 1589AD, see *ZMRD*, p.85. His calligraphy was deep in the hall of the Jin Dynasty. He copied it by tracing to make *Yugangzhai tie* in ten *juan*, which was the best one of his time (in *Jintang zhi* 金壇志, *The Gazetteer of Jintang*); *DMB*, p.1140; *ZLRD*, p.196.
[36] I agree with Amy McNair that the first rubbing collection was the *Chunhua getie*, see McNair(1994). My reason for this is because *Getie* contains calligraphy by more than one calligrapher, of more than one period, and existed in full set in the Ming.
[37] Bloom, Harold, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (London, 1996), p.20.

The calligraphy canon in this thesis refers to the classical tradition in Chinese calligraphy which was first fixed by imperial authority in the Tang Dynasty.[38]

Among the calligraphers of the Eastern Jin, the most representative and famous masters were Wang Xizhi and his son Xianzhi. They are the most venerated of Chinese calligraphers and their calligraphy stood out among that of their contemporaries and became the prototypes for the classical tradition.[39] Their works have set the stylistic and aesthetic standards since their inception. Without doubt, their works are among the most treasured calligraphy in the history of calligraphy in China.[40] Ledderose attributed the establishment of the classical tradition to the recognition of regular, running and cursive script-types in the Six Dynasties (in the third to sixth centuries).[41] He further explained the development and evolution of script-type by pointing to the application of a softer brush and of paper in south China during that time.[42] Eastern Jin calligraphy, in particular that of Wang Xizhi, was further established as the canon of calligraphy by the Tang court, through replication by hand-written copies as well as in rubbings. For example, Tang Taizong (599–649AD) was fond of Wang Xizhi's works and was well known at his court for his keen interest in collecting Wang's works. He always praised Wang's works and learned to write in his calligraphy style. He wrote:

> "Only Wang Yishao's [or Xizhi's] writing can be considered the best and most beautiful. … Only with this man will I learn calligraphy in the heart and practice with the hand."
>
> 盡善盡美，其惟王逸少[羲之]乎；……心摹手追，此人而已。[43]

In addition, the famous calligraphy *Lantingxu*, which was attributed to Wang Xizhi, was reputedly buried with Tang Taizong when he died.[44] This clearly showed his predilection for Wang's calligraphy. Though the calligraphy of the Two Wangs was very famous and renowned since the Eastern Jin Dynasty, without such promotion by the Tang court, the appreciation of Wang Xizhi and his calligraphy would not be so widespread in the calligraphy world.

As discussed above, *Getie* was believed to be the forerunner of rubbing collections. Although it had no title in the beginning, it became widely known later as *Chunhua mige fatie* 淳化秘閣法帖, which comprises the names of both the reign period (*Chunhua*, 990–4AD) and the imperial archive

[38] McNair(1994), p.210.
[39] The stylistic lineage of Wang Xizhi and his relatives and followers in the Northern and Southern Dynasties (317–589AD), Sui (581–618AD), and Tang dynasties has been termed "the classical tradition" by scholars in the West.
[40] For the discussion of works by the two Wangs, see Shen Yinmo 沈尹默, *Er Wang shu fa guangui* 二王書法管窺; Qi Xiaochun 祁小春, *Maishi zhi feng: youguan Wang Xizhi ziliao yu renwu de zonghe yanjiu* 邁世之風: 有關王羲之資料與人物的綜合研究 (Taibei, 2007).
[41] *MFCC*, p.8.
[42] *MFCC*, p.8.
[43] Wei Xu 韋續, *Mosou* 墨藪, *SKQS*, *juan* 2, p.31.
[44] Sang Shichang 桑世昌 (ed.), *Lanting kao* 蘭亭考, in *SHQS*, *juan* 3, p.7.

(*mige*) in the imperial palace where it was stored. Wang Zhu, who was the compiler of *Getie,* had studied the style of Wang Xizhi and was said to be a descendant of the same Wang family.[45] He selected fine calligraphy from the imperial archives as well as works from among the private collections purchased in the capital.[46] The sources of the chosen calligraphy were wide. In terms of the scope and size of *Getie,* it was a more comprehensive collection than any that had existed before. Despite the fact that the collection was not completed until after Wang Zhu's death, he was still criticised for his inability to identify copies and forgeries since he was the main compiler. Whatever the criticism about the authenticity of the calligraphy of *Getie*, it was a huge and significant collection, including works from 103 calligraphers and containing a total of 420 pieces.[47] Most of the works were written in either regular or running script-type except the works of pre-Qin (before 221 BC) calligraphy, which contain oracle-bone, seal, and early clerical script types – for instance, the works attributed to the legendary or ancient figures of Cang Jie 倉頡 (date unknown). More than half of the collection is the calligraphy of the Two Wangs of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, which is a vivid example illustrating how Emperor Taizong of the Song (939-7 AD) was fond of the classical tradition.

The *Getie* compilation preserved and reproduced important calligraphy in the form of rubbings. Because the full title of this first collection includes the word *fatie*, the implication is that it provides canonical examples of calligraphy to be used as models for learning. Regardless of their authenticity, most of the classical prototypes had been lost during the course of time. *Getie* provided important references and sources of knowledge to a wider audience in relation to early masterpieces. Despite this, the calligraphy of the Two Wangs formed a high proportion of the pieces included in *Getie,* and this reveals the preeminent status of Jin calligraphy in the Song which continued in the Ming.

Even though the Wangs' calligraphy style had already gained social acceptance when its inherent aesthetic possibilities were recognised during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the making of *Getie* further canonised the classical tradition of calligraphy in the Northern Song. The canon of calligraphy reflected in *Getie* was not exclusively created by the Two Wangs, but also included pre-Song calligraphy as well as that of some of their followers. For example, Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558–638AD) had himself studied with a seventh-generation descendant of Wang Xizhi and the Sui dynasty (581–

[45] Zong Chengzhen 宗成振, 'Shifei gongguo lun Wang Zhu' 是非功過論王著, *Meishu guancha* 美術觀察, 2008:11, p.108.
[46] Wang Kui 汪逵, Getie *bianji* 閣帖辨記, in *CHKZ*, p.614.
[47] Its first *juan* consists of calligraphy of kings and emperors of all dynasties ranging from the Han to Tang Dynasties in total of fifty works from ninteenth people (such as Zhangdi 章帝 Liu Da 劉炟 (r. 56–88AD) of the Han Dynasty (202BC–220AD) and Gaozong 高宗 Li Zhi 李治 (r. 628–83AD) of the Tang Dynasty); the second to fourth *juan* consists of noted officials of all dynasties, a total of 114 works from 67 people; the fifth *juan* includes ancient model calligraphy from various sources in a total of twenty-three pieces from fifteen named people and six anonymous writers; the sixth to eighth *juan* are works of Wang Xizhi, in total 170 pieces; finally, the ninth to tenth *juan* are works of Wang Xianzhi in total sixty-three pieces.

619AD) in the person of the monk Zhiyong 智永 (date unknown). Though these calligraphers collectively represented the classical tradition originating from Wang Xizhi, as Ledderose pointed out, "Wang Xizhi was not a unique figure, but only the most prominent in a group of several great masters",[48] and the classical tradition of calligraphy continued to be about Jin calligraphy.

Undoubtedly, in the beginning, the actual influence of *Getie* was limited due to the small number of copies and the limited means of circulation. For example, the renowned Ming art critic and collector Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–90AD)[49] commented on *Getie* as follows:

> "Nowadays people often talk about the *Chunhua getie*. However, they don't know it was received only by those newly promoted to serve in *Liang fu* (the two highest levels of government administration)[50] officials. During the Yuanyou era (1086–93 AD), peers school for princes and royal family members made a hundred copies of the *Getie* to disseminate. However, the new ones were not better than the old ones. By the time that the Jinkang (1126–7AD) court resisted the enemy (i.e. the transfer to the Southern Song), no one realized the existence of other old rubbing collections such as the *Tan tie, Jiang tie, Ru tie, Daguan tie* and *Xiru(tang) tie*."
>
> 今人類多稱淳化閣帖，不知往時唯兩府拜日方被此賜。元祐中，親賢宅諸王僅搨百本遺人。然雅已不逮舊，至靖康朝遂擲敵手，即無論潭絳泉汝大觀戲魚舊蹟，亦自不知矣。[51]

Apparently, the number of Song collections was small and their circulation was poor. While it is impossible to conceive of rubbing collections without being aware of their very particular contributions of preservation and providing model calligraphy for learning, they were not made originally for learning purposes. Copies of *Getie* were presented as gifts by the emperor of the Northern Song. Therefore, the collections were intended for internal use only. They were not expected to circulate outside the court. Had such circulation been intended, works of calligraphy would have been made in the form of stone steles (*bei*) and would have been erected in public areas in a manner similar to the texts engraved on stone, such as the *shijing* 石經 used by candidates to prepare for the civil examinations. Eventually, people began to use rubbing collections as prototypes for learning calligraphy.[52] With the trend for making collections among private individuals in the Southern Song, it is believed that rubbing collections began to be seen as a way of preserving the ancient culture.[53]

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[48] *MFCT*, p.93.
[49] *DMB*, pp.1399–405; *Shupu chubanshe* (Hong Kong, 1987), v.2, p.760; *Yanshan yuan* 弇山園 is his garden where he erected a pavilion for his collection of sutras. *Sibao gao biji*, 100 *juan* (preface dated 1590AD; also in sibao gao), the first version of which was copied into the Imperial Library and was written in 1558AD. It is an important work on state affairs of the Ming period; *DMB*, pp.1403–4.
[50] *Liang fu* in the Song and after meant two highest government administrations units for military and civil operations, which were Bureau of Military Affairs (*shumiyuan* 樞密院) and the Office of Grand Councilor or the Secretariat (*Zhongshu menxia* 中書門下), in *DOT*, p.309.
[51] *YSSBG*, *juan* 133, pp.11.
[52] A contemporary art historian Harold Mok Kar-leung 莫家良 argued that the role of the *Getie* in the Song was not as model calligraphy for learning calligraphy through faithful imitation, but a examples of calligraphy for the understanding of the calligraphy of ancient masters by viewing or reading, see *MGHF*, p.185. Some scholars did not accept this view and provided with ample evidences to show some Song Dynasty officials imitated the calligraphy of the *Getie* in a faithful

Besides *Getie*, most early collections were made under imperial patronage and usually consisted of high-quality calligraphy, because the court had enough money and manpower to make good collections – for instance, the *Daguan tie* 大觀帖 (*Daguan*) of 1109AD. As time went by the imperial collections eventually reached an audienceoutside the court and were disseminated through collecting, exchange, transaction or consumption. At the same time collections made by private individuals also began to emerge. For example, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–72AD)[54] described the *Tan tie* 潭帖 (*Tantie*)[55] by Liu Yuan 劉沅 (date unknown) of 1045AD as follows:

> "In the past, the former minister Liu Gonghang [Liu Cizhuan, act.1073AD],[56] who was from Changsha (Tanzhou during the Song), based on the court, commissioned a rubbing collection (*Getie*) to be cut in woodblock, and disseminated its rubbings to the public. Later, the imperial secretary Pan Shidan (date unknown)[57] selected the good works of [the *Getie*] and made a separate collection, which was released alongside Liu's edition."
>
> 往時故相劉公沅[劉次莊]在長沙，以官法帖鏤版，遂布於人間。後有尚書郎潘師旦者，又擇其尤妙者別為卷第，與劉氏本並行。[58]

Tantie, and a later collection called *Jiang tie* 絳帖 (*Jiangtie*) by Pan Shidan (also known as *Pan fuma tie* 潘駙馬帖) of the Jiayou reign (1049–1063AD),[59] were both made at the collectors' own instigations. Despite the fact that they were both made with reference to the imperial collections, the distribution channels and target audiences of these collections were different. In theory, the collections could reach more collectors and calligraphy practitioners outside the court. However, the restricted access and the limited number of imperial collections did not hinder the transmission of the classical canon. Quite the reverse – they enhanced their extraordinary status through the creation of symbolic power descended from imperial authority. As a result, the collections made under imperial patronage remained influential even after the emergence of private collections, which continued to have an enormous impact on the calligraphy world as well as on Ming society.

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manner. See Zhuang Qianhui 莊千慧, 'The Research of Wang Xizhi's Calligraphy Adopted by the Latter Calligraphers in the Medieval China' 心摹與手追—中古時期王羲之書法接受研究, (PhD thesis, National Cheng Kung University 國立成功大學, Tainan, 2009), p. 287.

[53] *MGHF*, p.185.

[54] *ZLRD*, p.1458.

[55] For a study of *Tan tie* 潭帖, see Zhao Shengquan 趙生泉, '*Songta Tan tie* bianwei' 宋拓《潭帖》辨偽, *Wenwu chunqiu* 文物春秋, 60(2001), pp.30–4.

[56] *ZLRD*, p.675

[57] It is another name of Pan Yunliang 潘允諒 (or 潘允亮). A record of deeds written by Wang Shizhen (1526–90AD) in his father Pan En 潘恩 (1496–1582AD)'s book entitled, *The Collected Writings by Pan Lijiang* 潘笠江先生集 (Tainan, 1997) used '允亮' to name Pan En's son, and the seal impression with Yunliang 允諒 on the genuine rubbing of the Getie, currently housed in the Freer Gallery of Art. Discussion on the correct name of Pan Yunliang can refer to Ho Pikki, 'the Getie housed in the Freer Gallery of Art and its Genealogy 佛利爾本《淳化閣帖》及其系統研究', *Taida Journal of Art History* 美術史研究 (Taiwan National University Journal of Art History), Vol. 20 (No. 3, 2006), p.26.

[58] It was written in the first year of Zhiping era (1064AD), in Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Jigulu bawei* 集古錄, *SKQS*, *juan* 4, p.13.

[59] For a study of *Jiang tie*, see *ZFQ*, vol.1, pp.6–12, 25–8, 32–53; Jin Xinwen 靳欣文, *Jiangzhou yi tie* 絳州一帖, *Cultural World* 文化天地, 2000:4, pp.46–8.

In the Southern Song (1127–1279AD), more collections were made by private individuals and the majority of them still kept the format of *Getie* and included mainly calligraphy and copies after the Jin masters. For instance, one famous collection, the *Baojinzhai tie* 寶晉齊帖 (*Baojinzhai*) of Mi Fu 米芾 (1051–1107AD)[60] compiled by Cao Zhige 曹之格 (date unknown) of 1268AD,[61] consists of seven out of ten *juan* of the Two Wangs' calligraphy, while the rest were all after the Two Wangs' style, including the noted Northern Song calligrapher Mi Fu's copies of the calligraphy of the Two Wangs as well as his own calligraphy.

Therefore, because of rubbing collections' capacity to reproduce calligraphy in a faithful and efficient manner, they represented a visual record of the succession, evolution and transmission of the classical tradition in calligraphy from the ancients to their contemporaries. However, making rubbing collections alone could not canonise any particular calligraphy or individual calligraphers in the absence of wider social acceptance. Nevertheless, it was an effective means of the transmission of canonical calligraphy. The popularity of certain collections indicated the positive reception of the calligraphy canon in general. This became even more the case in the Ming because rubbing collections were more accessible and they reached a wider public than ever before, thereby having a greater impact on the development of calligraphy.

The significant proportion of the more orthodox styles of calligraphy in a fairly standard format, which often included calligraphy from the eras of rulers of all dynasties arranged chronologically, would be naturally interpreted as representing the calligraphy styles recommended by the court or reflecting the taste of the rulers. In addition, this arrangement of listing imperial members chronologically, followed by famous officials, and finally individuals outside the court, mirrors the format of the biographical section of a dynastic history.[62] Both Lothar Ledderose and Amy McNair have stated that the imperial rubbing collections had an important political function, and McNair even believes that emperors used the making of rubbing collections to establish their throne as the owner of the premier art collection in the land.[63]

It is difficult not to think of rubbing collections as having any political intentions, such as legitimising rulership and demonstrating cultural achievement. Certain individual inclusions and

[60] Herbert Franke, *Sung biographies* (Wiesbaden,1976), vol. 4, pp.116–27. For studies of the calligraphy of Mi Fu, see *MFCT*; Sturman, Peter C., *Mi Fu: Style and the Art of Calligraphy in Northern Song China* (New Haven & London, 1997).
[61] Cao Zhige was the son of Cao Shiyan 曹士冕, the author of *Fatie puxi*.
[62] Marsha Weidner points out that many types of historical and biographical material are arranged the same way, in *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300–1912* (New York, 1988), p.17.
[63] "The imperial collection, however, always played a special role. It was the most prominent one and also laid claim to be the most comprehensive one, and it had an important political function", in *MFCT*, p.43; McNair(1994), p.213

exclusions may be construed as political. The exclusion from the *Getie* of the calligraphy of an eminent Tang calligrapher and scholar-official, Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (708–84AD or 709–85AD), was an example of this. A scholar attributed this omission to the political sensitivity of the family background of Yan, whose grandfather was the enemy of the ancestor of the Song royal family.[64] I agree with McNair that the making of *Getie* was part of the political campaign to present Song Taizong as a legitimate ruler. This project of cultural reproduction, the making of rubbing collections as a contribution to the preservation of culture, meant that he could gain popularity which would in turn consolidate his authority among the civil officials. Since *Getie* was rare and was disseminated among the political elite, it was more like a symbol of political power than a means of transmitting the calligraphy canon or of providing models for commoners to learn calligraphy.

However, we cannot rule out the possibility that the making of the rubbing collection was merely a product of the emperor's passion for calligraphy, since Song people believed that Taizong was displeased with the calligraphy of his day, which did not follow the classical tradition.[65] In this scenario, the imperial collection should have contained calligraphy in the classical tradition to re-establish the canon of calligraphy. However, Ledderose used the calligraphy of Mi Fu as an example to show how the classical tradition was propagated by Mi Fu's own interpretation. He concluded,

> "It was not the continuous physical existence of certain objects that guaranteed the continuation of the classical tradition. Throughout the ages the canonical group of stylistic prototypes varied in size and composition, and single pieces were constantly replaced and reinterpreted. Actually, however, it was this very process that allowed for continuous stylistic and aesthetic innovations."[66]

His interpretation is true, but it applies more to the calligraphy of Mi Fu's copies after ancient masters rather than those in *Getie.* At least, both the producer of the collection and the Song people had an expectation that the calligraphy of *Getie* would transmit and perpetuate the classical tradition in a visually faithful manner. Whatever the motives of making *Getie,* as the first comprehensive imperial rubbing collection it established and helped canonise the classical tradition, the styles of calligraphy for which were officially fixed in the Tang. Henceforth, the canon of calligraphy was preserved in the courts of the Northern and Southern Song, the Yuan, and the Ming.

In general, the classical tradition had a special position in people's minds and rubbing collections provided channels for the transmission of the calligraphy canon, which they purported to transmit in a

[64] Yang Xinling 楊心嶺, 'Shufashi shang qiangu yian *Chunhua Getie* heyi paichi Yan Zhenqing?' 書法史上千古疑案《淳化閣帖》何以排斥顏真卿. Accessed 15 June 2003, at http://www.people.com.cn/BIG5/wenhua/1088/1922112.html[Article in ejournal] and Li Qiang 李强, '*Chuhua getie* paichi Yan Zhengqing lema?'《淳化閣帖》排斥顏真卿了嗎?, *Yishu Baijia* 藝術百家, Vol.102 (2008.3), pp.5, 16–22.
[65] McNair(1994), p.213.
[66] *MFCT*, p.94.

faithful way. It was for this very reason that canonical calligraphy were made into rubbings. This explains why the past study of rubbing collections has always concerned itself so much with the reliability, authenticity and pedigree of the calligraphy in the collections. The technique is highly significant in the transmission of the classical tradition throughout the history of calligraphy in China. However, in the Ming, society changed and the value and reception of rubbing collections also changed. How did these changes affect the canon of calligraphy in the Ming? This will be discussed in Chapter Five.

1.3 Overview of the Study of Calligraphic Rubbings

In the history of Chinese calligraphy, *bei* and *tie* have usually been studied together as *beitie* 碑帖. What some call rubbings, and others call ink-imprints or ink-squeezes, are actually impressions made by tapping ink on paper over an inscribed stone slab or a woodblock. Despite the fact that clear explanations for *bei* and *tie* were found in *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 from 121BC,[67] their meanings have changed since then and have quite often been used interchangeably or been combined as *beitie* to refer to calligraphy reproductions in negative. Few people paid close attention to the distinction between them before the Qing dynasty,[68] and scholars still discuss their meanings and related issues today.[69]

By and large, most scholars believe that calligraphic rubbings emerged no later than the Tang Dynasty,[70] when rubbings aimed at preserving beautiful writing and iconic texts were found.[71] Inferring from the archaeological evidence, for example, the Tang rubbing of *Wenquanming* 溫泉銘 (see Fig.1.02) by Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r.627–49AD) of 648AD and two other Tang rubbings were found in Dunhuang.[72] Although the rubbings of Buddhist scriptures were also discovered there, they

[67] In Xu Shen 許愼, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Shanghai, 1988), for *bei*, it means erecting stone, p.194; for *tie*, it means title, p.159.
[68] Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849AD) wrote an influential essay: 'Beibei nantie lun' 北碑南帖論, in which he clarified the difference between *bei* and *tie* not only based on their histories and original meanings, but also on their conventions (e.g. script-type) and styles of calligraphy. See Ruan Yuan, *Yanjingshi ji* 揅經室集 (Beijing, 1993), 3 *ji juan* 1, pp.596–8.
[69] Hua Rende 華人德, 'A Study of Fundamental Distinction between the Model Calligraphy and Stele-inscription, and the *Chunhua getie*' 帖學與碑學的本質區別以及《淳化閣帖》, in *the Chunhua getie and The Two Wangs Calligraphy Conference AbstractsI*《淳化閣帖》與 '二王'書法藝術研究論文稿 (Shanghai, 2003), p.168; Sha Menghai 沙孟海 (b.1900), 'Bei yu Tie' 碑與帖, *Young adults' and Teenagers' Calligraphy* 青少年書法, No. 16, 2006), pp.5–12.
[70] Rong Geng, 'Chunhua mi ge fatie kao 淳化秘閣法帖考' in *Rong Geng wenji* 容庚文集 (Guangzhou, 2004), pp. 320–1
[71] For a detailed discussion on the origins of rubbing as a technique and the early development of it, see *BT*, pp.211–7. For my discussion in this section, my focus is on the primary textual materials particularly related to *tie* and provided with example to show how Ming people viewed the existence of rubbing in certain period.
[72] The other two were Ouyang Xun's 歐陽詢 *Huadusi bei* 化度寺碑 and Liu Gongquan's 柳公權 *Jinggang jing* 金剛經. Ouyang Xun's one is housed in British Library. The copy of the *Diamond Sutra* is the world's earliest complete survival of a dated printed book made in 868AD. It was discovered in Dunhuang, China by Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943AD), and is part of the Stein Collection in the British Library. Together with the *Wenquan ming*, they are currently housed in La Bibliothèque nationale de France, the National Library of France in Paris, in Qin Chuan 秦川 (ed.), in *Dunhuang shufa* 敦煌書法 (Beijing, 2010), pp.147–9.

were preserved because of their value in preaching Buddhism and not for their artistic value. The practice of preserving calligraphy in this way may have been influenced by the religious tradition of the transmission of sacred manuscripts, which were often transmitted in secrecy and were given to the believer only during an act of initiation.[73] Instead of transmitting the texts in a selective and secret manner, the tradition of handing down calligraphy from generation to generation was promulgated through copying and collecting. Religious writings were treasured primarily for their content and the sacred revelations they contained, but the value of calligraphy lay in its aesthetic quality. The content of calligraphy was thus subordinate to its forms and styles.

In terms of the motives for taking rubbings, rubbings of religious manuscripts were similar to rubbings of Confucian classics in that their content and the authenticity of the source were the primary concerns. However, both religious manuscripts and rubbing collections of secular calligraphy cared about the authenticity of the source of writings, as well as their aesthetic quality. This might explain why calligraphic rubbing collections emphasised the originality of the source of the chosen calligraphy, and why they were sometimes used for learning calligraphy.

Regarding scholarship on the study of calligraphic rubbings, few scholars of the Ming focused on Ming collections, looking instead at much earlier collections. For example, Gao Lian's 高濂 (active in the sixteenth century) *Yanxian qingshang jian jian* 燕閒清賞箋 and Tu Long's 屠隆 (1542–1605AD)[74] *Tie jian* 帖箋 studied the time that various rubbings were made and grouped them according to their dynasties, but their emphasis was on rubbings from earlier dynasties.[75] Throughout the entire Ming there remained a tradition from the Song that scholarship tended to focus on studying the mother collection, *Getie.* For example, the *Fatie shiwen kaoyi* 法帖釋文考異 of 1567–1620AD by Gu Congyi included the transcription and comments of former scholars, such as Liu Cizhuang 劉次莊 (*jinshi* 1074AD), Mi Fu and Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105AD), making comparisons with the calligraphy of other collections. For example, he said that in the *Yuanfu tie* 遠婦帖 (*Letter About a Woman Living Far Away*) in *juan* seven of *Getie*, the character "*qu"* 取 (take) was ruptured without mending, which was the same as in both Pan's and Gu's editions of *Getie.*[76] The late Ming art critic and collector Wang Luoyu 汪砢玉 (1587–1645AD) appreciated his scholarship and said,

[73] Lothar Ledderose, 'Some Taoist Elements in the Calligraphy of the Six Dynasties', *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, vol. 70 (No. Livr. 4/5, 1984), p.275.
[74] *DMB*, pp.1324–7.
[75] *TJ*, *juan* 4, pp.765–7 and *ZSBJ*, *juan* 14, pp.53–66.
[76] *FTSW*, *juan* 7, p.5.

> "*Gu's Chunhua getie* is a stone recut with annotations made by Gu Zhong[/Cong]yi with reference to the *Getie*'s Song edition collected by Pan [Yunliang]. Gu's study on the transcription and the verification of the calligraphy in the *Getie* is the most comprehensive and accurate."
>
> 顧氏淳化閣帖乃顧仲[/從]義借潘氏[允亮]所藏宋本摹勒上石，復刻淳化法帖釋文，考異最為詳確。[77]

Without a doubt it was a very comprehensive study, and it was recognised as such by contemporary experts. Instead of producing specialist books solely concerning rubbings or rubbing collections, books about collecting and connoisseurship that were published during the Ming period usually included a specific section on rubbing collections, as in the *Gegu yaolun* 格古要論 by Cao Zhao 曹昭 (fl. 1387–99AD),[78] the *Yanxian qingshang jian* by Gao Lian, the *Tie jian* by Tu Long, and the *Zhangwuzhi* 長物志 of 1621AD by Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 (1585–1645AD).[79] There is a closer content proximity between Gao's work and Tu's work than between either of these two and *Zhangwuzhi*. The former two were edited as lists with selected rubbings and rubbing collections roughly according to their times of production, while the latter was a rather improved summary of existing rubbings, which not were only arranged chronologically and based on their reputation, but also with Wen's comments and suggestions, supplementing the descriptions with more details such as compilers and place of publication according to their relative importance from a connoisseur's perspective. Even though *Yanxian qingshang jian* and *Tie jian* had the same target readers as *Zhangwuzhi*, i.e. collectors and people interested in rubbing collecting, the latter book's structure and format were different and it was more user-friendly.

While Gao and Wen only spent one chapter on rubbings, Tu chose to publish his treatment as a separate and specialised book.[80] It may have been a form of marketing strategy to publish his work separately, so as to attract more potential buyers who were looking for books specialising in calligraphic rubbings. The cost of publishing a smaller book would also have been much lower. This may have been merely for profit-maximising purposes. On the other hand, the continual and increased

[77] *SHW*, *juan* 21, p.32.
[78] There is a full English translation of this book with critical and bibliographical study by Sir Percival David entitled, *Chinese Connoisseurship: The Ko ku yao lun, the Essential Criteria of Antiquities* (London, 1971).
[79] Contents of certain books were similar. They were usually extracted and copied from one book and used in another. In addition, a counterfeit book entitled Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴 (1525–90AD), *Jiaochuang jiulu* 蕉窗九錄 in which he described nine items in his collection: paper, ink, stick, writing brush, ink palette, printed books, rubbings of inscriptions on stone, paintings, lutes, and incense. The authorship of this work has been questioned; *DMB*, pp.539–44. It was discussed in *ST*, p.29. This counterfeit book is still used by some contemporary scholars.
[80] *TJ*, *juan* 4, pp.765–72.

supply of connoisseur manuals in Ming China reflected the fact that there was a demand for such texts. Inferring from the type and number of rubbing-related publications, it is reasonable to think that rubbings were popular in the Ming to such a degree that they were not restricted to calligraphers and rubbing experts.

Apart from texts which provide general lists of various calligraphic rubbings, there was also an early Ming catalogue with ranked calligraphy and calligraphic rubbings, the *Fatie shenpinmu* 法帖神品目 by Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488–1559AD). Even though it did not include rubbing collections, it included individual rubbings which were regarded as significant in the Ming period. This book provided a reference tool for rubbing collectors for reading and ranking rubbing collections. Furthermore, there were other scattered short discussions related to, but not exclusively about, rubbing collections. These can be found in notebooks (*biji* 筆記), epigraphic studies, gazetteers, and recorded colophons. Examples include the *Yanzhou shanren sibugao* by Wang Shizhen, the *Weishuixuan riji* 味水軒日記 from 1603–5AD to 1616AD by Li Rihua 李日華 (1565–1635AD),[81] the *Jinshilin shidi kao* 金石林時地考 by Zhao Jun 趙均 (1591–1640AD),[82] and the *Chongbian hongyulou tiba* 重編紅雨樓題跋 by Xu Ao 徐坳 (date unknown). Despite this, however, little specific attention has been paid to Ming collections.

[81] Li Rihua was an official, artist, and art critic, and was a native of Jiaxing. About 1614AD he published a collection of inscriptions on his own paintings, entitled *Zhulai huaying* 竹嬾畫賸 and its sequel was published in 1625 which has become a minor classic of its kind; *DMB*, pp.826–30.
[82] Other names of this book are *Hanshantang jinshilin shi di kao* 寒山堂金石林時地考 and *Hanshan jinshi shidi kao* 寒山金石時地考, see *ZLRD*, p.1628.

Chapter 2 The Materiality and Visual Characteristics of Rubbing Collections

2.1 Stone Slabs versus Woodblocks

The physical appearance of a rubbing is closely related to the materials and the methods for taking rubbings. The different hardness of the materials not only required different tools and skills to carve; it also affected the quality of the rubbings. This chapter studies the physicality and visual characteristics of Ming collections. Firstly, it looks at attitudes towards the two primary materials, namely stone and wood, on which calligraphy was carved and from which rubbings were taken.

Kenneth Starr has stated that "rubbing was the only means the Chinese had of mechanically reproducing such materials until the invention of woodblock printing".[83] He makes a distinction between the techniques of making rubbings and prints, but he does not explain this distinction based on the materials involved. However, the physicality of ancient engraved calligraphy is always an important issue, and this was also true in the Ming. A number of Ming writers comment on the different properties of stone and wood. For example, the late Ming calligrapher and poet Wang Zhideng 王穉登 (1535–1612AD)[84] quoted the poem *Li Chao bafen xiaozhuan ge* 李潮八分小篆歌 by the famous Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712–70AD) in his colophon to Pan Yunliang's 潘允亮 (date unknown) re-cut of the *Getie*, in which he said: "[The calligraphy which was engraved on] jujube wood was 'fat' and lost the original appearance" 棗木傳搨肥失真.[85] In addition, the calligrapher and rubbing connoisseur Gu Congyi commented on one of the Ming *Getie* editions in 1568 as follows:

> "As for the *Yuhongguan* re-cut of the *Chunhua getie*, half of its rubbing stones remained in the capital. It is difficult to obtain more. Recently, [I] have seen someone from Wuzhong *shi* (Suzhou) who pasted this edition on woodblocks and re-cut it to make another two editions. These re-cuts were carved roughly and poorly. Also, they were tabbed with many layers of papers [at one time] in order to reproduce rubbings quickly. Given that wood was easy to turn and move, a worker could make two to three collections per day. As for the stone edition, it required four to five days to make one collection. If it was cloudy and raining, no rubbing could be made. Thus, the price of these two kinds differed. Important scholars from all over would have real appreciation, but I fear that ignorant people would not understand why there was such a big difference between the prices [of these two kinds of collections]. They might find it difficult to know their authenticity."
>
> 玉泓館重摹淳化閣帖，其石一半尚留京師，不可多得。近見吳中市人將此本糊木板上，又重刻二種，刻既潦草濫惡，拓亦重紙取捷。況木易於翻動，其工一日可拓二三部，石本四五日方拓一部。若遇陰雨，即不可拓矣。其價固自不同。四方大雅自有真賞。恐不知者以為價直何太懸絕，難分真偽。[86]

[83] *BT*, p.18.
[84] He played a leading role among the literary circles of Suzhou for some thirty years after Wen Zhenming died, in *DMB*, pp.1361–3.
[85] In the colophon to the Pan Yunliang's 潘允亮 re-cut of the *Getie* by Wang Zhideng, in *CTM*, v.1, p.19.
[86] *CTM*, v.1, p.17.

Thus we see that the poor quality of some wood editions might make a bad impression on Ming people. In addition, stone was accepted as the traditional material from which to make rubbings. Even the *Getie* re-cut on wood mentioned above was made with reference to the stone edition. In fact, there was a practical consideration about engraving materials, namely the time and cost necessary to make a collection. Regardless of the quality, the heavy weight of stone slabs made them difficult to transport, move and reproduce in an efficient manner. This physical property not only hindered their production and circulation, but also increased the production, transport and storage costs. As far as capital investment was concerned, rubbings made from stone slabs placed much greater financial burdens on publishers.

Since it was more expensive to make rubbings from stone than from wood, it is no surprise that there were more collections made from wood than stone. Evidence of this can be found in a statement from Wang Shizhen, commenting on the Song rubbing of the *Shengjiaoxu* 聖教序 (*Preface to the Holy [Buddhist] Doctrine*), the *Duobaota* 多寶塔 (*Duobao Pagoda*) and the *Xuanmita* 玄秘塔 (*Mysterious Pagoda*) of Wang Xizhi as follows:

> "Although this rubbing collection of Administrator Bao was made from woodblocks, its paper and ink slightly reveal its antiquity. There is nothing to regret in regard to the movement of the brush. Only the fifth *juan* lacks eleven pieces of calligraphy by Zhiguo, Master He clan and others. At present, few [collections made from] Quanzhou stones exist. And Song rubbing collections from Wuzhen, Fuqing and Sanshan *diansi* (Bureau of Household) are all made from *zaomu* (jujube)."
>
> 包參軍此帖，雖木本，然紙墨古色隱隱指睫間。而波磔督策之際，無毫髮遺恨。唯第五卷闕智果何氏等十一帖。今泉石亦少，此而宋刻烏鎮福清三山殿司皆棗木。[87]

This statement reveals that more Song rubbings made from wood were extant in the Ming than those made from stone, and suggests that rubbings made from wood may have been quite common in the Song. One may attribute this phenomenon to the availability of materials in different regions. Another possible reason is the cost-effectiveness which was demonstrated in the earlier example about sourcing stones. If cost was really the primary concern of most Ming people when making a rubbing collection, there would have been more Ming woodblock rubbings than we know of today.

In addition, Wang Shizhen put the word *sui* 雖 ('although') in front of *muben* 木本 ('woodblock edition'), as if to suggest that a collection engraved on wood was inevitably going to be seen as in some way inferior to one engraved on stone. It seems that stone was still the most desirable material from which to make rubbings, at least from this famous Ming collector's point of view. In

[87] *YSSBG*, *juan* 133, pp.11–2.

another example demonstrating the same attitude, Wang Luoyu's 汪砢玉 (b.1587AD) *Shanhuwang* 珊瑚網 mentioned that:

> "Tang Taizong obtained the real copy of Wang Xizhi's *Langting xu*; he commanded Zhao Mo (627–49) to make ten copies and give them as presents to Defence Commanders. The *Dingwu* edition alone was carved on jade."
>
> 唐太宗得右軍蘭亭真蹟，使趙模搨以十本賜方鎮，惟定武用玉石鐫之。[88]

Therefore, we can see that materials mattered, and how they represented the importance of a work or an edition.

Jade was seldom used to make rubbings due to its high value and hardness. The stone most widely used for engraving calligraphy in the Ming was considerably less precious. In general, copper-blue stone 銅青石 and Fuping stone 富平石 (stone from Fuping xian, Shanxi)[89] were widely used to make rubbings. For example, Fuping stone was used to make the Sufu ben 肅府本 of *Getie*, or 'Su palace edition' (*Sufutie*), produced by the Ming imperial Prince of Su in 1621AD. The evidence for this comes from a statement by a Qing poet and scholar Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634–1711AD), who described this *Getie* re-cut as follows:

> "[The *Sufu* edition of *Getie*] was made from 144 pieces of carved Fuping stone slabs on 253 pages (sides), and the stones were housed in the *Shuyuandian* in the east of the palace."
>
> 刻用富平石一百四十四，葉二百五十三，藏府東書園殿。[90]

Here Wang records for us both the stone type used and the total number of stone slabs necessary to make this version of the famous text. It is clear that the quantity was huge and the stone slabs were heavy, making it difficult to transport and store them. In most circumstances, the stones were usually sourced locally or from a nearby county. However, on this occasion the collection was made of Fuping stones but was carved in Lanzhou in Gansu. Strictly speaking, Fuping was not very close to Lanzhou, although it might have been the closest stone source at that time. This example reveals that the engraving materials did not necessarily provide a way to locate the provenances of the collections.

In spite of this, engraving materials may help to date the collections. For example, in a Ming connoiseurship text, *Xinzeng Gegu yaolun* 新增格古要論, we find a description by a Song scholar Li Zhuangjian 李莊簡 (1106AD *jinshi*) of an edition of the *Getie* with a certain kind of mark, as follows:

> "In the beginning, woodblocks were intact and did not need any silver vivets to restore them. Later, as the woodblocks were eventually broken and split up, silver vivets were used to join them together."

[88] Although the copies made by Tang Taizong are now believed to be hand-written copies (since *ta* 搨 in the Tang Dynasty meant hand-tracing copies), Ming people believed that there were rubbings taken from jade. The original text in *SHW*,*juan* 19, p.21.
[89] *QSBT*, p.121
[90] *CTM*, v.1, p.25

初時板完好不用銀釘，後來板漸拆裂，然後用銀釘。[91]

That is the reason why the presence or absence of silver tack marks can always be relied on to date a rubbing. The marks to which Li Zhuangjian refers were from the impression of silver pins or ingots, as shown in Fig.2.01. The pins were applied to hold the broken woodblocks together. Some rubbings had silver ingot/pin/horse-shoe marks on them, especially between pages, which indicated that they were taken from blocks made of wood instead of stone because pins or ingots were only used for wood. In addition, rubbings with these marks clearly would not be the first published edition and must be from a later period, when the blocks had already been broken. These became important traces used in the Ming and subsequently to date the rubbing collections.

The relationship between the quality of the workmanship and the materials used for the blocks from which rubbings were made was another major issue in the Ming. The rubbing expert Zhao Yiguang 趙宧光 (1559–1625AD)[92] discussed the distinction between rubbings taken from stone and wood, and argued that stone and wood have different strengths and weaknesses. His work is particularly important because no earlier expert, not even the renowned Song rubbing expert Huang Bosi 黃伯思 (1079–1178AD), the author of a lengthy book on rubbings from stones and metals, had discussed the physicality of rubbing collections in such detail with clear explanations and comments from a technical perspective. Zhao writes:

> "Both stone and wood editions have strengths and weaknesses. As for stone engravings, firstly, there would be mistake(s) made during the process of tracing [the calligraphy]; secondly, there would be a loss in the original appearance of the calligraphy during the process of filling the red outlines; thirdly, there would be a loss in the originality of the calligraphy during the process of transferring the text from paper to stone; fourthly, there would be a loss during the process of cutting the calligraphy on stones. As for woodblock engravings, there would not be any of these four losses. The only drawback was that the engraved characters would easily become worn and lose their sharp edges very soon after they were made. They would no longer be high quality rubbings for appreciation. There was no harm in those with knowledge of rubbings to comprehend the marvelousness of it."
>
> 石本木本，具有得失。凡刻石，鉤墨一失，填硃二失，上石三失，椎鑿四失。至於木，則四失皆無。獨易於圓頹，使鋒芒早失，不成佳賞耳。識者殆不妨領會其妙也。[93]

Zhao, from his own experience and observations, concurred with the above distinctions but appeared not to have had any fixed preference for one material over another. He also looked at the craftsmanship with regard to engraving materials. He examined the distinction between engravers who specialised in woodblocks and stone slabs as follows:

[91] *GGYL, juan* 3, p.3; Another english translation can be found in Sir Percival David (trans.), *Chinese connoisseurship: the Ko ku yao lun, the essential criteria of antiquities*, with a facsimile of the Chinese text of 1388AD (London, 1971), p.71.
[92] He was a descendent from the Song's royal family, in *ZMRD*, p.1284; also, in *ZLRD*, p.1670.
[93] *HSZT, juan xia*, p.30.

> "Woodblock will shrink and stone will not. Craftsmen who specialise in woodblocks are coarse but those who specialise in stone are fine. Craftsmen who specialise in woodblocks are fools but those specialising in stone are clever. Craftsmen specialising in woodblocks are rash and those in stone are cautious. All these differences show that stone is better than woodblock and their differences are huge. But for those who are good at knowing about calligraphy, these differences are just superficial (*pinmu lihuang*) in how they would lessen the spirit [of the calligraphy], at all. If good craftsmen who specialise in woodblocks re-cut high-quality engravings, the first edition of the rubbings (*chuben*) will greatly surpass those made from stone."
>
> 至若版伸縮，石不動；版工粗，碑工細；版工愚，碑工慧；版工輕易，碑工慎重；皆石勝木，是又天淵然。而善知書者，即不過牝牡驪黃，何傷神駿？苟能版得良工，拓得初本，便須遠出石上。[94]

Zhao first stated that stone was better than wood, but then he changed his mind and concluded that wood was better. It seems that Zhao's view of rubbings contradicts his earlier comments on the four 'weaknesses' or 'losses' to which carving on stone was prone, quoted in the first passage from his writing above, and which recommends the superiority of using woodblocks to make rubbings. The apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that the second time his focus was different. His earlier comment was regarding the properties of each material (stone slabs and woodblocks) and his latter comment was on the relationship between the materials and craftsmanship. He explained that if the craftsmen were good, they could compensate for the weaknesses of the engraving materials. Also, for those who knew calligraphy well, such minor differences would not cause big problems. Therefore, as long as the craftsman and calligraphy (or rubbings) were good, even if the rubbing was a re-cut, its reproduction would still be desirable. The skill of the craftsman involved is given clear priority here over any intrinsic qualities of the materials. Zhao added that rubbings made from woodblocks could be much better than those from stone slabs, provided that they were made by good engravers. He emphasised the importance of craftsmanship.

In line with Zhao's observations, the late Ming writer Xie Zhaozhe's 謝肇淛 (1567–1624AD)[95] *Wuzazu* 五雜俎 also preferred wood to stone. Sewall Oertling has translated Xie's comment in his *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu* as follows:

> "Carving into stone is a particularly easy way to lose the true quality of the original. The Ch'un-hua Pavilion Copybook Collection (Ch'un-hua ko-t'ieh) reflects the patronage of the emperor in the excellence of its workmanship. The inscription says that the rubbing was taken from an engraving made on stone, but actually it was made on wood. Therefore its spirit force and life movement have not lost the intent of the brushstrokes of the old masters. It should be considered the best work among the antique and modern calligraphy."[96]

[94] *HSZT, juan xia*, pp.30–1.
[95] *ZLRD*, p.2382.
[96] *WZZT*, pp.88–9.

> 至於石刻，尤易失真。淳化以帝王之力，聚極工巧，題曰上石，其實木也。故其氣韻生動，不失古人筆意，為古今墨跡之冠。[97]

Xie attributed the responsibility for the loss of faithfulness and the intent of the calligraphers' brushstrokes to the limitations of stone. Like many other late Ming people, such as the Ming politician Zhang Heming 張鶴鳴 (1551–1635AD),[98] he believed that the mother collection, *Getie* of 992AD, was carved on wood instead of stone. This idea originated from some Southern Song literature. For example, *Dongtian qingluji* stated that the *Getie* was made from woodblocks and thus it held traces of silver ingot patterns (evidence for later repair of the blocks).[99] Whatever the truth was, rubbings made from woodblock were common in the Ming and they even had a higher opinion then those made from stone.

Apart from the elasticity of the engraving materials mentioned by Zhao Yiguang in the earlier example, durability was another crucial factor to consider when choosing an engraving material. In his colophon of 1607AD to *Xihongtang*, the Ming collector Shi Shuhao 施叔灝 (date unknown) stated that the early copies of this collection were made with good paper and ink and skilled craftsmen. Thus, everyone greatly appreciated them. However, later, Dong Qichang assigned the wrong person to reproduce his collection, commissioning someone who wanted only to make a quick profit. Henceforth, the price of his collection was greatly reduced.[100] According to the colophon of the renowned Qing scholar Wang Qisun 王芑孫 (1755–1817AD), the history of the collection was as follows:

> "The first edition was made of woodblocks. When [Dong Qichang] Wenmin went to Huguang as education-intendant Censor, the woodblocks were destroyed by fire. This collection was then re-cut in stone. After Wenmin died, these engraving stones were obtained by Shi Shuhao. Shi's edition was the finest. He worried that craftsmen would mix up the order of the rubbings. Thus, he added a contents page which had two editions. One was in red and the other was in black. The red one was the one the world most admired."
>
> 初刻固木版也。當[董其昌]文敏提學入楚，版燬於火，乃重摹而刻之石。文敏即世是石為郡人施叔灝所得，施氏搨致精，慮工人裝失次第，增加目錄，其目有紅印墨印二種，其紅印世尤貴之。[101]

This text explicitly states that the collection was first made from wood and then its re-cut was made from stone. In theory, Dong Qichang should have known that stone engravings would last longer than woodblocks because they are resistant to fire. Therefore, why did he choose wood to make his

[97] *WZZT*, p. 276.
[98] Zhang Heming's colophon to the *Sufu* edition of the *Getie* stated that he saw the *zaomu* edition of the *Getie* at his friend's house when he was young. Zhang believed that *Getie* was made from wood. See the record of the colophon in *CTM*, v.1, p.23.
[99] For the colophon to the *Getie*, see *CTM*, v.1, p.22.
[100] For the colophon to the *Xihongtang*, see *CTM*, v.1, p.269.
[101] See the colophon recorded in *CTM*, v.1, pp.270–1 or *Tifuweidinggao* 惕甫未定藁, in *Yuanyatang quanji* 淵雅堂全集 (56 *juan*, Shanghai, 2002), *juan* 16, p.6.

collection in the first place? This can be explained by the positive way in which Ming people received rubbings from woodblocks, as shown by the earlier example of Gu Congyi's comment on his *Getie* re-cut.

Efficiency was thus one of the main reasons to choose woodblocks over stone in producing private rubbing collections in the late Ming. Moreover, another main factor was the quality control which wood provided in making faithful copies. This can be found in Zhao Yiguang's comment. Zhao claimed that woodblocks would not have the drawbacks of stone, except for the deterioration in the sharpness of the character outlines with time due to wood's greater softness. This might also explain why Dong Qichang later re-cut his collection on stone, probably because of stone's durability.

Many Ming collections have inscriptions at the end of each *juan* to describe when they were made. For example, Fig.2.02 shows the last page of the *Qingjiantang tie* 清鑒堂帖 of 1637AD. It states that "in the tenth year of the Chongzhen reign, the summer of the *Dingchou* year in June, the native of Xindou Wu Zhousheng carved [this] on stone." 崇禎十年丁丑夏六月，新都吳周生氏摹勒上石。[102] It had been a tradition to have such an inscription marked on rubbing collections since the inception of *Getie*. Despite the controversy over the engraving materials of the *Getie* of 992AD,[103] many rubbing collections made from woodblocks clearly did exist in the Ming. For example, part of the *Laiqinguan zhenji* 來禽館真迹 of 1628AD was inscribed with the place of its production, *Ruiluguan* 瑞露館, and it was made from woodblocks as is clearly shown in the grain of one woodblock rubbing of this collection, which is now on display in the Xing Tong Memorial Museum in Linyi, Shandong (see Fig.2.03)[104]. This collection's content consisted of correspondence written by Xing Tong in his old age and was made two years after his death by the Minister of War (*bingbu shangshu* 兵部尚書) Wang Xia 王洽 (1591AD *juren*).[105] In fact, both the inscription and the literature on this *Ruiluguan* collection had never mentioned that it was partly made of woodblocks.

This example reveals that the use of woodblocks was not mentioned in any text at all, although the collection was partly made of wood. Since the existing collection is incomplete (there are only thirty-eight out of forty-eight stones extant), we do not know the exact proportion of stone slabs in relation to woodblocks in this case. Also, we cannot infer from the existing evidence to find out whether the woodblocks in this collection were a later replacement or not. However, this example

[102] *MTSB*, pp.126–7.
[103] An example of the discussion about the controversy, by the Qing scholar Li Lian 李濂 (date unknown) in his colophon to the *Chunhua getie* of the Five stones edition can be found in *CTM*, v.1, pp.22–3.
[104] Photographed by the author on 22 Oct 2011 at the Xing Tong Memorial Museum 邢侗紀念館 in Linyi, Shandong.
[105] Zhang Fating 張法亭, *Laiqinguan shike taben* 來禽館石刻拓本 (Shandong, 2011), p.7.

reveals that there might be many more collections made entirely or partially of woodblocks in the Ming which were not described in any texts.

Moreover, although the term *shangshi* 上石, which literally means 'to put on stone', was used to describe the process of transferring calligraphy to engraving materials, this did not necessarily always refer to stone. The most obvious example was the *Getie* of 992AD, which was believed to have been carved on wood but was inscribed with the word *shangshi* at the end of each *juan* (see Fig.2.04). It is uncertain why this happened, although it may simply have been a convention.

There are a number of woodblock collections which do contain some degree of intrinsic textual evidence about the circumstances of their production. These include Dong Qichang's *Jiaoliaoguan tie* 鷦鷯館帖 of 1615AD and the *Yulutang tie* 玉露堂帖. They are both described as being made of *qinban* 鋟版, which literally means carved woodblocks. Both were recorded in inscriptions by Dong Qichang himself as being made into *qinban.* The *Jiaoliaoguan tie* appears in the colophon of *Shuzhongtang* in 1615AD,[106] and the *Yulutang tie* in the colophon to the *Yulutang tie* in 1616AD. Dong Qichang wrote in the *Jiaoliaoguan tie* that:

> "now, the rustic man (*shanren*) Chen Yibu assembled my bad [hand-written] correspondence and carved them into woodblocks."
>
> 茲陳懿卜山人結集予惡札，漫為鋟版。[107]

He thus clearly indicates that the collection was made from woodblocks. In fact, this term *qinban* rarely appeared in rubbing collections before the late Ming, and these two are both late Ming collections. It was a term often used to refer to the woodblock printing of books, appearing in that context as early as the Southern Song Dynasty. For example, a writer and official Lou Yao 樓鑰 (1137–1213AD) wrote in an epitaph of Zhou Mo 周模 (date unknown) as follows:

> "Since the gentleman [Zhou Mo] worried that it would be lost as time went on, he edited it himself and spent a thousand strings of coins to pay for the cost of woodblock carving and publishing fees. [I] can then have this book at home."
>
> 君[周模]恐其久而墜失，手加编校，以千緡為鋟版印造之費，始得家有此書。[108]

This shows the impact of printing on Ming rubbing collections, since *qinban* was a term originally used in printing as shown in the above example.

[106] *CTM*, v.3, p.1236.
[107] *CTM*, v.3, p.1227.
[108] Zhou Bofan muzhiming 周伯範墓誌銘, in Gongkuiji 攻媿集, *juan* 109, *SBCKCB*, pp.1068–69.

2.2 Paper and Ink

Rubbing collections not only consist of different styles of beautiful writing, but also involve procedures of a technical nature which have an influence on the final appearance of the calligraphy. The use of paper and ink to make rubbings was an important issue. In fact, the study of paper, seals, mounting and ink-stones had already begun in the Northern Song. For example, the book *Baozhang daifanglu* 寶章待訪錄 by Mi Fu studies the use of different types of papers and ink as well as mounting methods, which were all essential to good calligraphy.[109] Among them, paper was one of the most influential factors in the visual aspect of rubbings. For example, Cao Shimian's *Fatie puxi* said:

> "During the mid-Shaoxing reign (1131–61AD), the old *Chunhua* rubbing collection of the imperial palace was re-cut and housed in *guozijian* (the Imperial College). Its beginning and end were not much different from [the original edition of] the *Chunhua getie* [of 992AD]. At that time, since imperial rubbings often used *kui* papers which were embellished with gold and silver foils, the supreme spirit of the brushwork was visible."
>
> 紹興中以御府所藏淳化舊帖，刻板置之國子監。其首尾與淳化閣本略無少異。當時御府拓者，多用匱紙蓋打金銀箔者也，故字畫精神極有可觀。[110]

Cao attributed the impressiveness of the calligraphy to the paper instead of the style of calligraphy. Thus, the type of paper had been seen as crucial to the quality of a rubbing since the Song.

In general, various kinds of papers were used for rubbings as well as printed books in the Ming; for example, *huangmian* (yellow cotton) paper 黃棉紙,[111] *baimian* (white cotton) paper 白棉紙,[112] *pi* (bark) paper 皮紙,[113] *jingguang* (mirror light) paper 鏡光紙,[114] *hongjin luowen* (red root sieve pattern) paper 紅筋羅紋紙,[115] *taishilian* paper 太史連紙 and *lianshi* paper 連史紙[116], among others.[117] The last two kinds were mainly made of bamboo and appeared more often in southern China. In fact, according to the modern paper expert Pan Jixing's 潘吉星 *Zhongguo zaozhishi* 中國造紙史 (Shanghai, 2009), *mian* 棉 paper was usually a kind of *pi* paper (not made of cotton but of fibre from tree barks).[118] However, it is uncertain whether the white *mian* paper of the Ming was made of bark fibre or not. Another modern expert Zhou Peizhu 周佩珠 claimed that white *mian* paper began to

[109] Mi Fu, *Shushi* 書史 and *Baozhang daifanglu* 寶章待訪錄 (Shanghai, 1991), pp.27–50 and pp.51–62.
[110] *FTPX, juan shang*, p. 5.
[111] It is a loose and rougher version of the Song's goupi paper 構皮紙. Also, it is made by adding the juice from the leaves of *an* 桉 trees (gumtrees) to white cotton paper.
[112] It is one of the best paper kind used for books during the Ming Dynasty. See *SCC5*, p.89. It is a loose version of the Song's *baima* paper 白麻紙 (white hemp paper).
[113] It is a new edition of Song's Mulberry or Morus alba, and flax paper *sangma* paper 桑麻紙 (mulberry and hemp paper).
[114] It is a thinner and darken version of Song's *jinbo* paper 金箔紙 (paper with gold leaves).
[115] It was made with textile patterns. See *SCC5*, p.90.
[116] They were mostly made in Liancheng of Fujian and Qianshan of Jiangxi.
[117] For the study of paper types and their making methods in the Ming, see *ZGZZS*, Wang Wenshi 王文詩, *Zhongguo chuantong shougong zhi shidian* 中國傳統手工紙事典 (Taibei, 2001), pp.41–50; Liu Renqing 劉仁慶, *Zhongguo guzhipu* 中國古紙譜 (Beijing, 2001), pp.137–71. For the study of paper development in the Ming, see *ZZSH*, pp.135–59.
[118] *ZGZZS*, p.282.

appear in the Ming, but it was made with short fibres, was of uniform thickness and was without knots. Moreover, yellow *mian* papers appeared in the late Ming, with the yellow colour being caused by the inferior quality of white *mian* papers.[119] The *Getie* of the Ming Quanzhou edition was made of white *mian* papers.[120]

As for rubbing papers, they needed to be thin, fine, durable, elastic and able to absorb ink easily. Therefore, bark papers were the best, and they were often used to make rubbings.[121] According to Pan Jixing, bamboo papers were not suitable to make rubbings.[122] Zhou Peizhu also thought that bark papers were usually used for making rubbings in the past.[123] However, this may only be true before the Ming Dynasty because bamboo papers were prevalent after the mid-Ming. This will be discussed later.

Regarding the constituents of papers, the modern expert on paper Wang Juhua 王菊華concluded in his *Zhongguo gudai zaozhi gongcheng jishushi* 中國古代造紙工程技術史 that pre-Ming papers were mainly made of plants with long fibres, such as chu 楮 (paper mulberry), sang 桑 (mulberry), ma 麻 (hemp) and teng 藤 (rattan). However, another contemporary expert Zhou Peizhu claimed in her *Chuanta jiyi gaishuo* 傳拓技藝概說 that hemp was the main constituent of Song paper.[124] With limited scientific evidence regarding Song and Ming rubbing papers in existence nowadays, we can only rely on the literature and statements by experts. For example, Wang Juhua stated that *juan* seven of *Daguan* and *juan* eleven of *Chengqingtang* of the Southern Song were both made of hemp papers. [125] However, these kinds of long fibre plants were less available after the mid-Ming Dynasty.[126] With improved techniques for making bamboo paper and plentiful bamboo available in the Ming, bamboo paper became common.[127] For example, *lianshi* paper was made of young bamboo. Since this kind of paper was fine and white, it was good for taking rubbings.[128] In general, there were both *sheng* (raw) papers 生紙 and *shu* (processed) papers 熟紙 in the Ming. The latter type was

[119] *CTJY*, p.58.
[120] *CTJY*, p.58.
[121] *CTJY*, p.58.
[122] *ZGZZS*, pp.282–3.
[123] *CTJY*, p.57.
[124] *CTJY*, pp.57–8.
[125] Wang Juhua 王菊華 and others, *Zhongguo gudai zaozhi gongcheng jishushi* 中國古代造紙工程技術史 (Shanxi, 2006), p.228. Hereafter, Wang Juhua.
[126] Wang Juhua, p.333.
[127] Wang Juhua, p.333.
[128] *ZZSH*, p.137.

impregnated with *jiao* 膠 (glue) and *fan* 礬 (alum), but the former was not.[129] However, processed papers were not used for making rubbings because they were not good at absorbing ink.[130]

Furthermore, papers used for rubbings needed to be tougher than those used for paintings and calligraphy so as to reduce the chance of being pierced or torn. Also, as the depth and thickness of the brushstrokes in *tie* calligraphy were usually shallower and thinner than those for calligraphy on *bei*, papers for making rubbings of *tie* required a thin, smooth and fine texture so as to depict the details. For example, in the *Lunshubiao* 論書表 of z*hongshu shilang* 中書侍郎, the deputy head of the legislative bureau of the government (z*hongshu sheng* 中書省) Yu He 虞和 (date unknown) of the Liang Dynasty (907–23AD) stated that: "To make rubbings of calligraphy, one should use thin papers" 拓書悉用薄紙.[131] Therefore, it is clear that the types of papers for making rubbings were a concern since the Liang dynasty. This was still a concern in the Ming and it became even more important, in particular concerning their quality and strength.

Using Van Gulik's translation of Ming collector Zhou Jiazhou's 周嘉胄 (1582–1658AD) *Zhuanghuang zhi* 裝潢志, Zhou said,[132]

> "For making the backings of scrolls you should use mulberry-bark lien-szû (*liansi*) paper from Ching-hsien (Jingxian), kung-tan (gongdan) paper or lien-szû made from bamboo, according to the requirements of each case. When mounting hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, albums and rubbings, I use exclusively lien-szû, and not one single sheet of lien-chí (*lianqi*). Lien-chí paper is tough by nature, and therefore not easy to handle. Lien-szû is to a scroll what fine gauze is for a beautiful woman, while lien-chí is like common rough cloth for a country wench."
>
> 紙選涇縣連四，或供單，或竹料連四，復背隨宜充用。余裝軸及卷冊碑帖，皆純用連四[紙]，絕不夾一連七[紙]。連七性強不合適。用連四[紙]如美人衣羅綺，用連七[紙]如村姑著布帛。[133]

In addition to the papers for making rubbings, in gerenral, there was a distinction between how Song people and Ming people viewed rubbing collections. For example, while the Southern Song rubbing expert Chao Shimian's *Fatie puxi* highly valued *Daguan* because of its high proportion of genuine calligraphy from the imperial collection,[134] the late Ming and early Qing collector Sun Chengze 孫承澤 (1592–1676AD) focused on the paper types and various editions of the collection. Sun said:

> "The *Daguan tie* of the Song had yellow and white paper editions, which were not the same. [I] have only seen one copy of the yellow paper edition. Its calligraphy was fine and

[129] The definition of processed papers can be found in Wang Juhua, p.334.
[130] Tu Long pointed out this problem of processed papers and explained the non-processed and processed paper making methods respectively in his *KPYS*, pp.202–6.
[131] *FSYL*, *juan* 2, p.42.
[132] *CPA*, p.309.
[133] *ZHZ*, p.41. English translation in *CPA*, p.309.
[134] Colophons to the *Daguan tie* can be found in *CTM*, v.1, p.99.

> exquisite, and it seemed [to me] that it was hand-written. It was a gift to the Southern Song grand councillor Yu Shen (1050–1130AD) by Song Huizong (1082–1135AD).”
>
> 宋搨大觀帖有黃白紙二種，所見不一。而黃紙者止見一部，字法精妙，宛如手書，乃徽宗賜宰相余深者。[135]

In fact, many Ming people were concerned not only with the papers for rubbings but with those used for printed books as well. For example, a Ming writer Zhang Xuan 張萱 (active in the sixteenth century)[136] commented on Song papers for book publishing as follows:

> “I have had the chance to edit the books from the imperial archive. Every time I find a Song book, I often reproduce the book by printing using the back side of court correspondence. For example, the *Zhipin leibian* of forty *juan*. They were made in the second year of the Yuanfu reign (1098–1100AD) and the fifth year of the Chongning reign (1102–6AD) respectively. As for the papers used for both private and official correspondence to the court, they were very thick and shiny on both sides. Therefore, both sides could be used. As for present papers, they are not good enough.”
>
> 余獲校秘閣書籍。每見宋版書，多以官府文牒翻其背以印行者。如《治平類篇》一部四十卷。皆元符二年，及崇寧五年。公私文牘箋啟之故紙也，其紙極厚。背面光澤如一。故可兩用。若今之紙。不能稱也。[137]

He appreciated the thickness, toughness and even the shininess of the Song papers, which allowed them to be reused for writing on both sides. However, he was disappointed by contemporary papers which were relatively inadequate when compared with the Song ones.

Moreover, old papers were good in most Ming people’s eyes because they were tough and thick. For example, a Ming collector and writer Gao Lian 高濂 (active in the sixteenth century) described old papers in his book *Yanxian qingshangjian* as follows:

> “The papers of rubbings look old. The original users have touched the front side of the papers and left traces of aging colour, but the back sides of them remain their fresh appearance. Old papers are tough and thick and would not be stained.”
>
> 其古帖紙色面有舊意，原人摩弄積久，自然陳色，故面古而背色長新，以古紙堅厚不澀。[138]

From Gao’s description, we learn that old papers used for calligraphic rubbings were thick, tough and resistant to smoke or staining. These were actually the same requirements as for printed books. Gao then further discussed the variations in thickness and toughness in relation to the ink-absorbency of the papers. He said:

> “Ancient rubbings have been mounted many times and have a long history. The deep dark ones were as hard as raw lacquer, and have an incomparable special smell which was not released from the paper and ink. If one uses a finger to wipe it, it would not be stained at all. In addition, the paper is as shiny as if it has been polished. It is old and thin. Once you touch it, it will crack easily. The sides and corners of the rubbing did not have any traces

[135] The colophon was recorded in *GZXX*, *juan* 4, p.4 or see *CTM*, v.1, p.102.
[136] He edited the book *Xiyuan wenjianlu* 西園聞見錄 (Taibei, 1991) which described things happened between Hongwu till Wanli reigns.
[137] Zhang Xuan 張萱, *Yiyao* 疑耀, *SKQS*, p.107 or quoted by Sun Yuxiu 孫毓修, *Zhongguo diaoban yuanliu kao* 中國雕板源流考 (Shanghai, 2008), p.41.
[138] *ZSBJ*, *juan* 14, p.67.

> of ink to ruin the calligraphy…. Nowadays, the counterfeit rubbings are mostly made of *chuanshan* papers and *zhu* paper (bamboo papers).[139] They smoked it and stained it in water with old colouring so as to stain it thoroughly both outside and within, with the ancient colour. If it was taken off from one angle, a thin one would split immediately but a thick one would not. It would not be the same if it was an ancient rubbing. If one tried to uncover the thin one from one angle, it would not split as it was tough and full of glue. [On the contrary], the thick one would split and be unable to be uncovered."
>
> 古帖受裱數多，歷年更遠，其墨濃者，堅若生漆，且有一種不可稱比異香，發自紙墨之外。若以手揩墨色，纖毫無染。兼之紙面光采如砑，其紙年久質薄，觸即脆裂。側勒轉折處，並無沁墨水跡侵染字法。…今之贋拓，大率以川扇紙、竹紙。用掛灰爐煙瀝和水染成古色，表裏滲透，兩面如一。若以一角揭試，薄者即裂，厚者性健不斷。如古帖不然，薄者揭之，堅而不裂，以受糊多耳；厚者反破碎莫舉。[140]

Therefore, in addition to the types and qualities of papers, the amount of glue applied for mountings not only affected the visual characteristics of the rubbings but also helped to date and authenticate them. As mentioned in the above example, old rubbings had long mounting histories which made them thick and easy to break, while new rubbings were thin, tough and harder to break. Thus, the papers' toughness revealed the dates of the rubbings.

Regarding the papers' nature in relation to their ink-absorbency, Gao Lian further explained that:

> "Papers made in the south are tough and thin, which are suitable for making rubbings. Whereas papers made in the north are loose and thick, and it is difficult for them to absorb ink."
>
> 南紙堅薄，極易拓墨，北紙松厚，不甚受墨。[141]

Thus, even within the same period, there were distinctions between papers from different regions. Because the characteristics of papers affect the quality of rubbings, there was a regional difference between the rubbings from the north and the south. For example, Gao Lian said:

> "Rubbings produced in the north look like thin clouds floating over the blue sky."
>
> 北拓如薄雲之過青天[142]

This clearly shows that rubbings made in the north were lightly inked. Aside from the technique for taking rubbings, using papers produced in the north would not produce deep dark rubbings because northern papers were not good for absorbing ink. Pan Zhicong's *Shufa ligou* stated that:

> "Northern papers used horizontal screens to make them, and thus their pattern was horizontal and they were loose (less dense) and thick…. Southern papers used vertical screens [to make them] and their texture was vertical. Therefore, most genuine calligraphy by the Two Wangs was written on vertical patterned bamboo papers made in Huiji (present Suzhou)."

[139] According to *ZGZZS*, bamboo papers in Longxi 龍溪 during the Yuan dynasty was not made of bamboo but bark fibre of mulberry trees, see Pan Jixing (1998), pp.268–9. Usually from Fujian province, it was short, narrow, dark, and brittle, and lowest in quality and price. *SCC5*, p.89. Also, see Hu Yinglin 胡應麟, *Shaoshi shanfang bicong* 少室山房筆叢, *SKQS, juan* 4, p.7. Hereafter, Hu Yinglin.
[140] *ZSBJ, juan* 14, p.67.
[141] *ZSBJ, juan* 14, p.66.
[142] *ZSBJ, juan* 14, p.66.

> 北紙用橫簾造，紋必橫，又其質鬆而厚。…南紙用豎簾，紋必豎，若二王真迹多是會稽豎紋竹紙。[143]

Although Pan copied this comment from *Dongtian qingluji* of 1190AD, he slightly revised it and kept the concept of papers showing regional differences between the north and the south.[144] Therefore, there was still a regional distinction between papers from the north and the south in the Ming, and southern papers were obviously better for taking rubbings. There is no evidence about the provenances of rubbing papers, but Jiangxi, Fujian and Zhejiang were three major areas of Ming paper production.[145] These places were all close to or well connected with the largest Ming publishing centre in Suzhou. As will be discussed in the next chapter about the characteristics of Ming rubbing collections, most of them were made in similar areas to printed books. In normal circumstances large amounts of papers were needed for making rubbing collections, and it is believed that the requirements would be the same as for printed books. Papers produced in local areas and nearby counties would used because of their convenience. This helps to locate the place of production and even to identify and authenticate the collections. For example, Xie Zhaozhe's *Wuzazu* said:

> "As for Yuan rubbings, the characters were in a slightly running style; papers were made of bamboo and were a darker colour than Song papers. In the early Ming, people used thin cotton paper. If the collection was made in Chu and Dian, its complexion would be better than Yuan and of a similar quality as the Song ones. From the Chenghua (1465–87AD) and Hongzhi (1488–1505AD) reigns onwards, paper eventually became roughly made and simple. Up to now, these are the worst examples of rubbings."
>
> 元刻字稍帶行，而箋時用竹，視宋紙稍黑矣。國初用薄綿紙，若楚、滇所造者，其氣色超元匹宋。成弘以來，漸就苟簡，至今日而醜惡極矣！[146]

This shows the period convention for papers. According to Xie's observation, Ming rubbings used thin cotton papers which surpassed the quality of Song and Yuan papers. The technology of paper making deteriorated after the mid-Ming and accordingly the quality got worse.

In fact, one of the best Ming papers, *xuan* paper, which was a kind of bark paper, was made in Jingxian in Anhui.[147] Wen Zhenheng's *Zhangwuzhi* said:

> "Recently, both *sajin* papers made in Wuzhong and Tanjian made in Songjiang have not lasted long. Lian four [paper] of Jingxian is the best."
>
> 近吳中灑金紙，松江潭箋俱不耐久，涇縣連四最佳。[148]

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[143] *SFLG*, *juan* 9, p.9.
[144] Similar description was found in Song source, Zhao Xihu's *Dongtian qinglu* of 1190AD, *SKQS*, p.33.
[145] See Lin Yijun 林貽俊, 'Gudai zaozhishu zai guonei de chuanbo' 古代造紙術在國內的傳播, in *Zhongguo zaozhi shihua* 中國造紙史話 (Taibei, 1985), p.231; or Qiu Pengsheng 邱澎生, 'Mingdai Suzhou yingli chuban shiye ji qi shehui xiaoying' 明代蘇州營利出版事業及其社會效應, in *Jiuzhou xuekan* 九州學刊, 5:2 (Oct. 1992), pp.139–59.
[146] *WZZ*, *juan* 13, p.208.
[147] *ZZSH*, p.138.
[148] *ZWZ*, *juan* 7, p.20.

Because it was highly appreciated by Ming scholars and the materials for making it were less available than bamboo, it was believed that this paper was used for making high quality rubbing collections. Further to the types of papers, Wen suggested that:

> "The opening [of a mount rubbing] needs to use Song papers for writing Classic, white Song papers, Song and Yuan papers with golden flowers, or *jian* (chrysalis) papers from Gaoli (present Korea) and Japanese papers as well."
>
> 引首須用宋經箋，白宋箋及宋，元金花箋，或高麗繭紙，日本畫紙俱可。[149]

Thus, there was a convention about papers when mounting rubbings. Apart from papers for rubbings, Wen also commented on printed books as follows:

> "As for book collecting, Song books were the most treasured ones as most of them have the regulations around how fat and thin they are. The good ones are the styles of Ou[yang Xun] and Liu [Gongquan]. The papers were clean, and the ink was clear and smooth. … Papers were white and the woodblocks were new. Cotton paper was the best, the bamboo paper lining was also attractive."
>
> 藏書貴宋刻，大都書寫肥瘦有則。佳者有歐[陽詢] 柳[公權]筆法，紙質勻潔，墨色清潤…紙白板新，綿紙者為上，竹紙活襯者亦可觀。[150]

As well as the styles of calligraphy, Wen commented in great detail on the papers and suggested the best paper kinds to look for when collecting printed books. Therefore, the physicality (i.e. the paper type and the colour) of both rubbings and printed books was a crucial concern in the Ming.

Apart from papers, another crucial factor which determined the visual quality of the rubbing collections was the quality and constituents of the ink. Ink played an equally important role as paper in rubbing collections. Zhao Yiguang said:

> "Regarding ancient model calligraphy … the worst of them would use good quality paper and dark ink to hide their drawbacks … expert(s) [who knew the deceptive methods] were ashame of them."
>
> 古人法書，…其最下者借佳紙濃墨掩其拙筆，…識者恥之。[151]

Good paper and deep dark ink can hide the defects or weaknesses of the engravings. Regarding ink, the two main types of ink used to make rubbings in the Ming were *songyan* 松煙 (pine-soot/ smoked pine)[152] and *youyan* 油煙 (lampblack)[153] ink. Yang Shen said:

> "I always said that while *songyan* ink was deep and dark without flattering beauty, *youyan* ink was not deep and dark but beautiful in a flattering way."
>
> 余嘗謂松煙墨深重而不姿媚，油烟墨姿媚而不深重。[154]

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[149] *ZWZ*, *juan* 5, p.10.
[150] Z*WZ*, *juan* 5, p.16.
[151] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.13.
[152] For the method of making ink from pine soot, see a famous work on agriculture and technology printed in about 1637AD written by the Ming author Song Yingxing's 宋應星, *Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物 (Peking, 1978), pp.276–7. Hereafter, *Tiangongkaiwu*.
[153] According to rubbing expert from the National Library of China Jia Shuangxi 賈雙喜 in his *Chuanta yu Chuanta jifa wenda* 傳拓與傳拓技法問答 (Beijing, 2010), p.25, *youyan* was made of *shexiang* 麝香 (musk), *bingpian* 冰片 (bornes camphor), pearl powder and glue.

Therefore, the former was dull and black, and it was usually used for writing calligraphy and painting because it was more easily absorbed by the paper than the latter. Also, it was often used for making large rubbings of *bei* and inscriptions on cliffs (*moya* 摩崖) because it was cheaper. The *youyan* ink was shiny and was often used to make *tie* rubbings. For example, Gao Lian 高濂 (active in the sixteenth century) said:

> "In the north, people used pine-soot [ink], which had a greenish tinge and was shallow. It was not soluble with wax. Therefore, rubbings made from it were pale with wrinkles (the texture of crepe). They were not *jiasha* (lined with yarn) and were called *chanchi ta* (cicada wing rubbings). As for Southern rubbings, they used the ink made from smoke and wax, and thus the colour was pure black and shiny."
>
> 北用松煙，墨色青淺，不和油蠟，故色淡而文皺，非夾紗作蟬翅拓也。南搨用烟和蠟爲之，故色純黑，而有浮光。[155]

The ink made in the north was usually made from smoked pine, so it was not as dark as the ink from the south, and it was not soluble in oil and wax. Therefore, rubbings made in the north were usually lighter in colour and their grain could easily be seen.

In addition, rubbings of stele (*bei* 碑) style, especially the larger ones, usually used *songyan* ink. This pine-soot ink was produced by the incomplete combustion of aged pine wood, saving the time for grinding and thus lowering the cost. Usually, it was applied with heavy tapping and the rubbings were deep black. However, it was seldom used in *tie* rubbings because the colour did not last long. Instead, *tie* rubbings often used ink made of *yanmei* 煙煤 or *youyan* 油煙. This ink was made from the combustion of plant oil mixed with glue; it lasted longer and was slightly shiny.[156] For example, a Hongwu period (1386–98AD) scholar Shen Jisun 沈繼孫 (date unknown) in his *Mofa jiyao* 墨法集要 stated that:

> "There was only pine-soot [ink] in the past. The use of *tong* oil and sesame seed oil to make ink began in recent years … but *tong* oil mixed with ink better. [The ink made from it] was black and shiny. The longer-lasting the ink, the darker."
>
> 古法惟用松燒煙，近代始有桐油，麻子油燒煙…..但桐油得煙最多，為墨色墨而光，久則日黑一日。[157]

Thus, rubbings made of *youyan* ink look different from those made of pine-soot ink.

Last but not least, either *mo* 墨 (black ink) or *zhu* 硃 (vermilion or red ink) can be used to make rubbings. The former colour was more common than the latter. Vermilion rubbings (*zhuta* 硃拓) which were red in colour first appeared in the Song. In *Shuhua baba* 書畫跋跋, Wang Shizhen 王世

[154] Liang Zuo 梁佐, Yang Shen 楊慎, *Danqian yulu* 丹鉛餘錄, *SKQS*, *juan* 21, pp.29–30.
[155] *ZSBJ*, *juan* 14, pp.66–7.
[156] Lampblack made from combustion, in lamps with wicks, of animal, vegetable, and mineral oils such as fish oil, rapeseed oil, bean oil, hemp oil, sesame oil, *dong* oil, and petroleum. It was said that in the Ming 90 percent of ink was made from pine soot and 10 percent from oil lampblack. Quoted from *SCC5* and originally from *Tiangongkaiwu*, p.276.
[157] Shen Jisun 沈繼孫, *Mofa jiyao* 墨法集要, *SKQS*, p.1

貞 (1526–90AD) stated that there were *zhuta* in the *Zhenshangzhai tie* 真賞齋帖 (*Zhenshangzhai*) compiled by Hua Xia 華夏 (date unknown)[158] of 1522AD.[159] There are not many *zhuta* existing nowadays. In fact, red was usually used to indicate good fortune and luck in China.[160] Zhou Peizhu claimed that the first rubbing of *Getie* was *zhuta*, since vermilion was chosen to make rubbings for officials.[161] However, she did not provide any evidence to support her argument. Up to now, there has been neither reliable literature nor visual evidence to prove this. Thus, her argument is not convincing.

2.3 Craftsmanship

The technique of making rubbings is very similar and closely related to the mechanics used in stone inscription on mountain cliff (*moya* 摩崖),[162] seal impressions and woodblock printing.[163] All of these are worked by hand, cast or incised by characters on hard objects. However, they are made to various sizes, in different media and for different modes of display and purposes. For example, seals are the smallest in size and are mainly for identification purposes, while woodblock printing aims to provide multiple copies.

As for *tie*, the main techniques were engraving, tapping and rubbing. "Ink squeeze" 墨壓本 or in Chinese *taben* 拓本 was a term quite often used in the past because the process of making a reproduction of calligraphy was to squeeze ink onto a paper over a stone. The word "squeeze" eventually came to be used to describe the serigraph process or the making of silkscreens and screens. In fact, more technical terms such as *taben* 拓本, *moben* 墨本, *shuaben* 刷本, *daben* 打本 and *keben* 刻本 all refer to rubbings or ink squeezes.[164] In particular, rubbing in Chinese *pinyin* is *taben*, which can be written as both "搨本" and "拓本". *Daben* "打本" and *tuoben* "脫本" also mean rubbing, but they emphasise different techniques. In pre-Song texts, the meanings of the terms "搨 (搨) 本" and "拓本" were different. For example, "搨本" in the Tang meant a hand-traced copy.[165] When ancient texts are examined today, some confuse the usage and meaning of these terms, replacing one with the

[158] A collector and scholar in Wuxi, and was a close friend of Wen Zhengming; *DMB*, p.1473.
[159] *SHBB*,*juan* 2 *shang*, p.18.
[160] *CTJY*, p.66
[161] *CTJY*, p.66
[162] *Moya, or moya shike* 摩崖石刻 (Mountain cliff stone inscription), are texts carved into granite boulders. It was a kind of *keshi* and referred to inscriptions or Buddhist figures engraved on rock and hillside in nature, which its history can be traced back to the Zhou Dynasty (11th century –221BC), in *Shufa cidian* 書法詞典 (Taibei, 1994), p.197. *Moya* is similar to stone/ rock engraved with inscriptions but *moya* is often much larger than stone slab in size and for public viewing.
For a recent literature on *moya* written in English, see R.E. Harrist and R.E. Harrist, *The Landscape of Words : Stone Inscriptions from Early and Medieval China* (Seattle, Washington; London, 2008)
[163] According to Needham's analysis on printing in China, he thought that printing developed quite naturally from techniques developed in making and using seals, engravings on stone and metals, and taking inked rubbings from stone and other inscriptions. *SCC5*, pp.132–93, and J.S.Edgren, 'The history of the book in China', in Michael Felix Suarez and H.R. Woudhuysen, *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford, 2010), v.1, pp.353–65.
[164] For the meaning of *taben* and *daben*, see *CPA*, p.86.
[165] *Ta* "搨" should be the original word as explained in Huang Sheng 黃生, *Zigu* 字詁, *SKQS*, pp.64–5.

other and thus causing misconceptions. They use "拓本" for "榻本", believing that the difference lies merely in the use of Simplified versus Traditional Chinese characters.[166] Since many people today do not know the difference between the two terms, when reading and quoting ancient texts they inevitably make mistakes.

Concerning tapping and rubbing, these techniques depended entirely on the skill and knowledge of individual artisans or craftsman.[167] In general, to take rubbings, firstly, one needs to wet the *xuan* paper 宣紙; secondly, lay it on top of the engraved stone slab and use a brush to flatten the paper; thirdly, use a special tool – a *puzi* 撲子, *tabao* 拓包 or tamper (see Fig.2.05), which is made of goat hair towel (*yanmao* 羊毛巾) – to rub or tap on the paper over the stone slab; and finally, add ink to the paper by rubbing and tapping,[168] in Chinese, *ca* 擦 (rub or brush) and *pu* 撲 (tap) or *chui* 捶/*zhui* 椎 (hammer).

Regarding the terms related to visual aspects of rubbings, particularly their darkness and patterns, *danmo ta* 淡墨拓 (light inked rubbings), *chanyi ta* 蟬翼拓 (*chanchi ta* 蟬翅拓, cicada wing rubbings), *nongmo ta* 濃墨拓 (dark inked rubbings), *zhongmo ta* 重墨拓 (heavy inked rubbings) and *wujin ta* 烏金拓 were used in the past. Among these terms, *chanyi ta* was used more often in the Song. For example, Cao Shimian said:

> "Recently, craftsmen often made *chanyi* rubbings and used thick papers to lessen the traces of *yinding* (silver ingots) to deceive people."
>
> 邇來碑工往往作蟬翼本，且以厚紙覆板上，隱然為銀錠痕以惑人。[169]

Although the *chanyi ta* technique was applied in the Ming, aimed at making counterfeit rubbings, the above quote reveals that rubbings made in or before the Southern Song were also often *chanyi ta*.

A Ming book collector and connoisseur Zhu Cunli 朱存理 (1444–1513AD) said in *Shanhu munan* 珊瑚木難:

> "About stone engraving, although it is a single piece of stone, its rubbings varied a lot. It is as if paper is thick and thin, rough and fine; ink is dry and wet, dark and light; ink could be applied by heavy and light action; engraving is fat and thin, bright and dark."
>
> 大凡石刻，雖一石，而墨本皆不同。盖紙有厚薄麤細，燥濕墨有濃淡，用墨有輕重，而刻之肥瘦明暗隨之。[170]

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[166] In 'The origin of the rubbing and its technique 拓印的起源和技術' in Qian Zunxun 錢存訓's *Shu yu zhubo: Zhongguo gudai shu shi* 書於竹帛: 中國古代書史 (Shanghai, 2002), Qian misunderstands "榻" and replaced it with "拓" when quoting the Tang textual sources. In the *Book of Tang* 唐書, *tashu shou* 榻書手 who worked for the impertial court, refers to the craftsmen who used tracing and filling to make handwritten calligraphy.

[167] Cf. Arthur Stanley, 'The Method of Making Ink Rubbings,' in *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, v.48 (1917), pp.83–4.

[168] The best account of rubbings in English is probably *CPA*, p.86; for a detailed discussion of the technique, see Ma Ziyun 馬子雲, "Quanta jifa" 傳拓技法, in *Wenwu* 文物 (or formerly *Wenwu Congkan* 文物叢刊), 1962(no.10), p.53; (no.11), p.50; For a detail explanation of the process of taking rubbings in Chinese, see Ji Hongzhang 紀宏章, *Chuanta jifa* 傳拓技法 (Beijing, 1991), pp.37–58.

[169] *FTPX, juan shang,* p.3.

Therefore, various editions of rubbings existed despite the fact that they might be from the same source. Craftsmanship was influential on the appearance of a rubbing.

Furthermore, different tapping or rubbing methods made different kinds of rubbings. Regarding their techniques, *chanyi ta* was not only common in the Song; it also had a higher ranking than *nongmo ta* in the Ming. For example, Yang Shen's *Mochi zaolu* 墨池瑣錄 stated:

> "The *Shengyuan tie* of the Southern Tang Dynasty which was made of *kui* paper and Li Tinggui ink, was a peerless work of art [i.e. of the first class]. The *kui* paper was made of paper with thin pieces of beaten gold. The second class of rubbing collection was made of *chengxintang* paper by the *chanchi* tapping method. The third class was the *nongmo* edition."
>
> 南唐昇元帖以匱紙摹拓，李廷珪墨拂之，為絕品。匱紙者，打金箔紙也。其次即用澄心堂紙蟬翅拂為第二品，濃墨本為第三品也。[171]

Chanyi ta was praised higher and *nongmo ta* was ranked lower in the Ming. The late Ming and early Qing historian and writer Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611–71AD) explained *chanyi ta* in *Tongya Qiyong* 通雅・器用as follows:

> "Yan Zhou (date unknown) explained the calligraphy of Shiyou *zhangcao* (a kind of cursive script) that the thin and light kind of cicada silk fabric was called cicada wing. Papers also have a kind like cicada wings, which were said to be made of thin papers. "
>
> 顏籀解史游章[草]曰：蟬縐之輕薄者，若蟬翼也。紙亦有如蟬翼者，或云用薄紙搨。[172]

Thus, *chanyi ta* was named not only because the ink was light but also because it was made of thin papers. Regarding Song examples of *chanyi ta* and light inked collections, there were the *Maoqindian* 懋勤殿 editions of *Getie* and *Daguan*.[173] Ming collections inherited the *chanyi ta* of the Song and this became another major rubbing method. The collections were inked lightly and traces of the brushing direction were clearly shown on the rubbings. *Zhenshangzhai* (see Fig.2.06) and the *Yulantang tie* 玉蘭堂帖 of 1590AD were *chanyi ta* and light inked collections respectively.[174]

In fact, *nongmo ta* was made by *ca* (a brush). The rubbings were usually deep, dark and wet.[175] We can get an idea of what *nongmo ta* were like from Gao Lian's *Yanxian qingshangjian* comments. He said:

> "As for today's deep-dark inked rubbings, if one uses a finger to rub them slightly, the whole finger will be stained black."
>
> 今之濃墨拓者，以指微抹，滿指皆黑。[176]

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[170] Zhu Cunli 朱存理 *Shanhu munan* 珊瑚木難, *SKQS, juan* 4, p.69.
[171] *MCZL, juan* 4, p.5.
[172] Fang Yizhi 方以智, *Tongya* 通雅, *SKQS, juan* 31, p.21.
[173] These illustrations can be found in *MTSB*, pp.92, 105 and Yin Yimei 尹一梅 (ed.), *Maoqindian ben Chunhua getie* 淳化閣帖懋勤殿本 (Hong Kong, 2005)
[174] Images of these examples can be found in *MTSB*, p.92, 105.
[175] *CTJY*, pp.67–8.
[176] *ZSBJ, juan* 14, p.67.

As well as giving us an idea of the darkness of a *nongmo* rubbing, this also implies that the rubbings were made of *songyan* ink because the ink was taken off easily. A Ming epigrapher Zhao Jun 趙均 (1591–1640AD) stated in his *Hanshanjinshilin bumu* 寒山金石林部目that *Tingyunguan* was made by:

> "Hammering [the paper over the inscribed stone] several times, then applying ink lightly on it by rubbing in order to stick the paper onto the stone and keep the ink on the paper. Thus, the turning and bending of the brushstrokes would not be ruined by over-inking."
>
> 其拓法必椎之數次，務以輕墨幾番刷之，令紙合于石，墨浮於紙，則字之宛委波折纖微不滲。[177]

This explains why *nongmo ta* was not always as good as *chanyi ta*. Examples of *nongmo ta* include the *Taiqinglou tie* 太清樓帖, the best rare edition of *Getie* from the Shanghai Museum, the *Yingguangtang tie* 英光堂帖 from the Beijing Palace Museum, *Rutie* from the Art Museum of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the *Quyutang tie* 群玉堂帖; these are all Song examples. Besides these, there were also late Ming examples such as *Dongshutang* and the *Kuaixuetang tie* 快雪堂帖.[178]

However, differing levels of ink darkness would affect the visual perception of the calligraphy. For example, Huang Fuweng's 黃涪翁 (Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅, 1045–1105AD) colophon to *Lantingxu* stated that:

> "Whenever ancient people made rubbings of the *Lanting Preface* and *Kongzi miaotang bei*, they would make light inked rubbings and we could see that ancient people used a brush with turns and continuous momentum. If the rubbings were from a heavy inked edition, calligraphy was only in the spirit of the pieces. The people see that most-heavy inked rubbings had blurred edges. Thus, they use old brushes to copy and do not know that their ancestors' calligraphy had sharp edges."
>
> 古人作蘭亭叙、孔子廟堂碑，皆作一淡墨本，葢見古人用筆，迴腕餘勢。若深墨本，但得筆中意耳。今人但見深墨本收盡鋒銳，故以舊筆臨倣，不知前輩書初亦有鋒鍔。[179]

Therefore, a difference in ink darkness could have a huge impact on the visual appearance of rubbings, and change the perception of their styles of calligraphy.

As mentioned earlier, apart from *chanyi ta* and *nongmo ta*, other rubbing methods were also used. For example, Zhou Jiazhou said:

> "The paper of rubbings from stone tablets is made of either cotton or bamboo, and the method used in taking rubbing varies; it could be *wujin*, *chanchi*, or *xuehua*, etc."
>
> 碑帖本身紙，或綿或竹，及拓法，或烏金、蟬翅、雪花等色。[180]

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[177] Quoted by *ZFS*, 2 vols., p.155.
[178] Regarding the three collections from the Beijing Palace Museum, see *MTSB*, pp.4, 21, 41. The Shanghai Museum's best rare edition of the *Getie* can refer to the catalogue of the *Chunhua getie zui shan ben* 淳化閣帖最善本 (Shanghai, 2003). *Rutie* of the Song from the Art Museum Chinese University of Hong Kong has been viewed by the author in 2006.
[179] *SHW,juan* 24 shang, p.40.
[180] *ZHZ*, p.35.

W*ujin* 烏金 (black gold) and *xuehua* 雪花 (snow-flake or *gema* 隔麻)[181] rubbings were used in the Ming. W*ujin ta* was made by *ca ta.* In fact, the tradition of deep dark rubbings made by the action of *ca* (a brush) began in the Ming.[182] Wang Luoyu's *Shanhuwang* explained *wujin* rubbings as follows:

> "[Using] ink made of *youyan,* wax, golden dark ink, paper and water to brush the inscriptions on *bei*, rubbings will be pure black and shiny; these were called *wujin ta.*"
> 墨用油煙，以臘及烏金紙水敲刷碑文，故色純墨而有浮光，謂之烏金搨。[183]

Wujin rubbings are shiny dark rubbings made of *youyan* ink. However, *wujinzhi* differed from normal paper, and it first appeared in the Ming.[184]

In fact, there was no single rule about how to make rubbings, and the techniques used depended upon the craftsmen's preferences. By and large, in the Ming, *chanyi ta* was no longer the most common technique to make rubbings; rather, *nongmo ta* (producing heavy inked rubbings) was used more often.[185] While Zhou Peizhu and another modern scholar, Qin Guan 秦觀, have both argued that rubbings taken by deep dark ink techniques were common in the Ming,[186] other contemporary rubbing experts such as Jiang Wenguang 蔣文光 and Zhang Juying 張菊英 have claimed that rubbings made by the light tapping method were more common in the late Ming.[187] It is difficult to judge who is correct because only a small proportion of Ming rubbing collections have been published so far. Among the published collections, however, there are more *nongmo ta* than *chanyi ta*.[188]

Moreover, rubbings were not only named according to their physical appearances but also according to their techniques. For example, *xiang ta* 響拓 literally means a "loud rubbing", which was made by tracing the outlines of characters against a light source, after which the gaps are filled with ink; *la ta* 蠟拓 was made by applying wax to paper and then painting over it with ink a few times;[189] and *gema ta* 隔麻拓 was light in colour and incorporated the texture of hemp fabric because the *tabao* was made of this type of material. There were other old terms as well, such as red rubbings, *tuoben* 脫

[181] It was made by adding a layer of rough hemp cloth over the stone when tapping and there will be mould marks on the rubbings.
[182] *CTJY*, p.66.
[183] *SHW*, *juan* 23, p.44.
[184] For the meaning and making method of *wujin* paper in the Ming, see Liu Renqing 劉仁慶, *Zhongguo guzhipu* 中國古紙譜 *Catalgue of Ancient Chinese Papers* (Beijing, 2009), pp.145–6. However, there is no extant Ming *wujin* rubbings made of this kind of *wujin* paper.
[185] *CTJY*, p.66.
[186] Qin Guan 秦觀, in *QSBT*,p.114
[187] Jiang Wenguang 蔣文光, Zhang Juying 張菊英 (eds.), *Zhongguo beitie yishu lun* 中國碑帖藝術論 (Beijing, 1995), pp.293–4.
[188] Publications include *MTSB*, *ZFQ* and individual collections such as *Pomozhai fatie* 潑墨齋法帖 (Beijing, 1998), *Yuqingzhai fatie* 餘清齋法帖 (Hefei, 1992) and *Tingyunguan fatie* 停雲館法帖 (Beijing, 1997), etc.
[189] *CTJY*, p.68.

本 and *tuiben* 蛻本. Regarding modern terms, the Dutch scholar Robert Hans van Gulik also distinguished between wet and dry rubbings.[190]

Furthermore, the initial process of converting or transferring calligraphy from paper to stones or woodblocks was critical and determined the quality of a rubbing made from those blocks. The calligraphy was first copied onto stones or woodblocks, a process which was usually done by scribes – in Chinese, *shangshi* people 上石人. They differ from *shudan* people 書丹人, who write calligraphy directly onto stone or woodblocks without the interim step of tracing a hand-written calligraphy. For example, Sun Kuang's *Shuhua baba* said:

> "When one copies calligraphy and cuts it on stone or woodblocks … though double line tracing was separated by a piece of paper, there might still be a loss of originality and faithfulness of the calligraphy. By *shudan*, the calligraphy was cut based on the original hand-written work of the calligrapher. If engravers were outstanding, then the engraved calligraphy will not have a hair's worth of difference from the original."
>
> 凡摹真蹟入木石者…然雙鉤隔紙一層，恐尚有疑似失真處。惟書丹則就筆而刻。果刻手精，真可謂毫髮無疑。[191]

Since the transfer process was more direct, rubbings made by *shudan* retained the originality of the calligraphy more than those made through normal hand-tracing, provided that both were made by good engravers. From the late Yuan and early Ming collectaneum *Shuofu* 說郛:

> "According to tradition, most calligraphic rubbings of the Two Wangs were copies traced with reference to genuine works except *Yue I lun*, which was written directly by the author on stone."
>
> 世傳二王帖皆以真跡摹勒，獨樂毅論就石書丹其石。[192]

Thus, the *Yue I lun* should retain the most of the Two Wangs' style. Nevertheless, both *shangshi* and *shudan* people were usually educated, and some of them were even calligraphers.[193] Besides famous calligraphers, many of the lesser craftsmen had failed in the civil examinations and they made their living from calligraphy. [194]

As well as the scribes, engravers were also important when making a collection. Yang Shen's *Mochi zaolu* stated:

> "The *Shengyuan tie* was superior to the *Chunhua* [*getie*], the ancestor of the rubbing collection, and was inferior to the *Kaihuang tie* of the Sui dynasty. However, they were no longer available to be seen. Rubbing collections of the Song which still exist nowadays are rare. *Daguan* was hand-traced by Cai Jing (1047–1126AD) and I have already seen this. The *Xuexitang* [*tie*] was cut by Wang Tingjun (1156–1202AD). The *Baojinzhai* [*tie*] was cut by Cao Rixin (date unknown). The *Cheng*[*xin*]*tang tie* was copied by He Zhizhang (659–744AD). All of them were excellent. The *Mige xutie* was found in Wang Yixue's

[190] For his classification, see *CPA*, pp.86–91; for other classification, see *CTJY*, pp.67–8.
[191] Description about the *Jiuchenggong liquanming* 九成宮醴泉銘 of 632AD, in *SHBB*, *juan* 2 *xia*, p.4.
[192] *SF*, *juan* 95 *xia*, pp.43–4.
[193] *QSBT*, p.126.
[194] *QSBT*, p.126.

> (date unknown) place. His home has the calligraphy of Liang people which was cut by the Zhongshancao hall, and there has never existed such a rare and powerful [style].”
>
> 昇元帖在淳化[閣帖]祖刻之上，隋開皇帖之下，然今皆不可復見矣。宋世集帖，傳於今者絕少。大觀帖，蔡京所摹，予及見之。雪溪堂[帖]，王庭筠所刻；寶晉齋[帖]，曹日新所刻；澄[心]堂帖，賀知章所臨：皆絕妙。秘閣續帖於王宜學處見之。又聞其家有鐘山草堂刻梁人書，[風格]奇勁未之有也。[195]

Yang emphasised the scribes and engravers rather than merely the names and the compilers of the collections. This reveals that craftsmanship was important in the Ming when talking about a rubbing collection. The quality of collections varied a lot, and some collections were made much more painstakingly than others; for example, *Zhenshangzhai* compiled by Hua Xia 華夏 (date unknown)[196] was a high quality collection. Its inscription by Wen Zhengming in 1522AD stated:

> “His tracing and engraving techniques were wonderful; he made a fine carved rubbing.”
>
> 其摹刻之妙，極其精工。[197]

This collection was cut by the famous engraver Zhang Jianfu 章簡父 (date unknown). His name appeared in a prominent place in the collection in seal script, which was different from the other scripts in the collection. The inscription by Chen Changqi 陳昌齊 (1743–1820AD) praised the skills of Zhang Jianfu as follows:

> “Wen Daishao [Wen Zhengming] and his son brush-traced the calligraphy and Zhang Jianfu carved the works on stone. All of them were among the most famous people in the making of rubbing collections. Hence, this rubbing collection was ranked the best among all collections in Ming China.”
>
> 當時鉤摹者為文待紹[文徵明]父子，勒石者為章簡父，皆一時名手，故為有明刻帖第一。[198]

Also, *Tingyunguan* was regarded highly. In a preface from 1583, Wen Yuanshan 文元善 (1554–89AD)[199] stated that:

> “The *Tingyunguan* [*tie*] of my family was made according to the will of my ancestor *Taishigong*. It was copied by a former *guobo* (an official who teaches in court) and *xuezheng* (a teaching assistant in court) who were my father and uncle [Wen Jia 文嘉 (1500–82AD) and Wen Peng, and hand-traced by the gentlemen Wen Shu (1537–60AD) and Zhang Jianfu 章簡甫 (date unknown). It includes works from the small regular script of the Jin and Tang Dynasties to later periods. More than half of them are works from Tang and Song famous emperors, officials and celebrities. Nothing in the collection is unsatisfactory, and it was just one rank lower than the originals.”
>
> 余家停雲館，蓋出自先祖太史公之所指授，先國博及學正二父之所臨摹，而溫君恕、章君簡甫之所手勒。由晉唐小字而下。太半以唐宋勝國諸君名流遺墨對刻。無纖微不愜，下真跡一等者也。[200]

[195] *MCZL*, *juan* 4, p.5.
[196] A collector and scholar in Wuxi, and was a close friend of Wen Zhengming; *DMB*, p.1473.
[197] *CTM*, v.1, p.219.
[198] *CTM*, v.1, p.219.
[199] The descendant of Wen Zhengming, in *ZMRD*, p.35.
[200] The content and preface to the *Tingyunguan tie*, in *CTM*, v.1, p.249.

Wen Yuanshan was proud of his family's collection due to the outstanding craftsmen as well as the calligraphers; this vividly demonstrates that craftsmanship was an essential element to a good rubbing collection in the Ming.

In addition, Zhao Yiguang also praised *Tingyunguan* highly and appreciated the fact that it was made under the close supervision of Wen Zhengming and his sons, and was carved by the famous engraver Zhang Jianfu. He believed that a rubbing collection would be much better if engravers had knowledge about calligraphy. He said:

> "When a good rubbing meets a mediocre craftsman and an outstanding craftsman meets a counterfeit piece, although these are all bad paths, it is not a worthless pursuit."
>
> 善帖遭庸工，良工逢偽跡，雖皆惡道，然亦不皆空過也。[201]

He thought that having good craftsmen and counterfeit calligraphy were equally important as having good calligraphy and poor craftsmen. He added:

> "Contemporary rubbing editions were fabulous because of outstanding craftsmanship and fine carving techniques. These criteria should not be overlooked. As for *Tingyunguan* of Wen [Zhengming], … he used the surplus of his savings [to make it]. He hand-traced the calligraphy by himself, recruited eminent engravers Zhang Jianfu and Wu Caiding [to be involved in the production] and supervised them. To strive for excellence, all disappointing pieces were removed from the collection. He did not mind re-cutting the calligraphy several times until it was exactly the same as the originals without discrepancies. Then he would put them in his collection, which became the first ranking collection in the Ming. For those [calligraphy] with anonymous authors we could not comment, but its followers also did not see its authors or calligraphers, so how could the collection not be treasured?"
>
> 時帖佳本，妙在名家手裁，鐫功精核。此其所以不可闕耳。若文氏之停雲館，…是出其餘資，手自摹勒，倩章簡甫吳才鼎良工，耳提面命。精一為之，稍不稱意，即從刊削。不惜數四，恰情無忝，然後入卷。居然為明興第一流。前無作者無論矣，後之繼者亦未睹其人也，可不寶諸。[202]

From Wen Zhengming's serious attitude towards rubbing making, we see how important craftsmanship and personal care were in order to make a high quality collection. As a calligrapher, he would rather hand-trace the calligraphy himself than appoint anyone to do the job, in order to ensure satisfactory quality. Even though he employed talented engravers, he also paid enormous attention to their work and supervised them to avoid any disappointments. This demonstrates that a high quality collection relied very much on both the craftsmen and the compiler. Besides *Tingyunguan*, Zhao criticised the craftsmanship of his time as follows:

> "To evaluate the craftsmanship in ancient times, one who was able to keep the body (shape) of a text was an excellent engraver; to evaluate the contemporary craftsmanship, one who can keep the brushstrokes of the original character is a master engraver. People who did not

[201] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.25.
[202] *HSZT*, *shiyi*, p.4.

> know this difference and applied both ancient and contemporary methods to carve calligraphy totally misunderstood [the rule and relationship].”
>
> 評論鐫工，古以不失體為高手，今以不失筆為高手。不知者左今右古，大謬不然也。[203]

Only a few people were knowledgeable or competent enough to know how to choose a good rubbing. Therefore, the reputation of a collection was important. Calligraphy appreciation was not easy, and the reproductions were more difficult to assess than the originals.[204] As the art market flourished and the number of counterfeiters increased from the time of the mid-Ming Dynasty onwards, many Ming texts included the subject of rubbing collections, or they at least made comments on their significance and discussed the quality of various collections. They often appeared in catalogues and manuals for connoisseurs, collectors and merchants. Therefore, it was not surprising to see the emergence of literature on rubbing collections as well as counterfeit books about collecting antiques.

The late Ming scholar official Wang Shizhen attributed the unfaithfulness of engraved calligraphy to poor craftsmanship. He said:

> “Hand-written calligraphy would never have stiff and motionless brushstrokes. The motionless brushstrokes were caused by the poor skills of copiers and engravers. If Han’s edition was made into rubbings and reproduced by outstanding craftsmen, it would surpass the collection made in Guanzhong (Shaanxi).”
>
> 手書狀絶無僵筆，乃知僵者乃摹刻手拙耳。倘得高手取韓本鉤勒入石，應勝關中石。[205]

Obviously, craftsmanship was critical to the success of a rubbing collection from a Ming expert’s point of view. Regarding craftsmanship, Zhao went on to argue that:

> “Craftsmen who carve pictures do not necessarily have the skill to carve text; those who carve text may not necessarily have the skill to carve calligraphy; those who are able to carve calligraphy may not have the skill to carve ancient model calligraphy; those who carve ancient model calligraphy may not necessarily have the skill to carve different editions of a rubbing. If they do so, their deficient skill would be recognised easily.”
>
> 工人能刻繪事，未必能刻文字;能刻文字，未必能刻名家善書;能刻名家善書，未必能刻古人法帖；能刻古人法帖，未必能同本異摹諸拓；刻同本異摹諸拓，工拙必露矣。[206]

From the technical point of view above, to paint, to write, and to carve various kinds of texts involved different techniques. Even though all these tasks were done by engravers, the skills required were different and were particular to specific materials, such as wood and stone. Nevertheless, good

[203] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.2
[204] The art market of calligraphic rubbing collections was originally targeted at the highly cultivated class. With the wealthy economic environment in Jiangnan area in the mid-Ming Dynasty, people collected antiques (e.g. paintings and calligraphy) to show their tastes. Craig Clunas has studied this phenomenon in his book, *ST*.
[205] *SHBB*, *juan* 2 xia, p.4.
[206] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.29.

collections, especially of ancient masterworks, required a high level of carving skills, which differed from the skills required to make collections of contemporary calligraphy.

Moreover, the original calligraphy needed to be transcribed onto thin sheets of paper by calligraphers or professional scribes. To do this, a blank sheet was ruled into columns and spaces with a centre line in each column, known as *huage* 花格 (variegated space), which was used as a guide for writing characters within each space in a balanced arrangement.[207] Zhao also described the supervision of the engraving process and the criteria for making good collections as follows:

> "The two people who were responsible for tracing and carving respectively needed to be instructed for a few days prior to making a start on the rubbing. Furthermore, they needed to bring up all their traced and carved characters so as to examine the success and failure of the engravings by comparing them with the original calligraphy. … The rubbings which were not edited out could be cut according to the compilers' minds. The fifth point was that the inferior brushstrokes could be removed or cut [by engravers] from the original calligraphy [before being transferred to stones or woodblocks]."
>
> 鉤帖鐫刻二人，先與講解數日，然後下手，更殿其所鉤所刻之字對按，指其得失。…或曾經割勒之帖，可以意裁。五指主客失所敗筆，或本帖原作敗筆可以意裁。[208]

Thus, even if the craftsmen had knowledge about calligraphy, to make a good collection, every process was carried out cautiously with careful editing.

In addition, calligraphy of various script-styles, such as running and cursive scripts, required engravers to have considerable calligraphy knowledge rather than merely being able to read it, so as to minimise the errors made during production. In some cases, the text was not transcribed by normal craftsmen but was copied by specially appointed calligraphers, or by someone whose handwriting was considered fine or exceptional.[209] For example, Zhao stated that:

> "For ancient engravings, even if they were not personally designed by famous experts, the craftsmen needed to be instructed clearly and supervised before starting to cut the characters. The most important thing is to remove defective brushstrokes. Current engravings are poor. Regardless of inferior craftsmen, even contemporary calligraphers also make erroneous engravings. I claimed that I would simply capture the idea of the brush movement. I, basically, do not have the real knowledge and practical experience. Thus, if there is any change, it will not improve the condition and become a craftsman's calligraphy which is worthless to view. It will also be the subject of ridicule for people to laugh at."
>
> 古刻即非名家親自斟酌，必其工人實解此道，然後下手，是以去敗筆是貴。今刻無論工人下劣，即當代書家亦謬。自謂但取筆意飛揚而已。自已本無真知實見，是以一經改動，即不益其醜態，便翻作刻工之書，漫然泛觀，兼有浮議，可以一粲。[210]

[207] *SCC5*, p.197
[208] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, pp.10–1.
[209] See calligraphy in *SLZJ*, p.140.
[210] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.29.

Although editing was part of the process of making a rubbing collection, it could ruin a collection if improper editing was done. Zhao was discontented with many so-called "bad" Ming collections, and he attributed the poor quality not only to the inferior craftsmanship but also to contemporary calligraphers with poor [editing] judgement. Despite the fact that Ming collections contained a higher proportion of their dynasty's calligraphy than Song ones, this did not mean that most Ming people appreciated the new collections made in the Ming. This example shows that some of them such as Zhao, who had knowledge of calligraphy, rated old collections higher than the Ming ones. Their admiration for old collections was not merely a pursuit of antiquity for its own sake, but was actually based on the faithfulness and originality of the calligraphy. In fact, there were other views in the Ming as well, and they will be discussed further in the chapter on the social functions of Ming rubbing collections.

Concerning how a text is visualised and comes alive through the alternation of blank spaces and inked spaces, a rubbing is often in negative while the original and hand-written copy is always in positive. For example, most Han Dynasty *bei* are negative engravings, and hardly any *bei* are in positive.[211] There were only a few positive engravings in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–557AD). For example, the *Longmen shike* 龍門石刻, *Bei Wei Biqiuhui chengzaoxiang* 北魏比丘慧成造象 shown in Fig.2.07 was made in the second year of the Taihe period (477–99AD) in Laojundong 老君洞 in Luoyang, Henan.[212] It was even rarer to find *tie* engravings in positive (in Chinese, *yangke* 陽刻). Up to now, no existing *tie* rubbing collection has been found that was made from positive stone engravings.

A rubbing in negative means that its surface is almost covered with ink. In terms of appearance, the original and the reproduction (in rubbing format) of the same piece of calligraphy look very different from each other, because a rubbing is a total inversion of the original piece with brush strokes appearing white in high contrast against a dark background. In this manner, a rubbing can never replace its original because the viewer might have different responses to the same piece of calligraphy. For example, the broken part(s) on stone or woodblocks may seem to be more prominent in rubbings than they appear on the engravings. For example, see the woodblock of *Laiqinguan* showing a huge hole and its rubbing in Fig.2.08. In addition, the brushstrokes of small script

[211] *QSBT*, p.121.
[212] Guan Baiyi 関百益 (ed.), *Longmen shike tulu* 龍門石刻圖錄 (Tokyo, 1978), p.174.

calligraphy might appear weaker or thinner than they actually were because of the diffusion of the ink around the borders of engraved characters. These are the common shortcomings of rubbings.

Another drawback of a rubbing was that it could not reveal the gradual tonal effect of a brush stroke (from wet to dry, or black to white) because the image was in high contrast. The changes of darkness present in brushstrokes would have to be in one's imagination. This results in reducing the aesthetic value and visual experience of the rhythm of calligraphy. Despite the deficiencies in rubbing format, however, making calligraphy into rubbings could immortalise a calligrapher's works, and if copies were made in large quantities and circulated well, they may draw people's attention to them and increase people's familiarity with that calligrapher's work. This had a similar effect to printed publications, which will be evaluated further in a later chapter. When comparing rubbings with free-hand copies, the former is better than the latter because it keeps the quality of reproductions from the same piece of work fairly constant, while manual copies may vary from person to person and even if the copies were done by the same person.

When comparing rubbings to their inscribed stones or woodblocks, Zhao Yiguang argued that rubbings were inferior because:

> "If rubbings were worn, they would be inferior to the inscribed stones. Why? Paper cannot reveal the entire surface of the stone steles or slabs, but the inscribed stones could show their overall appearance. When a remarkable calligrapher finds an ancient engraving (or stele), they occasionally think to sit or lie in front of it and do not stop gazing at it. [To avoid] anything that he might fail to perceive from the engraving, he might stay next to it for three days and nights. I think the stay is very short."
>
> 凡剝蝕碑刻，拓不如石，何也？紙面不全，碑底具在也。是以名家遭逢古碑刻，作稀有想，坐臥其下，目不暫捨。實有不忍捨處，三晝夜留宿碑旁。吾以為尚速。[213]

Even though Zhao first referred to inscribed stones in poor condition, he was actually describing old engravings as well.

In addition, a famous Ming drama theorist and calligrapher He Liangjun 何良俊 (1506–73AD)[214] commented on engraved calligraphy in his *Siyouzhai shulun* 四友齋書論 as follows:

> "Since the Tang Dynasty, no Song people were good at cutting characters on stone. Although there were rubbings of Su [Shi, 1037–1101AD] and Huang [Tingjian], they were not good. Zhao [Jixian (date unknown)] studied the calligraphy of Li Beihai. The calligraphy which had not been cut in stone was all vivid and wonderful. However, those which had already been cut in stone lacked an antique quality, but I am not sure if there is any reason for this."
>
> 自唐以後，宋人無一好石刻。雖蘇黃諸刻，亦不見有佳者。趙集賢學李北海書，未入石者皆咄咄逼真，可謂妙絕，但一入石，便乏古意，此不知何理。[215]

[213] *HSZT, juan xia*, p.30.
[214] He was the master of *Siyouzhai* 四友齋, in *DMB*, p.515.
[215] *SYZSL*, p.867.

He was disappointed by the post-Tang engraved calligraphy, which was not good on the whole. He found that there was a great loss in the spirit of the calligraphy after it had been engraved on stones. He did not blame the engravers directly, but this clearly highlighted the difficulties inherent in the process of transferring calligraphy from paper to stone, which depended critically on the craftsmanship. Engravers were inevitably responsible for any loss in the originality of the calligraphy that was not the problem of the scribes or of the authenticity of the work itself. Some calligraphers only chose the engravers they trusted. For example, He Liangjun stated that:

> "When Zhao Jixian wrote calligraphy for people to make *bei*, he would not do it if the *bei* was not going to be carved by Mao Shaozhi (active 1328AD), because this person knew his calligraphy style quite well."
>
> 趙集賢與人寫碑，若非茅紹之刻則不書。亦以此人稍能知其筆意耳。[216]

Zhou Jiazhou commented similarly on craftsmanship. He said, "if you cannot find a good mounter, it is better to leave a scroll as it is." 不遇良工，寧存故物。[217] Thus, craftsmen were crucial if one wanted to make a good collection. From the above example, we learn that a good engraver not only required sophisticated engraving skills, but also needed to be familiar with the style of calligraphy and its intended conception. Xie Zhaozhe's *Wuzazu* stated that:

> "Each time when a piece of genuine calligraphy was reproduced by *mole* (cutting into printing blocks), it would lose part of its spiritual qualities. When *mofang* (the hand copies of the calligraphy) had been done for a long time, [there was] hardly any original feature left."
>
> 凡真蹟經一番摹勒，便失數分神采。摹倣既久，幾并其面目而失之。[218]

This was true because the longer the engravings lasted, the more degraded they would become. For example, Wang Shizhen's *Shuhua baba* pointed out that:

> "The calligraphy written with slightly light brushstrokes was mostly thin and small without spirit. Thus, calligraphy written with bold brushstrokes was difficult to cut deeply. When the engravings of fine brushstrokes were worn out, they would become shallow. This was called getting thinner. With this I learned from [my brother] Jingmei [Wang Shimao, 1536–88AD], who said, the characters on *bei* would become thin after the *bei* had been used for a long period of time."
>
> 筆稍輕處，多瘦細乏神。蓋畫粗處，刻深不易，磨細則刻淺，故日漸瘦耳。以此知，敬美[王世懋]謂：碑文搨久乃瘦者果也。[219]

He explained that the quality of the rubbings not only depended on craftsmanship but also on the age and condition of the engraved calligraphy. Therefore, Zhao Yiguang said:

> "Although famous calligraphy is easy to collect, famous engraved calligraphy is difficult to obtain. If the calligraphy is not hand-traced by calligraphers, it would not be good. If the

[216] *SYZSL*, p.867.
[217] Original text can be found in *ZHZ*, p.76 and the translation is extracted from *CPA*, p.291.
[218] *WZZT*, pp.88–9, 276.
[219] *SHBB*, *juan* 2 *xia*, p.4.

> calligraphy is not engraved by outstanding engravers, it would not be a fine inscribed stone."
> 然名帖易存，名石難得。非出於書家手勒，非名帖也；非出於精工手刻，非名石也。[220]

This shows how critical the craftsmanship was in order to make a good rubbing collection.

Furthermore, when comparing the content of the Song colophon to the Ming colophon of the *Rutie* of 1109AD, the Song critic Huang Bosi's lengthy comment was mainly about his views on the authenticity of the selected works,[221] while the Ming critic Wang Shizhen discussed the quality of the collection and even paid attention to the grains of the engraved stones and the craftsmanship. For example, Wang criticised *Rutie* as follows:

> "It was made with narrow, rapid and slanting cut lines, the stone grains were rough and the craftsmen were stupid."
> 且自以險急偏傾之勢發之，石理麁而刻工拙。[222]

Wang did not discuss the authenticity of any individual works within *Rutie*, but concentrated instead on its technical aspects. Undoubtedly, the physicality and craftsmanship of the rubbing collections were the main concerns. However, it was difficult to authenticate a work merely through the styles of calligraphy because not many people had the relevant knowledge and could gain access to the genuine ancient calligraphy. However, an inability to appreciate the aesthetics and styles of the calligraphy would not be the main reason for Wang Shizen's omission, because he was a calligrapher and collector himself. It could only be due to the difference between the ways that he and Huang Bosi received rubbing collections.

2.4 Binding and Mounting

Mounting (*zhuanghuang* 裝潢) was an ancient expression which originally referred to providing scrolls with a backing of yellow material; the term first appeared in the Liang dynasty (502–57AD).[223] This process can also be known as adding a pool (*zhuangchi* 裝池). A late Ming and early Qing historian and writer Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611–71AD) said in his compiled dictionary *Tongya* 通雅:

> "The coloured paper (*huang*) is just like a pool (*chi* 池) surrounded with borders. Therefore, the inside is regarded as a pool (*chi*). Once the papers are bound in album format, they are called *huang*, that is backing (*biaobei* 裱背)"

[220] The colophon to *Tingyunguan*, see *CTM*, v.1, p.242.
[221] For the original colophon, see *DGYL*, *shang*, p.42; or *CTM*, v.1, p.117.
[222] The colophon was recorded in *YSSBG*, *juan* 133, p.11; or *CTM*, v.1, p.117.
[223] For the discussion of this term and its origins, see Tai-Shiang Wen, Yen-Kuang Pu and Shih-Jung Yang, 'Study on the meaning of zhuanghuang and the relationship between zhuanghuang and book conservation 釋書籍裝潢與保存關係研究', in *Taiwan tushuguan guanli jikan* 臺灣圖書館管理季刊, 4:3(Jul.1997), pp.95–117. Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀, *Shuofu* 說郛 explained *zhuanghuang* as stained yellow papers which means putting things in order and the method of managing people. 染黃紙修治之名，本齊民要術, in *Shuo fu* 說郛, *juan* 11 *xia*, p.26.

潢，猶池也，外加緣則內為池。裝成卷冊，謂之潢，即裱背也。[224]

Thus, the process of binding and mounting a rubbing collection into an album was called *zhuanghuang* or *zhuangchi* in the Ming.

Further to the meanings of *zhuanghuang*, the modern scholar R. H. van Gulik discussed this term quite thoroughly in his *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur* and used the definition in *Gezhi jingyuan* 格致鏡原, an encyclopaedia of one hundred *juan* written by the Qing scholar Chen Yuanlong 陳元龍 (1652–1736AD), to explain its three different meanings. These were *zhuangding* 裝釘 (book binding), *zhungzhen* 裝幀 (bound pieces inserted with covers) and *biaobei* 裱褙 (provided with a front mounting and a backing) respectively.[225] Despite this term's multiple meanings, however, we can usually find the intended meaning from the context. Gulik also claimed that "rubbings are esteemed as highly as original works of art and the greatest care is bestowed upon their mounting."[226] He found that people in the past paid great attention to the mounting of rubbings.

The Ming painter and scholar Wang Hang 王行 (1331–95AD) said in his colophon to the *Tangshi xianyou zhu tie* 湯氏先友諸帖 (Rubbing collections of the deceased friends of Tang's clan):

> "Followed by Cui Yangong, four out of ten people had exchanged letters with Tang's ancestor(s) and there were more than twenty letters. [I] have mounted and bound them into two *juan* so as to keep them forever."
>
> 茲裒其先友翠巖龔公而下，十有四人，與其祖往復書札，凡二十餘帖。裝潢成兩卷，將以傳於永久。[227]

Therefore, *zhuanghuang* was aimed at keeping multiple correspondences or calligraphy in large quantities together for a long period of time.

In addition, *zhuanghuang* had rules to follow. In the colophon to *Jiangtie* in Yang Shiqi's 楊士奇 (1356–1444AD) *Sequel to the Dongliji* 東里續集, Yang said:

> "This *Jiang tie* consists of five *ben* (books) in total and has been presented by the administration vice commissioner of Shanxi Yang Ding (date unknown). [Yang] Ding has worked in the Hanlin Academy and is renowned for his virtuousness. However, this rubbing collection does not mount and bind properly and is not of the finest quality either."
>
> 此絳帖總五本，山西叅政楊鼎所惠。鼎嘗從事翰林，在山西有賢稱。但此帖裝表者失倫次，非一也。[228]

This shows that mounting and binding were not only essential to a rubbing collection, but were also very important as a kind of identity which should be equivalent to the status and fame of the owner or collector of the collection. This was similar to the calligraphy tradition in that calligraphy was usually

[224] Fang Yizhi 方以智, *Tongya Qiyong* 通雅.器用 (Beijing,1990), *juan* 32, p.385. The translation is from *CPA*, p.70.
[225] *CPA*, p.52.
[226] *CPA*, p.94.
[227] Tangshi xianyou zhutie 湯氏先友諸帖, in Wang Hang 王行, *Ban xuanji* 半軒集, *SKQS*, *juan* 8, pp.6–7.
[228] Sequel to the *Dongliji* 東里集.續集, *SKQS*, *jibu biejilei* 集部 別集類, *juan* 21, p.1.

judged based on the personality and integrity of the calligrapher. In the Ming, this evaluation standard was further elaborated. Not only the quality of the calligraphy was significant, but also its layout and arrangement were important as well.

In addition, *zhuanghuang* of rubbing collections had their period styles. The Ming calligrapher, epigrapher and collector Dou Mu 都穆 (1458–1525AD) said in his *Tiewang shanhu* 鐵網珊瑚：

> "[This] *Chunhua ge tie* was the old edition from Quanzhou. I asked a family member to find craftsmen to remount the collection. They removed the paper at the back of the rubbings and discovered that the previous mounting was removed by Song people. Its structure and layout were very different from the present style."
> [此]淳化閣帖是泉州舊帖，家君命工重背，拆下背紙，乃是宋初人公移，體式與今絕異。[229]

This clearly shows that there had been a practice of mounting rubbings since the Song, but there was a huge distinction between the mountings of Song and Ming collections.[230]

An eminent Ming writer Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578–1642AD)[231] described a Song counterfeit collection in his *Wanli Yehuobian* 萬曆野穫編 as follows:

> "There was a man from Wu province whose surname was Lu. He re-cut the best edition of the rubbing collection from Quanzhou. He changed the movement of some brushstrokes slightly and made rubbings of it using ultra-thin papers and the cicada wing technique. Then, he bound the rubbings and mounted them with a type of brocade (*jin* 錦) cover, and added a counterfeit seal impression of the collecting stamp from Zhu Zongxi [Zhu Xixiao, 1518–74AD], … [Dan] Cigong [date unknown] bought it for three hundred *tael* (ounces) of gold."
> 有吳人盧姓者，取泉州之最佳本重刻之。而稍更其波畫，用極薄紙蟬翼搨之，裝以法錦，偽印朱忠僖[朱希孝，1518–74]家收藏印，…[啖]次公以三百金得之。[232]

Apart from showing the high price of a mounted collection and the counterfeit techniques used by Lu, this extract reveals the luxury style of an important Song collection, which was mounted with a *jin* 錦 (decorated silk brocade fabric) cover on top (see *Daguan* in Fig.2.09). In fact this highly decorative style was quite common in the Song, but this was not the case in the Ming. Although many Ming people especially those who were less knowledgable about calligraphy including rich merchants valued the binding and mounting of rubbing collections as demonstrated in Ming literature, among the existing Ming collections, many of them merely had plain wooden covers. For example, one may point to the wooden covers of the *Yugangzhai momiao* 鬱岡齋墨妙 (*Yugangzhai*) of 1611AD, the *Yuyantang fashu* 玉煙堂法書 (*Yuyantang*) of 1612AD as shown in Fig.2.10, the *Chonglanguan tie* 崇

[229] Dou Mu 都穆, *Tiewang shanhu* 鐵網珊瑚 (Beijing, 1723), *juan* 6, p.6.
[230] For the detailed discussion about the period convention of mounting and binding rubbing collections of different dynasties, see Kang Jianguo 康建國, *Zhongguo shuhua zhuangbiao jifa* 中國書畫裝裱技法 (Chengdu, 2005), pp.8–42.
[231] His family had been established for several generations. He is now best known as the author of the *Wanli yehoubian*, with the earliest preface written in 1606AD, in *DMB*, pp.1190–1.
[232] *WYHB*, *juan* 25, p.656.

蘭館帖 of 1620AD and the *Song sijia tie* 宋四家帖. Instead of brocade covers, plain wooden covers were quite common. This may be due to the tastes of Ming elites and calligraphers who preferred simple mountings. This pursuit of simplicity appeared particularly among the elite because the publishers of these wooden-covered collections were all calligraphers or eminent collectors, such as Wang Kentang and Dong Qichang. Undoubtedly, there were Ming collections with brocade covers, such as Jiang clan's 姜氏 *Yulantang tie* and Wang Bingchun's 王秉錞 (date unknown) *Pomozhai fashu* 潑墨齋法書 of the late Ming (1624AD).[233] The publishers of these two collections were less famous, with no or little information available about them.

However, mounted collections had a higher chance of suffering from insect or parasite damage. A famous Ming book collector and writer Xu Ao 徐坳 (date unknown) shared his book and rubbing collecting experiences.

> "[I] have said to others: If books were not bound, they would not be eaten by moths; if rubbings were not mounted, they would not be eaten by insects."
> 嘗語人云：書不裝不蛀，帖不裱不蟲。[234]

Xu understood the risks of mounting a rubbing and thereby making it vulnerable to insect damage. Not many Ming people kept their rubbings in their original format for the sake of conservation or preservation purposes. On the contrary, most Ming rubbing collections were mounted and bound because *zhuanghuang* would add value to the collections. It was mentioned in a previous chapter that rubbing collections became more accessible in the Ming than they had ever been before. They were purchasable as long as one could afford them. Since rubbing collections had monetary value and could be obtained through trading, they became priced commodities. Their prices depended very much on their mountings, which might be due to the fact that many Ming people especially non-calligraphers and those who had less knowledge about calligraphy placed great emphasis on their packages, sometimes even more than the contents. We can gain an insight into this phenomenon from the price difference between mounted rubbing collections and unmounted ones. For example, Zhao Yiguang listed the prices of ten various types of collections in the colophon of *Tingyunguan*. He said:

> "the rubbing collections are made of *Longmen* paper and are tapped with a heavy ink technique, and have used ink with egg white added, which then becomes as dark as fine lacquers and as shiny as a mirror. With the same mounting as the previous type [i.e. mounted with brocade fabric tied with a slip of jade connected with a flowing water floral strip], it belongs to the fourth category. Its listed price is two *liang* (tael) of gold. The pre-mounted price is five *qian* (coins)."
>
> 法用龍門紙重墨搨，更加雞子純白令黑如黝漆，其光可鑑，裝法如前，為第四種。定價二兩。未裱者五錢。[235]

[233] Record from the Beijing Palace Museum or it can be found in *MTSB*, pp.105, 124.
[234] Xu Weiqi 徐維起 (Xu Bo 徐 [火勃]), 'Gushugutie 古書古帖' in *Xushi bijing* 徐氏筆精, *SKQS*, *juan* 6, pp.28–9.

Zhao listed many similar examples in his colophon. The great price difference between the mounted and pre-mounted editions reveals that most Ming people valued the mountings more than the calligraphy. Rubbing collections became commodities and were sought after according to their monetary value in the Ming. *Zhuanghuangzhi* said:

> "Since the fate of famous scrolls depends entirely upon the quality of their mountings, I venture to say that the mounter is the arbiter of the destiny of scrolls."
>
> 故裝潢優劣，實名跡存亡係焉。[236]
>
> "If the precious scrolls in their collections are remounted, well, their value becomes doubled, but if the mounting is clumsily done, they become nothing but rubbish."
>
> 其書畫高值者，裝善，則可倍值；裝不善，則為弃物。[237]
>
> "Wang Yanzhou (Shizhen) came from a family whose members were famous for their discerning knowledge of antiquities. His house had many rare treasures and he was knowledgeable about binding and mounting. When he invited the mounter Qiang to his house, he gave him the place of honour, and rewarded him with great munificence. All lovers of art of his time, without exception, followed Wang Shih-chên's (Wang Shizhen's) example and acknowledged the importance of binding and mounting."
>
> 王弇州公，世具法眼，家多珍秘，深究裝潢。延強氏為座上賓，贈貽甚厚。一時好事，靡然向風，知裝潢之道足重矣。[238]

Thus, *zhuanghuang* not only adds value to the piece, but also determines the life and death of a work. Knowing the importance of mounting and binding were necessary in the Ming.

In fact, rubbing collections were purchasable in the Song as well, but there is more textual evidence about their monetary value and transaction records for rubbings in the Ming than in any previous dynasties. This was not simply a consequence of the available evidence, but was due to a change in people's attitudes towards rubbing collections. Craig Clunas made a thorough study of the monetary values of a number of luxury items including calligraphy and rubbings, and listed their prices during the Ming Dynasty in his book *Superfluous Things*: *Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*.[239]

Furthermore, *zhuanghuang* in the Ming was analagous to the clothing of a rubbing, representing its status and identity. For example, Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558–1639AD) said in his *Yanqi youshi* 岩棲幽事:

> "To bind and mount ancient rubbings of *bei* (stone steles) and *tie* (calligraphy on papers/silks), the seal script heading must not be removed. Otherwise, it would be similar to a sage not wearing a hat."
>
> 裝潢舊碑石刻法帖，篆額斷不可去，不然却似賢人不著冠耳。[240]

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[235] *CTM*, pp.243.
[236] *ZHZ*, p.1; The English translation in *CPA*, p.291.
[237] *ZHZ*, p.5; and the English translation in *CPA*, p.292.
[238] *ZHZ*, p 46; and the English translation in *CPA*, p.311. "Wang Shih-chên" is equivalent to Wang Shizhen in *pinyin*.
[239] *ST*, Appendix II, pp.177–81.
[240] See Chen Jiru, *Yanqi youshi* 岩棲幽事, in *SKCM*, v.39, pp.118–700.

The comparison with a sage and his hat highlights the importance of suitable mountings, and suggests that inappropriate mountings might even cause identification problems. The mountings of rubbings were the same as men's clothing, which had proper rules to follow, that should not be overlooked. As with other traditions, this was part of most Ming people's core values which were deeply rooted in their minds and were inseparable from their daily life.

Apart from their symbolic meanings, bindings and mountings were also functional. Zhou Jiazhou *Zhuanghuang zhi* said:

> "It is the cardboard cover that lends rubbings mounted in album form, and albums in general, a splendid look, and ensures their preservation without damage for a long time to come. … I myself have mounted more than a hundred rubbings and some score of albums, making the cardboard covers always with my own hands. … If the outside of your album is protected by covers made from this cardboard, its inside will be safe—a conspicuous achievement indeed!"
>
> 碑帖冊頁之偉觀而能歷久無患者，功系硬殼，…余裝有碑帖百餘種，冊葉十數部，皆手制硬殼。…帖冊賴此外護，內獲無咎，功莫大焉。[241]

Zhuanghuang protected the rubbings from external attack to a certain extent. Some of the covers were made of special wood to deter insects, such as fragrant *nanmu* wood 楠木,[242] and the collections were stored in pear wood cabinets.[243] Everything about the packaging of collections was carefully selected to show and match the value of the collections.

There were cut and uncut mountings in the Ming. An uncut rubbing was called *quan ta* 全拓 (full rubbing).[244] For example, see the rubbing of the *Zhongxiu Kongmiao shijing ji* 重修孔廟石經記 by Wang He 王鶴 of 1589AD, which is the same size as the original stele as shown in Fig.2.11.[245] This kind of rubbings aim at retaining all the features of a rubbing stone as well as the structure of the original calligraphic configuration. For example, a late Qing archaeologist and book collector Ye Changchi 葉昌熾 (1849–1917AD) mentioned that:

> "Ancient people, once they had found a good *bei* (inscribed stone) would make a *zhengzhuang* (entire) rubbing. This would prevent the collage or fragments of rubbings from falling off, and kept the rubbing the same size as the original, which was the best way to make rubbings."
>
> 古人得佳碑喜整裝，既免脫落，且不失原碑尺寸，誠為善法。[246]

[241] *ZHZ*, p. 36. Translation in *CPA*, p.306.
[242] R.H. van Gulik, translated the *Zhuanghuangzhi* about *nanmu* that it was a kind of cedar wood from Jiangsi province, much used by cabinet makers, quoted in *CPA*, p.98.
[243] *WZZ*, p.208.
[244] *QSBT*, p.127
[245] For the original illustration, see the illustration in Li Chengzheng 李城錚, Zhao Minsheng 趙敏生 and Lei Bingxi 雷冰 (eds.), *Xian beilin shufa yishu* 西安碑林書法藝術 (Xian, 1997), p.436.
[246] Ye Changchi 葉昌熾, *Yushi* 語石 (Shenyang, 1998), p.266.

Thus, *quanta* were not only good at giving an overview and a sense of the size of the original work as an intact piece, but also kept the original structure and layout of the calligraphy. This type of rubbing was especially common for rubbings of monument stone steles, because this method could display their decorated borders even if the *bei* was huge and larger than the size of a normal album.

As for rubbing collections in album formats, they were either in *hudie* bindings 蝴蝶裝 (butterfly or *die* bindings 蝶裝, Fig.2.12) or *jingzhe* bindings 經摺裝 (sutra-fold mounting/binding). *Hudie* (butterfly) binding, which began in the ninth and tenth centuries, was a kind of binding with leaves folded down the centre.[247] The page was flipped from left to right, and two pages could be viewed at a time. It was the most common fine binding method in both the Song and the Ming, and it consisted of four borders around the core rubbing to protect it from insect damage. For example, a Ming scholar Zhang Xuan 張萱 (*juren* 1582AD) stated in his popular book *Yiyao* 疑耀that butterfly binding was used in Ming civil examination records. He said:

> "The Song books which are currently housed in the imperial archive are the same as the recent records of triennial provincial examinations, of which their bindings are called butterfly binding. The glue for the binding could last for a few hundred years and would not fall off."
> 今秘閣中所藏宋板諸書，皆如今制鄉會進呈試錄，謂之蝴蝶裝，其糊經數百年不脫落。[248]

Although this is an example of butterfly binding for printed books, this binding was also used for rubbing collections. For example, the *Baoxiantang jigu fatie* 寶賢堂集古法帖 (*Baoxiantang*) of 1489AD by the Jing King of Jin 晉靖王 Zhu Qiyuan 朱奇源 (1450-1501AD) of 1489AD, which is currently housed in the National Palace Museum in Taibei, is in butterfly binding.

However, *jingzhe* or sutra-fold binding 經摺裝 was the most common method for rubbing collections in the Ming. For example, *Tingyunguan* of the Ming was finished with a sutra-fold mounting.[249] One of the advantages of *jingzhe* binding was that the whole collection could be opened at once when it was fully extended. For example, Fig.2.13 illustrates how a long piece of calligraphy can be displayed without interruption. Other traditional binding and mounting methods can be found in *Beitie jianding qianshuo* 碑帖鑑定淺說 (Beijing, 1986), written by the modern rubbing expert Ma Ziyun 馬子雲 (1903–86AD). Ma summarised the sizes and techniques of *tie* rubbings and classified them into various types: *tuo biao* 托裱, *xiangbian wuban jingzhe biao* 鑲邊五板經折裱 (see

[247] For detail explanations of butterfly binding and their binding methods, see *SCC5*, p.231.
[248] Zhang Xuan 張萱 (*juren* 1582), *Yiyao* 疑耀, *SKQS, juan 5*, p.27.
[249] *ZFQ*, v.13.

Fig.2.14), *dabiao* 大裱, *qianzhan ben* 乾粘本, *xianding ben* 線釘本, *zhiwaxiang* 紙挖鑲 and *lingwaxiang* 綾挖鑲, and so on.[250]

2.5 Layout and Arrangement

The layout of calligraphy is always one of the most important aspects in calligraphy or *tie*, making a difference between rubbings of *bei* and *tie*. Once a rubbing of *bei* was made, if it was bound into an album format, it was usually cut and reorganised to fit the size of the album. Clearly, the size of a *bei* or stele is always much larger than the size of a book. This issue will be discussed further in this section, but the crucial point to note is that a good *tie* always keeps its original composition. In this regard, a famous Ming calligrapher Dong Qichang said:

> "Ancient people discussed calligraphy by studying its structure, which was perceived as the most important thing. Therefore, this meant layouts and column spacing."
> 古人論書以章法為一大事，蓋所謂行間茂密是也。[251]

The composition and layout could determine whether a piece of calligraphy was successful. This applied to the reproduction of calligraphy as well. In fact, composition and layout were more influential and critical to the success of rubbing collections than they were for model calligraphy.

Regarding rubbing collections, *Zhuanghuangzhi* 裝潢志 claimed that "the quality of a mounting depends on its cutting" 裝者之能，惟在裁折.[252] This meant that *zhuanghuang* was significant to the quality of a rubbing collection in the Ming. A Qing book collector Ye Changchi 葉昌熾 said, "most calligraphic rubbings collected by contemporaries have all been cut and mounted." 今人藏帖，皆用剪裱。[253] Although Ye was talking about collecting rubbings in the Qing, the situation was the same in the Ming. This was because rubbing collections were usually made of many different sizes of *tie* which had to be standardised and edited into a uniform book format. To make this happen, Ye Changchi described this process as follows:

> "As for large inscribed upright steles, their rubbings are cut into separate strips and then stuck together again [according to the new layout] without traces. This process is called *suoyibiao* (hygrophila mounting)."
> 丰碑直行，分條合縫，聯綴無痕，世謂蓑衣裱。[254]

This technique of cutting the rubbings into strips and combining them back together in an album format was called *suoyibiao* 蓑衣裱 (rain-coat mounting).[255] For example, Fig.2.15 shows the

[250] For detail explanations of each type of cut mounting of *tie*, see Ma Ziyun 馬子雲, *Beitie jianding qianshuo* 碑帖鑑定淺說 (Beijing, 1986), pp.60–1.
[251] HCSSB, *juan* 1, p.6.
[252] *ZHZ*, p.46.
[253] Ye Changchi, *Yushi* 語石, Qing Xuantong yuannian keben 清宣統元年刻本, *juan* 10, p.220. Hereafter, *Yushi*.
[254] *Yushi*, *juan* 10, p.220.

Zhengzuowei tie 爭座位帖 of the Song, which has a rain-coat mounting.[256] The figure clearly illustrates how the strips were pasted side by side. Zhou Jiazhou explained this process in detail and R.H. van Gulik translated the description in *Chinese Pictorial Art as viewed by the Connoisseur* (New York, 1981 [1958]) as follows:[257]

> "I spend great care on inscriptions on bronze and stone. Every time I have rubbings from such inscriptions mounted, I spare no effort to obtain good results. First I copy out the text, counting how many characters each column contains, and into how many columns the text should be divided. And having noted the "elevated characters", the date, the superscriptions and colophons and extra sheets at beginning and end, choosing a sheet of beautiful paper I draw a detailed sketch showing how all these parts of the rubbing should be mounted together. Then with respectful mien and winning words I hand the rubbing to the mounter."
>
> 余于金石遺文，尤更苦心。每拈一碑授裝，心力為竭。先錄其文，籌定每行若干字，每字若干行，及抬頭、年月、首尾附題小跋、前後副頁、皆擇名籤，一一畫定程式，然後恭貌婉言致之。[258]

From this description, we can see that as well as the main body of the calligraphy, mounted rubbing collections usually had titles, dates, subtitles and colophons as well as supplementary blank pages at the front and back of the collection. Some collections even page numbers (appearing in the lower right-hand corner of a page) as shown in Fig.2.16. For example, Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329–1410AD)[259] *Nancun chuogenglu* describes *Getie* as follows:

> "Wang Kui, *zi* Jilu, was a native of Quzhou. He attained his highest title as Duanming palace scholar. He built Jigutang to house special books, secret collectables, epigraphs and remaining articles comprising two thousands scrolls. He wrote *Chunhua getie bianji* "Record of Evaluating the *Chunhua Getie*" of ten *juan* which were very detailed. In the end, he said, that edition was made of woodblocks and had 184 pages in total, 2287 columns. Each paragraph was marked with one, two, three, four on its sides, or with the engravers' names … other editions [of the *Getie*] had their *juan* number on the upper part and the page number on the lower part [of a page]."
>
> 汪逵字季路，衢州人。官至端明殿學士。建集古堂，藏奇書秘蹟，金石遺文二千卷。著淳化閣帖辨記，共十卷，極為詳備。末云：其本乃木刻，計一百八十四版，二千二百八十七行，其逐段以一二三四刻於旁，或刻人名…他本刊卷數在上，版數在下。[260]

This shows how extravagant it was to make a mounted collection using lots of extra papers, as well as the importance of colophons. In addition, the collections were bound like a book with many pages containing clear signs and titles. This practice was not common in the Northern Song, but it was not a Ming invention. For example, the *Laiqinguan tie* was marked with engraver's name (see Fig.2.17).

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[255] R.H. van Gulik explained that it was named as rain coat mounting because the various strips of text pasted side by side which looked like the straw strips of the rain coat of a Chinese peasant. See *CPA*, p.97; or for the detailed discussion of *suoyibiao*, see Xu Zhaohong 許兆宏, '*Suoyi taben* de zhuangbiao tantao' 蓑衣拓本的裝裱探討, in *Shuhuayishu xuekan* 書畫藝術學刊, 2009:6, pp.315–32.

[256] The illustration of this rubbing was originated from *MTSB*, p.80.

[257] *CPA*, p.305.

[258] *ZHZ*, p.46; or the English translation is in *CPA*, p.305.

[259] *ZLRD*, p.2055.

[260] *CGL*, *juan* 15, p.4.

However, the practice was very rare in the Song and more common in the Ming. Without doubt, it was easier to open and read bound rubbings in albums than it was to read loose-leaf rubbings. It also enabled readers to read collections page by page, and also allowed them to read any page immediately without the need to turn through the album page by page.

S*uoyibiao* appeared both in *bei* and *tie* rubbings, although it was more common in *bei* rubbings. The most important thing to note in the above example is the editing and rearrangement of the layouts, which had to be carefully thought through before mounting. *Bei* rubbings differed from *tie* rubbings because the reconstruction of the calligraphy was often done after the rubbings were made and the reconstruction of *tie*, if any, was usually made before the calligraphy was cut into the stones or woodblocks.

As for *bei* rubbings in album format, they were often cut into characters and rearranged according to the number of words in each column. Then they were assembled and listed, character by character and column by column according to their original order; for example, see the cut mount rubbing of the *Huashan bei* 華山碑 (or the *Xiyue Huashanmiao bei* 西嶽華山廟碑) of 161AD in Fig.2.18.[261] This rubbing was first cut into individual characters. Then, the characters were assembled based on the new layout and album size, and were finally mounted onto hard sheets to form an album.

Regarding *tie* rubbings, in most circumstances most of them attempted to keep the original layouts of the calligraphy during both the Song and the Ming. Tao Zongyi's *Nancun chuogenglu* said:

> "The Jiangzuo edition [of the *Chunhua getie*] which I have, every page of it is intact and with no joining area. It is a set of ten *juan*. Every page matches with the records written by the Academician at the Duanming Palace [Wang Lu of the Song]. Whenever people in the past did the mounting, they would rather increase or decrease the number of columns than cut the calligraphy into pieces to fit the layout, so as to keep the original appearance of the old calligraphy."
>
> 余所得[閣帖]江左本，每版皆全紙，無接粘處。一部十卷，無一版不與端明[殿學士汪逵]所記合。乃知昔人裝褙之際，寧使每版行數或多或寡，而不肯剪裁湊合者，欲存舊帖之真面目。[262]

Thus, if there was any reconstruction, it was usually kept to a minimum. Each leaf was folded double at the centre of the sheet, and the album was usually about the actual size of the block or slab. If the calligraphy was long, it would be divided into different pages according to the width of the album. People only needed to calculate the expected size of an album, and then to cut and mount the calligraphy accordingly. This usually did not require cutting the calligraphy into individual characters;

[261] Lam, Peter Y. K. used the rubbings of the Stele of Temple Huashan to illustrate various edition of the rubbing. He reconstructed the individual characters mounted in album and back to their original state to become an entire piece of rubbing. For the details, see his article in the *Han yanxi xiyue huashan miaobei: Shende ben* 漢延熹西嶽華山廟碑: 順德本 (Hong Kong, 1999).

[262] *CGL*, *juan* 15, p.5

at most they may have been cut into strips so as to rearrange the number of columns to fit the page and keep the same number of characters in each column.

Generally, once calligraphy was made into rubbing collections, re-cuts would follow the same layout without many alterations. For example, various layouts or text arrangements of Wang Xizhi's *Yue Yi lun* 樂毅論 and the *Huangting Classic* 黃庭經 have been found in different rubbing collections since the Song. Huang Bosi's *Dongguan yulun* 東觀餘論 commented on the colophon to the *Huangting Classic* as follows:

> "There were several editions of the *Huangting Classic*, either *xiangta* or *kanke* (engraved publication). They were all written in regular script. People of the Six Dynasties and the Tang Dynasty copied from each other's, and thus they differed from this *juan*. "
> 黃庭世有數本，或響搨或刊刻，皆正書。蓋六朝及唐人轉相摹放[倣]，所以不同此弓。[263]

This explains why there were various editions of the *Huangting Jing*. In fact, most existing editions nowadays are similar in terms of the number of characters in each column except for *Baojinzhai*, which was different from most other Ming and Qing editions as shown in Fig.2.19. This could be explained by Dong Qichang's comments on another famous canonical calligraphy *Lantingxu*, as follows:

> "The composition of the *Langting xu* by Youjun was the best in both ancient and modern times. The characters of this calligraphy were all connected and interrelated, small or large, made conveniently as such. All these had their own rules, and so it was regarded as a superb calligraphy."
> 右軍蘭亭叙章法為古今第一。其字皆映帶而生，或小或大，隨手所如，皆入法則，所以為神品也。[264]

This illustrates the importance of the composition of a *tie* (calligraphy) because without exception people evaluated a piece of calligraphy through its structure and layout. As a result, an intact piece of calligraphy or a calligraphic rubbing without reconstruction was usually preferred because it would minimize the impact on the spirit and style of the calligraphy. In addition, the standardisation of the layout of rubbing collections was limited to spacing between columns instead of spacing between characters. This was much better for calligraphy learning and appreciation because its momentum, spacing and structure could be retained. In this regard, Zhao Yiguang said:

> "Collecting ancient calligraphy did not aim to edit the calligraphy to mislead people. However, it was quite difficult to express the lifting and lowering of the brush. If the inscription of the upper and lower position of the texts by famous calligraphers should not be changed and removed, then the collected calligraphy (*jitie*) should not be joined together without reason. In the past, I have seen some lines of the calligraphy that have been misplaced. The beginning of the line started and ended without reason or abruptly. Some of

[263] *DGYL, juan xia*, p.32.
[264] *HSCSB, juan* 1, p.6.

> the connecting lines between characters were cut and these meanings were also lost. People who did not know that these faults were made during the production process would learn from them and make mistakes which were undesirable. The distinction between *jitie* (gathered ancient works) and calligraphy with misarranged lines was like the sky and the earth. … For those collections of calligraphy which selected full texts or intact pieces but were still not good, this was due to the loss of their momentum. When viewing reconstructed calligraphy, one needs to understand the limitations and the reasons for such problems. If one wants to find the cause, it was because of the wrong order of arrangement and not because of including the entire piece of calligraphy."
>
> 集古諸帖豈惟修改誤人。即其顧盼起伏，略不可得矣。名家作書行款上下尚不可移易，況集取强合乎。往往見移行諸帖，行首無故而來，行末無故而往。甚至强割聯絲，意義失所。不知者效顰從事已。自可憎。集古比之移行又天淵矣。…集帖之取圓整有不得不然者，失勢故也。凡觀集帖，又須緣情欲定其罪，罪在亂次，不在取圓。[265]

Zhao continued:

> "There were people who gathered calligraphy and included characters which were mostly round and intact, and arranged the characters according to their will. The work made from this method was not ugly, but it was greatly different from the originals and lost the Jin Dynasty styles. As for the structure of running and cursive scripts, their ways of writing were usually formed with the help of momentum (*shi*)."
>
> 彼集帖人收拾多字擇圓整，如其意者填入，非不美，至殊失晉人風度矣。凡行草章法，筆法大半借勢成形。[266]

Hence, the momentum of the calligraphy was very important, especially for cursive script. As a result, the layout was equally important because it determined how people read rubbing collections. In particular, the layout, rhythm and momentum of a piece of calligraphy was critical because good rubbing collections could enhance the power and authority of the original calligraphy. Thus, it was not surprising that Zhao criticised contemporary calligraphy as follows:

> "While ancient people did not worry about structure, present people are only concerned with the momentum of the brush and do not know what structure means."
>
> 古人不畏無結構，今人惟筆勢自務，而不知結構為何物。[267]

He complained about the lack of structure in contemporary calligraphy. However, this happened because many original works were lost and most rubbings of model calligraphy were made into bound albums in which the structure of the original might have been distorted. The calligraphy would inevitably lose its integrity and original structure after mounting. If rubbing collections were the main source of model calligraphy in the Ming, the structure of the models would not be good for people to learn from. How was it possible for people to write calligraphy with a good structure when they did not even know the structure of the calligraphy they were learning from? Whatever the state of the Ming calligraphy world, one should not ignore the impact of the mounting and reconstruction of the

[265] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.14.
[266] *HSZT*, *juan shang*, p.58.
[267] *HSZT*, *shiyi*, p.2.

calligraphy into rubbing collections, which might affect the transmission of the classical tradition as well as the calligraphy canon.

Further to the layout of collections, the strips of text from an intact rubbing would be assembled and rearranged following the original order. There were usually two methods of assembling: close tie and loose tie. The close tie method meant that there would be no gap between the cut strips. The loose tie method meant that there would be gaps between them. Additional papers of a similar colour to the rubbings were usually added to fill the gaps.[268]

Besides line spacing, the spacing between characters was another concern about the layout of a rubbing collection. Usually the character spacing was the same as in the original calligraphy. However, in some circumstances, especially for calligraphy from steles written in large script, the album was often much smaller than the size of the original stele. This would necessitate a reorganisation of the characters in order to fit the new layout of the collection. Therefore, calligraphy displayed in an album format might lose its original form in terms of line spacing and character spacing. The assumption was that rubbings of *tie* would usually keep their original structures because their original size was about the same as an album format. For example, the most influential calligraphy in history is the *Lanting xu* of the Six Dynasties.[269] There were somewhere around a hundred editions of its copies in the Song,[270] but all of them had the same layout and did not change the total number of lines and characters. The importance of the work lies very much in the overall structure of the piece and the momentum of the characters. If the characters were rearranged, the calligraphy would lose its original spirit. In addition, the tight connection between characters and the rhythm of the characters would be lost. This might be the reason why the *Lantingxu* has kept its original layout throughout its long history and after remounting many times. Since there is no original existing nowadays, we do not know whether the present layout is the same as the original one.

2.6 Display Methods

Apart from learning and collecting, rubbings were also used for memorial, conservation and even advertising purposes. These were in accordance with their display methods as well as their content. For example, *muzhiming* 墓誌銘 (inscriptions on tomb tablets) were written in memory of the deceased so the tablets were often displayed in public instead of displaying their rubbings in album

[268] For the detail discussion on Ming mountings, see *ZHZ*, p.11.
[269] One of the most important publications regarding *Lantingxu* was the Hua Rende (ed.), *Lanting lunxu* 蘭亭論集 (Suzhou, 2000).
[270] *SHW, juan* 19, p.16.

formats for collecting. If a rubbing of *muzhiming* was made, it was usually made for the sake of keeping records of their content (short biographies of the deceased). However, if the tablet was written by a famous calligrapher, its rubbing would undoubtedly be for the purpose of keeping copies of the calligraphy for appreciation or collecting. In fact, rubbings of tomb inscriptions were seldom included in rubbing collections. Only those written by very famous calligraphers in the past, and which were considered to be masterpieces, would be selected for inclusion in rubbing collections. For example, one of the earliest *muzhiming* examples was the *Runan gongzhu muzhiming* 汝南公主墓志銘 of 636AD, written by the famous Tang poet and calligrapher Yu Shinan in *Xihongtang*.[271] It has appeared in many other later collections such as *Yugangzhai* and the *Xiucanxuan tie* 秀餐軒帖 of 1619AD. Despite these examples, *bei* rubbings made into *tie* collections were not common either in the Song or the Ming Dynasties because *bei* were made originally for memorial purposes and not for calligraphy appreciation.

The inscription of Confucian Classics on *bei* began in the Eastern Han (25–220AD).[272] For example:

> "[Cai] Yong (133–92AD) copied the texts on *bei* (stones) by himself and asked craftsmen to cut them on stones which were erected in front of the door of *taixue*. Henceforth, later students and Confucian scholars used them as *zheng* (standard) texts. Once the *bei* stand, viewers and scribes travelled in chariots to come and see. There were more than a thousand chariots every day, which filled the streets."
> [蔡]邕乃自書冊於碑，使工鐫刻，立於太學門外。於是後學晚儒，咸取正焉。及碑始立，其觀視及摹寫者，車乘日千餘兩，填塞街陌。

The purpose of setting up the inscribed stones was to allow more members of the public to read model texts of Confucian Classics. For example, *Xiping shijing* 熹平石經 was first made in the fourth year of the Xiping period (175AD) under a court command.[273] It was displayed outside the entrance of *taixue* 太學 (similar to the present day national university)[274] so as to provide standard texts for civil examination candidates to study. However, there is no existing evidence to show that *tie* or letters were carved on stone for the same purpose as *bei* before the Ming. Although there were inscribed letters on stone steles being appreciated and studied prior to the Ming period, they were not originally made for this purpose. Since the Tang, model calligraphy such as the *Wenquanming* was cut on stone

[271] The earliest example of tomb inscriptions in rubbing collections was *Kong Qiu Yanling jizi muzi* 孔丘延陵季子墓字 in *juan* five of the *Getie* collection of 992AD. However, the authenticity of this piece was in doubt and it was made from the selected characters of the original tomb inscriptions and not its entire content. It was difficult to know whether it was selected because of the fame of Kongqiu or the calligraphy of the piece itself. Besides, there was no dating of the original stone tablet as it was lost but its re-cut was made in 1511AD in Jiangsu.
[272] Pan Jixing 潘吉星, *Zhongguo kexue jishushi: zaozhi yu yinshua juan* 中國科學技術史: 造紙與印刷卷 (Beijing, 1998), p.288. Hereafter, Pan Jixing(1998).
[273] Mao Qiling 毛奇齡, *Daxue zhengwen* 大學證文, *SKQS*, *juan*2, pp.1–2.
[274] The Biography of Cai Yong 蔡邕傳, Hou Han shu 後漢書, *juan* 90.

to reproduce multiple copies as rubbings instead of displaying the calligraphy as engravings. Unquestionably, rubbings of calligraphy on *bei* were made by people for learning and appreciation, but this was not the reason for making them in the first place.

The occurrence of model and canonical calligraphy which was cut on stone and displayed as engravings merely for appreciation was much later than the inception of *tie* engravings. A unique example to indicate the change in the reception and display method of *tie* first appeared in late Ming. It was *Qingshantang* of Xu Xiake, active during the Taichang and Chongzhen reigns (1370–1632AD). Xu gathered calligraphy from his ancestors and his renowned friends and made them into a rubbing collection to celebrate his mother's eightieth birthday. The selected calligraphy consisted of various kinds of writings such as memorial tablets, biographies, prefaces, prologues, poems and eulogies; altogether there were ninety-four pieces of writing. In addition, seventy-six inscribed stone slabs still exist nowadays. In terms of calligraphers, they were written by eighty-eight renowned late Yuan and Ming figures, such as Ni Zhan 倪瓚 (1301–74AD), Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–81AD), Zhu Yunming 祝允明 (1460–1526AD), Gu Dingchen 顧鼎臣 (1473–1540AD), Gao Panlong 高攀龍 (1562–1626AD), Dong Qichang, Wen Zhengming, Mi Wanzhong 米萬鍾 (1570–1628AD) and Huang Daozhou 黃道周 (1585–1646AD). In terms of content, a large proportion of Xu's collection was eulogies to his mother and colophons to a painting entitled *Qiupu chenjitu* 秋圃晨機圖 for his mother. The content of this collection suggested clearly that it was made to express approval of Xu's mother's moral quality, and acknowledge the social status of Xu's family and their broad social network. Such a purpose was more consistent with the function of *bei* than *tie* rubbings.

As well as the name *Qingshantang*, it is also called the *Qingshantang shike* 晴山堂石刻. This was because, in addition to the book format, the calligraphy was also displayed as engravings on walls in *Qingshantang* 晴山堂 (see Fig.2.20). The hall, which was in the house of Xu Xiake, was first built in 1620AD in Jiangyin of Jiangsu, and was rebuilt in 1977AD.[275] Its original appearance and many engravings inside it were destroyed or lost in the war at the end of the Ming.[276] Unlike many *tie* rubbing collections, it is believed that the rubbing stones and woodblocks of *Qingshantang* were displayed on the interior walls of the house. For both rubbing collections and printed books, once the reproductions were made, the inscribed blocks or stone slabs would usually be kept on shelves. For

[275] At present, there are calligraphy corridors decorated with the inscribed rubbing stones but no records could prove that they were in the same display method as their original appearances. There were calligraphy corridors in other Ming gardens but these were more common in Qing gardens. It is not certain that whether these calligraphy corridors in the *Qingshantang* were post-Ming constructions or not.
[276] Preface of the *Qingshantang tie*, *QSTFT*, p.1.

example, Ye Dehui 葉德輝 (1864–1927AD) *Shulin qinghua* 書林清話 described how the woodblocks were stored and why they were made by an eminent late Ming book publisher and collector Mao Jin 毛晉 (1599–1659AD) as follows:

> "The purpose of keeping the woodblocks of books was probably for Mao Jin's own viewing, appreciation and as a source of the sense of his own achievements. For example, the woodblocks of the *Shisan jing* (Thirteen [Confucian] Classics) and *Shiqi shi* (History of Seventeen Dynasties) engraved by Mao Jin's family were stored. Thirteen sets of woodblocks were hung on newly inserted shelves."
>
> 書板的保存目的，可能多在供毛晉本人觀賞把玩，以為自己成就感的來源。例如毛家所刻十三經十七史的書板，保存方式即是十三部板斬新插架。[277]

Whatever the reason why Mao made the woodblocks, they were put on shelves. If it was the same for stone slabs as for woodblocks, this means that they were not made merely for making rubbings; the engravings were also made for display.

Regarding the *Qingshantang* engravings, except the preface which was carved on woodblocks, the rest of the collection was cut on stone slabs. Therefore, this *tie* collection existed not only in the usual format as books, but was also visible as inscriptions on walls. This idea undoubtedly originated from the concept of *bei*. Despite the memorial purpose and the intention to make Xu Xiake's mother as well as his family known to the public, the engravings were displayed in a private house. This implied that the target audience of this collection was restricted to friends and selected visitors rather than the general public. This was consistent with the function of *tie* collections, which had limited access depending on the number of publications, their circulation and prices.

Furthermore, Xu chose stone slabs rather than woodblocks as the main medium of his *tie* collection. This further supported his intention to preserve his collection in the long run. He did it not merely for the sake of advertising his family. This was because book publications had a better and more efficient circulation than rubbing collections and stone engravings.

Apart from private houses, *tie* stone slabs were also used in Ming private gardens. This had never happened before the Ming – or at least, there was no literature describing any *tie*-inscribed stones displayed in pre-Ming gardens. Since the mid-Ming Dynasty, with the economic growth in Southern China, there were many more private gardens than in the early Ming. These belonged not only to royal family members and rich merchants; the literati also made their own private gardens, such as *Yi Garden* 怡園 in Suzhou made by Wu Kuan 吳寬 (1435–1504AD), and *Zhuozheng Garden* 拙政園, also in Suzhou, designed by Wen Zhengming. There were other private gardens, such as *Yao* 藥/ *Yipu*

[277] Mao Jin 毛晉, 'the re-cut of the thirteen Classics and seventeen histories' 重鐫十三經十七史緣起, in *SLQH*, p.197.

藝圃)[278] by Wen Zhenheng and *Yishan Garden* 羿山園 by Wang Shizhen. Some of them put inscribed *tie* rubbing stones on walls for decoration – for instance, *Yi Garden* (see Fig.2.21). There were monumental stone steles and tablets in earlier Chinese gardens, but calligraphic pieces engraved on landscape stone slabs like rubbing stones, which were then embedded in garden walls for decoration, appeared as early as the Ming Dynasty and occurred more frequently in the gardens made or reconstructed during the Qianlong reign. After that time calligraphy became one of the essential elements in Chinese literati gardens in late imperial China, since horizontal inscribed boards and vertical couplets appeared in most Ming and Qing gardens. One of the Ming manuals about garden designs, the *Changwuzhi*, not only had a section on calligraphic rubbings but also recommended the people should put calligraphy inside buildings.[279] There were even *beilang* 碑廊 (calligraphy corridors or corridors decorated with inscribed stones) in some eighteenth century gardens. For example, the *Liu Garden* 留園 in Suzhou was built in the mid-Ming by the retired official Xu Shitai 徐時泰 (date unknown), and was later bought and renovated by Liu Shu 劉恕 (date unknown) during Jiaqing reign (1796–1821AD). Liu was fond of calligraphy and installed calligraphy engravings on both sides of the corridors of the buildings.

The *tie* stone slabs were mounted on the walls of private gardens mainly for decoration, but also for the ease of reading and looking at them in the garden or during *yaji* 雅集 (elegant gatherings). The issue of taste mattered a lot in the Ming; Craig Clunas has made an in-depth study of this aspect of Ming society.[280] From the Ming manual of antique collecting, known as *Zhangwuzhi*, the first chapter of the book suggests that people should include books and paintings in their houses.[281] This reveals the importance of cultivation in Ming people's minds. As the reproduction of calligraphy (the most important art in imperial China), *tie* engravings represented elite/literati culture, and including them in gardens would make the gardens more elegant. Thus, it is not a surprise to see *tie* engravings in Ming gardens. This also shows how the display methods altered the functions and reception of *tie* collections.

In sum, from correspondences to calligraphy engravings, the function of texts changed from a purely practical use (communication) to art appreciation, decoration and even cultivation. This was reflected in the materials used and the way the pieces were displayed. In particular, there was a great

[278] It was located in Suzhou Jinmen 金門 which was first made in 1541AD named as the *Zuiyingtang* 醉穎堂 and owned by Yuan Zugeng 袁祖庚 (1519–90AD). In 1620, Wen Zhengmeng 文震孟, the grandson of Wen Zhengming purchased it and renamed it as *Yaopu* 葯圃. But it was later bought by Jiang Cai 姜采 in 1659AD.
[279] *ZWZ*, *juan* 1, pp.1–2, and *juan* 5, pp. 12–5. A partial English translation of this book can be found in *ST*.
[280] See discussion on Tastes in *ST*.
[281] *ZWZ*, *juan* 1, p.1.

difference between reading a *tie* collection as a book on a table and looking at it as calligraphy engravings in a garden. The experience and expectations would be different. At least, it would be handier and faster to flip through the entire collection in a book format than to walk from one stone to another.

Nevertheless, some people would sit or even lie down in front of the calligraphy engravings in order to look at them closely. Huang Bosi's *Dongguan yulun* said:

> "Recent *haoshizhe* (art lovers) used a pavilion to house [the stele of the Han Dynasty] *Taiwei bei* and named the pavilion as *Baoke*. … Every time when I went to Shangdong, I went to look at the stele and think about the high morality of Wenrao [Liu Kuan, date unknown]. … Similar to how Ouyang Xinben [Ouyang Xun, 557–641AD] viewed Suojing (239–303AD) writing calligraphy on a stele (*bei*), who did not leave but sat and slept [next to the *bei*]. I am not much different from him. [I] ordered craftsmen to take rubbings from these two stelae and their characters in negative, which were then mounted and bound into three *zhi* (items) for viewing."
>
> 近世好事者，亭以覆之[漢太尉碑]，目其亭為寶刻。每過上東，必徘徊碑下，想文饒[劉寬]之高風，…。與歐陽信本[歐陽詢]之觀索靖書碑，坐卧不能去，何以異云。因令工椎拓二碑及陰文，裝為三帙，而時觀之。[282]

Although the above example is about how Song people looked at *bei* calligraphy, it was actually the same for *tie* calligraphy since the extract reveals their attitudes towards good engraved calligraphy. This is because this example shows how people appreciated the calligraphy of the inscription despite the fact that it was a *bei*. People might have the same attitude towards *tie* which was made for preserving the calligraphy. Therefore, rubbings were usually mounted and bound in a book format instead. There were a few exceptions – for instance, the inscribed stone slabs of the *Zhongyitang tie* 忠義堂帖 of the Southern Song were mounted on walls for people to view directly, largely because the content was as important as the calligraphy.[283] However, there is no further evidence to explain this phenomenon.

Furthermore, a large scale *leishu*, *Shantang sikao* 山堂肆考 by Peng Dayi 彭大翼 (1552–1643AD), published in private during the Wanli reign in Tongzhou, quoted the comments of Huang Tingjian (1045─1105AD) as follows:

> "Ancient people who learned calligraphy would not just copy and trace the originals; they would hang up several model calligraphy on walls and pay full attention to them. When they lowered their brushes [to write calligraphy], they would let the inventions [of these other calligraphers] lead their brushes."
>
> 古人學書不盡臨摹，惟多張古人法書於壁間，觀之入神，則下筆時隨人意。[284]

[282] Chen Si 陳思, *Baoke congbian* 寶刻叢編, *SKQS*, *juan* 4, p.8.
[283] Colophon to the *Zhongyitang tie*, in *ZFQ*, v.17, p.167.
[284] Peng Dayi 彭大翼, *Shantang sikao* 山堂肆考, *SKQS*, *juan* 133, p.11. It is a large scale *leishu* of 240 *juan* published in private during the Wanli reign in Tongzhou.

Apart from revealing ancient people's attitudes towards learning calligraphy, importantly this quote shows how they read and studied model calligraphy. People read it in a way that was actually similar to looking at the calligraphy engravings displaying in gardens. Therefore, the origin of this kind of model calligraphy display method may be traced back to the pre-Northern Song. It is also clear that in addition to *tie* collections, other calligraphy engravings were also found in Ming gardens. For example, a couplet by Dong Qichang was placed in the pavilion *Yuyanting* 玉延亭 in *Yi Garden*, located at the east of his house, for decoration purpose. This increased the literary constituents of the garden to match the taste of the garden owner, Wu Kuan, who was a poet and calligrapher.[285] It was also intended for those who came to visit the garden, and who might sit and have a moment of thought to share the author's feeling. Thus, the content and styles of the engravings would need to match the design of the garden and the taste of the garden owner(s). As the available space for calligraphy engravings in a garden might be limited, usually only a small part of a rubbing collection could be installed, which was often the most important and favourite pieces of calligraphy of the garden owner(s).

Such a radical change in the method of displaying model calligraphy and rubbing collections in the mid-Ming coincided with the emergence of new garden culture and the pursuit of aesthetic and philosophical ideals.[286] This revealed not only a change in most Ming people's values, but also a change in the reception of rubbing collections.

Individual works, such as the rubbings of the *Wenquanming*, were in loose sheets (without being mounted on any hard paper in an album) when they were discovered in Dunhuang. However, rubbing collections since the Northern Song, such as the *Getie* of 992AD, were mainly preserved in album formats. Clearly, this was due to the fact that the book format was a good way to keep a large amount of calligraphy neat and tidy. More importantly, however, it also allowed people to read them on desks and compare them with others' or their own works side by side, which would facilitate calligraphy learning. The emergence of new rubbing collection formats, including hand-scrolls and stone engravings on garden walls, meant that they no longer mainly served as model calligraphy for learning but also as objects for worship, appreciation, collecting and even merely as a kind of decoration. In addition, it demonstrated how rubbing collections eventually became detached from the limitations of the traditional writing formats and display methods. They played a more important

[285] *DMB*, pp.1487–9.
[286] Craig Clunas first suggested that there were new aesthetic trends emphasized an articulation of nature when gardens changed from being focused on productive farming to becoming objects of and places for aesthetic pursuits. For a detail discussion, see Craig Clunas's *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (London, 1996).

societal role through an increase in their decorative nature and their visual presence in people's daily activities.

In fact, the mounting and display format determines how we receive a rubbing collection. Rubbings in an album are already restricted in terms of the way people read and understand them. An album allows an individual, or a group or small number of people, to read it in turn. In addition, it allows readers to look at the details of a rubbing collection from the beginning to the end according to their own pace and preference – for instance, choosing to read the first few pieces of calligraphy instead of the last piece of the collection.

Although this might not be the main reason when a publisher is choosing book formats for their rubbing collections, every display method has its proponents. Nonetheless, the book format was demonstrably more popular in the Ming, and was more widely adopted than others. There were also new collection formats, such as hand-scrolls and engravings on garden walls as mentioned above, but these were not common.

Tie rubbings in the Ming became luxury commodities which, like other superfluous things for elegant living which were acquired as an indication of literati taste, embodied the social patterns in which they were made, enjoyed and collected. The calligraphy canon was therefore preserved, together with the traditional method of rubbing makings. Though this medium of transmission of the calligraphy canon was challenged by the change of materials involved and new modes of visual display, the canon itself could still remain in Ming collections.

Chapter 3 Characteristics of Rubbing Collections in Ming China

3.1 Naming

While book titles always denote their contents, few rubbing collection titles provide clues about their content or the calligraphers who contributed to them. A few rubbing collections even had no title. For example, the *Getie* had no title when it was first made. Later, people used the name of the reign during which the rubbing collection was made to refer to the collection in order to distinguish it from others.[287] If a collection has a title, it is usually expected to shed light on the theme, content and characteristics of the collection and is assumed to indicate its significance. The subtle change of naming practice in the Ming, ignoring the reign name in the title, reveals that publishers had different concerns from those in the Song.

The modern art historian Amy McNair, who specialises in Song collections, has even claimed that most collections were not officially named. It does seem from the existing evidence to date that only the collections made under the command of the emperor would have been entitled to have reign names. For example, *Daguan* and the *Chunxi mige xutie* 淳熙秘閣續帖 were made during the Daguan reign (1107─1110AD)[288] and the Chunxi reign (1174─89AD) respectively. They both include reign names in their titles. This did not apply to most collections because the rubbing of a single piece of calligraphy would always use the first few characters of the writing for its title. Also, it was not the case for private collections; for instance, *Baojinzhai* only uses the studio name of the publisher in its title. There was no Ming private collection marked with a reign name in its title.

Despite the existence of untitled and a few titled imperial collections, the characteristics of many other Ming collections could be found in their names. This demonstrates the prototypical naming convention or pattern of the period. In addition, unless the collections were sponsored by regional officials, such as *Tantie* (Tan means Tanzhou, Hunan), *Jiangtie* (Jiang means Jiangzhou, Shanxi) and *Rutie* (Ru means Ruzhou, Henan), the titles seldom indicated the place of publication. Most collections did not include any indications of date, although they did shoe the studio names of the publishers, and a very few included the provenance of the selected works. Even though *Jinlingmingxian* seems to be titled with a location, this was applied by later people rather than being specified in its original title.[289]

[287] Amy McNair, 'Engraved Calligraphy in China: Recension and Reception', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol.77 (No.1, 1995), pp.106.
[288] It was first made in 1109AD by Song Huizong 宋徽宗 Zhao Ji 趙佶 (1082–1135AD).
[289] There was no Ming literature with the title of this collection and there seems to be no extant collection. Instead, there was a collection entitled the *Mingxian tie* 名賢帖 in some Qing texts about rubbings. The title *Jinling mingxian tie* was found in modern text only, such as *CTM* and *ZGSFS*.

In the Ming Dynasty, except for the re-cuts which used their original names, only a few Ming collection titles included the calligraphers' surname or names rather than their studio names, such as the *Dongshi jiacang tie* 董氏家藏帖. The collection titles somehow reflected what mattered most in people's minds, and revealed how Ming publishers perceived and publicised their collections. As the studio names frequently appeared in the title, this signified the publishers of the collections rather than the content. Instead of showing pride in their possessions or their own calligraphy by adding the name of the collection owners or the calligraphers, the use of the studio name in the title achieved the same goal without losing modesty, which was an elegant and commonly accepted manner. Studio names in the Ming were similar to the brand names of today. Also, the use of studio names in a collection title became a trend.

3.2 Number of Ming Collections and their Scales

Throughout the history of rubbings, the Ming Dynasty has been regarded as the second heyday after the Song.[290] Also, there were various kinds of collections, and new forms of collections began to appear. For example, Shen Defu commented on Ming collections as follows:

> "The publishing of rubbings since the *Getie* expanded greatly in quantity till this dynasty, and the types of rubbing collections also increased significantly. The number of them was too large to count."
>
> 墨刻自閣帖後轉盛，至本朝則種類愈繁，幾不勝收。[291]

Although this was an exaggeration in terms of the kinds of collection, it reveals that in the Ming there were more collections and new forms of collections emerged.

Regarding the number of collections, there were approximately a hundred new rubbing collections (excluding re-cuts) in the Ming, whereas there were only around forty in the entire Song.[292] These figures are based on textual records and are not purely a reference to extant collections, because a large number of Song and Ming collections have been lost or destroyed.[293] The earlier they date from, the lower their survival rate. It is therefore more accurate to count them based on reliable textual evidence than on extant objects. Although it is impossible to compare the total number of

[290] However, an expert on rubbings and the former director of the Shanghai Museum Wang Qingzheng 汪慶正 (1931–2005AD) thought the number of rubbing collections made in the Ming was significantly less than the Song ones. He mentioned in his book *Qianbixue yu beitie wenxianxue* 錢幣學與碑帖文獻學 (Shanghai, 2008), p.181 that there were less than twenty collections in the Ming. This is incorrect as it should be at least about a hundred Ming rubbing collections.
[291] *WYHB*, *juan* 25, p.656.
[292] While there were about thirty rubbing collections listed in *CTM*, there were fifty rubbing collections listed in Xing Lin 杏林, *Zhongguo fatie shi* 中國法帖史 (Shandong, 2010, pp.117–27). Both of them are not accurate because the former one only listed the collections which Rong Geng had seen and the latter one included individual rubbings instead of rubbing collections. Hence, after combing the two and eliminating the invalid titles, there were approximately forty rubbing collections made in the Song.
[293] Most Ming rubbing collections recorded in diary, notes, catalogues, commentaries and gazetteers.

copies (including re-cuts) in the Song and the Ming periods owing to the insufficient information available, based on the known titles, it is clear that Ming rubbing collections were significantly more numerous than those from the Song. The large number of rubbing collections made during the Ming shows that such collections were popular and were becoming much more accessible than ever before.[294] This would make them more influential to the calligraphy world and in Ming society.

However, this was not the case for the entire Ming, because most Ming rubbing collections were made after the Jiajing reign (1522–66AD). In all, thirty-four of the eighty-seven dated rubbing collections were produced during the Wanli reign (1573–1620AD) (see Fig.3.01); this number constitutes almost half the total number of Ming collections. This reign was the most productive period for rubbing collections, although production remained high until the end of the dynasty. However, it should be noted that the large number of collections may be due to the relatively long reign of the Wanli emperor, whose reign lasted about fifty years. In fact, the highest number of rubbing collections was made during the period 1621–30AD, with twenty-three collections in total (see Fig.3.02); this period encompassed the last two reigns of the dynasty. Surprisingly, private printing during the Ming was not common before 1500AD, but it became very popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries according to modern scholar Tsien Tsuen-Hsuin's 錢存訓 (b.1909AD) research.[295] This phenomenon coincides with the situation concerning Ming rubbing collections, as shown in Fig.3.02.

In terms of the scale and standard of Ming rubbing collections, they were less standardised than those of the Song. Apart from this difference, as shown in Fig.3.03, the majority of Song collections consisted of ten *juan*. This was mainly because most of the Song collections were made with reference to the ten *juan Getie*. However, not many Ming collections consisted of ten *juan.* A Ming rubbing enthusiast and specialist Zhao Yiguang described rubbing collections as follows:

> "A rubbing collection has a number of *juan*, ranging from one to ten."
> 自一至十[卷]，即是法帖。[296]

Since he was such a renowned rubbing specialist, his comments meant a lot and were representative of the general fashion. He considered that the scale of rubbing collections could range from one to ten *juan*, although they were quite varied.

[294] The amount of extant rubbing collections studied by Rong Geng mentioned in his *CTM* was over three hundreds in total. And for Ming rubbing collections, there are about sixty which were recorded in *ZFQ*.
[295] Tsien Tsuen-Hsuin, "Paper and Printing", in Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China (Cambridge, London, New York, etc, 1974–), vol.5, pt1, p.178.
[296] *HSZT, juan xia*, p.18.

In the early Ming only a few rubbing collections were made, most of which followed the well-established Northern Song convention of usually containing ten *juan,* and quite a significant number of works by the Two Wangs. This arrangement indicated the function of rubbing collections for the preservation of former culture and traditions.

Subsequently the scale varied greatly, but collections mostly consisted of even numbers of *juan,* such as two, four, six and ten (Fig.3.03). However, the size of the collection could be as large as thirty-five *juan*. The scales of the collections depended on the owners' financial abilities and networks. When comparing the scale of rubbing collections of the Song to those of the Ming, we find that the former was on average of a larger scale than the latter. The scale of Song collections was highly concentrated at around ten *juan* while those of the Ming were usually two, four and six *juan,* which are in even numbers.

The loose standard of collection scale was determined by the publisher's own preference, and also because most Ming rubbing collections were made by individual collectors and calligraphers of their own free will. However, there were more rubbing collections made by the court and regional officials in the Song, who were more likely to adhere to "the model".

3.3 Choices of Selection and Structure

Following the above discussion of the scale of Ming rubbing collections, we have learned that rubbing collections since the time of the Song were made by either court officials or private individuals. The making of rubbing collections became popular once they were no longer restricted to being produced by the court during the Southern Song dynasty. Private individuals who could afford to do so could publish their own collections. As there were no written regulations or rules about the format of rubbing collections, private publishers could select works according to their preference and financial ability. The making of collections was monopolised by the court in the early Northern Song, with private collections appearing much later. The first was *Tantie* which was made by the governor of Changsha Liu Hang 劉沆 (995–1060AD) in 1048AD.[297] Since then, more collections were made in private, and this kind of collection eventually became the majority.

An interesting phenomenon was that all Ming rubbing collections were made outside the court. The first two new rubbing collections in the early Ming and one of *Getie*'s re-cuts were made under royal sponsorship, but they were not under the command of the emperor as they had been during the

[297] *SPX, juan xia,* p.1.

Song – for instance, *Dongshutang* by Zhu Youdun, who was the son of the Ding King of Zhou 周定王 Zhu Su 朱橚 (1361–1425AD), and *Baoxiantang*, and *Sufutie* by the Xian King of Su 肅憲王. A Ming connoisseur, Wang Zuo 王佐 (d.1543AD),[298] described *Dongshutang* in his collecting manual as follows:

> "*Zhou fu* (Zhu Su) made a rubbing collection based on the *Chunhua getie* and supplemented it with model calligraphy of renowned Song people. The collection was in twenty *juan*."[299]
>
> 周府[朱橚]臨淳化閣帖，增以宋名人法帖，凡二十卷。

Nevertheless, all the above collections were commissioned by royalty and were made with reference to the *Getie* in the royal collection, which had been given to the Ming emperor. Although royal rubbing collections were assumed to be made according to a more institutionalised structure, including the compilation and production process, there were in fact no written guidelines for making rubbing collections. In addition, there was no particular department, such as the *guozijian* 國子監, and no craftsmen for making the royal rubbing collections except for books published by the court.[300] Also, there were no regulations or rules on how to make rubbing collections for the court.

In general, books published by Ming royal family members were highly sought after and were well-recognised as having superior quality and high accuracy in their content.[301] However, this was not the case in the royal rubbing collections. On the contrary, the quality of *Dongshutang* and *Baoxiantang tie* was not satisfactory. For example, the former was claimed to be made with reference to a hand-traced copy by Zhu Youdun. Apart from the level of faithfulness to the original calligraphy and the copies, the strokes of the characters were poorly carved and unclear (see Fig.3.04). This may have been due to the poor quality of the existing edition, but it was not comparable to other private Ming rubbing collections, such as *Zhenshangzhai*. As for the latter collection, it was criticised by the renowned Ming art critic and collector Wang Shizhen as follows:

> "Regarding the *Baoxiantang tie*, its layout and arrangement of the calligraphy were not bad. However, the texture of the stone was rough. Also, three major types of craftsmen including scribes, engravers and craftsmen[302] were not unsatisfactory, so it was listed as inferior to many other collections."
>
> 寶賢堂帖: 於行款次第頗不俗。第石理既粗，而摹刻搨三手俱不稱，以此在諸帖下耳。[303]

[298] *DMB*, p.1449.
[299] *XGGYL*, *juan* 3, p.28.
[300] For detail discussion of royal book publishing, please read "Special institution(s) for book making and publishing for the court", in Zhao Qian 趙前, *Ming ben* 明本 (Nanjing, 2003), pp.10–22. Hereafter, *Mingben*.
[301] *Mingben*, p.23.
[302] Here, craftsmen refer to the ones who made the rubbing (ink squeezes) by tapping or rubbing.
[303] *YSSBG*, *juan* 133, p.15.

Hence, there was no guarantee of the quality of royal rubbing collections, so they should be viewed in the same way as if they were made by private individuals.

In addition, they no longer served the court and were hardly an effective means to express any political intention, mainly because they were not authorised by a legitimate or ultimate authority such as the emperor. Besides this, the circulation of these kinds of rubbing collections was limited. For example, *Baojinzhai* was rarely mentioned in any commentaries or any Ming literature. As a result, theoretically, they would have less impact (both political and artistic) on the court as well as on the public. They also did not represent the majority of Ming rubbing collections, and would not alter the canon transmission because of their limited circulation.

Nonetheless, some modern rubbing experts, such as Wang Lianqi 王連起 and Lee Yunwoon 李潤桓, have suggested that the kings who made rubbing collections wanted to redirect the emperor's attention and create an illusion that they were very fond of cultural activities and were not interested in ruling the empire.[304] This may well be a valid reason, because during the Hongwu (1368–98AD) and Yongle (1403–24AD) reigns, the emperors wanted to consolidate their power and eliminate or reduce the power of the regional heads. There was a bloody tanistry in this period and royal family members, in order to safeguard their lives and maintain peace, would show indifference to seeking political power.

This may be one reason for royalty to make rubbing collections, but it would not have been the main reason for the making of *Dongshutang*. Apart from the style of the calligraphy in the collection, which was different from the attributed calligraphers, the Ming collector Wang Shizhen also believed that the calligraphy was hand-traced by Zhu Youdun 朱有燉 (1379–1439AD) and criticised his incompetent skill. Wang said:

> "As for the *Dongshutang tie*, the calligraphy was hand-traced on stone by King Xian of Zhou when he was still the crown prince. … Although the Xian King put much effort into his calligraphy, he was not very gifted. Thus, there was too much polishing and not enough skin texture (originality)."
>
> 東書堂帖者，周憲王為世子時手摹上石,……憲王臨池之力甚精，惜其天資少遜，以故粉澤有餘，膚理不足。[305]

[304] I had a discussion with these scholars in 2009 and 2010 respectively. At that time, they both suggested that there might be political intention for the Ming kings to make of rubbing collection. After scrutiny of the preface of the collections and royal book publishing, I am now more convinced that it was not the main reason for them making rubbing collections.
[305] *CTM*. v.1, P.193.

If we believe Wang's opinion that the calligraphy of *Dongshutang* was copied by Zhu, it was a big job to copy such a large collection. What is mentioned in the preface of *Dongshutang* by Zhu Youdun (see Fig.3.05), is that the collection was only for him to study calligraphy. Zhu said,

> "Those I have copied before, I will copy freehand; those I have never copied, I will copy by tracing. I gathered the copies and made them into ten *juan* and cut them on stone for convenience, for me to read and not for showing them to others to study."
>
> 以嘗臨者臨之，未嘗臨者摹之，集為十卷，勒之於石，以便自觀，非敢示於人以為學也。[306]

It was the tradition that most people would write in this humble manner, but it may not have reflected the author's actual will or intention. Whether it was really for self-study or not, making a collection in such an involved manner was not simple. If he had not been fond of calligraphy, he would not have done it. Furthermore, Jiao Hong's 焦竑 (1540–1620AD) *Jiaotaishi bianji guochao xianzhenglu* 焦太史編輯國朝獻徵錄 stated:

> "Not only literati and calligraphers, but also Ming royal family members were fond of calligraphy. For example, the eldest son of the King of Duanyi from Lingqiu (Zhu Congge, 1472–1555AD) Zhu Junge (?–1545AD)[307] liked learning and was good at writing. He collected about twenty thousand *juan* of books. He was exceedingly keen on ancient seal scripts and had copied over sixty kinds of engraved calligraphy on stone, entitled the *Chongli tie*."
>
> 不只文人書家，而且皇室中也好此道者，如靈丘端懿王[朱聰滆]的長子朱俊格，嗜學善屬文，聚寸數萬卷。尤好古篆籀墨蹟，嘗手模六十餘種勒石，名《崇理帖》。[308]

Thus, we learn that some Ming royalty were truly fond of writing and collecting calligraphy. It was possible that they made rubbing collections solely for the sake of their personal interest.

However, some royal collections might have projected the political views of the kings. For example, Craig Clunas argues that Zhu Qiyuan might have linked himself to the Jin Dynasty because they shared the same name, "Jin 晉".[309] Zhu marked Jin Wang 晉王 on his *Baoxiantang*. This kind of projection is different from the political intentions of the Northern Song, when the emperor wanted to use rubbing collections to reveal his legitimacy and show his cultural achievement during his reign. Clunas also points out that the intention of some regional kings was to establish their cultural achievement by making rubbing collections to show to the emperor.

In terms of the differences in the compilation and the structure of the royal and private collections, it might be a coincidence, but there was a pattern in the royal collections. In general, there

[306] *CTM*, v.1, p.190.
[307] The grandson of the 5th generation of Taizu's 13th son Zhu Gui 朱桂, in *ZLRD*, p.568. He was the King Kangdao of Lingqiu 靈丘康悼王 in *Ming shi* 明史 (Taibei, 1970), *juan* 117.
[308] Jiao Zi 焦茲 (ed.), *Jiaotaishi bian guochao xianzhenglu* 焦太史編國朝獻徵錄, *juan* 1, Zong shi 1 宗室一, p.38, in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書, *di* 525 *ce*, *Xu Shushi huiyao* 續書史會要, p.61.
[309] Craig Clunas, 'The Politics of Antiquarianism in Ming Regional Courts', in Wu Hung (ed.), *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Chicago, 2010), pp.243–4. Hereafter, Clunas(2010).

were usually three main ways to arrange calligraphy in these collections: 1) chronological order (e.g. dynasties); 2) the social status of the calligraphers; and 3) the skills and aesthetic quality of their calligraphy.[310] This classification is brief and in fact the order of the calligraphy in the Ming collections was less standardised and more random than this might suggest, but the collections made by the royal family were relatively more standardised in terms of scale and were arranged similarly in structure in that usually the works of emperors were placed at the beginning or in the first *juan* of the entire collection. As shown in the preface of *Dongshutang* said:

> "In the *Chunhua tie* and various rubbing collections, they had calligraphy of the ancient time [including calligraphy of] Cang Jie,[311] Shizhou (date unknown),[312] Li Si (?–208BC)[313] and others. Now I gathered those not found in the above collections, with reference to the comments about the reliability of individual calligraphy written in the *Fatie kanwu*, and excluded the calligraphy in *zhuanzhou* (large and small seal scripts). … Collections of calligraphy placed that of the emperors at the front, followed by that of famous officials. Works of scholars, Buddhists and monks as well as ladies were all grouped below famous officials. As they excelled in calligraphy, they were famous, weren't they? Therefore, I put them after the famous officials within the section."
>
> 淳化帖並諸家帖中，皆有尚古倉頡、史籀、李斯等書。今集帖內無者，以法帖刊誤論其有非真當者，又皆篆籀之書，……茲不復錄。…集帖先之以帝王之書，次以名臣之書。其碩儒高士、黃冠緇衣、閨門女子之書，皆在名臣類中，不別立類者，……既以能書，豈非名乎？故列於名臣之後。[314]

This was actually the way in which the *Getie* and many other court-made collections arranged their calligraphy. This was not a new convention, but it was the first time that these unspoken rules (or preferences and logical arrangements) had been recorded clearly in writing. This shows how much the arrangement mattered to the royal family members who made rubbing collections, and what their concerns were. In fact, this followed one of the five basic relationships of the Confucian principles – that is, the ruler-official relationship.[315] In fact, the priority of putting emperors' calligraphy in the front and sometimes including their own personal works within this group was to raise their status, making it appear as if they had the same social status as well as the respect and recognition of the emperor. In other words, it was to make them superior to the famous officials and commoners. In the same preface of *Dongshutang* as shown in Fig.3.05, it said:

> "People of different dynasties were arranged chronologically. People within the same dynasty would not be arranged chronologically but randomly. Wang Xizhi of the Jin

[310] Thiese three ways were concluded by the rubbing specialist and the ex-director of the Shanghai Museum Wang Qingzheng 汪慶正, in 'Dong Qichang fashu ketie jianshu' 董其昌法書刻帖簡述, in *Qianbixue yu beitie wenxianxue* 錢幣學與碑帖文獻學 (Shanghai, 2008), p. 181.
[311] He was an ancient mythical figure, in *ZMRD*, p.651.
[312] His name was Zhou 籀, who was an official to record history during the Zhou Dynasty, in *ZMRD*, p.160.
[313] He standardized small seal script, in *ZMRD*, p.385.
[314] In the preface of *Dongshutang*, in *CTM*, p.191.
[315] The five human relationships are love between father and son, duty between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, and faith between friends respectively, in D.C. Lau (trans.), *Mencius* 孟子(Hong Kong, 1984), vol.1, 'Tengwengong shang'滕文公上, pp.104–7.

> Dynasty was not put in this dynasty, and was listed before other famous officials because of his superior and extraordinary calligraphy, which was the best both in the past and at present. As he was the master of all generations, his calligraphy was put before other famous calligraphy. As for Wang Xianzhi of the Jin Dynasty, who excelled at calligraphy, there were many pieces of his calligraphy so I grouped them into a separate *juan* and put them after the calligraphy of the Jin calligraphers. However, it did not mean that I took his calligraphy lightly. There were many examples of counterfeit calligraphy existing by various calligraphers. At present, if the calligraphy was definitely regarded as counterfeit, I would either exclude or correct it. If the incorrect characters were marked by Wang Bosi, because of my limited knowledge, I am afraid that I would not correct them and would keep the same appearance as they were cut in stone."
>
> 各代之人，以各代依次第而列之。其一代之人，所出先後，不依次第，但隨筆以臨摹耳。晉王羲之不列於本代，而列於名臣之首卷者，以其書妙絕古今，為學者之宗匠，則列於名臣之前。晉王獻之書法尤妙，以其字多，別為一卷列於晉人之後，非有所輕重列於後也。各家帖中亦有偽者。今以偽書昭然無疑者，或去之，或為之改正。其若黃伯思所辨之偽字，以予學識之淺，不敢盡以為然，姑依原本刻之。[316]

This preface clearly explains the reason for the order of the selected calligraphy, its classification method, and the arrangement of fake calligraphy and incorrect characters.

Furthermore, rubbing collections made by Ming family royal members often included the calligraphy of previous rulers, for example Xia Yu 夏禹[317], despite the doubtful authenticity of the calligraphy. For example, the first *juan* of *Baoxiantang* includes calligraphy attributed to Xia Yu. Unlike famous calligraphers who had the ability and knowledge to distinguish and authenticate the calligraphy themselves, Zhu's selection was based on past collections which might have been wrong.

In fact, the inclusion of the works of mythical and legendary figures was more for symbolic reasons rather than because of its actual aesthetic value. It made collections look comprehensive and representative if they included everything. However, many private rubbing collections preferred to include a few fine works rather than more of everything, such as *Zhenshangzhai* mentioned earlier. This consisted of three *juan* only, but it was highly recognised for the superior quality of the calligraphy selected and the craftsmanship of the collection.

Overall, the rubbing collections made by private individuals usually lacked a pattern and some were not even arranged in chronological order. For example, in the *Yanqingtang tie* 延清堂帖,[318] Yu Xin's 庾信 (513–81AD) *Kushu fu* 枯樹賦 (*Poem of a Dead Tree*) of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589AD) was placed in the first *juan*, while the works originally written by earlier calligraphers were grouped in the second *juan*, in which Zhang Hua's 張華 (232–300AD)[319] *Nüshizhen* 女史箴 (*Admonitions of the Instructress to the Palace Ladies*) of the Jin Dynasty preceded

[316] *CTM*, v.1, p.191.
[317] Xiayu 夏禹 or Dayu 大禹 (date unknown) was the founder of the Xia Dynasty, in *ZMRD*, p.1748.
[318] Dong Qichang, the 4th year of the Tianqi reign, compiled and trace-copied by Chen Juchang 陳鉅昌 6 *juan*, in *CTM*, pp.1230–1.
[319] He was good at cursive script, in *ZMRD*, p.857.

Shi Cen's 史岑 (active in the Xin Dynasty, 9–23AD)[320] *Chushi Song* 出師頌 (*Eulogy of Dispatching Troops*) of the Eastern Han Dynasty 東漢 (25–220AD), even though they were all hand-traced and written by Dong Qichang.

Many private rubbing collections excluded the works of the emperors and only included the calligraphy of individual calligraphers. For instance, the *Er Wang tie* 二王帖 of 1547AD[321] only included works by the Two Wangs, and the *Wanxiangtang Su tie* 晚香堂蘇帖 or *Da wanxiangtang tie* 大晚香堂帖 of 1616AD[322] only included works of Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101AD).

The main reason for the focus on individual calligraphers is that precious works were more readily available outside the imperial collection, especially after the mid-Ming Dynasty. For example, the prominent painter and calligrapher Wen Zhengming commented on the *Shenxian qiju fatie* 神仙起居法帖 of Yang Ningshi 楊凝式 (873–954AD), saying that "Imperial treasures mostly ended up in private hands" 禦府珍祕多歸私家.[323] Also, "they do not know where the treasures come from and where they are now amongst the public" 不知何以入官中, 今又散落民間。.[324] Therefore, the lack of important and high quality calligraphy in the court discouraged the making of rubbing collections. The making of Ming rubbing collections became completely privatised, and collections could therefore vividly reflect the individual and social reception of the classical tradition and the aesthetic standards of calligraphy in the Ming.

3.4 Provenance and Circulation

Regarding the provenance of rubbing collections in the Ming, Jiangnan, the richest part of China, was where most rubbing collections were made. After the mid-Ming, most calligraphic rubbings were made near Taihu (Lake Tai) or within the southern Metropolitan district (Nanzhili 南直隸), which can be seen clearly in Fig.3.06. The places with a dot in the Ming map show where rubbing collections were made. Fig.3.07 illustrates the percentages of the total number of Ming collections that were produced in various provinces. The Jiangnan collections, including those possibly made in Nanzhili, comprised about seventy percent of the total number of Ming collections, which greatly exceeded the production of other provinces. Since provinces were classified according to political administrations, it is difficult to find a precise and accurate picture of the collection distribution. Fig.3.08 illustrates the distribution of collections made in various districts (*fu* 府). We can see that the sum of the number of

[320] He was famous for his literary works, in *ZMRD*, p.424.
[321] 3 *juan*, Jiangyin tangshixian jianyinzhai moke 江陰湯世賢兼隱齋摹刻, in *CTM*, v.3, p.1130.
[322] Total of 35 *juan*, in *CTM*, v.3, p.1158.
[323] Colophon on the *Shenxian qiju fa* 神仙起居法 by Wen Zhengming 文徵明, in *CTM*, v.1, p.248.
[324] *Laiqinguan fatie* 來禽館法帖, *juan* 2, Colophon of Song Lian 宋濂 on the *Shiqi tie* 十七帖, in *CTM*, v.1, p.259.

collections made in Songjiang, Suzhou and Jiaxing comprised more than seventy percent of the total number of Ming collections. In addition, Fig.3.09 shows the percentages of Ming collections produced in various prefectures, showing the regional distribution of Ming collections in detail. For example, Shanghai, Wuxian and Haining produced the largest number of collections, making up more than half of the entire Ming production. Even though they were individual prefectures, they were very close to each other (see Fig.3.06).[325] Some of these places benefited from their close proximity to locations where high quality paper was made, such as Zhejiang, and where ink was produced, such as Xi xian 歙縣 in Anhui.

Furthermore, it is clear that the good economic environment and high level of stability favoured the development of rubbing collections. However, the most important reason why some prefectures produced more collections than others was largely dependent on where the compilers/ producers and their customers lived. For example, many famous calligraphers lived in Wu, such as Wen Zhengming who produced *Tingyunguan*.

Since it took a long time to make a collection and required a huge amount of stone or wood which were difficult to transport, rubbings were usually made close to where the engraving materials were, in order to lower the cost rather than based on the availability of craftsmen. This was because craftsmen were mobile and could move around and work in various regions. For example, *Laiqinguan* (see Fig.2.17) was cut by Wu Shangduan 吳尚端 (date unknown), who was a native of Suzhou and who was known as an eminent engraver in Jiangnan. This collection was made and published in Shangdong, which proved that engravers could be hired across regions. There is no strong evidence to suggest that Ming collections were made and disseminated all over the country; according to the existing commentaries and visual evidence so far, Ming collections are believed to have been distributed locally and within nearby regions according to their demand.

Furthermore, we may also look at the provenance of printed books in the Ming. Interestingly, to a certain extent, the distribution of books was similar to that of rubbing collections. The places where most rubbing collections were produced were similar to those that were involved in book publishing. The famous poet and scholar Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551–1602AD) said:

> "Usually the three places for making engraved books are Wu, Yue and Min. ... Yan, Yue, Qin and Chu also published engraved books nowadays. Their number is impressive and yet is not as many as the previous three areas, among them Wu made the finest engraved books."

[325] Tang Qixiang 譚其驤 (ed.), *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中國歷史地圖集 (Shanghai, 1982), v.7, the Yuan and Ming dynasties, p.48.

> 凡刻之地有三，吳也，越也，閩也……燕、粵、秦、楚今皆有刻，類自可觀，而不若三方之盛，其精吳為最。[326]

The engraved books mentioned above were probably printed books made from engraved woodblocks rather than rubbing collections because no recorded Ming rubbing collections were made in Yue 粵 (Guangdong). Despite the ease of publishing printed books, we learn that the most popular places for book publishing were almost the same as those for rubbing collections, and the same was true for high quality publications. For example, Shen Defu's *Wanli yehuobian* said:

> "The finest copies of the *Chunhua* [*getie*] of the Song are made in our district."
> 淳化[閣帖]宋搨，近世推吾邑。[327]

Although his book described his experience when he was in Beijing, here he emphasised "his district" which must mean his prefecture of Jiaxing. As discussed earlier, Jiaxing was one of the most popular places for making rubbing collections. This must be more than a coincidence, and may be due to the similar processes involved in the production of books and rubbing collections. They both required scribes, engravers, paper and ink. In addition, they were mainly targeted at the educated and even the elite who lived in the region. In the Ming, apart from qualified candidates for civil examinations, most *zhuangyuan* 壯元 (being *first* on the list of successful *candidates*) came from Suzhou, Changzhou, Songjiang, Jiaxing, Hangzhou and Huzhou, among which Suzhou, Changzhou and Songjiang had the highest number.[328] Prefectures which had over a hundred *jinshi* were Suzhou, Songjiang and Changzhou.[329] Thus, the prefectures where most successful candidates lived coincide exactly with the places where the largest number of Ming rubbing collections was produced. This not only shows the correlation between the places where rubbing collections were produced and the performance of local candidates, but also reveals the supply and demand relationship between the collections and their consumers. Usually, consumers of Ming collections were the elite and well-educated people rather than the general public. Otherwise, it is likely that the provenances of those collections would have been somewhere else.

Besides this, referring to the previous example, another Ming phenomenon was that new collections which emphasized regional characteristics, aimed not only at calligraphy practitioners but also at collectors and local people. Rubbing collections of this kind also had historical value as they contained works from regional officials and literati. As well as individual preferences, this regional

[326] Hu Yinglin, *juan* 4, p.6.
[327] *WYHB*, p.656.
[328] Fan Jinmin 范金民, Mingqing jiangnan jinshi shuliang diyu fenbu jiqi tese fenxi 明清江南進士數量地域分佈及其特色分析, in Nanjing daxue xuebao 南京大學學報, (Feb. 1997), p.171.
[329] Ibid.

characteristic would increase the value of the collections within the local area since people would have had stronger associations with their local famous historic and contemporary figures. This was good practice from both marketing and historical perspectives.

The centre of cultural and economic activities in the Ming was the Jiangnan region, especially the prefecture of Wu (Suzhou) where rubbing collections were mainly concentrated. The high concentration of production of the rubbing collections promoted their circulation and increased their impact on the calligraphy world and on public awareness. With the help of improved printing technology and a fashion for antiquarianism, the availability of publications about the collecting and connoisseurship of rubbing collections was increased. Rubbing collections in the Ming went through a golden age, and they were a representative medium for the transmission of the calligraphy canon.

The *Baohanzhai guochao shufa* 寶翰齋國朝書法 of 1585AD was the first collection solely composed of calligraphy from the same dynasty. It was not the first example in history, but it was the first Ming collection to highlight the importance of the dates of the calligraphy, restricting the collection to pieces from the same dynasty as the producer. *Jinlingmingxian* was a similarly unprecedented example in the history of calligraphic rubbings in that it was the first collection to emphasise calligraphers from the same region of production. Regardless of the actual quality of the calligraphic pieces in this collection, the Jinling region belonged to Nanzhili in the Ming Dynasty, where the largest number of calligraphic rubbings was produced. This region remained a significant rival, at least in terms of the number of rubbing productions produced, throughout the Ming period. This is not surprising because it was the centre of economic activity and a popular place for rich people. Most merchants, educated and cultivated people lived, worked and carried out their artistic activities there. All these factors provided an ideal environment for the making of rubbing collections because there was sufficient demand for them. It was because there were plenty of patrons, collectors, and craftsmen that so many high quality rubbing collections could be produced.

These are not the only examples, but they are first of their kind in the Ming Dynasty. The emphasis on a specific time period, region or origin of the calligraphers that was highlighted in some Ming collections was scarce in the Song.

In Zhang Chou's 張丑 (1577–1643AD)[330] *Zhenji rilu* 真跡日錄, we find that quite a few Ming collectors observed that genuine calligraphy of the Jin Dynasty was very rare in the Ming. For example, Hu Yinglin wrote after the *Wang Lin Boyuan tie zhenjige* 王琳伯遠帖真跡歌 that:

[330] His was one of the celebrated art critics of his day, in *DMB*, pp.51–3.

> "Genuine Jin Dynasty works are few nowadays. Except the Two Wangs, we have never heard of any other Jin Dynasty works."
>
> 晉人真跡世罕見，二王之外尤無聞。[331]

Also, in Dong Qichang's colophon to the *Dongfangshuo huaxiang zan* 東方朔畫像贊 he said:

> "Tao [Hongjing, 456–536AD] Yinju said that for those so-called famous works of [Wang Xizhi] Youjun, even the Song copies were as scarce as if they were morning stars. The Tang hand-traced copies would be even less common."
>
> 陶[弘景]隱居所稱[王羲之]右軍有名之跡，即宋拓已如辰星，況唐人臨乎。[332]

We can therefore infer that Song collections were very few and that not many of them survived into the Ming, being either destroyed or lost in war. Not surprisingly, it was always the case that recent works would have a better chance to achieve a wide circulation.

The situation was similar to the Southern Song Dynasty in terms of the channels for obtaining collections, but it is believed that these channels were not bound by regional differences or distances. As shown in the *Shanhuwang* of 1643AD by Wang Luoyu, as well as other Ming literature which was published in the Jiangnan area, rubbing collections made in other areas, for example *Dongshutang* from Henan, were mentioned alongside local collections. Therefore, distance did not create any significant barrier to the dissemination of Ming collections.

Through the circulation and dissemination of these selected copies of "perceived" canonical works, the involved parties, for instance collectors and viewers, became more aware of them, and were encouraged by this norm in the world of calligraphy. Eventually these calligraphic rubbings became more accessible and influential not only within small selected groups, but also, via word of mouth and published literature, reaching the common members of society.

This traditional form of cultural dissemination, reproducing elite art through rubbing rather than printing, remained essential and irreplaceable throughout the entire Ming Dynasty. Hand-written and printed copies of calligraphy could hardly play the same role as rubbing collections did in the Ming. This was because hand-traced copies, *taben* 榻本 in Chinese, which were commonly used to produce copies of calligraphy in the Tang Dynasty, could not maintain constant standards in a mass-produced and efficient manner, since they necessarily varied from one copyist to the next. Therefore, hand-written copies were never comparable to faithful rubbing collections because the former were never identical, as were the rubbings made from stones and woodblocks. Owing to the higher

[331] Zhang Chou, *Zhenji rilu* 真跡日錄, in *SHQS*, *juan* 4, p.420. Hereafter, *Zhenjirilu*.
[332] *Zhenjirilu*, *juan* 4, p.28.

standardisation and faster production of rubbings, they were the best means of transmitting the calligraphy canon.

Furthermore, in terms of the irreplaceable status of rubbing collections in Ming China, we should note that printed copies in positive were never established as an accepted method of high quality calligraphy reproduction throughout the history of calligraphy in imperial China, despite the fact that Ming printing technology had reached an unprecedented high level and was able to produce very faithful, precise and colourful pictorial reproductions. This was more the result of the degree of social acceptance of printed copies than of their actual capability of transmitting canonical works.

No one is even certain about the existence of printed copies; their availability may have created an illusion that a certain piece was important in the past because people have often assumed that calligraphy in rubbing collections was considered to be more important than that in print. This was because only the most exceptional or important calligraphy was made into rubbings, such as *Lantingxu*, rather than being put into printed books. Also, there were a great many profit-making publishers who published low quality books, which affected perceptions of the quality of printed books.

In fact, the availability of and accessibility to famous ancient rubbing collections were both low. He Liangjun said:

> "It is very difficult to find Jin Dynasty calligraphy now; even Tang copies of Jin works would be treated as wonderful treasures. Huang Changrui [Huang Bosi, 1079–1118 AD] of the Song was an erudite scholar of antiques. He thought he could not distinguish the Jin calligraphy, but he was able to distinguish from the Tang Dynasty onwards. … Nowadays it is hard to find Tang calligraphy. Only those works by calligraphers of the Song and after may be found. My family has Song calligraphy of over ten kinds. They are now sold out and are no longer available."
>
> 晉人書，世已罕見，即唐臨晉帖，世已稱為奇寶矣。故宋黃長睿[黃伯思, 1079–1118 AD]最號博古，然自以為不能別晉人書，但斷自唐以下而已……今唐人之跡，已自難得，唯宋以下諸公，世或有其書。余家宋人書亦有數十種，今皆賣去，不復存矣。[333]

Original Jin Dynasty works were scarce in the Ming, but even Tang and Song hand-traced copies were very rare. Even when they did exist, some Ming people may have sold them for profit. As for reproductions in rubbing collection format, Wang Shizhen described Ming collections such as *Baoxiantang* as follows:

> "I, in the past, for the sake of the Jin Dynasty standard, met *zhonggui ren* (eunuchs or officials) to ask for ancient genuine works. No genuine work has survived so far, and it is uncertain why the works were lost. We are left only with laments and sighs."

[333] *SYZSL*, p.863.

> 餘往歲為晉臬邂逅中貴人問古刻真蹟，今無一存者，不知何繇失之，為一慨歎而已。[334]

From this comment, we know that ancient rubbings and authentic calligraphy were almost impossible to find in his time. In addition, concerning the Chen clan's *Jiaxiutang tie* 陳氏甲秀堂帖 of the Song, Wang Shizhen stated:

> "The *Jiaxiutang tie* of five *juan* has suddenly become popular these days, but it is probably made up from miscellaneous collection."
> 甲秀堂帖五卷，近忽盛行，想是模刻雜本為之耳。[335]

Although this was an important Song collection, not many Ming people had seen the original. Even if these were counterfeit collections, it was difficult to distinguish them from originals, and in fact many Song collections in the Ming were not genuine. Therefore, people sought ancient calligraphy from alternative sources. For example, the famous Ming rubbing expert Zhao Yiguang said that:

> "ancient calligraphy was difficult to get, so people turned to pursue ancient inscriptions on seals and steles instead."
> 古名跡不易得，求之金石文。[336]

Many Ming people began to look for more reliable calligraphy – for instance, the inscriptions on bronzes and steles. However, in general, this was his expert opinion, and *bei* were not as popular in the Ming as they became in the Qing.

3.5 Colophons, Script-types and Pictorial Images

The following sections examine the fundamental constituents of rubbing collections, in particular, their structure and content – for instance, colophons, script-types and new element such as pictorial images and prefaces. Among these, the most obvious feature is the inclusion of a preface.

Ming collections are quite different from Song collections in terms of their content. For example, *Dongshutang* included a self-written preface by Zhu Youdun at the beginning of the collection which provided a brief explanation of the making of the collection and listed some examples.[337] A preface differs from a normal inscription in that it explains why some classical pieces were not selected, why particular calligraphy was chosen, how the calligraphy was arranged and provides essential information about the collection. Prefaces to collections emerged in the Ming and were included in negative as part of the collection.

[334] *YSSBG*, *juan* 133, p.16.
[335] *YSSBG*, *juan* 133, p.17.
[336] *HSZT*, *juan shang*, p.58.
[337] *CTM*, v.1, p.191.

In addition to the original preface, some re-cuts would include an additional preface so as to provide further information about the purposes of re-publishing the collection. For example, in the re-cut of *Dongshutang* of 1481AD, Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 Zhu Youtang 朱祐樘 (1470–1505AD) said:

> "When my deceased uncle King Xian of Zhou was an heir to the throne, he traced the *Chunhua getie* and added the calligraphy of Song emperors and Yuan eminent officials, arranged them according to their periods, made them into ten *juan* and put his preface at the beginning of the rubbing collection. Since the engraved calligraphy was housed in the *Dongshutang* where I read it every day as well, I entitled the collection with the name of the hall."
>
> 惟我王伯考周憲王位儲時，嘗臨摹淳化閣帖，益以宋帝王暨元名臣之書，各以其人，循時代分列，為卷凡十，自序其端。刻寘所居之東書堂以日資披閱，故命以茲名。[338]

If there was already a preface in the collection, a second preface added to later editions or re-cuts would be called *houxu* 後序, such as in the *Baoxiantang tie*.[339] In normal circumstances, prefaces were usually added when the collection was published for the first time. In fact, however, adding a preface to a rubbing collection was unprecedented before the Ming. Prefaces differ from *kuan* 款 (a kind of inscription that usually appeared at the end of a piece of writing) in that they are supposed to be read by anyone. This implies that any collection which had a preface was made for a wide audience, and was no longer limited to certain privileged groups. Even though Zhu Youdun claimed in his preface that he made the collection for his private use, it seems that this was not the case.[340]

Instead of hand-written inscriptions and colophons to the collection, most comments on any aspect of the rubbing collection were engraved on stone or woodblocks and became part of the core content of a collection. Colophons like this had already emerged in Song rubbing collections. Song people first wrote colophons to calligraphy in rubbing collections. The most influential were Su Shi and Huang Tingjian. Their inscriptions were much more than short personal views; they were of high literary value and had an impact on the literary world.[341]

Besides prefaces, colophons and postscripts were always kept in Ming rubbing collections. Colophons had already emerged and become popular in the Yuan Dynasty. For example, Li Rihua's *Liuyanzhai biji* 六研齋筆記 said:

> "Zhao Wenming [Mengfu, 1254–1322 AD] had copied many of Youjun's calligraphy. My home has been housing the *Kuaixue tie* for a long time. There were many inscriptions on it written by Zhao. This illustrates how Zhao treasured this collection."

[338] In the preface of the re-cut of *Dongshutang*, in *CTM*, v.1, p.192.
[339] Jinci bowuguan 晉祠博物館 (ed.), *Baoxiantang jigufatie* 寶賢堂集古法帖 (Beijing, 2002), p.336.
[340] *CTM*, v.1, p.191.
[341] For the study of Song inscription, please see Huang Shang 黃裳, *Yuxia shuoshu* 榆下說書 (Anhui, 2006), p.15. Hereafter, Huang Shang.

> 趙文敏[孟頫]公臨右軍帖為尤多，余家藏快雪帖乆矣，公反覆題識於上，可見其珍重之深也。[342]

Many Song collections did not contain Song people's comments, and even if they did, they were seldom engraved except for the long and special colophons written by former masters and noted people. Otherwise, the colophons would not be engraved. Moreover, these engraved colophons most often had the same aesthetic value as other calligraphy in the collection, such as the four-word *Colophon to the Preface to the Orchid Pavilion* by the Southern Song emperor Zhao Guo 趙構 (1107–87AD) in the second *juan* of *Baojinzhai*.[343] Despite its brevity, as with the *Getie ba* 閣帖跋 of Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322AD), it was received as a model calligraphy for learning.

In terms of Ming colophons, many of them were short and were put at the end of the collection rather than as part of the core content. For example, a colophon of seven columns to *Chengqingtang* by Dong Qichang in *Xihongtang* (see Fig.3.10)[344] was engraved after the collection. However, this kind of colophon was different from the above-mentioned Song ones, because they were not part of the core content of the collections despite the fact that they were engraved. They were subordinate to the main calligraphic pieces and were more for connoisseurship and authentication purposes. Although these colophons may eventually come to be received as model calligraphy for learning and appreciation, at the moment when they were made into rubbings they were supposed to provide additional information to the collectors. Therefore, the calligraphy was written in a relatively casual manner and was of a smaller size to signify the difference and its less important status.

In the Ming, colophons to rubbing collections contained more information than Song ones and were not restricted to the dates and places of publication. They often included the publisher's comments on the authenticity of the selected calligraphy, its stylistic characteristics and sometimes the circulation history of the pieces. In particular, the possession record of a collection in the colophon often helped to verify whether certain calligraphy or an entire collection was genuine. In general, a significant collection usually had long colophons recording its circulation or possession history. Collectors relied heavily on them to check the reliability of the collection. For instance, Wang Kentang's 王肯堂 (1553AD, c.1589AD, or 1549–1613AD) colophon to *Chengqingtang* reads as follows:

> "Dong Xuanzai misunderstood that the *Shiqi tie* was this piece. He also confused *Chengxintang* with *Chengqingtang*."

[342] *LYZBJ*, 2 *bi juan* 2, p.41.
[343] For the detail transliteration of this colophon, see *CTM*, v.1, p.148.
[344] Dong Qichang, the *Xihongtang tie* (Beijing, 1997), *xia ce*, pp.16–59–61.

蓋玄宰誤以十七帖為此帖，又誤以澄心堂為澄清堂也。[345]

Thus, colophons are useful for tracking the circulation records and the opinions of collectors.

Sometimes biographical comments about the calligrapher were offered in the collection as well. Occasionally in the Song the publisher would note the historical significance of the calligraphy, but not to the same extent or in the way that most Ming people did. For example, the re-cut of *Getie* by Gu Congyi had a long colophon by him, in which he said:

"Now I have studied each remaining *juan* critically and have written it after the collection."
今以逐卷殘駁考證，開具於後。[346]

There were many long colophons in the *Pan* 潘 [Yunliang 允亮] edition of the *Getie* as well.

Therefore, instead of publishing a study of the rubbing collection in a separate book such as the *Fatie kanwu* 法帖刊誤, *Shike puxu* and *Jiangtie kao* 絳帖考 of the Song, it was more common to see Ming people express their views directly in the colophons of the rubbing collections. This clearly happened in the past as well, such as Mi Fu's comment on the *Getie*, but inscribing comments with a detailed analysis of the history and authenticity of the calligraphy in the rubbing collection was more common in the Ming than in the Song. This even became more popular in the early Qing because the study of evidential research was better developed.[347]

Thus, the most important point to note here is the subtle differences between colophons in Ming and Song collections. While almost no Song publishers left their comments on their collections, Ming publishers such as Wen Zhenming (*Tingyunguan*, 1560AD) included their own comments on individual calligraphy in the colophons of their collections. For example, in the colophon by Wen Zhenming to the *Jizhi Ji Mingwen* 祭姪季明文 of Yan Zhenqing in 1525AD, he said:

> "At the end of the calligraphy, there were two colophons: One by Chen Shen (1259–1329AD) and the other by Chen Yiceng (date unknown).[348] … The two were both famous for their knowledge of the study of inscriptions. Their comments in the colophons were thoroughly studied and well justified. Hence, it is unnecessary for me to say anything further about the calligraphy. I have provided the views of Huang [Tingjian] and Mi [Fu] for your information, and also to provide supplementary information that the Two Chen might have missed."

[345] *CTM*, v.1, p.165
[346] The colophon written by Gu Congyi in Sufu 肅府 edition of *Getie*, in *CTM*, v.1, p.17.
[347] 'Evidential scholarship' was a movement started in the late Ming dynasty, which was a reaction against the Neo-Confucianism which was popular during the Song dynasty. The most notable figure of this study approach was by a Qing scholar, Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724–77AD) who emphasized that truth should be found through investigation of the external world instead of focusing on introspective self-examination as claimed in Neo-Confucianism. For the study of evidential research or later named as *Kaojuxue* 考據學 in the early Qing Dynasty of Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–82AD), see Qian Daxin 錢大昕*Qianyantang jinshiwen bawei* 潛研堂金石文跋尾, no.17 & 18; or see Elman, Benjamin A., *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*: (Cambridge, 1984).
[348] He was active between Zhiyuan 至元 (1264–94AD) to Yuantong 元統 (1333–5AD) period, in *ZMRD*, p.1049.

> 後有陳深，陳繹曾二跋。……二人並以字學知名，而跋語考訂精審，余復何言。姑取黃[庭堅]，米[芾]之論，以備二帖折衷，亦補二陳之遺雲。[349]

This colophon clearly demonstrates the depth to which the publishers had studied the calligraphy. In fact, many other Ming publishers such as Wang Kentang also did similar things. This was what knowledgeable and serious publishers usually did in the late Ming.

Concerning inscriptions, those written by contemporary people were made into rubbings as part of the core content of the collections. Excluding re-cuts, this convention only began to be popular from *Tingyunguan* onwards. This practice was not well accepted by all Ming people, including Zhao Yiguang 趙宧光 (1559–1625AD), who said:

> "[Contemporary collections] abused inscriptions to put them in front and at the end of the collections, which mingled vulgar seal impressions, the bad hand-writing of the viewers and their names at the end of the collections. All these were a waste of money and were not beneficial to the collection. What was meant by this?"
>
> [時帖] 所刻濫及題跋，並其惡俗印章及觀者惡劄名姓都厠首尾。枉費無益，此何謂也。[350]

Although Zhao criticized the abusive use of colophons in rubbing collections, he also added that:

> "Inscriptions including the colophons and statements about connoisseurship in front and at the back of a *fashu* (model calligraphy) were necessary, but they were only good for precious and unusual antiques and should not be engraved and put in *fatie* (rubbing collections)."
>
> 法書首尾題跋鑑賞諸文，亦不可少。但謂之古玩奇珍則可，刻入法帖則不可。[351]

With the exception of undesirable colophons, Zhao still thought that it was essential to have inscriptions in a rubbing collection, but they should not be made into rubbings. This meant that the situation had already become quite common in his time.

Furthermore, some collections provided a contents page, for instance, *Tingyunguan*[352] and the *Baohanzhai guochao shufa* (see Fig.3.11). Although the contents pages of these collections were later addition (within the Ming Dynasty), the inclusion of a contents page was a new invention in the history of rubbing collections, possibly the result of the influence of printed books.

Besides these new features, the script-type of the calligraphy was another fundamental visual element of rubbing collections. In general, despite many script-types in calligraphy, the most common script-types in rubbing collections were regular, running and cursive scripts. By tradition, early rubbing collections were comprised of Jin Dynasty correspondence which was mostly personal and

[349] *CTM*, v.1, p.248
[350] *HSZT*, *shiyi*, p.4
[351] *HSZT*, *shiyi*, p.4.
[352] For the detail of the content page of the *Tingyuanguan tie*, see *CTM*, v.1, pp.249–50.

was often in one of these three script-types. Eventually these types became a convention until the Ming Dynasty.

As Zhao Yiguang pointed out, "small regular script was the most widely used script-type during his generation (the Ming Dynasty)" 小楷世用極博.[353] However, this script-type requires more attention and takes longer to write than running and cursive scripts. Since "running and cursive scripts were used for common [writings and letters]" 行草為通俗 [文書] 之用,[354] they were received as casual and expressive writing styles, the opposite of the regular script in which most government and formal documents such as official letters were written.

Other script-types, such as seal and clerical scripts, were less popular in the Ming. For example, Wang Shizhen stated in his *Yiyuan ziyan* 藝苑巵言 that "Ancient clerical script seldom appeared in the Ming Dynasty" 古隸在明世殊寥寥.[355] These scripts were used neither in court nor in daily life during the Ming. For this reason, a late-Ming calligrapher Ni Houzan 倪後瞻 (date unknown) suggested to his contemporaries in his book *Nisumen shufa lun* 倪蘇門書法論 that

> "Anyone who wants his calligraphy to be famous nowadays, apart from regular and cursive scripts, should focus mainly on running script."
> 凡欲以書名世者，雖學楷學草，然當以行書為主。[356]

This clearly shows how popular and important running script was in the Ming. It describes how common running script was in the Ming, despite the fact that cursive as well as regular script-types were also widely learned and practised. Other script-types, such as the ancient clerical script, were not very popular and it is rare to find good examples of them in Ming rubbing collections. Except for seal and clerical scripts, which were sometimes applied in *kuan* 款 (dates with the name of the author, scribe or publisher) at the end of a *juan* of a collection (Fig.3.12), these script-types were not often used in the Ming. Evidently, due to their practicality of the regular, running and cursive scripts in daily life and in the court, they were applied more often than any other script-types. They also became the trend in the Ming calligraphy world, and therefore it is no wonder that the calligraphy of rubbing collections was mainly in these script-types.

In addition to reasons of tradition and practicality, an important social factor affecting the choice of script-type was the level of knowledge of the audience. Ming rubbing collections were intended for

[353] *HSZT*, Jinshilin xulun 金石林緒論, p.7.
[354] *HSZT*, Jinshilin xulun, p.14.
[355] *YSSBG*, *juan* 154, p.25.
[356] *LYZYL*, *juan* 303, p.1.

any literate person and not just the elite, and the ancient scripts that were no longer in use would restrict the readership to a few people who had the ability to understand the archaic script-type.

There were even Ming collections solely written in small regular script or regular script, which we rarely see in similar collections from the Song. Since writing good calligraphy was one way to obtain an official title in the Ming, there was an unspoken rule that writing in the style preferred by the emperor was encouraged. Hence, most men of letters in the Ming (especially in the first half of the dynasty) usually followed the imperial preference. The third emperor of the Ming, Yongle (r.1403–24AD), especially prized calligraphy, and instructed his court officials to learn the art of the Two Wangs, meaning that the works of the Two Wangs were adopted as models. Emperor Yongle's son Emperor Renzong (d.1425AD) liked to copy the *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion*, and attained a level of accomplishment equal to that of emperor Taizong (r.627–49AD) of the Tang.[357] Because of its use by officialdom, in general running script was highly valued in the Ming. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that educated Ming people put more effort into learning it and accorded it higher value than other script types.

For example, in his manual to antique collecting: entitled *Zhangwuzhi*, Wen Zhenheng (1585–1645AD) states:

> "The price of calligraphy depends on the regular script as a standard. For example, a hundred characters of the cursive script by the Right General Wang [Xizhi] costs about the same as one line of his running script; three lines of running script is equivalent to one line of his regular script."
> 書價以正書為標準，如右軍草書一百字，乃敵一行行書，三行行書，敵一行正書。[358]

Although Wen used the same idea as Jiang Kui's *Xu Shupu* from the Song Dynasty, he still put this note in his book that provided guidelines about collecting. The statement shows the way in which Ming people measured the value of a piece of calligraphy based on script-types. From it we know that Ming people placed a higher value on calligraphy written in regular script than in other script-types. Another example which shows that Ming people valued regular-script calligraphy comes from Dong Qichang's *Xihongtang*. He recommended that calligraphy beginners should learn to write regular script before they learned other script-types, so as to have an idea of the frame of a character. After that, they would be able to control the movement of the brush freely and skilfully.[359] He emphasised the importance of regular script and had at least one *juan* of regular-script calligraphy in *Xihongtang*.

[357] *HLJ*, *juan* 2.
[358] *ZWZ*, *juan* 5, p.3. For other English translation, see *ST*, p.122.
[359] The colophon to the Thousand characters by Ouyang Sugeng 歐陽率更千字文 in Dong Qichang (ed.), the *Xihongtang fatie* (Beijing, 1997), *juan* 4, pp.59–60.

Some of the regular-script calligraphy, such as the *Nüshizhen* 女史箴 (*Admonitions of the Court Instructress*), *Qianziwen* 千字文 and *Lisao* 離騷 (*Sorrow at Parting*), was included in a rubbing collection for the the first time. Therefore, he did not merely select common calligraphy, but really hunted for outstanding pieces in regular script to include in rubbing collections.

Traditionally, calligraphy was the main and only content in Song collections. However, pictorial images started to emerge as a new feature in rubbings as well as in rubbing collections in the Ming. The first example to include pictorial images was a hand-scroll, the *Lanting tu* 蘭亭圖 of 1417, containing Zhu Youdun's copy of Mi Fu's *Lantingxu* in small characters. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this thesis focuses on rubbing collections in book format because they are on a larger scale than individual rubbings and therefore provide a body of texts of sufficient size to give meaningful patterns or findings. An example of a collection that included pictorial images is the *Mingke er Wang tie* 明刻二王帖 of 1548AD, which included the figures of both Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi in the front of its Ming edition (Fig.3.13). Human figures are also found in the twenty-eight *ce Mingke Wanxiangtang sutie* 明刻晚香堂蘇帖by Chen Jiru of 1616AD (Fig.3.14), and in the *Chonglanguan tie* 崇蘭館帖 of ten *juan* by Mo Houchang 莫後昌 (date unknown) of 1620AD. While the former includes calligraphy by Su Shi, the latter includes calligraphy by famous calligraphers Mo Ruzhong 莫如忠 (1509–89AD) and his son Mo Shilong 莫是龍 (fl.1552–87AD, 1537–87AD)(see Fig.3.15).

Sometimes pictorial images other than human figures, such as paintings by the calligraphers or paintings depicting the content of the works, were included in the collections as well – for instance, the painting of *The Bamboo and Rock* in the *Wanxiantang sutie* (Fig.3.16). This is another factor that illustrates changes in the perception of rubbing collections in the Ming, since illustrations represent a new element. Further in terms of illustrations, there was a significant correlation between printed books and rubbing collections in the Ming. Illustrations in Ming printed books were very common and they became essential constituents in novels, especially in the second half of the Ming. Most popular novels in the Ming, such as *Xixiangji* 西廂記, included illustrations.[360] Therefore, it is possible that rubbing collections were illustrated under the influence of printed books.

[360] For the detail discussion on illustrations in Ming novels, please see Shih Hsioyen, *On Ming Dynasty book illustration* (Chicago, 1958), or Robert E. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 1998).

3.6 Dates and Scope of Calligraphy

Another crucial feature of Ming collections which should be noted was changes in the period and the scope of calligraphy preference. The calligraphy included in Ming collections shifted away from mostly classical works to a focus on contemporary calligraphy from same dynasty. More recent calligraphy was included in Ming collections, as evidenced in the lower proportion of Song and earlier content. Although this was not a Ming innovation, since some Song collections such as the *Fengshu tie* 鳳墅帖 of forty *juan* by Zeng Hongfu 曾宏父 in 1237–52AD only consisted of Song calligraphy, it was not a common practice at that time.

As shown in Fig.3.02, the number of new rubbing collections increased as the dynasty progressed and it rose sharply towards the end of the Ming. When we compare the dates of the calligraphy selected in early and later Ming collections, we discover that late Ming collections contain a higher proportion of the same dynasty and contemporary calligraphy than early Ming ones. There were also Ming collections that specifically excluded canonical calligraphy from past dynasties. Therefore, the scope of calligraphers and calligraphy had changed, and it was now quite different from the scope of pre-Ming collections.

In the Ming, *Baoxiantang* was the first rubbing collection to include contemporary calligraphy. The Ming rubbing expert and publisher Mao Yixiang 茅一相 (date unknown) said:

> "The calligraphy of Ming calligraphers first appeared in the *Baoxian* [*tang tie*]. However, it only gave a glimpse of it. People who read it felt it was not enough."
>
> 國朝明人書法，兆於寶賢，惜其嘗鼎一臠，覽者憾之。[361]

He went on to say:

> "The *Baoxiantang tie* was made when [Zhu Qiyuan] the Jing King of Jin was still a crown prince, which was mainly made in respect to the *Getie*, *Jiang tie* and *Daguan tie*, and included Song, Yuan and Ming calligraphy from the works housed in the residence of the king. They were then engraved in stone."
>
> 寶賢堂帖自晉靖王[朱奇源]為世子時刻者，大約以閣帖、絳帖、大觀、寶晉為主，而益以邸中所藏宋元及明人墨蹟，摹勒上石。[362]

We learn from the above that Ming people were aware of the significance of the act of including the calligraphy of their contemporaries, and they valued the way in which rubbing collections could provide a picture of their contemporary calligraphy world. *Tingyunguan*, which was made by Wen Zhengming and his sons, was the second rubbing collection to include contemporary calligraphy. Henceforth, more collections had this feature.

[361] In the Preface of the *Baohangzhai guochao fatie*, recorded in *CTM*, v.3, p.961, or *SHW*, *juan* 21, p.53.
[362] *YSSBG*, *juan* 133, pp.15.

Since there were often doubts about the reliability of old and classical calligraphy, especially regarding the authenticity of the calligraphy of Wang Xizhi, the inclusion of classical calligraphy in a rubbing collection was sometimes solely because of its symbolic meaning and formality. Traditionally, rubbing collections were the cultural reservoir of the old canonical calligraphy, and Jin Dynasty calligraphy was highly regarded as representing the classical tradition and model calligraphy. The reduction or elimination of Jin Dynasty calligraphy and similar works revealed how the importance of the classical tradition had lessened in the minds of the Ming people.

The inclusion of contemporary calligraphy was a way of recognizing the work of their contemporaries. The purpose of rubbings was to produce multiple copies and lower the chance of works being lost, which shows that Ming people were becoming more aware of the importance of recent and contemporary works. In addition, greater numbers of copies would not only increase the accessibility of the calligraphy, but also make the works and the publishers of the collections well-known to a wider audience.

Some Southern Song rubbing collections had begun to include the calligraphy of the Northern Song – for example, the *Qunyutang mitie* 群玉堂米帖 of the Jiading reign (1208–24AD), the *Yugutai fatie* 鬱孤臺法帖 of the Shaoding reign (1228–33AD), and *Baojinzhai*. These collections all included works by Northern Song calligraphers such as Su Shi and Mi Fu. Although these collections consisted of work by calligraphers from the same dynasty, they were made long after the calligraphy was written, and the calligraphers had already been dead for a few decades or even a century. We are reminded again that this was a new innovation in Ming China. Whether it became a norm or trend in the Ming or not, the inclusion of rubbings from calligraphy by living calligraphers in collections was very rare before the Ming Dynasty. From the mid-Ming onwards, rubbing collections such as the *Tingyunguan xutie* 停雲館帖續帖 of Wen Zhenming, the *Chonglanguan tie* of Mo Shilong and *Laiqinguan* all contained calligraphy from calligraphers who were still alive when the collection was compiled, or who had died very recently. In other words, contemporary calligraphy or calligraphy by living calligraphers was chosen to be made into rubbing collections. Further examples of collections containing contemporary calligraphy are the *Quanjinjiu qijue* 勸進酒七絕 by *Xu Youzhen* 徐有貞 (1407–72AD)[363] and the *Chenyanshi biao* 陳言事表 by *Li Yingzhen* 李應禎 (1431–93AD)[364] in the twelfth *juan* of *Tingyunguan*,[365] the *Xiyuanyaji tuji* 西園雅集圖記 by Xing Tong in the first *juan* of

[363] He was a native of Wuxian and a politician, in *DMB*, pp.612–5.
[364] He was a noted scholar-calligrapher and was the vice minister of the Court of the Imperial Study. He helped Wen Zhengming with his calligraphy, in *DMB*, p.1471.
[365] The list of the title of calligraphy of the *Tingyunguan tie* in *CTM*, p.228.

Laiqinguan,[366] and the *Zhishiji tie* 之室集帖 of three *juan* made by Xing Tong and his sister Xing Cijing 邢慈靜 (date unknown).[367] Sometimes the rubbing collections were compiled by the calligraphers themselves, or by their sons or close relatives. For example, Dong Gao 董鎬 (Yanjing 彥京) (date unknown) was the descendent of Dong Qichang, and he compiled some of Dong Qichang's collections, such as *Shuzhongtang*.

In fact we can also see this contemporary taste in other areas of collecting, such as books and antiques. For example, a Ming book of one *juan* entitled *Shanxi sizhen junmashu* 陝西四鎮軍馬數 from the Jiajing reign was collected by Ju Zhenyi 季振宜 (1630–?AD) and Wu Xiu 吳岫 (date unknown), and it was marked with their seal impressions. Wu Xiu's colophon to this book said:

> "whoever is in charge of this area should not neglect it, but should keep it well and not forget to read it."
>
> 繼其政者，當珍藏檢閱勿忽。[368]

It seems that Wu was doing more than simply reminding government officials about the importance of the book; he truly wanted to keep the book in good shape. As for the nature of this book, it was actually court-commissioned and is of a confidential nature. Despite the fact that every newly appointed official had to reprint it several times, there were not many copies in circulation at that time. So why did Wu Xiu, who was a book collector but did not need it for his work, collect it? Obviously, he must have been very fond of collecting books, but this also shows that Ming people such as Wu appreciated and valued new and contemporary books, and did not restrict themselves to collect books from earlier periods.

Apart from antiques, further examples also indicate that many Ming people were keen on collecting recent objects. For instance, Shen Defu observed this phenomenon and described contemporary items as follows:

> "An object for pleasure is good if it is ancient. However, this is not the case in this dynasty. Carved red lacquer of the Yongle reign, bronzes of the Xuande reign and porcelains of the Chenghua reign are as expensive as antiques."
>
> 玩好之物，以古為貴。惟本朝則不然。永樂之剔紅，宣德之銅，成化之窯，其價與古敵。[369]

[366] *CTM*, p.258.
[367] She was a younger sister of Xing Tong and was a native of Linqing, Shangdong, in *ZMRD*, p.467.
[368] In the colophon to the *Shanxi sizhen junmashu* 陝西四鎮軍馬數 written by Wu Xiu, in Huang Chang, p.15.
[369] *WYHB*, p.653.

Without denying the importance of antiques and ancient objects, the above example shows that from the collecting practice and standpoint of a Ming person, recent objects such as books and porcelains were becoming equally important as collectables. Many people still collected old objects, but it is fair to say that there was a trend towards collecting more contemporary works.

As a further illustration of this trend, collections exclusively composed of Ming calligraphy started to emerge at about the same time as the above examples. For example, the first Ming rubbing collection which was entirely composed of Ming calligraphy was the *Baohanzhai guochao shufa* 寶翰齋國朝書法 (*Calligraphy of the Ming from the Treasure and Scholar Studio*). It was completed in the Wanli reign and consisted of calligraphy from Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–81AD) of the early Ming to Huang Jishui 黃姬水 (1509–74AD)[370] of the late Ming. Mao Yixiang 茅一相 (date unknown) said:

> "This collection of sixteen *juan* with over a hundred pieces of calligraphy was composed of old works from famous collectors, both local and overseas (*hainei*). To make the rubbing collections, the ink used was difficult to obtain, and the copyists were outstanding and surpassed the vulgar ones. In one year only one or half a *juan* of the collection could be made. It was started in the year of Xinyou (1563AD) and was completed in the year of Yiyou (1585AD). … I should share this with all the knowledgeable elite."
>
> 此帖計共十六卷，凡百餘種，皆遍求海內名家所藏前人遺墨。勒諸石者，墨蹟既不易得，臨摹亦非俗手可與，或歲摹一卷，或半卷，自辛酉至今乙酉始訖。……貴當與博雅之士共之。[371]

This was a large-scale collection of sixteen *juan*, which included calligraphers ranging from the early Ming up to the time when the collection was completed. From the above description we know that the producer was not in a hurry to make the collection, and he cared a great deal about its quality. He did not mention antiquity, stating merely that the collection was for those who were striving to own a wide range of elegant work. This clarifies his purpose in making the collection – in other words, to create something unusual.

In addition, another collection consisting entirely of Ming calligraphy was *Jinlingmingxian*, which included calligraphy from early Ming calligraphers such as Shen Du 沈度 (1357–1434AD)[372] to late Ming calligraphers such as Dong Qichang; altogether there was a total of fifty-four calligraphers represented. Most of the selected people were contemporaries in Nanjing; this collection will be discussed further in the following section. Some other contemporary collections with later dates were *Qingshantang* and the *Chengguantang tie* 澄觀堂帖 by Cheng Zhai 程齋 (date unknown)

[370] He delighted in literary pursuits, and spent large sums for the acquisition of books, paintings, and antique objects, in *DMB*, p.664.
[371] Preface of Mao Yixiang 茅一相 of the *Baohanzhai guochao shufa* 寶翰齋國朝書法, *CTM*, v.3, p.961
[372] He was known for both his prose and poetry, and was an official and calligrapher, in *DMB*, pp.1191–2, or see *ZMRD*, p.426.

of the Tianqi reign, and the *Jiuyuxuan cangtie* 舊雨軒藏帖 by Zhu Changtong 朱長統 (date unknown) of the Chongzhen reign.

> As for the perception of collections of contemporary calligraphy, Zhao Yiguang said:
>
> "Regardless of rare good ancient rubbing (collections), old collections were better than contemporary ones. Why? People were praised as a teacher and their every word was viewed as model calligraphy. Of the later rubbing collections, disregarding the poor quality collections, even the renowned ones could not surpass the early collections. Why? This was because they selected unqualified calligraphers."
>
> 古帖善本無論矣，即不善本，亦大勝時帖，何也?人人當家，字字師範也。後世諸刻，惡本無論矣，即名世善本，不堪比並前作，何也?所采未必當家。[373]

This comment represents the traditional view inherited from Song antiquarianism, but it also reflects the opinion of some Ming people. It is known that antiquarianism was very popular in the Ming and many people still had a preference for old objects, including rubbing collections. However, Ming people were also aware of the importance of the authenticity and accuracy of the content of the works, especially since there were many low quality works and forgeries in existence. For example, Shen Defu commented on Ming rubbing collections as follows:

> "It originated from the members of the Jiangnan gentry who were fond of ancient books. People believed and followed all the words said by the vulgar people of the Xinán region. Several rich merchants said the book was worth a thousand or a hundred [ounces of gold]. They easily spent all the money they had on the items they wanted, without noticing the difference between the genuine ones and the fakes."
>
> 濫觴於江南好事縉紳，波靡於新安耳食。諸大估曰千曰百，動輒傾橐相酬，真贋不可復辨。[374]

Ming people knew that high-quality and genuine antiques were rare and their availability was limited, and not many people were cognoscenti. In the 1617AD colophon to the six *juan Lanqinguan zhenji* 來禽館真跡 (including its sequel) of 1621AD, the Ming politician Zhang Yandeng 張延登 (date unknown) said:

> "Nowadays everywhere is full of your [Xing Tong's] counterfeit calligraphy. No one except the people who have good eyes can distinguish the difference between genuine and fake works."
>
> 今海內盛傳[邢侗]先生書贋鼎混真，非具眼不能別識矣。[375]

The situation had become very bad. This was why Xing Tong had to make a second edition of the rubbing collection of his calligraphy, and to emphasise the word *zhenji* 真跡 (authentic works) in its title. Also, from another calligrapher's collection, the colophon to *Shuzhongtang* by Dong Qichang stated:

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[373] *HSZT*, *shiyi*, p.4.
[374] *WYHB*, p.653.
[375] This transliteration was recorded in *CTM*, v.3, p.1216.

> "One visitor asked me: the counterfeits of my calligraphy were everywhere. There was no magic mirror to distinguish the genuine ones from the forgeries. Who would take the role to judge them? I replied: In the Song, there were only a few genuine works by Li Yingqiu and people wanted to make counterfeit paintings. Mi Yuanzhang [Fu] said that there were only two genuine works out of three hundred forgeries, but would those three hundred forgeries be able to fool people? I asked my son Gao to trace my calligraphy and make it into a rubbing whenever I had finished a piece. As time went on, copies of my calligraphy accumulated up to six *juan.* I told him to name the collection the *Shuzhongtang tie* because of this continued practice."
>
> 有客諦餘曰: 公贋書滿海內，世無照魔鏡，誰為公辨黎丘? 餘曰:宋時李營丘畫絕少真蹟，人欲作李論。米元章見偽者三百本，真者二本，安見三百本能掩二本哉? 餘每書輒令族子鎬摹之，歲久積成六卷，命之曰書種堂帖，因為題此。[376]

In view of this and in the context of the new interest in contemporary books, Ming people shifted their preference to contemporary works to avoid being cheated.

As well as the above, a new type of ideology emerged and became prevalent in the late Ming. For example, Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602AD) said:

> "Why do poems need to be old and writings need to be from the Qin Dynasty? Lower (the standard) to the Six Dynasties, change it to include recent writings, change it again to include legends, institutional-style writings, miscellaneous drama scripts such as the *Xixiang ji* (*The Song of West Chamber*), the *Shuihu juan* (*The Water Margin*), and examination study materials. They were the best writing past and present, and they should not be judged by their dates."
>
> 詩何必古選，文何必先秦? 降而為六朝，變而為近體，又變而為傳奇，變而為院本，為雜劇，為《西廂曲》，為《水滸傳》，為今之舉子業，皆古今至文，不可得而時勢先後論也。[377]

Another interesting feature of Ming rubbing collections was that they often included widely known and highly-regarded contemporary calligraphers.[378] Traditionally, many pre-Ming publishers preferred classical examples with wider variations in their dates of calligraphy. In the *Fashu kao* 法書考 of the late Yuan, poet and writer Yu Ji 虞集 (1272–1348AD) said:

> "The above listed examples show only the important ones. To study the most worthwhile calligraphy, if you want famous calligraphers, it is good to read a wide range of them."
>
> 以上並舉其要，必所當究者，若欲名家，尤以博覽為貴也。[379]

Thus, Yuan people were keen on rubbing collections containing calligraphy from various calligraphers. In contrast, collections of works by single calligraphers were common in the late Ming.

In fact, there were many examples of rubbing collections from a single calligrapher. For example, *Shuzhongtang* of 1614AD, and its sequel of another six *juan* in 1617AD, were compiled under Dong Qichang's supervision. Dong's other personal collections, such as the *Jiaowuguan tie* 鷦鷯館帖 of

[376] Colophon of the *Shuzhongtang tie* by Dong Qichang, in *CTM*, v.3, pp.1235–6.
[377] Li Zhi, "Tong Xinshuo" 童心說, in *Fen shu. Xu fenshu* 焚書.續焚書 (Hunan, 1990), pp.97–99.
[378] A modern art historian Huang Dun 黃惇 was the first one to comment that Ming rubbing collection publishers broke the past convention and bravely included contemporary calligraphy and their own works. Huang used the term *zhuanji* 專集 (*special collection*) to describe the collection with the same feature in *ZGSFS*, p.183.
[379] *FSK*, *juan* 1, p.16.

four *juan* of 1615AD, the *Hongshouxuan tie* 紅綬軒法帖 of four *juan* of 1619AD, the *Yanqingtang tie* 延清堂帖 of six *juan* and the *Jianhezhai tie* 劍合齋帖 of six *juan* in 1624AD, were all made by a relative of Dong Qichang, Chen Juchang 陳鉅昌 (date unknown). The making of rubbing collections during the calligrapher's lifetime was quite extraordinary in the history of rubbings, because most Song collections were made by people other than the calligraphers themselves, or not during their lifetimes. According to the evidence provided by existing Ming collections, however, Dong Qichang was the most representative figure of this phenomenon during the Ming. The collections of Dong Qichang's calligraphy were important examples, although they were neither the earliest examples in the history of rubbings nor the only examples in the Ming. For instance, the *Laiqinguan zhenji* was solely composed of Xing Tong's calligraphy. However, here we must recognise an area of ambiguity in our knowledge regarding whether Dong Qichang was the first Ming person to have a rubbing collection of his own calligraphy made when he was alive. To date, he might be the earliest one who is known to have done so, but there might be other earlier examples on a smaller scale. However, it was clearly quite an unusual practice to publish personal rubbing collections.

Whether because of the frequent publishing of Dong Qichang's personal rubbing collections or because of some other factor, his collections were amongst the most popular ones, and there were many more of them in terms of the sheer number of collections than for other calligraphers within the same period. Similarly, the renowned calligrapher Wang Duo 王鐸 (1592–1652AD) also published many rubbing collections of his calligraphy. However, Wang Duo's collections were made later and most of them were completed in the early Qing, such as the *Langhuaguan tie* 琅華館帖 of seven *juan* of 1649, and the *Nishanyuan tie* 擬山園帖 of ten *juan* of 1651–9AD. It is clear that Dong Qichang had an impact on Wang Duo in terms of publishing personal collections. Nevertheless, the publishing of personal rubbing collections became a trend in the late Ming and during the early Qing. Dong Qichang was crucial and influential in the emergence of this cultural norm.

Regarding the publication of personal calligraphy in rubbing collections, a modern Japanese scholar Tomoyuki Masuda 増田知之 argues that a large family who published rubbing collections, like that of Wen Zhenming, did so with the intention of publicising the family's achievements in terms of calligraphy, with the aim of making their calligraphy connoisseurship and their collections known to the rest of the local elite.[380] This may be one of the reasons why Wen Zhenming published

[380] 'Mingdai de fatie kanhang yu Suzhou Wenshi yizu' 明代における法帖の刊行と蘇州文氏一族, in *Tôyôshi Kenkyû* 東洋史研究, 62:1(2003.6), pp.39–74.

rubbing collections, but not all of the early Ming rubbing collections were popular or easily accessible to the general public, because some were outside Jiangnan and some were made by regional kings in remote places with limited access. However, the idea of family publicity in a period when collections were not as accessible and common as in the late Ming may be of doubtful utility. Since there is no information about the number of copies of each rubbing collection made in the Ming, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of advertising through publishing rubbing collections. However, it is a reasonable explanation with the caveat that it might only be applicable to some collections.

It could be claimed that most collections of this kind were not compiled by the calligraphers themselves, and therefore they would not provide publicity for them personally. As mentioned earlier, even if they were not compiled by the calligraphers themselves, they were often done by their relatives and friends. For example, the *Jigutang tie* 汲古堂帖 of 1630AD was edited by Dong Qichang's relatives. It said:

> "the *Baodingzhai* [*tie*] was made into a rubbing collection by my son [Zu]he (date unknown). [Later,] it was re-cut by my grandson Ting (date unknown)."
>
> 寶鼎齋[帖]予兒[祖]和所鋟版，予孫庭復刻此帖。[381]

This was still a way of showing pride in their outstanding calligraphy, and safeguarding them for future generations to learn from or memorise. That is a different kind of publicity.

The above Ming collections had a tendency to include the same dynasty and contemporary calligraphy, which could be observed in their content. In terms of the calligraphers selected for inclusion, another crucial observation was their personal fame, which was sometimes more important than the quality of the calligraphy.

Rather than publicising one's achievements (at either family or individual level), a feature common in the Ming was that people preferred rubbing collections by celebrities or renowned calligraphers. They purchased collections which included well-known calligraphy and the works of famous people. In fact, what they were really concerned with was the fame of the calligraphers without much evaluation of the quality of the work itself. A rubbing collection made under the name of Dong Qichang, such as the re-cuts of *Xihongtang*, may therefore have been better received than rubbing collections such as the *Chonglanguan tie* by the less famous calligrapher Mo Shilong, who was in fact the calligraphy teacher of Dong Qichang and who was presumably better than Dong in some ways. No matter how bad the calligraphy was, as long as it was written by Dong Qichang,

[381] For the transliteration of the colophon by Dong Qichang to the *Jigutang tie*, see *CTM*, p.1252.

people would gather and collect it to make it into rubbing collections. Many people requested calligraphy from Dong Qichang as well, but we have never heard of any of Mo Shilong's calligraphy being appreciated and collected in a similar way.[382]

Further, one may wonder why Dong Qichang had so many rubbing collections of his own, while there are far fewer collections featuring other renowned calligraphers. This was simply because other less famous calligraphers had less of their own calligraphy to make into collections, and they may not have been as wealthy as Dong and his relatives and other rubbing publishers who could afford to make many rubbing collections. Owing to the fame of Dong Qichang, there were many counterfeit examples of his calligraphy.

Furthermore, the Ming calligraphy selected for inclusion was not restricted to works by renowned deceased calligraphers. It might be the work of reputable people living at the same time. For example, most of the calligraphy in *Jinlingmingxian* was written by native sages and scholars of Jinling. However, there was originally no written title on the rubbing collection. Some calligraphy was written by less famous calligraphers, or non-calligraphers such as Gu Qiyuan 顧起元 (1565–1628AD)[383] who was more famous for his literature than for his calligraphy. Other Ming authors, such as Du Huan 杜環 (date unknown)[384] and Yang Xichun 楊希淳 (date unknown),[385] were rarely mentioned in the literature about calligraphy or were not well known in the Ming calligraphy world. An important aspect of this collection is that most of the authors included in it were introduced with their working department, and official titles or qualifications gained from the civil examinations. For instance, the collection includes *Song Xie Wenqing Jiangdong qigu* 送謝文卿江東七古 (*To Send Xie Wenqing at Jiangdong a Seven-character Poem*) by an official of the Ministry of Works named Huang Qian 黃謙 (*jinshi* 1472AD, act. 1521AD),[386] *Jielin lantingxu* 節臨蘭亭序 (*A Selected Copy of Lantingxu*) by *biejia* 別駕 (an unofficial reference to a department vice magistrate or assistant department magistrate) Chen Gang 陳綱 (1465–1487AD)[387], *Mingyue tie* 明月帖 by *taipu* 太僕 (archaic minister coachman) Li Shen 李甡 [Yingzhen 應禎, 1431–93AD](Fig.3.17), *Yuzixiang shihan* 與子象詩翰 by *jinyi*[*wei*] 錦衣[衛] (the embroidered-uniform guard unit or imperial bodyguard)

[382] See note 530, 531.
[383] He was an official, expert on bronzes and stone, and a calligrapher. His famous book was *Kezuo zhuiyu* 客座贅語 of 1618AD which talked about Nanjing and primarily dealed with the contemporary scene, in *DMB*, pp.734–6.
[384] He was a native of Luling. Ming Taizu (1368–98AD) was fond of his calligraphy, in *ZMRD*, p.341.
[385] He was a native of Suzhou. He was a good friend of Geng Dingxiang 耿定向 (1524–96AD), in *ZLRD*, p.872.
[386] He was a native of Jiangning and was good at writing poem and calligraphy, in *ZMRD*, p.1168.
[387] He was a native of Ningbo but lived in Nanjing, in *ZMRD*, p.1035.

Huang Lin 黃琳 (date unknown),[388] and *Dacheng shanzhong jiuyou shi* 大城山中舊遊詩 by *gongshi* 貢士 (a candidate who has passed the first grade of the examination system but not yet achieved the court grade) Shen Shitai 盛時泰 (1476–1545AD).[389]

In addition, those people without official titles, such as Shizhong 史忠 (1438AD–?)[390] and Xu Lin 徐霖 (1462–1538AD),[391] were introduced as *chushi* 處士 (scholars) or *shanren* 山人 (hermits). The way in which this rubbing collection emphasised the official titles of the authors' social status was extremely unusual.

It was far more common to see the studio names and full names of the authors, for example as in the *Zhaifang tie* 齋舫帖 by Wang Zhideng in the *Jiuyuxuan cangtie* of 1640AD. Thus, it was clear that the rubbing collection was made to express pride in having so many famous sages in their region of Nanjing. The use of official titles to describe the authors of individual calligraphy in the collection may be because the collection was targeted at potential consumers who would obtain and appreciate it because of the fame of the authors or for its historical value in terms of the study of the Jinling people. Undoubtedly, it was also because the producer wanted to preserve the works of local people for later generations and to raise the profile of local people in other areas, especially since calligraphy from Nanjing was not as famous as that from Suzhou and Songjiang. This prompted the creation of this rubbing collection which highlighted the region, even though some of the featured calligraphers only worked or lived in Nanjing for part of their lives. For example, Chen Gang and Li Yingzhen were natives of Ningbo and Changzhou respectively.

Thus, the preference for calligraphy has changed from high quality classical masterpieces to the calligraphy of famous contemporary people. Ming people were realistic and would choose a genuine work by renowned contemporaries rather than a masterpiece of doubtful authenticity. In sum, the move from selecting calligraphy from former dynasties towards appreciating contemporary calligraphy might have been prompted by an increased awareness of the authenticity of the calligraphy due to the existence of many counterfeits and low-quality late-Ming collections, and the emergence of the study of evidential research (particularly in the Tianqi reign).

[388] He was highly appreciated by Dong Qichang that he was one of the best collectors and connoisseurs of the Ming, in Lin Boting 林柏亭 (ed.) *Daguan: Bei Song shuhua tezhan* 大觀: 北宋書畫特展 (Taibei, 2006); or the Taipei National Palace Museum, notes on seal impression on the *Zhi Mengde bixiao chidu* 致夢得祕校尺牘, accessed 16 July 2012, at http://tech2.npm.gov.tw/sung/html/graphic/c_t2_1_a10.htm [edatabase].

[389] He was a native of Nanjing. He was good at calligraphy and wrote *Gujin mingtie* 古今明帖 in *Xuanduji* 玄牘記. He was a good friend of Gu Lin 顧璘 (1476–1545AD), in *DMB*, p.1628.

[390] His original surname was Xu 徐, *zi* Tingzhi 廷直. He was a native of Nanjing and was good at painting, in *ZMRD*, p.157.

[391] He was a native of Changzhou, in *DMB*, pp.591–3.

3.7 Literary Element

Another characteristic of Ming calligraphic rubbings was the active participation of collectors and calligraphers in the making of the rubbings. In the Ming, it was common for the local elite, collectors, connoisseurs and sometimes dealers to make rubbing collections. For example, an experienced Ming rubbing collector and connoisseur Wu Ting 吳廷 (date unknown) made the *Yuqingzhai tie* 餘清齋帖 of twenty-four *juan* (including a sequel) during the Wanli reign. His collection became much more popular in the late Ming when the making of rubbing collections became fashionable. Eminent calligraphers such as Wen Zhengming and Dong Qichang made their own rubbing collections, the *Tingyunguan* and the *Xihongtang fatie* respectively. Sometimes calligraphers would copy and even engrave the original pieces by themselves instead of relying on scribes or copyists. Hence, calligraphic rubbing collections made by experts and knowledgeable calligraphers were not only of higher artistic value; they also included more reliable calligraphy.

Besides this, new forms of rubbing collections also developed and there was an increase in the literary content of Ming collections. In the very beginning, most selected calligraphic works in rubbing collections were forms of correspondence – for example, the *Chunhua getie* was mainly composed of correspondence. Eventually, religious texts such as the *Xin Jing* 心經 (*Heart Sutra*) of Buddhism and the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (*Invaluable Classic*) of Taoism, and literary works such as poems and songs, were also included. For example, the *Xilou Sutie* 西樓蘇帖 (*Dongpo Sugong tie* 東坡蘇公帖 or *Xilou tie* 西樓帖) of thirty *ce*, which consisted of Su Shi's calligraphy, was compiled by Wang Yingchen 汪應辰 (1118–76AD) in 1168AD.[392] More than half the collection was not correspondence.[393] From the pattern of Song rubbing collections which were actually quite varied and wide ranging, the assumption was that Song people selected calligraphy based on the aesthetic quality of the works and did not restrict the content. For example, there were eulogies, such as the *Dongfangshuo huaxiang zan* which was attributed to Wang Xizhi, and prefaces, such as the *Preface to the Poxielun* 破邪論序 (*Preface to the Essay of Refuting Errors*) by Yu Shinan.

However, in the late Ming, especially in small-scale collections which included works of only one or two calligrapher(s), the content became more important than ever. For example, the *Zhishiji tie* of Xing Tong and Xing Cijing contained mostly literary works, such as Xing Cijing's *Zhilanshi feifeicaoshi* 芝蘭室非非草詩 (*Feifei-grass Poems from the Zhilan Studio*), and included forty-one

[392] *DMB*, p.1352.
[393] It was compiled by Wang Yingchen 汪應辰. For images of the collection, see *ZFQ*, *vol.6*.or Su Shi, *Songta Xilou sutie* 宋搨西樓蘇帖 (Hangzhou, 2005).

poems in *juan* three of the collection. This type of rubbing collection reveals that the priority of the selection criteria had shifted from aesthetic value to textual/literary value.

Furthermore, other literary works such as prose, songs and even *muzhiming* 墓誌銘 (inscriptions from stone tablets) were included, which were seldom found in previous collections. Many of these appeared for the first time in the Ming, and they became increasingly important. For example, *Tingyunguan* was comprised of a significant number of literary works, such as a copy of the Tang poem *Qiufeng ci* 秋風辭 (*Words about Autumn Breeze*) by Li Bai 李白 (701–62AD) in *juan* eleven of the collection. This work also appeared in other Ming rubbing collections. Also, the twelth *juan* of the *Wanxiangtang Su tie* included the calligraphy of Su Shi. These two rubbing collections both included many literary works, especially verses.

The increase in literary content in Ming rubbing collections is not a coincidence, as we can easily observe from the significant proportions and frequent occurrences in late Ming collections. Whether or not this was done intentionally, it shows that Ming rubbing collections had fewer restrictions in terms of content choice.

On the whole, the publishing of rubbing collections blossomed in the late Ming. The circulation of these works was boosted by the participation and support of various classes in society, including the upper class (royal family members and famous officials), the middle-class (scholars/literati), and the public (merchants, craftsmen and commoners). This situation provided a perfect environment for the development of rubbing collections in Ming China. The new forms of collection demonstrated the fact that Ming people treasured their regional identity and tells us about how they valued their contemporary calligraphy.

Chapter 4 Officialdom, Reception of the Calligraphy Canon and Rubbing Collections

4.1 Calligraphy Learning and Attitudes Towards Model Calligraphy

Regarding learning calligraphy, an early Ming collector Cao Zhao 曹昭 (fl. 1387–99AD) in *Gegu yaolun* stated: "It is essential to copy the styles of masters of the past, until one is thoroughly familiar with them."[394] Therefore, model calligraphy by past masters was crucial when learning calligraphy in Ming people's minds. This chapter explores the relationship between officialdom, the calligraphy canon and rubbing collections. Until now there have been few detailed studies on the sources of model calligraphy and calligraphy training in Ming China. This section therefore seeks to focus on the development of the content of calligraphy learning materials, particularly in the Ming. In fact, since the Song a distinction has been made between learning characters and learning calligraphy. When children began to learn to write, model calligraphy was essential to give them an idea of what the characters and styles of calligraphy were. In addition, it would be difficult for anyone to learn to write proper calligraphy without knowing or understanding the order of the brushstrokes or the characters' meanings. Thus, there were different levels of calligraphy learning and various kinds of models to learn from, which will be discussed in the following section about the calligraphy learning path.

For beginners, *shizishu* 識字書 (primers) were not only for children to learn characters. They were also a kind of calligraphy learning resource.[395] *Shizishu* contained models of good handwriting for learners to imitate and copy. However, they were not necessarily only canonical calligraphy or written by calligraphers. They could also be handwritten calligraphy, or reproductions such as rubbings.

According to *Han shu yiwenzhi* 漢書藝文志, the earliest *shizishu* or primer in Chinese history is the *Shizhoupian* 史籀篇, attributed to the Zhou Dynasty (eleventh century BC–221BC), and the next was the *Cangjie pian* 倉頡篇 of the Qin Dynasty (221-207BC). Later, the *Jijiupian* 急就篇 of the Han Dynasty (202BC–220AD) and others were added to the curriculum as official primers.[396] For

[394] *KKYL*, p.201. For the original Chinese texts, see the *GGYL*, *juan* 5.

[395] For further studies on *shizishu* and bamboo slips of the Han Dynasty, see Lin Jinchung 林進忠, 'Hanjian shizishu zai wenzi yu shufashi shang de zhongyao yiyi – Qinjian wenzi wei Qinzhuan shuo' 漢簡識字書在文字與書法史上的重要意義—秦簡文字為秦篆說, *Di er jie xianQin xueshuyanjiuhui lunwenji* 第二屆先秦學術研究會論文集 (Gaoxiong, 1997), pp.81–2; or Huang, Ya-u 黃雅茹, *An Analysis of the Calligraphy of the Textbook of Han Jian* 漢簡識字書之書法初探, in *Zaoxing yishu xuekan* 造形藝術學刊, 2003.06, pp.187–208. In addition, modern calligraphy copybooks usually include square guidelines, marked with the order of the brushstrokes, and coloured outlined brushstrokes for learners to follow (which is called *miaohong* 描紅), but the pre-modern ones merely included the texts.

[396] For further discussion of the primers in early imperial China, see Hsing, I-tien 邢義田, 'Han dai Cangjie, Jijiu bati yu shishu wenti—zailun qinguanli ruhe xuexi wenzi' 漢代蒼頡急就八體與史書問題—再論秦官吏如何學習文字, in *Zhiguo anbang* 治國安邦 (Beijing, 2011).

example, some *Han jian* 漢簡 (Han Dynasty wooden slips, see Fig.4.01), which were unearthed at Juyan 居延 in Inner Mongolia[397] and in Dunhuang, provide evidence of how ancient people learned calligraphy.[398] These characters were the most typical calligraphy or character learning materials used in the ancient past. Obviously, they were materials that students had written to practice calligraphy. The characters were simple but included all the basic elements (i.e. the five basic brushstrokes which form a word). Later, there were the *Qianziwen* 千字文 of the Liang (502–557AD), the *Sanzijing* 三字經 of the Song (960–1279AD), and the *Yongzi bafa* 永字八法 (*Eight Methods to Write the Character Yong*) and the *Caojue baiyunge* 草訣百韻歌 (*Knack for Writing Cursive Script in a Hundred Rhythm Song*)[399] of the Ming. Although Ming eunuch Liu Ruoyu's 劉若愚 *Ming Gongshi* 明宮史 clearly stated that the *Yongzi bafa* was the primer for calligraphy in the Ming,[400] this text actually appeared much earlier.[401] In addition, there were many materials, including unofficial materials, for Ming people to use when they were learning various kinds of calligraphy script types.

Therefore, we know that the models used for learning calligraphy varied from time to time, and from person to person. Advances in printing technology, especially after the mid-Ming, lowered the cost and increased the efficiency of publishing books. More people had the opportunity to understand calligraphy through popular books: the *riyong leishu* 日用類書 which was often used by commoners of all ages, such as the *Wanbao quanshu* 萬寶全書, which widened the audience and facilitated the transmission of calligraphy knowledge among the general public. Most often, the content about calligraphy within these books was made for people who were learning to write and not for advanced learners, and the calligraphy only formed sections of the books and was not their main focus, since they also contained articles on various topics. For example, Fig.4.02 shows a page from the *Wanbao quanshu*.

Because of this, it was believed that books like this were not typical resources for studying calligraphy. The modern historian Wang Cheng-hua 王正華 argues that such books were used as a reference to obtain ideas about various issues in order for people to have common topics of discourse

[397] Exercise slips were discovered by Swedish scholar Folke Bergman and his team at Juyan 居延 in Inner Mongolia in the 1930s.
[398] Despite the fact that bamboo slips of the Han Dynasty were usually used for record keeping, they had other functions as well, such as for calligraphy learning. This can be proved from the examples in *Juyan hanjian jiayipian yi* 居延漢簡甲乙篇乙 (Beijing, 1980), Fig.122 (G169.1A *Er mian gu* 二面觚) which were characters written by students practising calligraphy.
[399] The Ming edition of the *Caojue baiyun ge* 草訣百韻歌 was written by Han Daoheng 韓道亨 (date unknown) of the Ming. However, the author of the original text was claimed to be Wang Xizhi. In fact, it should be attributed to the Song Dynasty according to Ming writer Yang Shen's 楊慎 *Shenan Waiji* 升庵外集,*SKQS, juan* 88.
[400] It consisted of 21 pages in one volume, in Liu Ruoyu's 劉若愚 *Ming Gongshi* 明宮史,*SKQS, juan* 5, p.13.
[401] One of the beliefs was that it was written by Tang Dynasty Zhang Xu 張旭 (date unknown), in *MCB, juan* 2, p.12.

to discuss in their leisure time.[402] She explains that Ming people read these books according to their own needs. Her article entitled 'About Calligraphy' (*Shuhua men* 書畫門) in a daily encyclopaedia stated that the content of the calligraphy section was not primarily for people to learn calligraphy; rather, people read it to get ideas and knowledge to enrich themselves and for use in their social life. I agree with her view, but we should not totally rule out the possibility that some people really used it to study the basics of calligraphy, especially less privileged groups in society or those who were financially unable to afford rubbings. As a matter of fact, *leishu* was a popular publication and was quite easily accessible and affordable when compared with calligraphic rubbings. Hence, it might have represented an alternative for people to learn to recognise the script-types and for the illiterate to grasp a basic idea of calligraphy.

In terms of the content of the sections on calligraphy in these books, they were very comprehensive in that they included some rubbings of canonical calligraphy such as the works of Wang Xizhi. In addition, a great variety of script-types ranging from the rare bird-script to the most common regular script were included, with more than ten kinds in total. The model calligraphy presented in these *leishu* ranged from inscriptions on stone and ritual objects such as bronze vessels to correspondence on paper. Among these, in Ming people's eyes, the most important and useful model scripts were regular script rather than the ancient script styles, which would be used for the civil examinations. However, the sample calligraphy was small in size and most of the calligraphy was incomplete, so that it did not provide enough of a model for people to learn properly. Despite this, readers could get an impression from the samples and understand various kinds of script types. Nevertheless, during the Ming Dynasty, it was the mass popularity of *leishu* across China as a handy tool and visual medium (pictures and texts) that made this elite form of art appealing to people from all walks of life, including both illiterate and educated people. As a result, *leishu* also helped to popularise calligraphy among the general public, provided that the economic situation was favourable.

One drawback of this kind of mass-printed book, however, was the question of their reliability. Since they were not specialised books on any one subject, the authors may not have been able to authenticate the content to ensure its accuracy. For example, the famous Ming book collector and calligrapher Feng Fang 豐坊 (1492–1563AD) used Calligraphy Learning Path Diagram (*Xueshu cidi zhi tu* 學書次第之圖, see Fig.4.03) from a Song text entitled *A Study on Past and Present Rubbing*

[402] Wang Cheng-hua 王正華, 'Daily Life, Commercialized Knowledge, and Cultural Consumption: Late-Ming Fujian Household Encyclopedias on Calligraphy and Painting' 生活、知識與文化商品：晚明福建版「日用類書」與其書畫門, in *Academia Sinica jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 (*Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica*), v.41, 2003:9, pp.1–85.

Collections (*Gujin beitie kao* 古今碑帖考) by Zhu Changwen 朱長文 (1039–98AD) to illustrate and suggest various examples of model calligraphy for learners at different ages and levels.[403] He used it uncritically and unselectively in his *Tong xue shu cheng* 童學書程 (*Tongxueshucheng*). As shown in the diagram, beginners aged between eight and ten started to learn calligraphy. Learning calligraphy from an early age was thus a long-standing tradition.[404]

Nevertheless, the Calligraphy Learning Path Diagram was found in many daily encyclopaedias (*riyong leishu* 日用類書) and was believed to be a copy of either *the Study on Ancient and Contemporary Calligraphy Rubbings* (*Gujin beitie kao* 古今碑帖考) or *the Calligraphy Learning Path for Children* (*Tongxueshucheng* 童學書程). In addition, most of the daily encyclopaedias were poorly printed and many errors were found in later editions. In particular, when comparing the Song genealogy diagram of the *Getie* (see Fig.4.04) with the Rubbing Collections Ranking Diagram (*Fatie ciditu* 法帖次第圖) in *Assembled Pictures of the Three Realms* (*Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會) of 1607AD compiled by Wang Qi 王圻 (1530–1615AD) and his son Wang Siyi 王思義 (date unknown),[405] apparently they were from the same source, but the latter was poor in terms of its printing quality and integrity. Some connecting links between different examples of calligraphy were missing, and discrepancies were found. For example, under the old edition of *Jiang tie* (*Jiangben jiutie* 絳本舊帖), there should be three different branches showing the new edition of *Jiang tie* (*Xin Jiang ben* 新絳本), the edition of East Storehouse (*Dongku ben* 東庫本) and the edition of missing the character 'liang' (*Liang zi buquan ben* 亮字不全本). Instead, there were a total of eleven editions which emerged from the old edition of the *Jiang tie*. Also, the *Lizhou Rubbing Collection* (*Lizhou tie* 利州帖) was derived from the *Xiyutang Rubbing Collection* from Linjiang area (*Linjiang xiyutang tie* 臨江戲魚堂帖) with reference to the Song edition, but it was misplaced under the branch of *Shaoxing Guozijian Rubbing Collection* (*Shaoxing guozijian tie* 紹興國子鑒帖) in *Assembled Pictures of the Three Realms*. There were further mistakes in this later genealogy tree diagram, suggesting that it was undoubtedly a defective copy of the diagram from the Song. Therefore, some of the late-Ming illustrated encyclopaedias such as this were not a good reference for people who wanted to study calligraphy seriously.

[403] Zhu Changwen 朱長文, *Gujin beitie kao* 古今碑帖考, in *SKSL*, *di* 2 *ji*, v.18, pp.13164–5.
[404] For example, *Mosou* 墨藪 written by the Tang calligrapher Wei Xu 韋續 (date unknown) said that Zhong Yao 鍾繇 (151–230AD) started to learn calligraphy at the age of eight. Also, *FSYL* stated that Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 began to learn calligraphy at about seven or eight years old in *FSYL*, *juan* 2, p.8.
[405] It included content extracted from ancient texts with illustrations showing how to hold a brush and the way of writing (order of brushstrokes).

Furthermore, many script-types shown in the calligraphy section of the daily encyclopaedias (see Fig.4.05) were not common in the Ming, and they might be fake script-types. Also, the transliteration of each character was listed so that readers could see the different script types (Fig.4.06). In this respect, the calligraphy section was aimed at a wide range of readers, and covered information from basic to more specific knowledge. Owing to the limited scope of the calligraphy and the rough printing quality of the *riyong leishu*, however, they could not replace the traditional primers or model calligraphy, but they could be useful for the literate to learn about various styles and script-types.

Apart from primers for the masses and for less privileged people, some of the elite and the rich in the Ming had another option for obtaining model calligraphy for their reference. For example, Feng Fang's *Tongxueshucheng* commented on *fatie* as follows:

> "As for learning calligraphy, it is essential to study ancient model calligraphy. The origin of every dot and stroke needs to be memorized so as to avoid writing vulgar calligraphy. It is recommended to study a wide range of *tie* (calligraphic rubbings), and to be selective, for example, the *Chunhua ge* edition. Even though it is the ancestor of model calligraphy, it still has counterfeit calligraphy which misleads people. It is not surprising if other collections have counterfeit calligraphy as well. Since the *Chunhua* (*getie*), collections such as the *Xingfenglou* [*tie*], *Er Wangfu* [*tie*], *Baojinzhai* [*tie*], *Xuexitang* [*tie*], *Jiangzhou* [*tie*] and *Tanzhou* [*tie*] are all good, but they had to get the Song editions. As for the *Wuling* [*tie*], *Ruzhou* [*tie*], *Dongshutang* [*tie*], *Baoxiantang* [*tie*] and others, they are bad and vulgar. People should exclude them and be selective."
>
> 學書，必多學古人法帖。一點一畫皆記其來歷，然後下筆無俗字。看帖貴博，尤不可不知所擇。如淳化閣本，乃法帖之祖，其間剩有偽跡，混雜足誤來學，況其他乎？淳化之後，如星鳳樓[帖]、二王府[帖]、寶晉齋[帖]、雪溪堂[帖]、絳州[帖]、潭州[帖]等刻皆好，亦必得宋拓為佳。他若武陵[帖]、汝州[帖]、東書堂[帖]、寶賢堂[帖]等，俗惡可惡。當一切痛絕，不可濫及。[406]

Therefore, rubbing collections could provide a source of model calligraphy for learning ancient masterworks, but not for collections of contemporary calligraphy. However, one should know how to choose good collections for reference, and learn the works selectively. According to Feng's comment, he believed that the collections of the Song were much better than those of the Ming. He regarded the Ming collections as vulgar, and he advised people to avoid them. Apparently, the Ming collections were not a suitable source of calligraphy learning materials at all, and Ming calligraphers such as Feng did not recognise their Dynasty's collections as part of the calligraphy canon.

In terms of the history of learning calligraphy, calligraphy teaching started as early as the Shang Dynasty (eighteenth to twelfth century BC) and was part of a cultured man's essential education. Writing and calligraphy had already been included in the Six Arts (*Liu yi* 六藝): rites, music, archery, riding, writing and arithmetic in the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046–771BC). Henceforth, calligraphy

[406] *TXSC*, p.855.

was not only a kind of cultural element but was used extensively by the government. Therefore, having the ability to write good calligraphy was the prerequisite or one of the criteria for obtaining an official title.

It is thus easy to understand why excelling in calligraphy was essential in imperial China, since writing good calligraphy was part of the civil examination requirements. Not only calligraphers but also anyone who wanted to write proper calligraphy required a long apprenticeship. It is very difficult to reach a sophisticated level and to achieve great skill, because calligraphy requires years of arduous training and practice. It usually takes many years and sometimes even decades of intensive training, practice and extensive study of model calligraphy in order to attain full command of the brush. To many scholar-officials, the pursuit of calligraphy spanned a lifetime. Its lifelong practice allowed an individual to write with greater confidence and ease. As a result, calligraphy education often started from a very young age. Even Wang Duo 王鐸 (1592–1652AD),[407] who was a gifted calligrapher and learned calligraphy through copying the *Shengjiaoxu* when he was fifteen,[408] did not reach his full flowering until he was middle-aged. Therefore, it was crucial to start learning to write calligraphy early. Whether the calligraphy education was formal (at school) or informal, the use of model calligraphy as calligraphy teaching materials was fundamental and a crucial determinant of writing good calligraphy.

In learning calligraphy, the first lesson began with the grip, the proper way to hold the stem of the brush. The beginner learned with a diagram showing the respective positions of the brush (see Fig.4.07). Next, the first calligraphy style to be learned was always the regular script, not because it was easy to learn but because it was the most popular, and was a script-type used in the civil examinations. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, whoever learned calligraphy needed to refer to and copy works from models. Zhao Yiguang said:

> "As a reference for copying and imitating, one ought to use rubbings of calligraphy; for appreciation, one ought to use hand-written calligraphy."
> 臨仿須用拓本，把玩須用墨跡。[409]

Rubbings were unquestionably models for the study of calligraphy in some Ming people's minds, especially those of experts on calligraphy such as Zhao.

Although the classical tradition has remained fundamental ever since, different levels of acceptance and interpretations of these models have exercised at different times. For example, the

[407] *DMB*, p.1434.
[408] Wang Duo 王鐸, *Nishanyuan xuanji* 擬山園選集 (Beijing, 2009), *juan* 39, colophon 2.
[409] *HSZT*, p.98.

model calligraphy selected in the diagram ranged from regular script to rare ancient seal script. Apart from the famous calligraphy mentioned in the *Diagram of the Order of Calligraphy Learning*, *A Thousand Characters Classic* 千字文, which was originally used by children to learn characters, was a classical piece which was a typical model for calligraphy learning in the Ming, as well as being a traditional and enlightened teaching material. In fact, it was a popular model of calligraphy among calligraphers. For example, the colophon to the *Santi qianwen* 三體千文 of Xu Lin 徐霖 (1462–1538AD) written by the Ming scholar Sheng Shitai 盛時泰 (date unknown) in 1554AD stated that:

> "My friend Xuan Guangyin (date unknown) collects many ancient works of calligraphy and paintings. Some excess works have been moved to *Huayu shanfang.* He views them day and night, and this scroll was written by my fellow villager Xu Jiufeng,[410] which was a gift to Guangyin to help those young calligraphy learners (as a model)."
>
> 余友宣光蔭多蓄古書畫，餘數過花嶼山房中，披覽竟日夕，此卷乃吾鄉徐九峰先生書，以貽光蔭，助其少歲學書者。[411]

This shows that the piece was originally for young calligraphy learners to begin with. However, later, not only beginners but also sophisticated and renowned calligraphers wrote this piece to practice calligraphy. For example, the renowned Ming calligrapher Wen Zhengming wrote this piece many times throughout his life, and he even wrote it in the last year of his life when he was eighty-nine, as shown in Fig.4.08.[412] It indicates that *A Thousand Characters Classic* was commonly used by people of all ages to practise calligraphy in the Ming. It is still uncertain why, and it is quite thought-provoking that such a common piece was not listed as model calligraphy in the calligraphy learning path in the *Tongxueshucheng*. It might be simply due to personal preference, but it may also be because the diagram was made in the Song and so did not reflect the current situation in Feng Fang's time.

Nevertheless, this reveals that no matter how important a work of classical calligraphy was, in reality, it might not necessarily be used for practising calligraphy, as demonstrated by Wen Zhengming. He wrote *A Thousand Characters Classic* many more times than any other model calligraphy during his lifetime. We can therefore infer that canonical calligraphy was appreciated but was not universally adopted in the Ming as we might have expected, based on the extant calligraphy and its reproductions as rubbings.

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[410] According to *SYZSL*, Xu Jiufeng 徐九峰, named Lin 霖. He was active during the Ming Yingzong reign (1457–64AD) and was a native of Changzhou. Regarding the description of his calligraphy, see Gu Lin 顧璘, *Gu Huayu ji* 顧華玉集, *SKQS, juan* 1, pp.12–3.
[411] *LYZYL, juan* 168, p.42.
[412] Illustration of Wen Zhengming's *A Thousand Character Classic* in Xu Hongliu 許洪流 and Li Jieyi 李介一 (eds.), *Wen Zhengming A Thousand Character Classic* 文徵明千字文 (Hangzhou, 2003), pp.3, 23.

As for whether rubbing collections were good calligraphy learning materials, this depended on the attitudes of the learners. For example, a comprehensive study of calligraphy and rubbings entitled *Hanshan zhoutan* 寒山帚談 written by a Ming rubbing expert Zhao Yiguang 趙宧光 (1559–1625 AD) stated:

> "Inscribed calligraphy on stone can remedy calligraphers' unsuccessful brushstrokes. However, the amendment may lead to bad consequences. Why? Good calligraphy students may regard these weakpoints as useful."
> 刻石能振救書家之敗筆者，此其小補而有大害事處，何也? 善學書者多於敗處為功。[413]

He also said that when copying model calligraphy:

> "once the calligraphy was copied and re-cut dozens of times, inferior brushstrokes by ancient calligraphers could no longer be hidden. As long as one could distinguish the good from the bad calligraphy, these failures are my teachers."
> 十數翻摹，古人敗筆亦已不掩。能辨得失，敗筆皆我師資。[414]

After recuting many times, the weakpoints of the ancient calligraphy would be intensified in rubbings of later editions. Nevertheless, these weakpoints may become good examples to illustrate the comparison between the good and bad calligraphy. Therefore, the attitude towards how to learn model calligraphy was sometimes more crucial than the quality of the model calligraphy itself.

4.2 The Impact of Officialdom on the Ming Calligraphy World

There was a standard of beauty in calligraphy, and model calligraphy varied from time to time. For example, there was the *Yuzhu zhuan* 玉箸篆 (small seal script) used in the Qin Dynasty to standardise script-types, and the *Xiping Stone Classic* 熹平石經 of 175–184AD (see Fig.4.09) in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220AD) used to standardise classic texts for people to study for the civil examinations. Since then, there have been the *Zhengshi Stone Classic* 正始石經 (or *Stone Classic in Three Script-styles* 三體石經) in the Cao Wei Dynasty (220–266BC), the *Kaicheng Stone Classic* 開成石經 (or Tang Classic 唐石經) of the Tang, the *Stone Classic in Two Script-styles* 二體石經 (or *Jiayou Stone Classic* 嘉祐石經) of the Northern Song,[415] the *Song Gaozong Imperial Stone Classic* 宋高宗御書石經 of the Southern Song, and the *Qianlong Emperor Imperial Stone Classic* 乾隆御定

[413] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.59.
[414] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.60.
[415] It was written in regular and seal scripts which included nine Classics: *Zhou yi* 周易, *Shi jing* 詩經, *Shang shu* 尚書, *Zhou li* 周禮, *Li ji* 禮記, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋, *Xiao jing* 孝經, *Lunyu* 論語 and *Meng zi* 孟子.

石經 of 1791AD.[416] No matter who wrote these pieces, these Stone Classics were all authorised by the court as canonical texts for the civil examinations.[417]

Undoubtedly, unlike calligraphic rubbing collections, the content of these Stone Classics was much more important than the calligraphy illustrating them. However, one should bear in mind that before the invention of printing technology, cutting characters on stones and displaying them in public was the most efficient means of circulating and transmitting texts, involving relatively less discrepancy than using hand copies. Thus, Stone Classics such as the *Xiping Stone Classic* were not only imperial authorized editions of the classical texts, but they also served as models of calligraphy prior to the emergence of rubbing collections.

In general, the making of Stone Classics was the result of political intentions. This has been thoroughly studied by modern scholars – for example Keng, Hui-Ling's 耿慧玲 study on stone engravings and classical texts, which evaluated the political intentions of publishing classical texts and the importance of the medium.[418] Therefore this section mainly focuses on the calligraphy of these texts. There are three crucial points to note: 1) the selection of script styles; 2) the people who wrote these models; and 3) the publishing dates of these classical texts.

First of all, the script-styles used in these canonical texts changed from time to time. As they were model texts for civil examination candidates to study, the calligraphy style would also be considered as an authorised style by the court. Most often, it was the official style or orthodox style which would also be used in official court documents. This indicates the most popular calligraphy style of the time, and also how the court received the calligraphy style(s) of their time. The regular script (nowadays referred to as clerical script) of the *Xiping Stone Classic* was the most popular script in the Han Dynasty. The *Zhengshi Stone Classic*, which was written in the ancient, clerical and seal scripts, and the Northern Song Stone Classic, which was written in regular and seal scripts, consisted of both ancient and contemporary styles. Most other dynasties' Stone Classics were usually in one style. This therefore reflected how much emphasis the court placed on classical traditions.

Secondly, an interesting point to note was about the people who copied the texts. In the beginning, the Stone Classics were written by famous calligraphers or officials who were very well

[416] There were seven books of the Han Dynasty Stone Classics and it also included later dynasties' classics: *Gou liang zhuan* 彀梁傳, *Xiao jing* 孝經, *Meng zi* 孟子, *Zhou li* 周禮, *Li ji* 禮記, and so was called the *Thirteen Classics* 十三經.
[417] Sometimes, these materials might include Buddhist and Taoist in addition to Confucian classics, such as the Stone Classic of the Southern Song Dynasty. However, in most circumstances, they were Confucian Classics.
[418] Keng, Hui-Ling 耿慧玲, 'The Study of Stone Engravings and Classical Texts' 石刻與經典研究, *Zhishan* 止善, issue 5, (2008.12), pp.3–20.

known for their calligraphy, such as Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–192AD). Later, they were written by less famous officials who were responsible for editing the texts and were also good at calligraphy. These officials were, however, relatively less famous in the world of calligraphy. From the Southern Song onwards, emperors were more involved than in any of the previous dynasties in the editing and publishing of these sample texts. In fact, with many alternatives available, such as hand-copied and printed textbooks, these Stone Classic engravings became less important or even lost their function of offering model texts to the public, and became more symbolic rather than having a practical use. In fact, they became tools for emperors to demonstrate their legitimacy and literary achievement rather than being model classical texts or model calligraphy.

Last but not least is the time of the production and publishing of these Stone Classics. Almost every dynasty had its own official edition of the classical texts. However, no known orthodox Stone Classic engravings were made in the Ming.[419] Instead, the Ming court kept the old ones made in previous dynasties in Confucian temples and *shuyuan* 書院, such as the *Kaicheng Stone Classic*. This coincided with a decline in the publishing of rubbing collections by the Ming court. It is suspected that this phenomenon was affected by antiquarianism and the well-developed book industry during the Ming Dynasty, although further study is needed to prove this relationship. However, this goes beyond the scope of this thesis and so will not be discussed here.

One may wonder why these were engravings and not rubbings. In fact, after the emergence of rubbings, they were reproduced as rubbings for circulation. Nevertheless, since the majority of people in the past studied calligraphy for the sake of their careers, calligraphy style(s) either approved of or preferred by the court would inevitably have different degrees of impact on the calligraphy world. As shown by the history of calligraphy,[420] this preferential system usually led to homogeneity in the style of calligraphy, because many people copied and learned from the same model calligraphy style without creativity or the input of their own characteristics. This tendency even resulted in a calligraphy style unique to the civil examinations, namely *taigeti* 台閣體 and *guangeti* 館閣體, in English, "chancellery style", as used by the modern historian Huang Dun.[421]

[419] There were other official reference texts for civil examination candidates, such as *Hongwu zhengyun* 洪武正韻 of 1375AD.
[420] Calligraphy style and officialdom have been well studied. See Huang Dun, 'From domination of the chancellery style to liberation of the self: calligraphy of the Ming Dynasty' in Wen Fong (ed.), *Chinese Calligraphy* (Yale, 2008), pp.303–38.
[421] Ibid.

In fact, officialdom influenced the world of calligraphy from as early as the Tang Dynasty. For example, the mid-Ming calligrapher Mo Yunqing 莫雲卿 [Shilong 是龍, 1537–88AD][422] commented:

> "In the mid-Tang Dynasty, the court selected officials based on candidates' abilities to write good calligraphy. Hence, suddenly most scholars endeavoured to learn regular scripts. Their calligraphy styles were typical for the civil examinations. A clear example was the *Ganlu zishu* (Character book for seeking an official emolument) of Yan Lugong [Zhengqing]."
> 唐之中葉以書判取士，一時學士大夫競趨端楷。類有科舉氣，顏魯公[真卿]有干祿字書是其證也。[423]

This confirms that the institutional script style emerged in the Tang Dynasty. The author of the *Ganlu zishu* 干祿字書 was the uncle of Yan Zhenqing, Yan Yunsun 顏元孫 (?–714AD) and its calligraphy was written by Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–85AD). This book was intended as an official guide and dictionary of regular script for civil examination candidates. Hence, it contributed to the homogeneity of calligraphy style among candidates. As described by Mo Shilong, at least in the mid-Tang, most scholars and educated gentlemen tended to write regular script because of the examinations.

Writing good calligraphy was in fact often inseparable from officialdom. The court always needed people to write various kinds of official documents, such as *gaozhi* 誥制, *zhaoming* 詔命, *yudie* 玉牒 (jade plate) and *bian e* 匾額 (horizontal boards) and so on. For example, in the early Yongle reign, the court recruited candidates to serve them. In particular, they needed people to write *neizhi* 內制 (inner drafts) and *waizhi* 外制 (outer drafts, e.g. official documents given by the Central Secretariat). Some would be appointed as *zhongshu sheren* 中書舍人 (secretariat drafters).[424] For example, Huang Zuo's 黃佐 (1490–1566AD)[425] *Hanlin ji* 翰林記 stated that:

> "In the early Ming, the court recruited people who were good at calligraphy to serve the Central Drafting Office and appointed them as secretariat drafters. After the second year of the Yongle reign (1404AD), the court began to hire scholar-officials from the Ministry of Personnel who wrote good calligraphy as *Hanlin* staff and gave them an official salary. Thus, their talent could be applied to writing official documents."
> 國初令能書之士專隸中書科，授以中書舍人。永樂二年，始詔吏部簡士之能書者，儲翰林給廩祿，使進其能用諸內閣辦文書。[426]

Furthermore, according to the *Veritable Records* and other official documents, the Ming government encouraged calligraphy education and set up a national central institution *guozijian* 國子

[422] *ZLRD*, p.1850.
[423] *LYZYL*, *juan* 286, p.23.
[424] This is the one who serviced the Grand Secretariat (*neige* 內閣), in *DOT*, p.193.
[425] *ZLRD*, p.2063.
[426] *HLJ*, *juan* 19, pp.19–20. The term *ban wenshu* 辦文書 means on duty assignment as secretarial assistant to Grand Councilors and being responsible for writing documents for the court. Similar examples mentioning how the Ming court looked for people who were good at calligraphy to work for them can be found in *XSSHY*, p.1.

監 (Directorate of Education) to implement it. For example, *Ming Shilu* 明實錄 recorded in the year of 1397 that:

> "[Candidates] should practice calligraphy through copying more than two hundred characters each day. They learned the calligraphy [style] of [Wang] Xi[zhi], [Wang] Xian[zhi], Zhiyong, Ou[yang Xun], Yu [Shinan], Yan [Zhenqing], and Liu [Gongquan], etc, and They could select any one of these calligraphers and specialise in his calligraphy style, but the calligraphy must be in regular script."
> [諸生] 每日習仿書一幅二百餘字。以羲、獻、智永、歐、虞、顏、柳等帖爲法，各專一家，必務端楷。[427]

Therefore, we see there were standard models for candidates to study in the Ming, and they were not allowed to write their own styles; instead they had to use regular script. Calligraphy in regular script from any of the above calligraphers was regarded as the style approved by the court. In normal circumstances, candidates needed to practice calligraphy over many years until they could write skilful and refined script in the civil examinations. As a consequence this style, approved by the court and preferred by the emperor, gradually became dominant among the officials of the *Hanlin* Academy, especially in the early Ming.

Indeed, some government positions in the Ming were especially intended for those who wrote superb calligraphy. For example, the famous Ming calligrapher and painter Wen Zhengming devoted almost all his lifetime to studying and taking civil service examinations until the age of fifty-three. He became almost obsessed with official titles, but still he failed to succeed in the civil examinations. In 1523AD, owing to his fame in calligraphy and painting, he was recommended to the court by the Ministry of Works 工部尚書 Li Chongsi 李充嗣 (1465–1528AD)[428] for a government post as a *Hanlin* member 翰林待詔 (editorial assistant). This was a typical example showing the importance of writing good calligraphy in the life of an educated person in the Ming.

Further to the impact of officialdom on the Ming calligraphy world, the function of calligraphy in serving the court was also crucial. Although many people did not receive any official titles in return for working for the court, they were still hired by them to write calligraphy. For example, books published by the Ming court such as the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典 required 1,381 scribes to copy 1,095 books for such an extensive collection.[429] Therefore, numerous people were needed to work on the publication, and they all needed to write in the same style in order to maintain consistency within this enormous collection. The compilation started in 1403AD and was completed in 1408AD. For six years, and employing over one thousand scribes, the project trained and nurtured numerous people to

[427] *Ming Taizu shilu* 明太祖實錄, in *Chaoben ming shilu* 鈔本明實錄 (Beijing, 2005), v.2, *juan* 254, p.396.
[428] *ZLRD*, p.974.
[429] Sun Chengze 孫承澤, *Chunming mengyulu* 春明夢餘錄, *SKQS*, *juan* 12, p.5.

write in the same style. The *Yongle dadian* is only one of many such imperial publications, produced especially during the Yongle reign. Therefore, we can imagine how great the influence of the court was on the Ming calligraphy world.

Apart from this influence, sometimes emperors' personal preferences for the calligraphy style of a particular person would affect the court calligraphy style in general, and even influence the calligraphy world outside the court. For example, Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 (1364–1444AD) described the prosperous condition of the court calligraphers as follows:

> "Whenever there were jade books, gold letters, things used in ancestors' temples and by the court that would be housed in imperial halls and delivered to the four descendants (distant places), his calligraphy would also be cut in virtuous stones and transmitted to future generations. Whatever huge writing had to be done, the emperor always asked Shen Du to write it."
> 凡玉冊、金簡，用之宗廟、朝廷。藏秘府、施四裔，刻之貞石，傳之後世。一切大製作，必命公書。[430]

The Shen brothers had such successful careers mainly because their calligraphy styles matched the emperor's taste. Shen Defu recorded that:

> "The sage [Emperors] of this dynasty all paid very much attention to paintings and calligraphy. Emperor Wen Yongle cared especially for the two brothers Shen Du and Shen Can (1379–1453AD) who were natives of Yunjian. They were appointed directly as academics."
> 本朝列聖極重書畫。文皇特眷雲間二沈度粲兄弟，至直拜學士。[431]

Also, Jiao Hung's 焦竑 (1540–1620AD) *Yutang conghua* 玉堂叢話 described Taizong's calligraphy style preference as follows:

> "He was very fond of two Shen who were scholars and natives of Yunjian, particularly Shen Du's calligraphy. He said that Shen Du was our dynasty's Wang Xizhi."
> 最善雲間二沈學士，尤重度書，曰我朝王羲之。[432]

If the emperor was this fond of Shen Du, it would be natural for officials to learn Shen's style in order to please him. It was not surprising that there was often a preference for the style of calligraphy consistent with the emperor's taste. This example obviously shows the early Ming situation, revealing that the Yongle Emperor, r.1403–24AD was fond of the calligraphy written by Shen Du. This may be because Shen applied the Jin and Tang Dynasties' calligraphy style which reflected the classical tradition and especially Wang Xizhi's style. Therefore, it was not surprising to see Shen Du's calligraphy everywhere within the court.

[430] Yang Shiqi 楊士奇, *Dongli ji* 東裡集, *SKQS, juan* 16, p. 4.
[431] *WYHB*, p.25, p.907.
[432] Jiao Hung 焦竑, *Yutang conghua* 玉堂叢話 (Beijing, 1981), p.257.

Despite the fact that the Ming court viewed calligraphy as a tool with a practical function, Ming people in general respected people with good calligraphy skills rather than viewing them simply as craftsmen. They considered some of them to be potential officials and accepted them as cultured people. This perception was different from any previous dynasty because the court had never appreciated calligraphy to this extent before, and had never appointed officials based merely on the merits of their calligraphy. In fact, the Ming grand secretariat was usually promoted from academics who drafted the imperial prescripts in which decisions were promulgated.[433] The prospects or career path of being a member of the grand secretariat in the Ming revealed that the importance of writing good calligraphy was much greater than in any previous dynasties.

Indeed, if we trust the late-Ming work entitled *The Incoherent Talks in the Art and Literary Circles* (*Yiyuan zhiyan* 藝苑卮言) by Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–90AD), the Yongle Emperor treasured Shen's calligraphy to such an extent that he requested his sons and other royal members to study it:

> "[Shen] Du was appointed to the highest official title of the Chancellor of the *Hanlin* Academy. Emperor Wen (Yongle) thought highly of Shen's calligraphy skills and asked the crown prince and several kings to study from him."
>
> [沈]度至翰林學士，文皇雅重之，令太子諸王咸習焉。[434]

Shen Du's calligraphy was greatly admired in the early Ming. Thus, the calligraphy of the two Shen was very popular and was studied by people from both within and outside the court, with the secretariat drafters the first to follow the imperial preference.

Even after Yongle, other emperors such as Renzong 仁宗 (r.1424–5AD) were also very fond of Shen Du. For example, Renzong "copied the *Lantingxu* and presented it to Shen Du" 嘗臨蘭亭序帖賜沈度.[435] In addition, other Ming emperors were also keen on Shen's calligraphy. The Ming royal family member Zhu Mouyin 朱謀垔 (date unknown) commented on the calligraphy style of Xuan Zong 宣宗 Zhu Zhanji 朱瞻基 (1399–1435AD), believing that it originated from the calligraphy style of Shen's brother from Huating.[436] He also claimed that:

> "The Emperor Xiao Zong (1470–1505AD) ardently loved the calligraphy style of Shen Du. He copied a hundred characters of Shen's calligraphy every day as his homework and ordered the Left and Right court calligraphers to write it as well."
>
> 孝宗皇帝酷愛沈度筆跡，日臨百字以自課，又令左右內侍書之。[437]

[433] *DOT*, p.73.
[434] *YSSBG*, *juan* 154, pp.15–6.
[435] Huang Jian 黃簡 (ed.), *Lidai shufa lunwen xuan* 歷代書法論文選 (Shanghai, 1979), p.173.
[436] *XSSHY*, *juan* 1, p.1.
[437] *XSSHY*, *juan* 1, p.1.

Shen Du was thus recognised by the Ming court as a calligrapher who not only represented the imperial taste and approved style; his calligraphy was also viewed as model calligraphy by the public. This is clearly shown by the previous examples. As a consequence, following the calligraphy style of Shen Du became a fashion in the early Ming. The commentary on the set of albums consisting of *Sanwu kaifa* 三吳楷法 (Calligraphy in regular script by the three Wu) was recorded in *Shuhua baba* as follows:

> "From the Xuan[de] and Zheng[tong] to the Cheng[hua] and Hong[zhi] reigns, calligraphy was often written in the style of Shen [Du], occasionally in the style of Jiang [Ligang] Tingxian. As for Zhao [Mengfu]'s style, it has been there since the early Ming."
>
> 宣[德]正[統]至成[化]弘[治]多沈[度]體，亦間有姜[立綱]廷憲筆，若趙[孟頫]體則自國初來皆有之。[438]

This reveals how popular Shen's style of calligraphy was in the early Ming, since it was accepted as one of the most popular styles alongside that of the famous Yuan calligrapher Zhao Mengfu.

However, this only happened in the first half of the Ming. Because the style of calligraphy in the early Ming court was dominated by Shen Du, who had learned from the Jin style, rubbing collections produced in the early Ming mainly contained more Jin-style calligraphy, such as *Dongshutang and* the *Baoxiantang tie*. No other rubbing collections of contemporary calligraphy were made during this period. This reflected the calligraphy preference within the court and probably the calligraphy world,[439] but this situation gradually changed from the time of the Jiajing reign (1522–66AD).

Instead of just focusing on particular calligraphy styles, it is also crucial to understand the kind of popular script type in the Ming which reveals the perception of canonical calligraphy. In general, regular script was usually used in official documents throughout history, and there was a clear regulation in the Ming stating that official documents were required to be written in regular script.[440] As for correspondence to the emperor or to senior officials written by low ranking officials, writing in small regular script would show respect, although personal correspondence could be written in running or cursive scripts. Hence, regular script was the most popular script in the Ming court.

Also, it was the first script-type that students started with when they were learning to write calligraphy. The Song politician Cai Duanming 蔡端明 (Xiang 襄, 1012－1067AD) said:

> "In the past, those who were good at calligraphy had to learn regular script first. Eventually, they would learn running and cursive scripts."

[438] *SHBB, juan* 1, p.29.
[439] For studies on the Ming calligraphy world, see *ZGSFS*, or Ouyang Zhongshi (et. al), *Chinese Calligraphy* (New Haven and Beijing, 2008).
[440] Lin Yaoyu 林堯俞, *Libu zhi gao* 禮部志稿, *SKQS, juan* 23, p.15.

古之善書者，必先楷法，漸至行草。[441]

However, it was not an easy script to write. For example, the Liuyi's Investigations in Calligraphy (*Liuyi lunshu* 六一論書) written by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–72AD) stated:

> "Former people had difficulty writing good small regular scripts. Thus, only a little small regular script calligraphy exists nowadays."
> 前人於小楷難工，故傳於世者少。[442]

The colophon to the *Jianyue* 簡約 recorded in Jie Yue 解悅 (date unknown) and Xie Jin's 解縉 (1369–1415AD)[443] *Collected Works of Wenyi* (*Wenyi ji* 文毅集) also stated that:

> "No calligraphy style is more difficult than regular script, and the small regular script is the most difficult. I worked very hard when I was young, but up to now I have not achieved its wonder."
> 書莫難於楷法，而小楷尤難。吾少時極用功，至今未得其妙。[444]

If even famous calligraphers said this, ordinary calligraphers and the general public would find it even harder to write good regular script. Regardless of its functional use, regular script was considered to be a difficult script-type to write. Thus, people who could write good regular script were highly appreciated, such as the Ming scholar-official and calligrapher Jiang Ligang 姜立綱 (?–1498AD) who had a very high reputation owing to his extraordinary skill in writing this particular script. For example, Fan Yin 范欽 (1505–85AD)[445] said in his *Pingshu* 評書:

> "Since the Cheng[hua] and Hong[ren] reigns, people were fond of regular script. Jiang Ligang's upright and stable calligraphy was admired by his contemporaries. People of this generation like his work and learn from him."
> 成[化]弘[治]以來尚正書，姜立綱端正、凝重，世顧好之，疊相宗習。[446]

Since both the court and the public were very fond of regular script, and Jiang Ligang was renowned for his ability with this script-type, Jiang's works became popular models, especially from the time of the mid-Ming. However, although Jiang's regular script calligraphy was very popular, other renowned writers and calligraphers did not appreciate his calligraphy. For example, Wang Shizhen commented that Jiang Ligang:

> "slightly changed the two Shen's style into a square and angular style. His style could be called skillful, but was unavoidably vulgar and haggard. At present his calligraphy is popular."
> 小變二沈爲方整，就其體中可謂工至，而不免俗累。今盛行於世。[447]

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[441] Wen Zhengming 文徵明, *Futianji* 甫田集, *SKQS, juan* 21, p.15. Hereafter, *Futianji*.
[442] Futianji, *juan* 21, p.15.
[443] He was born into a family in which every generation worked as officials. He wrote poems when he was six. He edited the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典, see *ZLRD*, p.2419.
[444] Jie Yue 解悅 and Jie Jin 解縉, *Wenyiji* 文毅集, *SKQS, juan* 16, p.18.
[445] He was a *jinshi* 進士 (provincial graduate, the highest degree in the Imperial China) of the 1532 AD during the Jiajing reign. He was the best book collector in Siming 四明 and he built the *Tianyige* 天一閣 in present day Ningbo. See *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志, *SKQS, juan* 159, p.36.
[446] *LYZYL, juan* 286, p.32.

From the above examples, the calligraphy styles of Shen Du and Jiang Ligang apparently had an impact on the Ming calligraphy world. From the above literature, their calligraphy seemed to be regarded as highly as the canonical calligraphy. However, according to extant rubbing collections which included Ming calligraphy, there was no single collection fully devoted to Jiang Ligang's calligraphy. At most, only one known collection, the *Baohanzhai guochao shufa* 寶翰齋國朝書法 in its sixteenth *juan* made in 1570AD, contained one piece of Jiang's calligraphy out of over two hundred Ming calligraphy pieces. Other famous rubbing collections which consisted of Ming calligraphy, such as *Tingyunguan* and the *Qingjiantang tie* 清鑑堂帖, did not contain a single piece of calligraphy from Jiang Ligang.

If the above statements about Jiang are reliable, this may be due to the fact that his calligraphy was popular mainly among civil examination candidates and people who were less knowledgeable about calligraphy. For example, as noted above, some renowned calligraphers and scholars such as Wang Shizhen complained that Jiang's calligraphy was vulgar. They did not like to follow trends and preferred unique and extraordinary styles, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The fact that Jiang's calligraphy was not common in, or was even excluded from, most Ming collections was probably due to his calligraphy being disliked by experts and others in the calligraphy world. If rubbing collections served to provide model calligraphy for learners to study, and if Jiang Ligang's calligraphy was so popular in Ming society at the time, there should be more collections containing his calligraphy. This provides evidence that rubbing collections were still not used as calligraphy models for learning, at least apparently not for examination candidates or the wider public during the Jiajing and Wanli periods.

Nevertheless, although small regular script was widely used, it was not the most common script-type in the Ming. Many scholar officials, calligraphers as well as collectors, began to look down on this kind of script because they considered it to be calligraphy used by people of low status. For example, Li Rihua's *Discourse on small regular scripts by Zhulan* 竹懶論小楷 said:

> "Ancient people did not treasure small regular script and named it *li shu* (clerical script) which was used by petty officials. Emperor Wu of Liang (464–549AD) ordered subordinates to write all memorials to the throne in running script. As for personal writing, only signatures were more cautious. Emperor Wen (599–649AD) of the Tang decreed that scholars from three schools write Buddhist and Taoist texts. Since the texts were in regular script, they were called *jingshengti*, which scholar officials will not write. Zhuyu's brother (date unknown) had asked me several times to write regular script, which caused me fainting and pain. In order to get him to give up, I gave little attention to his request. This was indeed considered as the accurate account of a calligrapher."

[447] *YSSBG*, *juan* 154, p.19.

> 古人不貴小楷，謂之隸書，為胥隸所書耳。梁武勅臣下書疏，皆用行押筆，自書唯署名稍謹耳。唐文皇令三館諸生寫道釋諸經，以其楷正，名經生體，士大夫不為也。竹雨弟屢要余作楷，余目昏甚苦之。為作一絶，以冷其意，然寔書家正論也。[448]

Therefore, late-Ming calligraphers such as Li Rihua did not like regular script at all, not only because it was vulgar but also because it did not fit with their identity as calligraphers and scholars. This view continued until the end of the Ming. Xie Zhaozhe's *Wuzazu* stated that:

> "The present letters of patent (*gaolai*) which were made by the court and the inscribed horizontal tablets of the palace buildings are all written in a very standard script, which is called the "secretariat type" (*zhongshu ge*). While I admit to its stately and refined qualities, it is in fact so vulgar and distasteful that one cannot stand it. In the early Hungwu reign (1368–99AD), Zhan Mengju gained a reputation through this skill. Most inscriptions on the palace halls and provincial temples in Nanking were written by him. Recently, there is Jiang Ligang (active c.1457–65AD) whose style was extraordinarily formal and neat; for a time he received much acclaim and reputation for his calligraphy, which reveals the vulgar taste of contemporary people, it being a model for all low-class functionaries. After this, the secretaries in both capitals all practiced Jiang's style without going beyond it."
>
> 今國定誥勅，及宮殿匾額，皆用筆法極端楷者書之，謂之中書格。但取其莊嚴典重耳，其實俗惡不可耐也。洪武初，詹孟舉以此技鳴。南京宮殿省寺之署，多出其手。近代有姜立綱者，法度嚴整過之。一時聲稱籍甚，然亦時俗之所賞，胥史之模範耳。自後官二殿中書者，皆習姜體，而不及愈甚。[449]

This shows that in the late Ming period officialdom no longer had the same impact on the calligraphy world as it had had during the early Ming. There was stratification between different groups in society, and this was also reflected in the calligraphy world. In fact, the controversy revealed that calligraphy in the Ming was not restricted to the elite, but was available to all who were literate including those who were less educated and even the general public, probably because regular script was relatively easier to understand.

Nevertheless, calligraphy in regular script was often not the major element in most traditional rubbing collections. The exception was one Southern Song collection entitled the *Bogu Hall Rubbing Collection* (*Bogutang tie* 博古堂帖) or the *Shi's Rubbing Collection in Yuezhou*(*Yuezhou Shishi tie* 越州石氏帖), which consisted only of regular script. Apart from this collection, most calligraphy was in ancient styles or in a style between running and regular script. For example, the *Xuanshibiao* 宣示表 of Zhong You 鍾繇 (151–230AD), as shown in Fig.4.10, was written in an old style of Han *kaishu* 楷書 or *zhangcao* 章草 clerical script which differed greatly from the *kaishu* or regular script that was prevalent during the Ming period. Also, most traditional collections mainly consisted of calligraphy in running and cursive scripts, and they did not satisfy the general public's demand for small regular script. Because of this, rubbing collections were not the source of model calligraphy for the general

[448] *LYZBJ*, *san bi*, *juan* 4, p.22; or *SHW*, *juan* 23, pp.41–2.
[449] For the English translation, see *WZZT*, p.82 and original Chinese text in *WZZ*, p.272.

public prior to the emergence of new forms of collections in the late Ming. This may also explain why the production of private collections in the first half of the Ming was not very common.

4.3 Reception of Rubbing Collections

Owing to no extant original works and the limited availability of reliable early hand-written copies, the rubbing collections of precious ancient works such as those of the Two Wangs (Wang Xizhi and his son Wang Xianzhi) not only offered more examples revealing ancient calligraphy styles but also provided evidence for the bigger picture of the style of calligraphy of the time. However, in general, people paid greater attention to ancient and original calligraphy and its rubbings than to recent calligraphy and its rubbings. In the Song, Ouyang Xiu's *Jigulu* 集古錄 stated:

> "To record model calligraphy of ancient people, only original works would be treasured."
> 著錄古人法書，惟重真蹟。[450]

In the Ming, the preference for original works broadened to include old rubbings of genuine calligraphy as well. The famous Ming writer Zhong Xing 鍾惺 (1574–1624AD) said in the colophon to Yuan Hongdao's (袁宏道, 1568–1610AD) *Yuanzhonglang shu* 袁中郎書:

> "The poems and prose were learned from ancient people. Whenever ancient poems and prose were circulated as hand-written, engraved or printed copies, they were the spirit left by the ancient people. For someone who wanted to learn ancient calligraphy, he needed to use original calligraphy or old rubbings; otherwise, it would not have any of the spirit of the ancient people."
> 詩文取法古人，凡古人詩文流傳於鈔寫刻印者，皆古人精神所寄也。至於書欲法古，則非墨跡舊搨，古人精神不在焉。[451]

Zhong Xing preferred ancient works because he believed that the spirit of the past was retained within them. Therefore, as long as a piece of calligraphy was made in the past, it did not matter whether or not it was a rubbing. In other words, Ming people were more open to rubbings than previous dynasties. In addition to concerns about ancient spirit, there was a more practical reason for this change of perception. Zhao Yiguang said:

> "Famous ancient calligraphy was difficult to obtain; thus people looked for inscriptions on metal and stone instead. Good rare collections of metal and stone were not easy to find; it was better to see various editions simultaneously, and then the good and the bad, the genuine and the fake would be shown naturally. Also, it was essential to know former calligraphy thoroughly so as to collate model calligraphy. Otherwise, everyone would get lost. When reading the same calligraphic piece in various editions, one could compare and find out its distinctions. The success and failure, the right and wrong, could be checked as if it was black versus white. There was an extreme difference between various re-cuts and the original. Contemporary calligraphy, or those that had been re-cut twice, were all reproductions and poor rare editions. Even if old and original rubbings were occasionally found, the chance was one in a hundred. One had to use one's eyes to distinguish among

[450] *Jigulu* 集古錄, *SKQS*, Abstract, p.1.
[451] Zhong Xing 鍾惺, *Yinxiuxuan wenji* 隱秀軒文集, in *SKJHS*, v.48, p.48–505. Hereafter, Zhong Xing.

> them. Since there was no perfect model, people needed to imitate the calligraphy of outstanding people. One should imitate the original calligraphy and not the copy. Hand-written calligraphy was the proper form and stone engraving was the supplement. The original rubbing was the proper one and its re-cut was the supplement. The first rubbing was the right one and the later re-cut was the supplement. The full text was the main one and the gathered text was a supplementary one. The rest can be deduced similarly, no matter what the distinctions between ink and stone, ancient and new."
>
> 古名蹟不易得，求之金石文。金石善本不易得，當以同文數本竝觀，高下真假自然呈露。又須淹貫前人書法，然後能校法書。否則不無行迷失路。閱同帖異刻比量其不侔處，得失是非，校若白黑，方能得力。凡翻工之與正本勢必天淵；時帖或是二刻俱翻，通非善本。即偶中兩是，百無一二。會須著眼辨之。自無水鑑，仿之哲匠。書倣正本，勿倣副本；墨蹟為正，石刻為副；原刻為正，翻刻為副；前翻為正，後翻為副；全文為正，集文為副；可類推也。墨石之殊、古新之異無論矣。[452]

The fact was that ancient genuine calligraphy was not easy to find, and this led to a change in attitudes towards rubbings of original works. Although rubbings had a higher status than in any previous dynasty, the preference was still for good old collections, and original works were still more important than their rubbings. Zhao listed the priority of various kinds of works and explained the reasons for their relative positions. In fact, this not only reveals that the study of rubbings was very advanced, but also attests to the importance of editions.

Regarding distinctions in terms of quality among various kinds of copies and model calligraphy, Zhao Yiguang argued that:

> "When they pursued a skin-deep similarity, they used bad pieces which were owned by their families for comparison with model calligraphy. When they sought similarity of muscles and bones, they would use good copies by others to compare them with the genuine. When they strove for marrow, they would use the re-cuts of old rubbings to make the comparison. When they wanted to write ingenious calligraphy, they needed to make reference to genuine calligraphy. With all these various kinds of copying methods for reference, it was as if one distinguished jade from stone; everyone would be awakened to reality."
>
> 凡求皮相以自家臨倣之惡札比照法書，凡求筋骨以他人臨倣之佳書比照真蹟，凡求精髓以翻榻古榻之異同相為比照，凡求神妙以真蹟墨本相為比照；如此重重參攷，如玉石之辨，無有不矍然醒悟者。[453]

He emphasised the great difference between the good and the bad and the distinction between contemporary calligraphy and ancient calligraphy, saying:

> "Contemporary calligraphy and ancient calligraphy belonged to different worlds; rubbings and the original calligraphy belonged to different worlds as well."
>
> 時帖之于古帖，分門別是一重世界；拓本之於真跡，分明別是一重世界。[454]

Prior to the Ming, most ancient rubbing collections had been lost in fire and war. New collections were then made to replace them and to supply the Ming people's needs. However, these recent

[452] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.58.
[453] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.56.
[454] *HSZT, juan xia,* p.24.

collections were in no way comparable with the ancient works, and Zhao used this as a parallel for the difference between original calligraphy and its rubbings. He continued to give advice on how to use rubbing collections to learn calligraphy properly to avoid going in the wrong direction. He said:

> "To learn calligraphy from ancient people, if one only read rubbings, he would end up getting nothing. Since both the strength level of a brush and the degree of ink darkness are unable to be revealed by engravers on stone, only the broad outline is left in the engravings. Therefore, it is better to view the genuine calligraphy of the ancient masters. It is impossible to get an impression of the Jin and Tang people's calligraphy. Song people changed the form of Wei and Jin Dynasty calligraphy, which should not be viewed as rules. Only Yuan calligraphy was close to the Jin and Tang calligraphy. … Anyone who could learn from the strengths and eliminate the weaknesses of calligraphy could then reach the level of elegant and primitive simplicity of the Jin style, which was feasible."
> 學古人書，若徒看刻本，終無所得。蓋下筆輕重，用墨淺深，勒者皆不能形容于石，徒存梗概而已，故必見古人真跡為妙。晉、唐人書邈不可得，宋人變魏、晉之體，不可為法，唯元人差近之。……學者能捨短取長，由是以造晉人之高古，未為不可。[455]

Apart from reminding people to use the original calligraphy of ancient masters whenever possible, he listed the weaknesses of the model calligraphy of different periods, and suggested the best one and the proper way to learn from it. Since there were not many detailed commentaries on the comparison between rubbings and calligraphy by Ming people, his views give us an idea of how one of the Ming elite and a rubbing expert perceived the transmission of canonical calligraphy in various dynasties. It clearly shows that Jin Dynasty calligraphy was the ultimate model and the classical tradition to learn from theoretically, but not practically because no original Jin work existed in his time.

Nevertheless, rubbing collections provided stylistic prototypes and set aesthetic standards of calligraphy in specific times. These calligraphy standards have for centuries largely determined the perspective and understanding of the history of calligraphy, in particular when the selected calligraphy was the only surviving evidence of the work of famous calligraphers and was representative of the calligraphy style of its time.

Yet the canon reflecting most Song rubbing collections was concerned with their understanding and values, rather than with the original appearance of the canonical pieces. They aspired to a level of theoretical abstraction that was valid for their time only. Therefore, Ming people would rather choose Yuan editions of canonical calligraphy. Besides this, rubbing collections were obviously made for more advanced and wealthy learners because they were relatively fewer and more expensive than prints, although they were more accessible and available than in the Song.

[455] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.58.

In fact, printed calligraphy might have been an alternative reference. For example, the *Shizhuzhai huapu* 十竹齋畫譜 (Ten Bamboo Studio Collection of Paintings) of 1644AD, as shown in Fig.4.11, was a collection of printed paintings and calligraphy in album format.[456] However, there were no known printed calligraphy collections comparable to rubbing collections in the Ming.

If the fundamental nature of a rubbing collection was to transmit canonical calligraphy and the classical tradition to future generations, no matter how faithful a rubbing was, there would be an unavoidable loss of originality in terms of the spirit of individual brushstrokes and the overall structure of the calligraphy. Thus, along with these natural losses, people realised that re-cuts of the ancient collections could hardly retain the shape and spirit of the original calligraphy. Then, how could the classical tradition and the calligraphy canon be transmitted without distortion? Ming people completely understood the limitations of rubbing collections as a medium for transmitting classical tradition and canonical calligraphy. Therefore, they no longer accepted the calligraphy of Ming rubbing collections as canonical calligraphy for the purpose of learning.

This change in the perception of rubbing collections is also revealed in the content of rubbing collections. There was a change in the content of Ming collections, which has already been discussed in Chapter Three. In brief, the proportion of correspondence in Song collections was much higher than in Ming collections. This was probably due to the length and content of Ming correspondence. For example, Xie Zhaozhe's *Wuzazu* of the late sixteenth century said:

> "Ancient people did not write letters to exchange conventional greetings. They would write about contemporary politics and personal matters in their correspondence. Since a letter was a piece of text, it would not be carelessly written. Examples include a letter to the King Z*hao* of Yan replied to by Le Yi (date unknown), a report from Yang Yun (?–54BC) to Sun Huizong (date unknown), and a letter in reply to Ren Shaoqing (date unknown) by Taishigong [Sima Qian, 145?–87BC], Li Ling (?–74 BC) and Adjutant Su. Having read their words, and having thought about their meanings repeatedly, everyone would burst into tears. The content of these correspondences passed from one generation to the next without interruption, and it was good to have them. … Short correspondences became common after the Jin Dynasty, but they were only military orders describing reciprocal matters. The spoken words were not written down, and there were no incidents to record. Alternatively, it may be that people listened to the opinions of a highly regarded sage, or treasured high quality calligraphy, and did not simply follow the old tradition. Nowadays people write long letters, half of which are eulogies. Eight lines on a foot-long paper are all about love from the family written in slang. These are cut in woodblocks for passing on to their successors, and their lack of shame is indeed serious!"
>
> 古人不作寒暄書，其有關系時政及彼已情事，然後爲書以通之。蓋自是一篇文字，非信手苟作者。如樂毅複燕昭王，楊惲報孫會宗，太史公[司馬遷 145?-87BC]複任少卿，李陵與蘇中郎，千載之下，讀其言，反覆其意，未嘗不爲之潸然出涕者。傳

[456] Further studies on this painting manual, see Chu-tsing Li, James C.Y.Watt, The Asia Society Galleries (eds.), *The Chinese Scholar's Studio, Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period*, *An exhibition from the Shanghai Museum* (Thames and Hudson, 1987).

> 之不朽，良有以也。……自晉以還，始尚小牘，然不過代將命之詞，敘往複之事耳。言既不文，事無可紀。而或以高賢見賞，或以書翰爲珍，非故傳之也。今人連篇累牘，半是頌德之諛言，尺紙八行，無非溫清之俚語，而災之梨棗欲以傳後，其不知恥也，亦甚矣。[457]

Thus, ancient correspondence, as a whole, was more meaningful and concise. Ming correspondence was usually more lengthy and full of flattery and redundant words.

After the Southern Song, calligraphy chosen for a rubbing collection was not limited to correspondence but could include any kind of writing, such as *jinwen* 金文, religious scriptures and even epitaphs. Examples include the Song's *Yuezhou Shi Shi's Calligraphy in Small Regular Script* 越州石氏小楷, *Names and Titles of the Shang Dynasty Bronzes* 商器款識 in the *Dingtie* 鼎帖 (see Fig.4.12), the *Zhihuiqingjing jing* 智慧清靜經 in the *Shaoxing Mi tie* 紹興米帖, and the *Inscriptions on the Stele of the Guogong Temple* 郭公廟碑銘 in the *Zhongyitang tie* (see Fig.4.13). Although these were not common in pre-Ming rubbing collections, they showed the evolution of the content of the collections.

Therefore, when comparing the content of Ming with pre-Ming collections, except for the re-cuts and derived editions, the proportion of correspondence was less and there was a relatively higher proportion of collected literary texts written by calligraphers or renowned contemporary figures. For example, the entire sets of the *Baohanzhai guochao shufa* 寶翰齋國朝書法 of 1585AD in the sixteenth *juan* and of *Jinlingmingxian* both consisted of mainly literary works, including poems, prose and eulogies but no meaningless correspondence. There was no Song collection with such a high proportion of literary content. Even the *Fengshu tie* of the Southern Song was not entirely made up of calligraphy of poems and prose. In other words, the content of rubbing collections was more important than it had ever been in the past, as already discussed in Chapter Three. These new forms of Ming collections possessed both utilitarian and aesthetic qualities, showing that rubbing collections started to serve a similar function to collected writings (*wenji* 文集). This was an unprecedented change, and manifested itself in the new perception of rubbing collections.

Furthermore, according to the development of rubbing collections and evidential scholarship on calligraphic rubbings, we know that since the Northern Song not many people really paid attention to studying the content of rubbing collections. For example, the *Investigation of Rubbing Collection Lexicon* (*Fatie shiwen kaoyi* 法帖釋文考異) by Gu Congyi 顧從義 (1523–88AD) was published in the late-Ming. Its preface said:

[457] *WZZ*, *juan* 14, pp.248–9.

> "Wen Zhengming, Wang Shizhen and his son regarded this study [*Fatie shiwen kaoyi*] highly. This was the transliteration of the *Chunhua getie* with the corrections of former errors in pronunciation annotations and analysis of their distinctions. It followed the original order of the calligraphy and was made in ten *juan*. It was handwritten and published by [Gu Congyi]. After the commentaries of the *Chunhua getie* by several scholars such as Mi Fu, Huang Changrui and Qin Guan, there were not many others to revise the transliteration of the *Getie*. Therefore, Congyi combined various statements about the former transliteration and made them into one piece. Henceforth, people who commented on rubbings would use this as a reference."
>
> 文徵明、王世貞父子所重。此乃所作淳化閣帖釋文，於前人音注辨其訛謬，析其同異。依帖本原次，勒為十卷。[顧從義]手自繕寫，而刋行之。閣帖自米芾、黃長睿、秦觀諸家，而後踵加考訂者，寥寥無幾。從義始參彙羣說，輯成一編。後來評帖者，每以為據。[458]

Therefore, the study of rubbings became a discipline in the Northern Song. However, it diminished and its rebirth did not occur until the mid-Ming. People did not merely study the content of rubbing collections, but actually studied their history and used an evidential scholarship perspective to study them.

For the Ming elite, their concern was much more than basic human needs; it was the pursuit of intellectual satisfaction. With the development of the economy and the accessibility of calligraphy and its reproductions, calligraphy became increasingly diversified. Some of the elite had higher requirements and pursued rubbing collections which could show their distinction from the masses. This will be explained further in the conclusion.

Although rubbing collections were expected to contain important and representative works, they were not all canonical calligraphy which provided benchmarks for greatness. In spite of this, some collections did include legendary works, such as the calligraphy of the mythical sage Cang Jie 倉頡.[459] A famous Confucian thinker of the Warring States period, Xunzi 荀子 (313–238BC), credited Cang Jie as being one of the most noted calligraphers. Xunzi said:

> "There were many people good at writing calligraphy in the past, but Cang Jie was the onlyone transmitted]."
>
> 故好書者眾矣，而蒼頡獨傳者[460]

Despite the fact that Cang Jie's calligraphy is nowadays regarded as unreliable – in fact it is seen as imaginative counterfeiting – his work was included in the *Getie* of the Song as belonging to Z*hujia gu fatie* 諸家古法帖 and *Baoxiantang*. These two collections were similar in that they were made under the command of royalty. Craig Clunas believes that the making of *Baoxiantang* was a consequence of the royal family's interest in cultural activities, including writing calligraphy. He argues that through

[458] *FTSWKY*, *juan* 1, p.1.
[459] According to legend, he was one of the officials working for Huangdi 黃帝. Chinese characters became more mature since he improved them. Therefore, he was a representative who edited and organized Chinese characters, in *ZLRD*, p.286.
[460] *Xunzi* 荀子, *SKQS*, *juan* 15, p.1.

engagement in cultural activities, Ming royalty might gain respect because of their cultural achievement.[461] If his assumption is true, Zhu Qiyuan 朱奇源 (1450–1501AD) who made the collection should have had detailed knowledge of calligraphy and should have realised that the calligraphy attributed to Cang Jie was a counterfeit. Almost all other Song and Ming collections excluded this piece – *Cang Jie pian* 倉頡篇 (Fig.4.14) – except *Getie* and its re-cuts. If the *Cang Jie pian* was such an obvious counterfeit calligraphy and Zhu still kept it in his collection, which was claimed to be made on behalf of his father 朱鍾鉉 (1428–1502AD), then the intention to include this piece was symbolic and aimed at representing the style of influential figures from certain periods in the history of calligraphy.

In fact, many works from pre-Jin dynasties were counterfeit. Besides the re-cuts of some Song collections, many Ming collections excluded these suspicious works and included only works that they recognised as genuine – for instance, works by contemporary calligraphers. Therefore late-Ming collections would rather include less well-known calligraphy than obvious counterfeit calligraphy. This reflected the fact that they were more concerned with authenticity than with the symbolic meanings of the calligraphy.

4.4 The Reception of Books versus Rubbing Collections

In terms of originality, rubbing collections share the idea of "editions" with book publishing as they are all reproductions of writing; therefore, originality and edition are important aspects of the study of calligraphic rubbings. While the former is the core value in rubbing connoisseurship, the latter is helpful for identifying the uniqueness of a rubbing. There were many calligraphic rubbings as well as counterfeits in Ming China, and edition, related to the concept of originality, is used to distinguish among them.

While printed books mainly focused on their content, engraved rubbing collections focused more on the forms and aesthetic quality of the calligraphy. Also, printed books existed in more copies per title than rubbing collections. Regardless of the authenticity of the collections, they were often more valuable than printed books in terms of the number of copies produced. They were often received as collectibles and commodities, especially by the elite. For example, Sun Kuang's 孫鑛 (1543–1613AD) *Juye cibian* 居業次編 said:

> "Rubbing collections were different from [printed] books. If they were good quality, they were treasures. Otherwise, they were superfluous. Although they were produced from calligraphy in the beginning, they were not expensive."

[461] Clunas(2010), pp.229–54.

法帖與書不同。榻佳乃是寶，不佳即為長物。雖初出帖，不足貴也。[462]

Apart from the educational purpose of printed books, which was similar to that of rubbing collections, there were other similarities between the two which have often been found since the Ming. The most important aspects of the new forms of collections were their features such as prefaces, contents pages, sometimes page numbers and the names of the craftsmen. Although this was analysed in the previous chapter, it is mentioned here to emphasise the impact of printed books on rubbing collections.

One of the core points to note is the popularity of collecting trends in Jiangnan, especially after the mid-Ming. In addition to antique collecting, book collecting was also a fashion. If the target audiences of antique collecting in the Ming were cultivated collectors as well as rich merchants and officials, then book collecting covered a much wider market, as any literate or educated individual could afford books which were much cheaper compared with antiques. Naturally, this also depended on the quantity. Nevertheless, since printed books became more readily available with improvements in printing technology over succeeding centuries (colour printing had been available since the mid-fifteenth century), and as the cost of printing fell, ordinary people also began to follow this fashion.

In the light of this idea that Ming people accepted contemporary rubbing collections as printed books containing similar content (poems and writings) and constituents (prefaces, contents pages, page numbers and even pictures), collecting rubbing collections was actually a kind of luxury book collecting.

Inevitably, rubbing collections were in the same format as books. With the new features of the Ming collections mentioned above, it was possible for people to collect both. According to textual records, the most valuable handwritten copies of books from the Ming period were by renowned collectors of rubbing collections. For example, they included Wen Zhengming's 文徵明 (1470–1559AD) copies of the *Yulantang* 玉蘭堂 and Wang Kentang's 王肯堂 (1553AD, c.1589AD, or 1549–1613AD) copies of *Yugangzhai*, which both required life-long efforts to acquire through exchanging, borrowing, editing and handwritten notes with collectors' comments.[463] Thus, this is strong evidence to show that book collectors often collected rubbing collections as well, and that it was not uncommon to do so.

This demonstrates that book publishers also published rubbing collections, proving that Ming people accepted rubbing collections as a kind of book. Another example is found in a Ming book

[462] Sun Kuang 孫鑛, *Yuefeng xian sheng juye cibian* 月峰先生居業次編, in Lu Yinjun 吕胤筠 edition of 1613AD, *juan* 3, p.108.
[463] Ye Dehui 葉德輝, *Shulin qinghua* 書林清話 (Shanghai, 2008), p.206.

about the day-to-day matters faced by those who live in seclusion (*Shanju suoshi* 山居瑣事), in which the author Chen Jiru said:

> "Hand-copied books are similar to ancient calligraphy. They do not need to be complete or intact as they are all [received as] broken cliffs or fragments of jade."
> 抄本書如古帖，不必全帙，皆是斷壁殘珪。[464]

Ancient *tie* may also refer to old rubbing collections. This reveals that Ming people did in fact perceive old rubbing collections as hand-traced books. The above is just one of many examples showing the correlation between the collecting practices of Ming people in terms of books and rubbing collections. The ways in which they studied and evaluated printed books and rubbing collections were similar.

Clearly, owing to the nature of engraved calligraphy the concern of a rubbing enthusiast would be the faithfulness of the collections to the originals rather than the accuracy of their content. The most crucial point would be that it was true to life. However, the reality was that people focused on the packaging and materiality of the collections more than on the actual calligraphy, as previously discussed. This reveals that most people (including the general public or literate people) who collected or purchased rubbing collections did not have the ability to appreciate the calligraphy, or else they did not care about it. They simply followed the collecting trend and hoped to show others that they had good taste and that they were cultivated. Hence, whether the collection was made from woodblocks or stone slabs was irrelevant to them. Compared with printed books, the scale and number of publications of rubbing collections were far less.

Furthermore, the meaning of the collections surpassed their market value. The booming art market in the Ming allowed a great amount of previously unknown and rare model calligraphy and their rubbing collections to be seen. As for those who strove for fame and success in calligraphy, they were desperate to look for these collections and to learn from them, hoping that one day their calligraphy would be popular in the collecting market. With the help of the flourishing book industry, rubbing collections, regardless of their authenticity and quality, became as popular as books of collected writings among educated Ming people. Apart from being a kind of commodity, the modern Japanese scholar Masuda Tomoyuki has argued that Wen Zhengming's family used rubbing collections to promote him and to establish the status of the family.[465]

[464] See Chen Jiru, *Yanqi youshi* 岩棲幽事, in *SKCM, zibu bieji lei*, v.39, p.118–701.
[465] See note 15.

Technically, as mentioned earlier, rubbing is the impression on paper of engraved or inscribed hard objects, but printing involved mechanical replication of characters.[466] The technique of printing required carving a mirror image of characters in relief on blocks, while rubbings required squeezing ink or rubbing on paper from incised characters on stone slabs or woodblocks. Therefore, rubbing did not need any mirror-image conversion. [467] Thus, it required more skilful and experienced engravers to accomplish this work due to the risk of losing faithfulness and originality.

This made rubbings distinctive, highly cultured and elite-specific. These criteria limited the number of rubbing collections and maintained their superior status when compared with printed editions. They also matched the outstanding and luxurious features of high-quality stone rubbings. The same is true for the production of the reproductions. Books of the Ming and rubbing collections have come down to us with paper and type in a perfect state of preservation. This was due to various ingredients in the composition of the paper and ink and to the elaborate methods used in the materials for making rubbings, which are discussed below.

All in all, the main difference between a printed book and a rubbing collection can be illustrated by Xie Zhaozhe's comment as follows:

> "A book was good if it was a Song edition. This was not only because its dots and strokes were without error, but also because it was made of good paper and by skilful craftsmen. As for model calligraphy, there were two types of Song edition, fat and thin. While the fat one was learnt from Yan [Zhenqing], the thin one was learnt from Ou[yang Xun]. The spacing between columns was not even and the characters were all vivid. Their papers were thin, the colour was old, and it was not eaten by worms."
>
> 書所以貴宋板者，不惟點畫無訛，亦且箋刻精好；若法帖然，凡宋刻，有肥、瘦二種；肥者學顏[真卿]，瘦者學歐[陽詢]。行款疏密，任意不一，而字勢皆生動。箋古色而極薄，不蛀。[468]

His comment shows that Ming people had different criteria for the quality of printed books and rubbing collections. In addition to the physical properties such as paper and ink, their carving techniques were equally important. Printed books required high accuracy of content, whereas rubbing collections needed good layout, structure and calligraphy. However, this distinction was minimised through the changes in content and features of the collections, especially after the mid-Ming, which have been discussed in this chapter. Therefore, people came to hold a more similar view of the two.

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[466] Lothar Ledderose, Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art (Princeton, 2000), pp.12–3.
[467] For a detailed history of woodblock printing and book publishing, in Western languages, see Carter, T.F., *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward* (New York, 1955); In Chinese, see Ye Dehui 葉德輝, *Shulin Qinghua* 書林清話 (Shanghai, 2008), and Sun Yuxiu 孫毓修, *Zhongguo diaoban yuanliu kao* 中國雕板源流考 (*The Origins of the Chinese Woodblock Printing*) (Shanghai, 1934). For books written in English, please see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China. v.5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology* (Cambridge, 1974), pp.132–93, and J.S. Edgren, 'The history of the book in China', in Suarez, Michael Felix and Woudhuysen, H.R (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford, 2010), v.1, pp.353–65.
[468] *WZZ*, p.208.

4.5 Reception of the Calligraphy Canon and Contemporary Calligraphy

From the illustrations in Chapter Three, we know that the number of existing Ming collections was small and the content was mostly the same as that of the Song collections in the early Ming. There were only a few collections prior to the Zhengde and Jiajing era, as shown in Fig.3.01. The majority of rubbing collections were either re-cuts of renowned Song collections, or derived collections made with reference to former ones, such as *Baoxiantang*, for which the structure was copied from *Getie*. If we believe that rubbing collections serve to transmit canonical calligraphy, then their number would not be enough to reach or satisfy the needs of the large number of calligraphy learners. Also, calligraphy in the collections was mainly written in running script. Therefore, rubbing collections would not be made for people to learn the calligraphy canon or for examinations. They would be at most a reference to canonical calligraphy for a few people.

In Ming people's minds, ancient masterpieces were still the most highly sought-after and respected when compared with the more recent and contemporary calligraphy of their time. The spirit of the Jin style manifested itself as an unhindered striving towards classical tradition. No matter how Ming calligraphers interpreted Jin styles visually, Jin or ancient calligraphy was the most admired style. For instance, Zhao Yiguang said:

> "If one ever saw ancient calligraphy, he could not refrain from being vulgar; if one did not see the contemporary calligraphy, he could not get rid of delusion."
> 不見古人書不能灑俗，不見今人書不能祛妄。[469]

It means ancient calligraphy provides good model of elgant calligraphy for people to distinguish the vulgar calligraphy from elegant one and the contemporary calligraphy actually provides examples for people to compare the ancient calligraphy with the contemporary one. Obviously, they had a clear understanding of the differences between old and new, various dynasties and gentry classes. Zhao added:

> "There were Han rules in the Han Dynasty; Jin rules in the Jin Dynasty; Tang rules in the Tang Dynasty. Within one dynasty, the court had its official script style, scholars had bronze scripts, and authors had their own styles."
> 漢有漢法，晉有晉法，唐有唐法。一代之中，官家有入院體，學士有金石文，作者自得之。[470]

Shen Defu believed that Ming calligraphy was not as good as that from the Song. He said,:

> "Previous Song Dynasty calligraphy and paintings were far better than those of our dynasty, which are not worth one ten-thousandth of their quality."
> 以故宋世書畫，遠非本朝可企萬一。[471]

[469] *HSZT, juan xia*, p.18.
[470] *HSZT, juan xia*, p.34.

Wang Shizhen also did not regard Ming Dynasty calligraphy as high quality or influential. He said:

> "Regarding our Ming Dynasty calligraphy, in the beginning some people still kept the conventions of the previous dynasty and thus they were good at copying. Similar people after that did not have any outstanding influence."
>
> 我明書法，國初尚亦有人以勝國之習，頗工臨池故耳。嗣後雷同，影響未見軼塵。[472]

To sum up, they had different preferences regarding the period of calligraphy. No matter which specific dynasty they preferred, the general view was that they viewed calligraphy with reference to its dates, and contemporary works were considered to be inferior to calligraphy from any of the previous dynasties. A similar idea was mentioned by the Ming calligrapher and collector Wen Zhengheng (1585–1645AD) in his *Zhangwuzhi*, who took the idea from Ming painter Tang Zhiqie's 唐志契 (1579–1651AD) *Huishi weiyan* 繪事微言. It said:

> "The study of calligraphy must be limited by period. [Calligraphy of] the Six Dynasties was not as good as [that of] the Jin and Wei Dynasties; calligraphy of the Song and Yuan dynasties was not comparable to that of the Six Dynasties or of the Tang."
>
> 書學必以時代為限，六朝不及晉魏，宋元不及六朝與唐。[473]

Apparently, Ming people believed that there were distinctive period styles in calligraphy which varied significantly. However, the main point was that the older and more historic, the better. This was consistent with their views on collecting antiquities and books, as discussed in section 4.3 (Reception of rubbing collections). This could not simply be a coincidence. Rather, they were interrelated with each other as fashions and beliefs. The standard in the people's minds was the Wei Jin Dynasty's style, which was the origin of the classical tradition in calligraphy. The fact was that the actual Wei Jin work still extant in the Ming was not genuine Wei Jin calligraphy but copies. Therefore, knowledgeable calligraphers knew that it was impossible to reach or surpass the Jin level by imitating these forms of calligraphy without understanding the thinking of the Jin people. As a consequence, the classical tradition was much favoured and emphasised in terms of the texts, but it was not shown visually in their calligraphy. Therefore, the Jin style was in their minds but not in their hands. They believed what Jin masters believed, which was the fact that change and mind were important. This will be discussed further in the following section.

Nonetheless, as a consequence, most late Ming people shifted their attention to recent and contemporary calligraphy because they knew the limitations of their own time, i.e. a lack of authentic ancient works. Also, they were quite open to new things. Zhao Yiguang said:

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[471] *WYHB*, *juan* 25, p.907.
[472] *YSSBG*, *juan* 154, p.14.
[473] Tang Zhiqie 唐志契, *Huishi weiyan* 繪事微言, *SKQS* (*Taibei*, 1986), in *juan xia*, p.24.

> "In the past, I have seen calligraphy learners studying calligraphy from famous contemporary calligraphers, but they were puzzled by the ancient model calligraphy. Even if someone knew he should learn and copy [ancient calligraphy], he simply copied a few characters or a few brushstrokes, and made a counterfeit calligraphy. He then entitled the piece as after the style of that ancient master, which was a very strange calligraphy indeed."
> 往見學書人，于近代名家無所不學，于古法帖反覆茫然。即稍知傚效，不過浮慕幾字幾筆，遂肚饡(杜撰)改作，附名某家體法，大可怪也。[474]

These people were unable to understand the ancient works and so their calligraphy remained at a superficial level, simply an imitation of the past. Most importantly, they did not realise the real meaning of the pursuit of the classical tradition. It was more about striving for comprehension of ancient thinking and internalising their attitudes, rather than simply copying their forms and styles. In the eyes of the general public, it was important that they could understand the calligraphy. If they did not even know how to read the script type, they would find it hard to appreciate the work. Therefore, many people simply copied the distinctive styles of ancient masters and declared their connection with ancient calligraphy. Despite this, Zhao Yiguang said:

> "The present is different from the past. It should depend on the situation."
> 今不逮古，當緣其情。[475]

Not everyone fully understood the actual meaning of pursuing the classical tradition. Thus, most people, and especially the less knowledgeable and the general public, who learned to write calligraphy would claim that their styles came from the old masters because this was a convention or fashion in the Ming.

This happened more often among non-calligraphers, the ordinary literati with lower status who wanted to gain respect and recognition through calligraphy but failed to do it properly. Therefore, *leishu* such as *Sancai tuhui* also provided a few samples of Wang Xizhi's style of model calligraphy for the masses to get an idea of canonical calligraphy. In fact, this phenomenon was very common, and so there was a need to include a section on ancient calligraphy style in the Ming daily encyclopedia. This is informative about the distinction between the perception of the calligraphy canon among different groups of people in Ming China, especially renowned calligraphers and general civilised literate people.

4.6 Attitudes Towards *lintie* 臨帖

Regarding the techniques for copying calligraphy, *mo* 摹 and *lin* 臨 are easily confused. They are a pair of words both generally mean "copying", but they refer to different types of imitation methods

[474] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.60.
[475] *HSZT, shiyi,* p.3.

with distinct ultimate goals. The distinction between them is the attitude taken towards imitation and the way one copies calligraphy. Whether a calligraphic rubbing can keep the original form and spirit or the essence of the calligraphy depends greatly on the method of copying.

Firstly, the term *mo*, 'trace', means to faithfully imitate the form and style of the calligraphy, striving to make an exact copy of the original.[476] For example, in a Song text, *mo* 摹 means:

> "placing a thin sheet of paper over an ancient model calligraphy, and then tracing the outline of the characters. It was similar to copying a painting, which was called *mo*."
> 謂以薄紙覆古帖上，隨其細大而搨之，若摩畫之摩，故謂之摹。[477]

This is always the first stage of learning to do calligraphy, before one can make a freehand copy, *lin*, with accuracy. Feng Fang emphasised that one who begins to learn calligraphy must make faithful copies (*mo*) prior to making freehand copies (*lin*) "然初學者必先摹而後臨". [478] Thus, we usually only see *mo* and rarely see *lin* in the inscriptions on calligraphic rubbings. *Mo* could be combined with several characters to give binomes; for instance, the most frequently binome seen in calligraphic rubbing collections is *mole* 摹勒, "to copy and engrave on stone". Whereas *mole* means both "copy" and "engrave", *mota* 摹搨 has a single meaning only. Wang Shizhen said:

> "In the mid-Daguan era, [Emperor Huizong 徽宗] commissioned somebody to copy genuine calligraphy of all dynasties, and to engrave them on stone at the Taiqing House."
> 大觀中，又奉摹搨歷代真蹟，刻石於太清樓[479]

Mota here merely meant "copy", and was different from *mole*. Further, on the last page of *Yuyantang*, it stated that "Wanli sishi ji sui zai Renzi Yuyantang *mole shangshi*" 萬曆四十季歲在壬子，玉煙堂模勒上石, which means that the rubbing was made at the *Yuyantang* 玉煙堂 (*Yuyan* Hall) in the fortieth year of the Wanli reign (1612AD). Here, *mo* in Chinese, "模/ 摹", is equivalent to "trace". Another term, *moke* 摹刻, means the same as *mole*, "copy and engrave", but it is less commonly used. However, neither of them always retained their separate identities or double meanings, i.e. "copy" and "engrave". Sometimes, *mole* merely means copy.

As a famous Ming rubbing expert and calligrapher explained, *mo* actually meant tracing the shadow of the calligraphy "*mozhe yingxie* 摹者影寫".[480] In the past, there were several methods to assist in making a faithful calligraphic copy, including: 1) *xie fangying* 寫仿影, "copying the shadow of the calligraphy under a light"; 2) *xie yingge* 寫影格, "tracing the shadow of the calligraphy using

[476] Wang Zhuangwei 王壯為, *Shufa congtan* 書法叢談 (Taibei, 1965), p.120. Hereafter, *Shufacongtan*. Yujiro Nakata, *Chugoku shoronshu* (Chinese calligraphy), in *A History of the Art of China* (Tokyo, 1980), v.2, p.255. Hereafter, Nakata.
[477] *DGYL*, p.139.
[478] *TXSC*, p.855.
[479] *YSSBG*, *juan* 154, p.6.
[480] *TXSC*, p.855.

square guidelines"; and 3) *miaoying* 描影/ *yingxie* 映寫, "tracing the shadows of the characters".[481] However, most of these terms are no longer used.

In contrast to *mo*, an alternative method for copying is *lin.* As mentioned above, *lin* means to make a copy by hand without the aid of tracing or drafting devices. In the *Dongguan yulun*, copying by the *lin* technique means that someone places paper next to an ancient model calligraphy and then learns it through observing the forms of the calligraphy.

Two basic attitudes towards *lin* are *duilin* 對臨 and *beilin* 背臨. The former means copying an original without any assistance, whereas the latter also means copying without any assistance, but without looking at the original, thereby recalling it from memory alone. In addition to these two approaches, a higher level of calligraphy learning is to make a freehand copy through *yilin* 意臨, which solely relies on one's personal writing style. For example, a famous Ming calligrapher, Dong Qichang, described his method as follows:

> "I made a freehand copy of the *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion* but never of any ancient stele-inscription on stone."
>
> 餘書蘭亭皆以意背臨，未嘗對古刻。[482]

Hence, the importance of "*yiyi beilin* 以意背臨", which is copying according to one's own interpretation, is the attitude towards copying, the spiritual essence rather than the form of a work. However, it is not an objective for making a calligraphic rubbing collection. Thus, no rubbing collection should be made using *yilin*; rather, *mo* should be used.

Lin is the same as *linfang* 臨仿, "copy by imitating".[483] While *lin* carried a similar meaning to imitate (*fang* 仿), it seems to have been occasionally employed as an exact synonym for *fang*. Moreoever, *lintie* 臨帖 specifically means to copy model calligraphy,[484] while *linben* 臨本 refers to the "tracing edition"[485]. Each has a subtle distinction.

It was not only this subtle distinction that was misinterpreted; in fact, the more profound difference between *lin* and *mo* was often ignored as well. In *Dongguan yulun* of the Song period, it said:

> "most people cannot discern the difference between the two words, *lin* and *mo*. … They have totally different meanings and should not be misused."
>
> "世人多不曉臨、摹之別。……臨之與摹二者迥殊異，不可亂也。"

[481] *Shufacongtan*, p.120*;* Nakata, v.2, p.191.
[482] *HCSSB*, *juan*1, p.26
[483] *Shufacongtan*, p.120*;* Nakata, v.2, p.224
[484] *Shufacongtan*, p.225
[485] *Shufacongtan*, p.224

Jiang Kui 姜夔 (c.1155–c.1221AD)[486] in the *Xu Shupu* 續書譜 examined the advantages and disadvantages of *lin* and *mo.*[487] He concluded that:

> "*linshu* 臨書, a freehand copy of calligraphy, easily lost the original structure of a piece of calligraphy, but it often kept the essence of the brushstrokes; *moshu* 摹書, a faithful copy, easily maintained the original structure of a calligraphic work but often lost its spiritual essence. *Linshu* enhances one's improvement, whereas *moshu* fails to maintain one's progress (in doing calligraphy)."
>
> 臨書易失古人位置，而多得古人筆意；摹書易得古人位置，而多失古人筆意。臨書易進，摹書易忘[488]

In the Ming, Feng Fang inherited Jiang's view and mentioned in the discussion of *lin* and *mo* that:

> "*linshu* (freehand copy) can keep the spiritual essence of the calligraphy, while *moshu* "copy by freehand" can attain the accurate positions of the points and brushes of the calligraphy."
>
> 臨書能得其神，摹書得其點畫位置。[489]

All of the above may seem to be trivial points; however, as *lin* and *mo* are words which often appear in the discussions of rubbing collections, recognising the subtle difference between them allows us to understand clearly why Ming Dynasty scholars used these terms in certain contexts.

In fact, most people relied on copies of calligraphy in order to understand ancient masterworks. Strictly speaking, the faithfulness of the copies and their accessibility would affect how people received the calligraphy of former masters, and influence the transmission of the calligraphy canon. This happens throughout history; for example, in the Tang Dynasty, the chosen calligraphy was that which people would easily understand.

As a matter of fact, there were norms against faithfully following the classical traditions (the Two Wangs) in the late Ming. The emerging reformists had an opposing view to that of the masses. These calligraphers (the group with true taste and extensive knowledge in calligraphy) reinterpreted the classical tradition in a new way and sought creativity, individuality, authenticity, or simply the endorsements of noted figures (colophons or comments on rubbing collections) in a rubbing collection. From Ming people's point of view, the classical tradition had already disappeared as early as the Song. Zhu Youdun said:

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[486] *ZMRD*, p.583 or Jiang Kui (ca.1155–1235AD), in *ZLRD*, p.1772.
[487] An annotated scholarly English translation of *Xu shupu* (*Sequel to the Treatise on calligraphy*) by Jiang Kui is in *Two Chinese treatises on calligraphy* (New Haven & London, 1995) by Chang Chungho and Hans Frankel. This treatise consists of information on Chinese views of what constitutes good and bad calligraphy and concentrates on technical pointers, for example, the comparative advantages of copying over tracing when doing calligraphy. In this English translation, the original Chinese texts of both *Shupu* and *Xu Shupu* are clearly transcribed by Chang Chungho, and a photocopy of the original *Shupu* text is included as well.
[488] Jiang Kui, *Shupu*, *SKQS*, p.8.
[489] *TXSC*, p.856.

> "Till the Song under the Zhao family rulership, although people including Cai Xiang (1012–1107AD) and Mi Fu were renowned for excelling in calligraphy, in fact, their calligraphy did not reveal any styles of the Wei and Jin Dynasties' calligraphy."
> 至趙宋之時，蔡襄、米芾諸人雖號為能書，其實魏晉之法蕩然不存矣。[490]

Ming people's attitudes prompted them to keep a distance but maintain their relationship with the ancient. Li Rihua's *Liuyanzhai biji* 六研齋筆記 states:

> "The wonderful thing about ancient people copying calligraphy was their ability to get the meaning of the work and not merely be restricted to the similarity and faithfulness of the forms of calligraphy."
> 古人臨帖妙在得其意度，不特規規於形似而已。[491]

Nevertheless, their reformation was based on the classical tradition. In spite of the classical tradition, knowledgeable calligraphers realised the weaknesses of canonical calligraphy, and they did not follow it blindly. For example, Wen Jia 文嘉 (1501–83AD) commented on his father as follows:

> "He was poor at calligraphy when he was young. Thus, he particularly paid attention to copying the calligraphy of the Song and Yuan Dynasties. Once he acquired these calligraphy skills, he threw them away and shifted to study the Jin and Tang calligraphy. Although his small regular script originated from the calligraphy of *Huangting*[*jing*] and *Yueyi* [*lun*], his style was mild and refined, and just below the level of the calligraphy of Yu [Shinan, 558–638AD] and Chu [Shuiliang, 596–658AD]."
> 少拙於書，遂刻意臨學，始亦規摹宋、元之撰。既悟筆意，遂悉棄去，專法晉、唐。其小楷雖自黃庭[經]、樂毅[論]中來，而溫純精絕，虞[世南]、褚[遂良]而下弗也。[492]

His clerical script was from Zhong You 鍾繇 (151–230AD) and was unique among his generation. They knew that different scripts from different periods had their unique features, and the best thing was not to learn from one particular period; they were selective and learned from certain outstanding pieces or calligraphers. As for the general literati, there was a new phenomenon:

> "Ancient calligraphy did not lose its skeleton (body), and I have good works in my mind. The best thing was to use one's mind to express opposition to the rules and standards of renowned calligraphers."
> 古帖骨格不失，而我胸中自有佳賞，快心處以意逆名家法度。[493]

The new content and contemporary calligraphy which are discussed previously show that Ming people no longer restricted themselves to the ancient and classical calligraphy, but also looked to recent works. This was probably because there were no old models to follow. Zhong Xing's 鍾惺 (1574–1624AD) colophon to *the calligraphy of Yuan Zhonglang* 跋袁中郎書 in *Yinxiuxuan wenji* 隱秀軒文集 argued that:

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[490] Text from the preface of the *Dongshutang jigu fatie* 東書堂集古法帖, unpublished image from the Academia Sinica, Taipei.
[491] *LYZBJ*, 2 *bi juan* 2, p.41.
[492] Wen Jia 文嘉, 'Xianjun xinglue 先君行略', see Appendix 2 of *Wen Zhengming ji* 文徵明集 (Shanghai, 1987), v.2, p.1622.
[493] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.21.

> "How much calligraphy and old rubbings are extant at present? In thinking of elegant aspiration and interest, people would practice calligraphy with the *yi* (mind), not returning to ancient methods because there was no ancient method to be modelled after. There were no ancients and no methods, so if we do not write the meaning of the highly cultured and elegant ancient people directly, it would be similar to those who pretend to learn from the past masters. I requested to use the calligraphy of Yuan Zhonglang [or Hongdao, 1568–1610AD] to prove it. The skills in our world were all different. If it was related to tools, it could be skilful or clumsy; if it was related to brush and ink, it could be elegant or vulgar. While skilful or clumsy could be improved by hard work, elegant or vulgar could not."
>
> 今墨跡舊拓存者有幾？因思高趣，人往往以意作書，不復法古，以無古可法耳。無古無法，故不若直寫高趣人之意，猶愈於法古之偽者。余請以袁中郎[宏道]之書實之。夫世間技藝不一。從器具出者有巧拙; 從筆墨出者有雅俗。巧拙可強，雅俗不可強也。[494]

Further to the impact of *yi* 意 (mind) on Ming calligraphy styles, Zhao Yiguang said:

> "When discussing calligraphy, vulgar people focus on brushstrokes while scholars focus on the idea of a piece. They both make mistakes. The brush is used for application and calligraphy is for people to appreciate. Despite the fact that they both have weaknesses, the levels are different."
>
> 俗人評書但聞筆意，學者評書但聞帖意，未免各中一魔。作用在筆，鑒賞在帖。雖然受病，故自有重輕也。[495]

He thought that the actual way to learn calligraphy was as follows:

> "Whenever someone imitated a *taben* (calligraphic rubbing), he needed to imagine that it was genuine. To imitate a rubbing of a later edition, one needed to treat it as good ancient calligraphy. Otherwise, he would learn its mistakes, which were very wrong."
>
> 凡臨倣搨本，要須作真蹟想。臨倣後人鐫刻，要須作古人佳帖想。否則濊染其失處，大謬也。[496]

Zhao strongly believed that one should trace back to the original or ancient calligraphy if one wanted to learn good calligraphy. He claimed that:

> "Copying someone's calligraphy and claiming it to be his own was an act of stealing, which is not learning. To write calligraphy with reference to ancient calligraphy was an act of borrowing and not stealing. To turn someone's calligraphy into one's own was to adapt from it and not to borrow from it. Blending another's calligraphy into our own calligraphy was to treat it as teachers and not as a step ladder. This is the beginning of learning. When someone keeps this in mind and composes calligraphy, even if all the brushstrokes were *linmo* (copied), there was no harm in stealing from others, but it depended on his first intention. If anyone gave up in the middle of his learning, with liver and gall not yet changed, he needed to be able to point out which brush was not as good as the ancient masters'. It may need a dozen changes to imiate the calligraphy of ancient masters."
>
> 臨帖作我書，盜也，非學也。參古作我書，借也，非盜也。變彼作我書，階也，非借也。融會作我書，是即師資也，非直階梯也，乃始是學。能具此念而作書，即筆筆臨摹，無妨盜比，但問初心何心耳。若中道而廢，肝胆未易，明白臨倣法書要明明指出何處不如古人，不妨十數改作，必肖而後已。[497]

[494] Zhong Xing, v.48, p.48–505.
[495] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.62.
[496] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.52.
[497] *HSZT, juan shang,* pp.55–6.

Even if someone wanted to learn from past masters, there were only a few genuine old model calligraphic works (either handwritten copies or rubbings) for reference. In addition to the problem of limited numbers of old models, the calligraphic reproductions were not all faithfully made. In that case, how could they reach the level of the old masters if the model calligraphy was lacking in spirit? However, this does not mean that nobody learned the classics. Classical canonical calligraphy was still the core of the traditional values. This can be easily seen in the rubbing collections, wherein the classical Jin Dynasty calligraphy comprised one of the most common forms of calligraphy among the collections.

In Ming society, there were both classicists and revolutionaries. The classicists were fundamentalists and insisted on keeping the form of the canonical calligraphy, while the reformists valued individual creativity in calligraphy while still retaining the spirit of the classical canon.

The type of individuality recognised by Ming people was not the same as the Confucian standard in terms of moral character and intellectual attainments. Rather, it was about detachment from or advancement in classical traditions in calligraphy. This was manifested to a remarkable degree by famous calligraphers such as Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636AD) and their attitudes towards calligraphy canon and ancient calligraphy. Ming calligraphers were reluctant to learn and copy ancient calligraphy faithfully because they did not want their calligraphy to be regarded as *nushu* 奴書 (slave calligraphy), which literally means "slave calligraphy" because it lacks uniqueness. As early as the Northern Song, Ouyang Xiu had already raised the following criticism:

> "In the matter of calligraphy learning, one should establish one's own calligraphy style. If one simply imitates others, it is called *nushu*. People today use their eyes to make absurd criticisms of the similarity between someone's calligraphy and a particular calligraphy, without considering his righteousness and moral quality."
> 學書當自成一家之體，其摹倣他人謂之奴書。今人肉眼妄評某人書酷肖某帖，不論其人之賢否正蹈。[498]

The pursuit of change and transformation became a dominant characteristic because of Ming calligraphers' attitudes towards *lintie* and calligraphy styles. For example, the *History of the Ming* (*Ming Shi* 明史) said:

> "The generation of Zhu Zhishan (1460–1527AD) of the Wu province was famous for their free styles which were criticised by the Ming people."
> 吳中自枝山輩以放誕不羈，爲世所指目。[499]

[498] Xu Weiqi 徐維起, *Xushi bijing* 徐氏筆精, *SKQS, juan* 6, p.28.
[499] 'Wenyuan chuan' 文苑傳, *Mingshi* 明史, *SKQS, juan* 286, p.21.

Styles of calligraphy emphasising individual characters emerged, and this eventually became a trend. A group of literati from Wu province broke through the restriction of the popular chancellery style in the calligraphy of their time, resisting the influence of classicists. They stood out from the crowd and had unique calligraphic styles. In other words, new calligraphy style which differs from ancient style emerged. Calligraphers of this kind such as Zhu Zhishan mentioned above were critical of the imitation of ancient model calligraphy. Also, the famous Ming calligrapher Wen Zhengming mentioned in the colophon of the *Li Shaoxing tie* 跋李少卿帖 that his master Li Yingzhen 李應禎 (1431–39AD) was once astonished by his calligraphy after Su Shi, saying:

> "Why do you follow others' footsteps and learn such broken brushwork? Even if you are successful in succeeding in Wang Xizhi's calligraphy style, it still belongs to others and is not your own work."
> 破卻工夫，何至隨人腳踵，就令學成王羲之，只是他人書耳。[500]

His master's recommendation that he should strive for change was actually quite typical in the Zhengde reign (1506–1521AD), when there was a major trend towards opening one's mind and thoughts about oneself.[501] Sun Kuang's *Shuhua baba* stated:

> "When writing ancient calligraphy, there is no need to write in exactly the same way as it was written."
> 書法於古人何必盡合[502]

The way Dong Qichang learned ancient calligraphy was not solely through imitation. He emphasised that "the wonderful thing was the ability to unite, and the extraordinary thing was the ability to separate" 妙在能合，神在能離.[503] Therefore, his calligraphy had a strong personal style. For example, the copy after *Getie* by Dong Qichang, as shown in Fig.4.16, barely shows the style of the original calligrapher. This was probably related to his belief in *Zen* 禪 in terms of aesthetics, which he claimed to use to explain calligraphy. He included Chan thought in his painting and calligraphy theories. Regarding calligraphy, he emphasized *jianxiu* 漸修 and *dunwu* 頓悟. He mentioned in his *Rongtai ji* 容台集 that:

> "People in the world only learn the appearance of the *Lanting xu.* If someone wants to change his normal body, there is no magic pill. Shanggu's words meant the same as Dongpo's. It was between the merging and separation. If someone followed the rules without change, he was a slave calligrapher."
> 世人但學蘭亭面，欲換凡骨無金丹。山谷語與東坡同意，正在離合之間。守法不變，即爲書家奴身。[504]

[500] The colophon to the *Li Shaoqing tie* 跋李少卿帖 in *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, *chu bian, jibu, Hanyuan yinghua* 翰苑英華 *Zhongzhou ji* 中州集 (Shanghai, 1922), *juan* 9, p.19; or in Wen Zhengming 文徵明, *Futianji* (Taibei, 1985), pp.483–4.
[501] Theodore de Bary, *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (New York, 1970), pp.145–225.
[502] *SHBB, juan* 1, p.35.
[503] *HCSSB, juan* 1, p.11.
[504] *RTJ, juan* 2, in *SKJHS*, v.32, p.32–460; or *RTJ, biji juan* 2, p.26.

To avoid being a *shunu* 書奴,[505] which means being stagnant within one's person and producing a single kind of calligraphy style without individual characteristics or one's own creativity, the extreme remedy was to copy from one's mind rather than from the actual object. Undoubtedly, this was the view of Dong Qichang.

Apparently, he appreciated works by the Two Wangs and claimed to follow the classical tradition of the Jin Dynasty. Almost one third of his handwritten works were named after former masters. There are many examples of his copies of the Jin Dynasty style calligraphy. As for rubbing collections, in the *Baodingzhai fashu* 寶鼎齋法書 of 1609AD in six *juan*, half of them were his own copies of Jin Dynasty works, such as *Lantingxu*.[506]

> "I write the *Lanting*[*xu*] by following my mind without looking at any ancient engravings. This is as if someone plays a *qin* without strings."
> 餘書蘭亭，皆以意背臨，未嘗對古刻，一似撫無弦琴者。[507]

In fact, it was closely related to the change in traditional values, which was reflected in society as well as in the Ming rubbing collections. Gu Qiyuan's 顧起元 (1565–1628AD) *Kezuo zhuiyu* 客座贅語 quoted Wang Danqiu's 王丹丘 (date unknown) *Jianye fengsuji* 建業風俗記, saying:

> "Prior to the mid-Jiajing reign (1544AD), people obeyed the rituals and rules. Juniors would carry out the customs to show their respect to the seniors. This kind of convention has disappeared recently as juniors will now contend with their seniors. Some did not even get off their horses when they saw their elders."
> 嘉靖中年以前，獲循禮法，見尊長多執年幼禮。近來蕩然，或與先輩抗衡，甚至有遇尊長乘騎不下者。[508]

According to the *wulun* 五倫 (five relationships), the above situation was very abnormal and unprecedented in Chinese society. In the past, the ordering of relationships between ruler and official, father and son, brothers, friends, husbands and wives were the core values of a stable society. This does not mean that this order no longer existed in the mid-Ming, but values were being challenged and there was a crisis. There must have been reasons for these changes, but these are beyond the scope of this thesis. The most important point is to realise that it was a societal change which affected most aspects of society, including the reception of classical traditions in calligraphy. For example, there were many late Ming calligraphers who emphasised individual creativity which includes Dong Qichang, Xu Wei, Zhang Ruitu, Huang Daozhou 黃道周 (1585–1646AD), Ni Yuanlu 倪元璐 (1593–1644AD), Huang Hui 黃輝 (date unknown). Apart from the leading role of the calligraphers from

[505] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.34.
[506] For the list of titles of works in the *Baodingzhai fashu* 寶鼎齋法書, see *CTM*, v.3, pp.1220–2.
[507] Dong Qichang, 'Shupin' 書品, *Rongtai bieji* 容臺別集, in *SKJHS*, v.32, p.32–406.
[508] Gu Qiyuan 顧起元, *Kezuo zhuiyu* 客座贅語 (Beijing, 1987), pp.169–70.

Zhejiang province, other regions such as Zhili, Bashu, Diannan, Shanzuo and Lingnan were also affected by this trend. Zhao Yiguang, commented:

> "Whoever's calligraphy reaches the level of change is wonderful. However, if such a change is without learning, it would be better not to have any change."
> 書法變幻故自妙境，若無學而變，寧不變也。[509]

Zhao appreciated and recognized the importance of change in calligraphy style. However, the change should be based on classical tradition or derived from former masters instead of purely creative from nothing. He added that change should be attempted after learning model calligraphy, as this was essential. His argument lay between change and a lack of change, which was slightly contradictory. The modern art historian Huang Dun has pointed out that there were a number of calligraphers with a similar contradictory stance to Zhao. He explained that many calligraphers who were born before the late-Ming grew up with training in how to learn the former masterpieces in a faithful and conservative way. However, with the trend for antiquarianism and the rise of more open thought and self-expressive movements in society, calligraphers encountered this change and adjusted their ideas to find their own positions.

They would choose not to change if they had not learned from the past. They aimed at changing for the better, based on canonical calligraphy. For example, Dong Qichang used ancient masterpieces to learn calligraphy and looked down on the calligraphy of his seniors such as Wen Zhengming and Zhu Yunming. His *Huachanshi suibi* 畫禪室隨筆 stated that:

> "When I learned calligraphy at the age of seventeen … I began by learning the calligraphy of Yan Pingyuan's *Duobao Pagoda* and then I turned to learn from Yu [Shinan] Yongxing. Later, I believed Tang Dynasty calligraphy was not better than Jin and Wei Dynasties' calligraphy. Henceforth, I copied the *Huangting Classic* and Zhong [You] Yuanchang's *Xuanshi biao*, *Liming biao*, *Haishi tie* and *Bingshe tie*. After three years, I thought my calligraphy looked like that of the ancients. Then, I no longer had the calligraphy of Wen Zhengzhong [or Zhengming] and Zhu Xizhe [or Yunming] in my sight."
> 吾學書在十七歲時……初師顏平原多寶塔，又改學虞[世南]永興。以為唐書不如晉魏，遂倣黃庭經及鍾[繇]元常宣示表、力命表、還示帖、丙舍帖。凡三年，自謂逼古，不復以文徵仲[徵明]、祝希喆[允明]置之眼角。[510]

Dong Qichang emphasised the lasting appeal of calligraphy rather than its form. Therefore, he wrote a hanging scroll of calligraphy in running script, using the words from the *Biyi zan* 筆意贊 of Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426–85AD) in the *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華 as follows:

> "The wonderful thing about calligraphy was, firstly, its spirit, and then its form. If the calligraphy meets both criteria, it can then surpass that of the ancient masters."

[509] *HSZT, juan shang,* p.49.
[510] *HCSSB, juan* 1, p.7.

書之妙道，神彩爲上，形質次之。兼之者方可紹於古人。[511]

Dong put the spirit of the calligraphy as his first priority. Faithful imitation was not his method of learning ancient styles, but he did not deny its importance. In fact, having the ability to innovate and change major styles was an essential factor which contributed significantly to the development of good calligraphers. An extreme example was Wang Duo 王鐸 (1592–1652AD), who said:

"[I spend] one day to copy, another day to create. [I] do it alternately throughout my life"
一日臨帖，一日應請索。以此相間，終身不易。[512]

He copied Jin Dynasty calligraphy from rubbing collections throughout his life, and claimed that he copied the *Getie* every day. Therefore he could produce dozens of calligraphic works every day, and the people who requested his calligraphy came in droves. Even Japanese people felt very honoured to receive his works. He still wrote inscriptions on stele and epitaphs for others; he could work all day long without any weariness. Even though both Dong and Wang seemed to admire and adopt the Jin Dynasty style, they re-interpreted the classical works as well as the classical tradition using their own styles. Wang Duo actually used his own invented one-brush continuous style (where several characters were written in one continuous line) to copy ancient calligraphy. The rubbing collections of his works, such as the *Nishanyuan tie* 擬山園帖,[513] illustrate his own cursive style in the name of former masters. Another example is his copy of the *Getie* after Wang Xianzhi's *Yuanyu tie* 願餘帖, done in regular script as shown in Fig.4.17.[514] Showing individuality in calligraphy rather than faithful imitation was a key feature of Ming collections, with examples of this type of calligraphy such as the above example usually existing in high end collections.

There were distinctions between vulgar and elegant calligraphy. For example, Zhao Yiguang said:

"Vulgar calligraphy of later generations changed the small to large, made the thin fat. Individual words were clustered without leaving out any single word. When the calligraphy was seen word by word, it was not because it was not in the right regular script, but it was given a sense of vulgarity."
後世俗書，縮大為小，傳瘦為肥。一字字弄作團團，無有漏漏。逐字觀之，非不端楷，卻增一團俗氣。[515]

It seems that this was not an isolated example; in fact, it was a common phenomenon in the Ming. Although the emergence of so-called vulgar calligraphy may have prompted the emergence of a

[511] This sentence was originally in *Biyi zan* 筆意贊, by Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 of the Southern Dynasties in *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華, Song edition, *juan* 18, p.151. This was quoted by Dong Qichang and was recorded in Li Zuoxian 李佐賢 (1807–76AD), *Shuhua jianying* 書畫鑒影, in Qing Tongzhi shinian Lijin Lishi keben 清同治十年利津李氏刻本, *juan* 22 , hanging scroll series, Qing Dynasty 1871 Lijin lishi edition 利津李氏刻本, p.310.
[512] Ma Zonghuo 馬宗霍 (ed.), *Shulin jishi* 書林紀事 (4 *juan*, Shanghai, 1935), *juan* 2, p.76.
[513] Wang Duo works were made into a rubbing collection by his son Wujiu 無咎 (*jinshi* 1646AD) between 1651AD and 1659AD.
[514] Wang Duo, *the Nishanyuan tie* 擬山園帖 (Nanjing, 1986), *juan* 5, p.200.
[515] *HSZT*, *juan xia*, p.14.

calligraphy style which emphasised individuality, some scholars tended to believe that it was mainly due to the impact of Ming thought. For example, modern Chinese scholars use the term "romanticism" 浪漫主義 to describe the calligraphy style which features the momentum reflected from the form (*shi* 勢) of the characters.[516] They attribute this phenomenon to the literature and political movements of the mid-Ming Dynasty when people emphasised freedom of thought, the importance of expressing one's individual soul and mind, and a rejection of direct imitation of the past. This thought was derived from *xinxue* 心學 (The Study of Mind),[517] and became one of the most influential schools of thought after the mid-Ming. It was actually this thinking that prompted the Ming philosopher and scholar Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529AD)[518] to debate the nature and role of the individual.

It is suggested that there was a correlation between the Ming calligraphy world and *xinxue*.[519] As there was a new interpretation of imitating the past masters, which aimed to move away from direct copying, the calligraphy that was included in the new rubbing collections reflected this mid- to late-Ming thinking. Owing to the popularity of this idea among the late-Ming literati, it is possible that *xinxue* affected the development and the world of calligraphy, either entirely or partially. These people emphasised individual expression or an awareness of individuality.

Instead of overwhelmingly adhering to the classical tradition, some late-Ming rubbing collections included calligraphy which was very different to those of previous dynasties. Quite a number of calligraphers, both famous and anonymous, ceased following the Two Wangs' tradition and invented their own styles, such as Zhang Ruitu 張瑞圖 (1570–1641AD, see Fig.4.15), Ni Yuanlu 倪元璐 (1593–1644AD) and Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521–93AD). Xu Wei was a believer in *xinxue*. His book *Xuanchao leizhai* 玄超類摘 said:

> "From holding a brush to writing calligraphy skills, it depends on the hands; from writing calligraphy to *shudan* (writing with red ink for stone inscriptions), it depends on the mind. The origin of the calligraphy is seen by the eyes; the commentary of the calligraphy is spoken from the mouth. Mind is the most important and the hand is second. The eyes and mouth are the least important."
> 自執筆至書功，手也；自書致至書丹法，心也。書原，目也；書評，口也。心爲上，手次之，目口末矣。[520]

[516] Xu Liming 徐利明, *Zhongguo shufa fengge shi* 中國書法風格史 (Henan, 2009), p.254. Xu grouped many famous calligraphers writing in romantic stylets, such as Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428–1500AD), Zhu Yunming 祝允明 (1460–1527AD), Xu Wei, Huang Daozhou 黃道周 (1585–1646AD), Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1598–1652AD) and Fu Shan 傅山 (1606–84AD), pp.254–5. However, not all of them appeared to show great variation from traditional styles, for instance, Zhu Yunming.
[517] For the meaning and understanding of *xinxue* from Ming people's view, see *Rizhilu*, p.1048.
[518] Wang Yangming's 王陽明 (1472–1529AD) famous publication, *Chuanxi lu* 傳習錄 (Taibei, 1994) which are mostly dialogues with his students, makes clear what others learned and what they achieved with their efforts. His book represents his thinking which developed from Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism.
[519] For further discussion of the Ming calligraphy world and its relation to Ming people's thinking, see *ZGSFS*, pp.411–38.
[520] Xu Wei 徐渭, *Xu Wenchang wenji* 徐文長文集, *SKQS*, *juan* 20 preface, p.165.

He thought that even though the techniques of controlling the brush by hand were important, the critical point for writing good calligraphy was not the result of one's hand but of one's mind. Therefore, he explained, "Mind is the most important, and the next is the hand" 心爲上，手次之. Henceforth, the spirit and mind together determined the quality of the calligraphy, and this idea greatly altered the methods of imitating ancient calligraphy.

By and large, whether *xinxue* was a reason for such a change or not, these changes have revealed how Ming calligraphers perceived rubbing collections as materials for calligraphy learning. Faithful imitation of former calligraphy was not the approach that Ming people appreciated and adopted. Even if they chose former calligraphy as models for learning, they maintained their own individuality in their work. This is one of the most prominent characteristics reflected in Ming collections and it shows their changes with reference to the canon. Hence, the classical tradition in calligraphy still existed, but it was being challenged by the new norms in society. Thus, the nature of rubbing collections had changed from unquestioned recordings of canonical model calligraphy to a tool for publishing various interpretations of canonical calligraphy. They were now being used as a special means of demonstrating contemporary views of the canon. Rubbing collections became a kind of communication channel with past calligraphers, because they were an old method of reproduction and were accepted as a medium for transmitting the canon. The history and materiality of the rubbing collections gave power and authority to the selected works.

Although there were strengths and weaknesses in both ancient and contemporary calligraphy, rubbing collections were records of change in Ming people's eyes because they presumed that the collections contained faithful calligraphic reproductions. From the way in which people during the Ming period perceived rubbing collections, we learn that they separated vulgar from elegant through the use of the brush and the ideas in the mind.

Chapter 5 Conclusion: Social Roles of Rubbing Collections

5.1 Changing Social Bases for Audiences

Late-Ming rubbing collections were not only intended for the rarefied world of calligraphy but also for a wider public. For example, Gui Youguang 歸有光 (1507–71AD) *Zhenchuanji* 震川集 wrote:

> "It is necessary to look for good calligraphy, to cut it in stone and make a hundred copies of it and send them to nearby cities. This will make calligraphy well known throughout the country."
> 得求郡中善書者入石，可摹百本送連城，使海内知有此[521]

From this quote we know that the number of reproductions may have been up to a hundred for a single title, which was definitely more effective than making hand-written copies. Also, in order to make the collections more appealing to more people and ensure sales, many *tiejia* 帖賈 (rubbing dealers) would avoid difficult content and ancient script-types which few people would understand.

The higher living standards of many people in the Jiangnan region, combined with improved techniques in printing which lowered costs, meant that people were swamped with lengthy publications which were often redundant. Nevertheless, the popularity of rubbing collections helped to create demand and increase their accessibility, and changed the social basis of rubbing collection audiences.

By the Ming period rubbing collections had already become cultural commodities, which meant that people could purchase them, depending on their financial means. They were very popular in the Ming, as evidenced by the fact that there were so many in circulation. The most likely reasons for this popularity were the large number of literati produced by the stable civil examination system, and the well-developed economic environment in the Jiangnan region which had endured since the fifteenth century and which nurtured and changed the social basis of the audience for rubbing collections. Even counting only those who were educated, there were relatively more people than in previous dynasties. Ho Ping-ti 何炳棣 (1917–2012AD), a modern historian who studied the literate population in early modern China, pointed out that the number of literate individuals in Ming and Qing China was higher than in any previous dynasty.[522] Furthermore, Evelyn Rawski, another modern historian, suggested that the improved opportunities for education in the Ming boosted the number of literati.[523]

[521] Gui Youguang 歸有光, *Zhenchuanji* 震川集, *SKQS, biji, juan* 7, p.12.
[522] Ho, Ping-ti, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368–1911 (New York, 1979), pp.220–27.
[523] Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor, 1979), p.6.

Although not all literate individuals were interested in rubbing collections, a high level of literacy would unquestionably broaden the potential audience. Eisenstein argued that once printed books were mass-produced and became commodities, a favourable environment in society would make "public readers" popular.[524] In other words, supply would create demand. If this was the case in the book market during the Ming period, it may have been similar in the rubbings market because people perceived rubbing collections as luxury commodities. At least in theory, rubbing collections were commodities which were no longer restricted to high-brow literati and calligraphers, but were available to any individuals who could afford to own them.[525]

5.2 Literati Life and Collecting for Social Engagement

In general, rubbing collections as a means of calligraphic reproduction no longer merely valued visual similarity, but also pursued ego and internal and spiritual connectivity with the ancient masters. Their existence went beyond a simple function as model calligraphy examples for learning; rather, they became symbolic of the classical tradition. Also, they were used for leisure, and for raising the quality of spiritual life in the Ming period. The Ming drama writer and scholar Gao Lian in *Tianyi zizu tiao* 恬逸自足條, in a Ming piece about nurturing and raising life, *Zunsheng bajian* 遵生八箋, written in 1591AD, stated:

> "I like leisure, and am fond of antiques … Therefore, during my leisure days [I] study broadly, including bells, cauldrons, wine pots, vessels, paintings, calligraphy, ceramics, jades and stationeries in details … [I] sometimes sat beside ancient vessels, listed some *qin* books, made rubbings below pine windows, opened paintings in a boudoir … this would make me forget hunger for days."
>
> 余嗜閑，雅好古，……故余自閑日，[自]遍考鍾鼎卣彝，書畫法帖，窯玉古玩，文房器具，纖細究心。……時乎坐陳鍾鼎，幾列琴書，帖拓松窗之下，圖展蘭室之中，……亦足以忘饑永日。[526]

Gao Lian is representative of typical Ming scholars, and because of this life-nurturing book, his attitudes towards living influenced many contemporary and even later readers. In his preface, he viewed rubbings of model calligraphy as part of a scholarly pursuit which were similar to the study of antiques such as bronzes and jades. For him taking rubbings was not solely a craftsman's job; rather,

[524] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, 'Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought: A Preliminary Report,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 40:1 (1968), p.29.
[525] Literati here means educated people who could read and write. Many studies have discussed the definition of literati; some scholars, such as Timothy Brooks, prefer to use the term gentry, and Benjamin A. Elman used gentry-literati or scholar-gentry. For a detailed study of literati in late imperial China, see Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examination in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000), p.VXii, footnote 1; Stephen J. Roddy, *Literati Identity and Its Fictional Representations in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 1998), p.3; Jerry Dennerline, *The Chia-ting Loyalists: Confucian Leadership and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven and London, 1981), p.94; Baoliang Chen, 'Ming Dynasty literati: Differentiation and Analysis', in *Hanxue yanjiu*, No.19, issue no. 1, pp.187–218
[526] *ZSBJ, juan* 14, pp.1–2.

it was an entertaining activity to spend time in. He did not mention that he used rubbing collections for learning calligraphy. Instead the activity was a hobby, and an important part of literati life.

In addition, the Ming rubbing expert Zhao Yiguang said:

> "To read a famous calligrapher's writing you need to know the history of it. Apart from ancient calligraphy, the calligraphy of Wen Daizhao [Zhengming] and his son from our Wu (Suzhou), who originated from [Tang] Emperor Taizong (599–649AD) but was seen as following Youjun's [Wang Xizhi's, 303–61 AD style], was equivalent to cutting its bloodline. Anecdotes which originated from authentic collections were seen as Xiangyang – it was like disconnecting it from its origins. The reviewer was too far from the truth, and they were all wrong … The happiness of appreciating model calligraphy cannot be comparable to songs and women. Although toys and desirable items are good, they are no good to me. Only model calligraphy is always my teacher and model, which cannot be away from me for a moment. It is always said that people who are conversant with ancient learning but do not like ancient model calligraphy are not yet conversant with ancient learning; people who are good at calligraphy but do not like model calligraphy are equivalent to those who have never written a single character. Those eminent calligraphers who preferred hand-written pieces to rubbings did not know what the real good stuff was. Good ink copies were always difficult to get and good calligraphy is a rare world treasure. Good rubbings are also difficult to obtain, and this is why it is hard to know the really good ones. Even though someone's home may have lots of calligraphic pieces, or none, engraved copies are necessary to have. This is the meaning of connoisseurship; it also means loving antiques, being knowledgeable, with the wisdom to select and acquire and the recognition of good and bad. Otherwise, these are all peripherals."
>
> 閱名家書須識其來歷。古帖無論矣，如吾吳文氏父子待詔[徵明]出於[唐]太宗而目為右軍[王羲之]者，是截其血脈也。掌故出於藏真而目為襄陽者，是斷其源流也。評者過猶不及，皆非是。……鑒賞法書之樂，聲色美好，一不足以當之。翫好雖佳，無益于我。惟法書時時作我師範，不可斯須去身。常謂博古之士而不好法帖，是未嘗博一古；善書之士而不好法帖，是未嘗寫一字。名家亦有但貴墨蹟而不貴搨本者，此正不知真好者也。墨蹟故佳不可得，而善帖為稀世之寶矣。善搨又不可得，而常搨亦為不可闕之物矣。即使其家多藏墨蹟，或一帖不具，則刻本終不可少也。如是鑒賞，方是好古，方是知書，方是識去取，方是識好惡，不然皆浮慕也。[527]

From Zhao's description, we learn that some people studied calligraphic rubbings seriously and did not simply play at it, as suggested in a previous example. This demonstrates the difference between the approaches and attitudes to rubbings of a calligrapher and an ordinary person. How one read rubbings most often depended on one's knowledge and attitudes towards them, which were not the same all the time. Zhao recommended that one should treat model calligraphy (*fashu* 法書) particularly as models to learn from. He emphasised that being fond of *fatie* was conversant with ancient learning (*bogu* 博古), which was essential to those who were good at writing calligraphy. He even criticised famous calligraphers who overlooked rubbings, claiming that they did not actually know how to appreciate such things. He raised good rubbing collections to the same high status as rare treasures, and claimed that it was necessary to possess or collect even normal collections since they were essential to demonstrate one's connoisseurship, passion for antiquity and knowledge of

[527] *HSZT, juan xia*, pp.21–2.

calligraphy. Therefore, collecting rubbing collections was a means to show deep mastery of art or calligraphy, and it became the most popular fashion in the Ming period.

However, owing to the high demand for calligraphy among noted people, rubbing collections in the late Ming became a substitute for calligraphy in terms of social engagement. For example, Dong Qichang said:

> "I assigned my relative's son to make my calligraphy into the *Shuzhongtang tie* again. This was just as my teacher [Zhi]yong did who used an iron gate to limit the number of visitors for his calligraphy so as to save some time for social engagements."
>
> 命族子鎬復刻書種堂帖，猶之[智]永師作鐵門限，以省應酬之煩耳。[528]

In the colophon to the *Shuzhongtang xutie* in 1557AD, Dong claimed that:

> "There was a person who came to ask for my calligraphy again. I was angry and refused his request. It was recently the same for Zhu Xizhe [Yunming]. Although I am fond of calligraphy, I do not compose writings. Whenever friends demand my calligraphy during days of leisure, I would write calligraphy casually for them. Later, I realised that all this calligraphy was engraved on stone."
>
> 有從索書者輒怒不許。近時祝希哲[允明]亦然。餘雖好書，都不自作書。每勝日閑窗為人所強而應者，當時率意塗抹，寧知後來盡用入石。[529]

These sentences tell us how popular Dong's calligraphy was during the late Ming. This clearly shows the importance of the fame of the calligrapher of a collection. As in previous dynasties, the calligraphy of famous calligraphers and eminent people was highly sought-after as collectables in the Ming despite the fact that it was contemporary. In the late Ming, collecting the works of famous people became a trend. A renowned scholar-official like Dong Qichang was not only famous for his calligraphy, but also for his paintings and social status as a high ranking official. This example shows that many people would ask for his calligraphy. Sometimes, owing to too much demand for his works, he used rubbing collections of his calligraphy as gifts or alternatives to hand-written calligraphy to satisfy these people and reduce his social engagements.

Nevertheless, with support from the upper social class and the elite in leading and motivating, commoners followed the trend and participated as well. Nevertheless, Dong's comment clearly reveals the significance of owning rubbing collections as essential for living a cultured way of life.

Furthermore, a Ming-Qing collector named Wu Qizhen 吳其貞 (active 1635–77AD) said:

> "Remembering the prosperity of my Huizhou province, it was not as good as the two counties of Xiu[ning] and Xixian. The distinction between elegant and vulgar depended on whether someone had antiques. Therefore, people purchased antiques regardless of their prices. At that time, people came from near and far who traded and played the antiques

[528] Colophon to *Shuzhongtang tie* 書種堂帖 of Dong Qichang, in *CTM*, v.3, p.1236.
[529] Colophon by Dong Qichang at the end of *Shuzhongtang*, in *CTM*, v.3, p.1242.

> markets rushed to [Huizhou] when they heard about the antique market here. Those who traded outside came back to find antiques."
>
> 憶營我徽之盛，莫如休[寧]、歙[縣]二縣。而雅俗之分，在於古玩之有無。故不惜重值，爭而收入。時四方貨玩者，聞風奔至[徽州] 。行商於外者，搜尋而歸。[530]

This further proves that collecting antiquities was a way to show the distinction between being elegant and vulgar. In other words, collecting was the pursuit of elegance. The modern art historian Craig Clunas has provided a thorough discussion of how people were concerned about showing taste and what was regarded as elegant and vulgar in the Ming Dynasty in his book entitled *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, and therefore this issue will not be discussed here.[531] However, it is clear that rubbing collections in the Ming were viewed as a symbol of knowledge and an essential collectable or item in a cultured life.

Apart from knowing that acquiring rubbing collections was common and localised near the sub-prefectures of Huizhou, Xiuning and Xixian, we also have an idea of how desperate people were to obtain these *guwan* 古玩 (antiquities). Regardless of price and location, people were determined to collect them, which may have been due to the popular fashion for collecting at the time. Also, as suggested above, it may have been influenced by the book industry that had flourished since the mid-Ming. It was common to discover that a book lover was also a collector of rubbing collections. For example, the Ming book collector Xu Ao said, "I like to collect ancient books and calligraphic rubbings" 余喜蓄古書古帖.[532] Xu was very fond of collecting ancient books as well as *tie* (which here probably means calligraphic rubbing collections). Possession of these items did not have any practical use – for example, learning calligraphy – but was solely based on their status as collectables.

In fact, collecting antiquities was more than an individual activity and hobby; it was often a family or clan tradition, succeeding from one generation to another. As a consequence, the act of collecting objectified investments in social exchange networks both among the family's circle of friends and among people of different social classes and backgrounds. There is plenty of work already published that focuses on items such as fashion and furniture; for example, a modern scholar, Wu Jen-shu 巫仁恕 discussed the consumption issue among scholar-officials in the late Ming in *Pinwei shehua: wan Ming de xiaofei shehui yu shidafu* 品味奢華: 晚明的消費社會與士大夫 (*Luxury and Taste: Late-Ming Consumer-society and Scholar-officials*).[533] He analysed how the consumption

[530] A scroll of the *Huang Shanju xingcao canjushi* 黃山谷行草殘缺詩, in Wu Qizhen 吳其貞, *Shuhuaji* 書畫記 (Beijing, 2006), *juan* 2, pp.119–20.
[531] See detailed discussion in *ST*.
[532] Xu Weiqi 徐維起, 'Gushugutie 古書古帖' in *Xushi bijing* 徐氏筆精, *SKQS*, *juan* 6, p.29.
[533] Wu Jen-shu 巫仁恕, *Pin wei she hua: wan Ming de xiao fei she hui yu shi da fu* 品味奢華：晚明的消費社會與士大夫 (Taibei, 2007)

practices of the scholar class were affected by the masses in a social context, and the degree to which the selection of items situates people and their identities in relation to social politics. In addition, another detailed and more recent study about collecting and connoisseurship is *Pinjian yu jingying: Ming mo Qing chu Huishang yishu* 品鑒與經營: 明末清初徽商藝術 by the modern Chinese scholar Zhang Changhong 張長虹, although this is more about the Ming situation in Huizhou.[534]

5.3 New Reception and Social Function of Rubbing Collections

Wen Zhenheng's *Zhangwuzhi* said:

> "As for rubbings of steles with calligraphy of famous calligraphers from all dynasties, the best one should be the *Chunhua getie* … Also, for famous calligraphy of all dynasties, items of the Zhou, Qin and Han Dynasties which should be included in a collection are *Zhouzhuan* (large seal script), *Shiguwen* (stone drum calligraphy), *Tanshan* engravings, Lisi's seal scripts, several steles from *Tai shan, Qu shan, Yi shan, Qin shi, Zuchu wen,* the cursive scripts of the King Zhang … Jin Dynasty rubbings are the *Lanting ji*, *Bizhen tu*, *Huangting Classic*, *Shengjiaoxu*, *Leyi lun, ...* Tang Dynasty calligraphy of Ou[yang Xun] are *Jiuchenggong ming*, *Fangdinggong mubei*, *Huadusi bei*, *Huangfujun bei*, *Yu Gong gong bei, A Thousand Characters Classic* in small regular script, *Heart Sutra* … Song Dynasty ones are from Su [Shi] Mi [Fu] and other calligraphers, for example, *Yangzhou yuanchi*, *Tianmafu*, etc. The Yuan Dynasty rubbings are of Zhao Songxue, and the Ming Dynasty ones are Two Song and others. The best written calligraphy should be included, so for appreciation and connoisseurship, they do not need to be too complicated."
>
> 歷代名家碑刻，當以淳化閣帖壓卷。……又如歷代名帖，收藏不可缺者，周、秦、漢則籀篆、石鼓文、壇山石刻、李斯篆、泰山、朐山、嶧山諸碑、秦誓、詛楚文、章帝艸書帖，……晉帖則蘭亭記、筆陣圖、黃庭經、聖教序、樂毅論……唐帖歐書則九成宮銘、房定公墓碑、化度寺碑、皇甫君碑、虞恭公碑、真書千文小楷、心經……宋則蘇[軾]米[芾]諸公，如洋州園池、天馬賦等類。元則趙松雪，國朝則二宋諸公。所書佳者亦當兼收，以供賞鑒不必太雜。[535]

Wen's description mentions a well-known rubbing collection, the *Chunhua getie*, as *beike* 碑刻 (engraved steles), which nowadays refers to inscriptions on steles for memorial purposes. He categorised rubbings such as the *Yishan bei* 嶧山碑, which were traditionally perceived as *bei*, with other rubbing collections, for instance the *Huangting Classic*. Apparently, he interpreted *bei* and *tie* as the same kind of objects. This late Ming reception varies greatly from current thinking, which separates *bei* and *tie* according to the objectives of making them.

In general, most people wanted their works to be inherited by future generations. For example, in the preface of *Baoxiantang*, Zhu Qiyuan said:

> "As the tradition of calligraphy had long been severed, [the emperor] commanded crown prince [Zhu] Qiyuan (1450–1501AD) to select calligraphies of eminent people, copy and engrave them to make rubbings, and circulate them. The rubbing was called the *Baoxiantang jigu fatie* … This was supposed to be housed in a studio for my offspring to

[534] Zhang Changhong 張長虹, *Pinjian yu jingying: Ming mo Qing chu Huishang yishu* 品鑒與經營: 明末清初徽商藝術 (Beijing, 2010)
[535] *ZWZ*, *juan* 5, pp.12, 15.

> view. [I] am not brave enough to circulate it in the scholarly world. … the origin of legitimacy relies entirely on textual transmission."
>
> 帖歲久斷脱，令世子[朱]奇源采舊所傳名人墨蹟，摹刻以傳。號曰：寶賢堂集古法帖。……置之齋中，以留示我後人，非敢傳於士林間也。……道統之源流，俱賴文字而傳"[536]

The purpose of making this collection was claimed to be one of preservation and succession. However, it is reasonable to suggest that there were other motives as well. For example, Craig Clunas suggested in his study on the *Baoxiantang* collection that Zhu Qiyuan created his collection to make a contribution to cultural activities and as an achievement in history.[537] As a matter of fact, however, it was more about publicity for himself, which was just the opposite of his description. Although he claimed that the collection was only for his successors and not for the literary world, this was a humble way to hide his real intentions. Otherwise, he would not use *daotong* 道統 to emphasise the importance of texts for the succession of Confucian orthodoxy as a comparison. This may even reflect his unstated political stance, a theory which needs further study.

By and large, people such as members of the royal family, particularly the regional kings Zhu Youdun and Zhu Qiyuan, used rubbing collections to establish their presence in the history of calligraphy. For example, we would not know the calligraphy of Zhu Youdun if he had not made *Dongshutang*. He wanted his collection to be a historic one, and this theme was clearly stated in the title: "*jigu fatie* 集古法帖". His collection contained six hundred pieces of calligraphy, including work by more than forty calligraphers. Such a collection clearly expressed that his aim was to show his importance and legitimate position through the succession of the calligraphy canon. In writing calligraphy in the Two Wangs style, these royal family members conformed to cultural expectations about how Ming emperors or the Ming court received the classical tradition of calligraphy at this time. Since there was a concern about the issue of the legitimate rule of succession at that time, not only officials but also royal family members needed to protect themselves by staying away from direct political conflict with the emperor. This view is shared by some Chinese scholars.[538]

Whatever the real objectives were behind publishing collections such as these, they were obviously made to circulate to a wider public. As with *Dongshutang*, they were distributed, and after the first print ran out, a further re-cut was created to include more calligraphy. These and new forms of Ming collections consisted of not only classical works by the Two Wangs; they also featured

[536] *CTM*, v.1, p.206, or *XSSHY*, p.4.
[537] Clunas(2010), pp.229–54.
[538] For example, this opinion was formed after a discussion with a modern calligrapher and art historian, Lee Yunwoon 李潤桓, in Hong Kong on the 24th Oct, 2012.

contemporary calligraphy by less eminent regional figures. Without these collections, many of the less well-known literary and calligraphic works and calligraphers would not be known to us today. Most of the works were not recorded in the extensive Ming literature, but instead were preserved in Ming rubbing collections. Thus, the value of a collection of calligraphy by less famous calligraphers is in its conservation; the *Baohanzhai tie* is a good example. As a result, these collections have broadened the modern view of the history of calligraphy in China.

Apart from old writings, some Ming people such as Dong Qichang, Xing Tong and others were believed to be so eager to include their calligraphy in history, they made their own collections. For example, in the colophon by Wang Kentang 王肯堂 (1553AD, c.1589AD, or 1549–1613AD) to *Xihongtang*, Wang said that:

> "the elaborate works of Xuanzai (Dong Qichang) were made into this collection for passing his works on for a hundred generations"
> 玄宰書家能品，作此欲傳百世[539]

However, it was more than simply spreading and bequeathing one's works; rather, it was formal recognition through turning one's works into rubbing collections, which were traditionally perceived as publications embodying canonical calligraphy. It seems that to be included in a rubbing collection was a privilege which needed concrete materialisation as a book, as a tangible confirmation of one's status within society.

5.4 Publicisation and Status Consumption

Rubbing collections in China were more than just a functional reference for learning calligraphy. In addition to fulfilling an individual's pursuit of collecting an alternative to calligraphy for pleasure, collecting rubbing collections was a way to increase social recognition through the demonstration of personal taste. Authors, publishers and literati wanted their own works to be published and circulated widely so as to gain fame and prestige.

It was clear that rubbing collections could be a kind of cultural capital which people used to make judgements about one's class within society. Therefore, canonical works of calligraphy in the Ming period were transformed from practical learning models to symbolic capital. However, the canon and the idea of a canonical work were not be eroded; in fact they were reinforced by the practice of production and consumption. This can be explained by status consumption theory, which

[539] *SHW*, *juan* 21, p.41; or *CTM*, v.1, p.270 or original text in Mo Shilong 莫是龍, *Bichen* 筆塵, *SKQS*, *juan* 4, p.17.

refers in particular to classes that have spending power and which use consumption to express their position in the social hierarchy.

Even though status consumption theory was formulated based upon consumption patterns in modern Europe and the United States,[540] it fits well with Ming Jiangnan society where rich merchants (the emergent consumer class) had discretionary purchasing power to pursue their lifestyle or tastes. They were often the gentry, particularly rich merchants who did not hold any official titles and belonged to a social group which ranked lower than the literati in Confucian society. In order to attain a higher social status they sought to emulate more cultivated classes by showing taste and increasing their cultural capital.

Since the mid-Ming, a rising merchant-collector group with ample financial resources had emerged on the collecting scene – the rich who were investing in antique collecting to satisfy their desire to gain social status acquired from symbolic capital.[541] Many rich merchants had long striven for power and social recognition. As rubbing collections were always situated within a high literary tradition and were often perceived as exclusively for upper-class consumption, they became a symbol of recognition and their existence explained the Ming phenomenon. For example, numerous examples of Dong Qichang's calligraphy were made into rubbing collections, many of which consisted of poor quality works which were produced only for courtesy purposes, such as gifts for social engagements, and some were not even written by him. Without wishing to comment on the compilers and producers of these collections who made them merely for profit, if the consumers who purchased them were not cheated, it was probably due to Dong Qichang's high social and cultural status which attracted people to buy them.

The name of Dong Qichang became a luxury brand in the late Ming period;[542] whether the calligraphy was written by him or copied, rubbing collections in his name were popular. Otherwise, there would not have been so many collections made. The number of Dong Qichang-related rubbing

[540] Status consumption theory was initiated by Thorsten Veblen (1899/1970) and George Simmel (1904/1957), who developed the trickle-down theory, which explains how the rich rely on pecuniary symbols to obtain social status, and as a result they trickle down the class hierarchy. Theoretical debate on status consumption may refer to the scholarship of Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, 1984), Lamont, Michele: *Money, Morals and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class* (Chicago, 1992), Simmel, George, "Fashion," *American Journal of Sociology*, 62 (May, 1904/1957), pp.541–58, Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (London, 1970).

[541] Bourdieu explained symbolic capital as a crucial source of power, and as any species of capital that is perceived through the class system in the society. For details, see Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, 1984).

[542] According to David Wengrow, "Prehistories of Commodity Branding", *Current Anthropology*, 49:1 (Feb. 2008), p. 28, in China, the use of commodity labels in advertising can be traced back at least to the beginning of the Song Dynasty in the tenth century AD.

collections accounts for more than half of the total number of rubbing collections made in the second half of the Ming period, and almost one third of those made in the entire Ming. Most of them were apparently not solely for conservation or pedagogic purposes, but were also for profit-making. Their standard, in terms of the materials used and their aesthetic value, was unsatisfactory.

Wang Kentang, despite being a friend of Dong Qichang, was also dissatisfied with the poor quality of some Dong's collections. He stated:

> "My friend Dong Xuanzai [Qichang] made the *Xihongtang tie* which consisted of his own calligraphy only. Although he used *shuanggou* (hand-tracing) to copy the model calligraphy, he did it lightly in a casual manner, with poor engravers."
>
> 吾友董玄宰刻戲鴻堂帖，亦一色自書，即雙鉤亦甚草草，石工又庸劣。[543]

This reveals that purchasing famous collections from notable calligraphers did not guarantee a good quality collection. Besides this, collections of writing in a personal style had begun to be common since the late Ming, with *Xihongtang* as an example. Calligraphers were fond of creating and establishing their own styles of calligraphy, hoping to have a significant influence on the history of calligraphy. This attitude was deeply rooted in the minds of many active calligraphers.

However, the value was constructed by the dominant group in society rather than in the inherent characteristics and nature of calligraphy. In addition, Ming people were very keen on the styles celebrated in the commentaries, those favoured by the charmed circle of literati, viewing them as status symbols. The quest to keep up with elite culture through collecting the works of remarkable figures led some members of this class (rich, but with limited knowledge) to collect rubbing collections. This new forms of collection included relatively more calligraphy by socially recognised figures, often of high social status, illustrating that the selection preference was based on the fame of the calligraphers.

With regard to *Xihongtang*, although Dong was a leader of the calligraphy world, he was strongly criticised by his contemporaries. For example, a statement at the end of the collection written in 1607AD by Shi Shuhao 施叔灝 (date unknown) states:

> "Model calligraphy of Xihong Hall was compiled by Dong Qichang, which at first was finely rubbed with excellent ink on high quality paper. People came from everywhere to try to read it. It was difficult to own one even paying a high price. When Dong [Qichang] was inspecting a school in the region of Chu, the person whom Dong found to make the rubbing collection was incompatible. This person only paid attention to reproducing it rapidly as so to make profit. As a result, the price of the rubbing also dropped a lot."

[543] *CTM*, v.1, p.269

> 戲鴻堂帖乃董太史家所刻，初時紙墨搨工各極其妙，四方爭賞，以高價購之而不易得也。迨董太史督學楚中，董[其昌]治者不得其人，徒取速就射利而已，一時價亦頓減。[544]

This clearly shows that the rubbings were made for profit. They were not concerned with its quality, and they did not worry about any possible drawbacks. Another contemporary, Shen Defu, commented that:

> "Dong Xuanzai has cut the *Xihongtang tie* which is very popular today. However, it was made in a hurry and was not finely cut. If one compares it with the genuine calligraphy, their forms and shapes are very different. The small regular scripts inside the collection consisted of a few lines of the *Huangting neijing jing* housed in the Han Zongbo house. Of model calligraphy from around the world in recent years, this collection should be the best. The collection engraved by Xihong[tang] lost both the shape and form of the calligraphy."
>
> 董玄宰刻戲鴻堂帖，今日盛行，但急於告成，不甚精工。若以真跡對校，不啻河漢。其中小楷，有韓宗伯家黃庭內景數行。近來宇內法書，當推此為第一。而戲鴻[堂]所刻，幾並形似失之。[545]

Although the deterioration in rubbing quality might not be what Dong Qichang expected when he made the collection in the first place, unfortunately the above evidence shows that the quality of its later editions grew worse. This situation was indeed quite common during the late Ming. One might attribute this to the consequences of the emergence of capitalism in Ming China. Whatever the cause, it is interesting to explore how Ming people valued calligraphic rubbings from a consumerist perspective, and thereby to understand the role and significance of these collections in the Ming period. In the light of evidence about quantity and quality, it was not difficult to believe that many collections were made simply for profit rather than anything else.

Despite the fact that the calligraphy of the collections might be selected based on aesthetic sense, the physical properties, the choices of the calligraphy and the authors of the writings remained questionable in comparison with the classical calligraphy canon. These collections, which were made for profit, mass-produced and sold as commodities, contributed significantly to the total number of Ming collections. How, then, could classical canonical calligraphy be transmitted through this kind of collection? Since the audience for this kind of collection was much wider than collectors interested in the classical calligraphers, namely experts and connoisseurs on rubbings and calligraphy, the existence of mass-produced collections did challenge the traditional attitude towards canonical calligraphy in the Ming Dynasty (which was mostly about admiration), especially among less knowledgeable collectors who owned rubbing collections for social reasons such as demonstrating their taste and following fashion.

[544] *CTM*, v.1, p.269
[545] *WYHB, juan* 5, p.658.

Apart from collections for profit, some collections were for publicity – for example, *Qingshantang*. Its content draws our attention to the different social functions that a collection could perform – in particular, the motive that Xu Xiake expressed.[546] Thus, this collection differed significantly from many other traditional collections of ancient model calligraphy, since the writings from his eminent friends were especially requested for this occasion, and were for making rubbings. The involvement of eminent figures, who were all Xu's friends, was to demonstrate his social network which, in the widest sense, honoured himself both as a dutiful son celebrating his mother's birthday and as a man with high social standing through the inclusion of renowned calligraphers and scholars' letters and writings. As a result, his social status was assumed to rise through such social connections.

Besides, collecting and publishing rubbing collections was a trend in the late Ming but the ultimate reason was the eagerness of individuals to be recognised as persons of taste and culture. They would hope to gain social recognition and status in terms of taste through the consumption of rubbing collections, which were traditionally perceived as collectables only for the elite. This was how status consumption operated through rubbing collections in late-Ming China. From this socio-economic perspective, we can comprehend the correlation between cultural capital and social identity at that time.

To conclude, rubbing collections were undergoing major transformations under the influence of changes in the societal value of luxurious cultural commodities. This led to the formation of a new interpretation of rubbing collections. However, the Ming Dynasty ended before there could be enough time for this change to develop and flourish. Also, the content of the new forms of Ming rubbing collections resonates on a certain level with the overarching classical tradition or canonical calligraphy, according to which rubbings were linked to the traditional function and reception which had been developed since their inception. This canon was transmitted to the Ming, as attested not only by classical calligraphy but also by contemporary styles. These collections seem to have changed from being restricted to the social elite, moving downwards and outwards to gain a wider audience in Ming society. The core traditional value of calligraphy remained the same through a direct line, transmitting the classical calligraphy canon through rubbing collections despite the fact that these collections were often interpreted and understood in a more conceptual way rather than being visually faithful to the originals.

[546] See chapter 2 of this thesis, pp.64-5.

Nevertheless, new forms of rubbing collections which emphasised individuality and faithful and high quality re-cuts of ancient collections co-existed alongside each other in the Ming period. The former might seem to pose a threat to the classical tradition in calligraphy, but in fact they enhanced the internal value of the classical tradition and the meaning of the calligraphy canon. In fact, these two kinds of collections did not conflict with each other because their audiences were different.

Above all, the distinction between high-end and low-end collections remained huge. How an individual interpreted a rubbing collection was largely based on how cultured and knowledgeable he was concerning calligraphy. Therefore, the calligraphy canon was challenged, but was not substantially changed during the Ming Dynasty. Throughout this transformation process the elements of continuity with the classical past were much stronger than has hitherto been recognised. While not overtly political, the steering forces behind the transformation probably had a social motivation to effect this change. In sum, rubbing collections in Ming China were received as a kind of luxury collectable with symbolic meanings, and cultural commodities for social connectivity. Hopefully, this study provides a new sociological direction for art-historical research on Ming rubbing collections.

List of Abbreviations

Collections

SHQS	*Zhongguo shuhua quanshu* 中國書畫全書, by Lu Fusheng 盧輔聖, Cui Erping 崔爾平 and Jiang Hong 江宏, eds., (13 vols., Shanghai, 1992-)
SBCKCB	*Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編 (Shanghai, 1989)
SKCM	*Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書 (Jinan, 1995)
SKJHS	*Siku jinhuishu congkan* 四庫禁毀書叢刊 (Beijing, 2000)
SKQS	*Jingyin wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (1500 vols., Taibei, 1986)
SKSL	*Shike shiliao xinbian, xu bian, san bian* 石刻史料新編, 續編, 三編 (Taibei, 1982)

Individual Titles

BT	*Black Tigers: A Grammar of Chinese Rubbings*, by Kenneth Starr, (Seattle, 2008)
CGL	*Chuogenglu* 輟耕錄/ *Nancun chuogenglu* 南村輟耕錄, by Tao Zongyi, 30 *juan*, *SKQS*
CHKZ	*Chunhua mege fatie kaozheng* 淳化祕閣法帖考正, by Wang Shu 王澍, *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai, 1987), vol. 684
CPA	*Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, by R.H. van Gulik, (New York, 1981)
CTJY	*Chuanta jiyi gaishuo* 傳拓技藝概說, by Zhou Peizhu 周佩珠, (Beijing, 2004)
CTM	*Congtie mu* 叢帖目, by Rong Geng 容庚, 3 vols., (Taibei, 1984)
DGYL	*Dongguan yulun* 東觀餘論, by Huang Bosi 黃伯思, 2 *juan*, *SKQS*
DMB	*Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*, by Goodrich, L. Carrington, ed., (New York, 1976)
DOT	*A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, by Hucker, Charles O., (Stanford, California, 1985)
DQCSFL	*Dong Qichang shufa lunzhu* 董其昌書法論注, by Huang Dun 黃惇, (Nanjing, 1993)
ECCP	*Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period, 1644-1912*, by A.W. Hummel, (Taibei, 1970)
FSK	*Fashu kao* 法書考, by Sheng Ximing 盛熙明, 8 *juan*, *SKQS*
FSYL	*Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄, by Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠, 10 *juan*, *SKQS*
FTPX	*Fatie puxi* 法帖譜系, by Cao Shimian 曹士冕, 2 *juan*, *SKQS*
FTSWKY	*Fatie shiwen kaoyi* 法帖釋文考異, by Gu Congyi 顧從義, 10 *juan*, *SKQS*
FTSW	*Fatie shiwen* 法帖釋文, by Liu Cizhung 劉次莊, 10 *juan*, *SKQS*
GGYL	*Gegu yaolun* 格古要論, by Cao Zhao 曹昭, 3 *juan*, *SKQS*
GYZSJ	*Guang yizhou shuangji* 廣藝舟雙楫, by Kang Youwei, 6 *juan*, *Shufa lilun congshu* series 書法理論叢書, (Shanghai, 1981)
GZXX	*Gengzi xiaoxia ji* 庚子銷夏記, by Sun Chengze 孫承澤, 8 *juan*, *SKQS*
HCSSB	*Huachanshi suibi* 畫禪室隨筆, by Dong Qichang 董其昌, 4 *juan*, *SKQS*

HLJ	*Hanlin ji* 翰林記, by Huang Zuo 黃佐, 20 *juan*, *SKQS*
HSZT	*Hanshan zhoutan* 寒山帚談, by Zhao Yiguang 趙宧光, 2 *juan* and *shiyi*, *SKQS*
KKYL	*Chinese connoisseurship: the Ko ku yao lun, the essential criteria of antiquities*, translated and edited by Sir Percival David, (London, 1971)
KPYS	*Kaopan yushi* 考槃餘事, by Tu Long 屠隆, 4 *juan*, *SKQS*
LYZYL	*Liuyi zhi yilu* 六藝之一錄, by Ni Tao 倪濤, 406 *juan* and *xubian* 14 *juan*, *SKQS*
LYZBJ	*Liuyanzhai biji* 六研齋筆記, by Li Rihua 李日華, 4 *juan*, *SKQS*
MCB	*Mochi bian* 墨池編, by Zhu Changwen 朱長文, 20 *juan*, *SKQS*
MCZL	*Mochi zaolu* 墨池璅錄, by Yang Shen 楊慎, 4 *juan*, *SKQS*
MFCT	*Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy*, by Lothar Ledderose, (Princeton, 1979)
MGHF	*Mi ge huangfeng* : "*Chunhua ge tie*" *kan ke 1010 nian ji nian lun wen ji* 祕閣皇風: 《淳化閣帖》刊刻1010年紀念論文集, by Shui Laiyou 水賚佑, ed., (Hong Kong, 2003)
MQSFL	*Ming Qing shufa lunwen xuan* 明清書法論文選, by Cui Erping 崔爾平, ed., (Shanghai, 1994)
MTSB	*Mingtie shanben* 名帖善本, (Hong Kong 2011)
MZSY	*Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 明人傳記資料索引, by National Central Library 國立中央圖書館, ed., (Beijing, 1987)
QSTFT	*Qingshantang fatie* 晴山堂法帖 (Shanghai, 1995)
QSBT	*Qinshuo beitie* 秦說碑帖, by Qin Gong 秦公 and Wang Chunyuan 王春元, (Beijing, 1997)
RTJ	*Rongtaiji* 容台集, by Dong Qichang, 17 *juan*, *SKQS*
SUZL	*Sibu zonglu yishubian : shu, hua, fatie, banhua ce* 四部總錄藝術編 : 書、畫、法帖、版畫冊, by Ding Fubao 丁福保 and Zhou Yunqing 周雲青, eds., (Beijing, 1984)
SCC5	*Science and Civilisation in China. Vol. 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, by Joseph Needham, (Cambridge, 1974)
SF	*Shuofu* 說郛, by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀, 120 *juan*, *SKQS*
SFCD	*Shufa cidian* 書法辭典, (Taibei, 1994)
SFDCD	*Zhongguo shufa dacidian* 中國書法大辭典, by Liang Piyun 梁披雲, (Hong Kong, 1987)
SFLG	*Shufa ligou* 書法離鉤, by Pan Zhicong 潘之淙, 10 *juan*, *SKQS*
SFLZ	*Zhongguo shufa lunzhu cidian* 中國書法論著辭典, by Zhang Qianchao 張潛超, (Shanghai, 1990)
SHBB	*Shuhua baba* 書畫跋跋, by Wang Shizhen, 3 *juan* and *xu* 3 *juan*, *SKQS*
SHW	*Shanhu wang* 珊瑚網, by Wang Luoyu 汪砢玉, 48 *juan*, *SKQS*
SLQH	*Shulin qinghua* 書林清話, by Ye Dehui 葉德輝, 10 *juan*, (Taibei, 1988)
SLZJ	*Shulin zaojian* 書林藻鑑, by Ma Zonghuo 馬宗霍, 12 *juan*, (Beijing, 1984)

SPX	*Shike puxu* 石刻鋪叙, by Zeng Hongfu 曾宏父, 2 *juan*, *SKQS*
SSHY	*Shushi huiyao* 書史會要, by Zhu Mouyin 朱謀垔, 9 *juan*, *SKQS*
ST	Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China, by Craig Clunas, (Cambridge, 1991)
SYZSL	*Siyouzhai shulun* 四友齋書論, by He Liangjun 何良俊, (Shanghai, 1992)
TJ	*Tie Jian* 帖箋, by Tu Long 屠隆, 4 *juan*, in *SHQS*, v.4
TXSC	*Tong xue shu cheng* 童學書程, by Feng Fang 豐坊, in *SHQS*, v.3.
WYHB	*Wanli yehuobian* 萬曆野獲編, by Shen Defu 沈德符, 30 *juan* and *bu bian*, (Beijing, 2007)
WZZ	*Wuzazu* 五雜俎, by Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛, 16 *juan*, *Guoxue zhenben wenku* 國學珍本文庫 (Shanghai, 1935)
WZZT	*Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu*, by Sewall Oertling, (Ann Brbor, 1997)
XGGYL	*Xinzeng gegu yaolun* 新增格古要論, by Cao Zhao 曹昭 and Wang Zuo 王佐, 13 *juan*, *SKQS*
XSSHY	*Xu shushi huiyao* 續書史會要, by Zhu Mouyin 朱謀垔, *SKQS*
YSSBG	*Yanzhou shanren sibugao* 弇州山人四部稿, by Wang Shizhen 王世貞, 174 *juan*, *SKQS*
ZFQ	*Zhongguo fatie quanji* 中國法帖全集, Zhongguo fatie quanji bianji weiyuanhui 中國法帖全集編輯委員會, ed., 17 vols., (Wuhan, 2002)
ZFS	*Zhongguo fatie shi* 中國法帖史, by Xing Lin 杏林, 2 vols., (Jinan, 2010)
ZGSFS	*Zhongguo shufashi* 中國書法史, Yuan and Ming Dynasties 元明卷, by Huang Dun 黃惇, (Nanjing, 2005)
ZGZZS	*Zhongguo zaozhishi* 中國造紙史, by Pan Jixing 潘吉星, (Shanghai, 2009)
ZHZ	*Zhuanghuangzhi biaodian zhuyi* 裝潢志標點注譯, by Zhou Jiazhou 周嘉胄, annotated by Yang Zhengqi 楊正棋, (Jinan, 1987)
ZLRD	*Zhongguo lidai renming dacidian* 中國歷代人名大辭典, by Zhang Huizhi 張撝之 and Shen Qiwei 沈起煒, et al. eds., (Shanghai, 1999)
ZMRD	*Zhongguo meishujia renming* cidian 中國美術家人名辭典, by Yu Jianhua 俞劍華, ed., (Shanghai, 1981)
ZSBJ	*Zunsheng bajian* 遵生八牋, by Gao Lian 高濂, 19 *juan*, *SKQS*
ZWZ	*Zhangwu zhi* 長物志, by Wen Zhenheng 文震亨, 12 *juan*, *SKQS*
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