WEITIAN YAN

A FREER COUPLET BY GUI FU

Memory, Style, and Virtue in Qing Calligraphy

ABSTRACT
Couplet in Clerical Script by Gui Fu at the National Museum of Asian Art’s Freer Gallery of Art, dated to 1793, involves important references to early textual artifacts. This article focuses on how such references engendered historical experience for scholars in the social circle of Gui. A gift to Huang Yi, the calligraphy first evokes the sensorial experience of an inscription at Huishan Temple in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province. In addition, its uniform and vigorous brushstrokes point to the origin story of clerical script. Weng Fanggang, a colleague of Gui, further took up the eleventh-century concept of “substantial and thick” to code the style into an expression of sincerity. The calligraphic work details how Qing intellectuals appropriated ancient texts to commemorate social relationships, pursue stylistic innovation, and justify aesthetic preference.

A transmitter and not a maker, trusting in and loving antiquity. ¹
述而不作，信而好古。

From Lunyu 論語 (the Analects)

Introduction
A pair of five-character poetic verses, archaic in form and austere in stroke, sits firmly on a dark, rich red couplet (duilian 對聯 or yinglian 楹聯) (fig. 1). This format, consisting of two vertical hanging scrolls, is usually hung on the parallel columns of a building as architectural decoration.² The calligraphy is executed in clerical script (lishu 隸書), an ancient script type traditionally believed to have originated in the time of the First Emperor (259–210 BCE) of the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE).³ The compelling visual effects of this work—quiet, unaffected, yet forceful—are generated by the careful, almost mechanical alignment of unmodulated brushstrokes. Most characters in this work are symmetrical and compact, featuring individual strokes that appear uniform and ample. It is not hard to imagine that the writer maintained an extremely even speed of writing while steadily holding the brush. One could even describe these brushstrokes as “vigorou," “substantial," and “heavy," terms that evoke the engraved characters on some early stone monuments.

Such visual language illuminates a preferred mode of stylistic expression among scholars interested in epigraphic calligraphy during the second half of the eighteenth century.⁴
Starting in the seventeenth century, epigraphic materials (e.g., engraved texts on freestanding steles, natural cliffs, bronze vessels, and ceramic tiles) emerged as new models for Chinese calligraphy because scholars viewed these inscriptions as authentic and uncorrupted examples of early calligraphic styles. Gui Fu (1736–1805), the author of *Couplet in Clerical Script* at the Freer Gallery of Art of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art, belonged to a group of epigraphists who specialized in evidential research (考証) (fig. 1). This methodology, still widely used today, advocates that from rigorous textual analyses one can gather reliable evidence to restore the meanings of Confucian classics and dynastic histories. Consequently, the investigation of epigraphic inscriptions and transmitted texts became a valued field of inquiry during this period. Gui and his friends, through extensive research of historical documents, were able to reconstruct a style of clerical script that they believed to be congruent with the development of Chinese writing and representative of Confucian value.

This article offers a close reading of the calligraphic couplet by Gui Fu, with an emphasis on its references to early textual artifacts. *Couplet in Clerical Script* exemplifies Qing scholar-artists’ keen interest in using ancient inscriptions, fabled stories, and early aesthetic beliefs to pinpoint episodes in history that would appear meaningful within their social context. Evidential scholars of this period were not just experts in historical texts but also devout believers in those materials. Their erudition is best exemplified by their ability to navigate numerous challenging exegeses of classical texts and to piece together what might have happened in the past. Their faith is shown by their assertion that the lived experiences of ancient people could be reimagined through textual documents. Calligraphy done by this group of intellectuals often embodies such transhistorical knowledge and cultural imagination. For the work under discussion, Gui turned to a wide range of sources, including Han (206 BCE–220) steles, Tang (618–907) poems, Song (960–1279) letters, and seventeenth-century colophons, in the hope of channeling equally erudite viewers to moments in time signaled by those textual artifacts. In addition, these conscious references reinforced the historicity of the calligraphic style as well as its embodied aesthetic experience.

The following discussion centers on three types of textual artifacts that Gui Fu alluded to in *Couplet in Clerical Script*. The first section concerns an engraved stone monument. In 1793, Gui dedicated the work to Huang Yi (1744–1801), a prominent antiquarian scholar with a similar passion for stone inscriptions. Gui perhaps selected the pair of poetic lines to evoke the multisensory experience of an early stone inscription in Wuxi that had enchanted Huang for years. The bodily interactions with the monument described in an earlier poem constituted an integral part of the historical enjoyment of this inscription. The second section of the discussion explores the style of the work in relation to the traditional belief about the origins of the Chinese writing system. Gui and his friends fashioned a style of plain and vigorous brushwork using the narrative of the invention of clerical script. Moreover, these antiquarians also made use of extant Han steles to support the historicity of this new visual language. The final section situates the possible aesthetic experience of the work in a well-known calligraphic discourse of the eleventh century. The thick and unmodulated brushstrokes in the couplet resonate with Song commentary that equates such stylistic features with human characteristics of honesty and sincerity. This connection produced another experience of the couplet, one in which the calligraphy became a portrait of the writer’s personal traits. The calligraphic work is thus simultaneously a monument of friendship, a milestone in the development of Chinese writing, and a perpetuation of medieval aesthetics.
A Multisensorial Gift

*Couplet in Clerical Script* is a gift whose meanings were predicated on experience shared by a group of like-minded friends. In the eighteenth century, evidential scholars frequently exchanged material objects, not just as a social convention, but also as a mode of collaborative scholarship. Common examples include ink rubbings of epigraphic inscriptions, small inkstones with brief engravings, calligraphic scrolls emulating ancient steles, and paintings inspired by antiquarian activities. These objects allowed scholars to inform each other of new discoveries in the field, debate the identification of ancient characters, and exchange thoughts on early calligraphic styles. Moreover, some of these occasional works are like memory capsules, preserving episodes of a personal journey in the quest for ruined historic monuments. The work by Gui is one such material object embodying both scholarly pursuits and personal desires.

A native of Shandong, Gui Fu was a well-respected paleographer, philologist, and calligrapher of his day. Like many scholars in his generation, Gui did not gain much success in his political career but attained cultural distinction mainly through his textual studies. Since his youth, he had been particularly interested in collecting ancient seals and therefore gained a profound knowledge of seal script (*zhuanshu* 詔書), one of the earliest forms of Chinese writing. In his early thirties, Gui traveled to Beijing to search for opportunities and was quickly recognized by the antiquarian circle of Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1733–1818). A towering court academician, Weng was a scholar of stone inscriptions and an influential tastemaker at the time. Gui regularly participated in literary gatherings in Beijing, through which he built a reputation for himself as an erudite scholar in ancient Chinese writing. He produced several publications on the study of Chinese characters, including his own dictionary on a variant type of seal script. Later, when Gui returned to Jinan, Shandong Province, he devoted himself to the promotion of local culture. There he raised funds to build Tanxi Academy (Tanxi jingshe 潭西精舍), which soon became a popular site for literary gatherings and artistic productions among regional officials, literati, and students. Gui left Jinan in 1796 after he was appointed as the magistrate of Yongping in the far south of Yunnan Province. He died at his post in 1805 at the age of seventy.

The antiquarian network from which Gui benefited is perhaps best illustrated by the densely inscribed portrait of him in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum (fig. 2). Dated to 1789, the image was produced by an obscure painter named Fazao of Jiangnan 江南 (dates unknown). The figure at the center is depicted in a three-quarters view against a blank background. He wears a light blue robe and clasps his hands before him. The plain and undecorated garment is meant to underscore the identity of Gui as a true scholar who did not care for exterior embellishment. In his self-inscription, Gui indicates that the painting was made for his fifty-fourth birthday. Several noted scholar-officials of the late eighteenth century, including Weng Fanggang, Jiang Deliang 江德量 (1752–1793), and Zeng Yu 曾燠 (1760–1831), joined this celebration through their inscriptions on the portrait. Many of these texts identify Gui as a person who knew how to “comprehend characters” (*shizi* 識字), a glowing appraisal in the eighteenth century. Cheng Yaotian 程瑤田 (1725–1814), a prominent evidential scholar at the time, considered “comprehending characters” to be the most daunting task of his occupation. These contemporary comments on the painting celebrated the stature of Gui as a capable paleographer whose skills were essential to the interpretation of classical texts. The scroll, as a social document, creates the image of a learned antiquarian and situates him in the community that made such cultural representation desirable.
FIGURE 2. Fazao of Jiangnan (dates unknown). Portrait of Gui Fu, Qing dynasty, 1789. Hanging scroll; light color on paper, 71.5 × 34.7 cm. Tokyo National Museum, Gift of Dr. Hayashi Munetake, TA-451
The scholarship of Gui is marked by his trust in ancient texts and early exegeses. He was among a group of Qing scholars who offered new annotations to Shuowen jiezi (Explanation of graphs and analysis of characters), the first complete dictionary of Chinese characters, compiled by Xu Shen (ca. 30–124) of the Eastern Han (25–220). As pointed out by Ori Sela, Shuowen studies proliferated in the second half of the eighteenth century because this dictionary was a useful philological aid. A clear understanding of Shuowen offers a foundation for more accurate readings of other classical texts. The approach Gui adopted to study Shuowen, however, differed from some of his contemporaries. Many scholars at the time prioritized the phonological investigation of Shuowen. Characters that bore a similar pronunciation, in their view, implied a shared etymological origin and therefore a close semantic relationship. In contrast, Gui focused on the meticulous excavation of texts. To explicate the meaning of a given character, he conducted an exhaustive search of its historical uses in ancient documents and used them to instantiate the interpretation of the character in Shuowen. Such a text-based approach was rooted in the exegetical tradition of Shuowen. Noted commentators of the dictionary from the Song to the Yuan (1271–1368) dynasties engaged in similar painstaking comparisons of different early sources. Gui was proud to be a follower of this lineage of scholarship. His study of Shuowen reflects his belief in the power of texts to speak for themselves. Gui never aimed to produce meanings for early documents but only to organize exegetic texts that could illuminate the words of the ancients.

Analogous to his reliance on ancient texts for etymological studies, Gui also used these texts to uncover historical experience in his artistic creation, as exemplified by the Freer couplet. In this work, the symmetry of the overall composition and the unwavering brushstrokes compel a sense of awe, enhancing the poetic imagery produced by the text, which reads:

No one around, the moon is about to set.
Buddha is here, the pines do not speak.

These parallel verses are from the poem “Night Vigil at the Temple of King Aśoka (Ayuwang si yezuo 阿育王寺夜坐)” by Wang Siren (1575–1646). A man of Shanyin (present-day Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province), Wang was an acclaimed writer of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) who came to be recognized for his descriptive travel accounts in finely evocative language. One of his well-known essays is about the famous sites of Jinan in Shandong. Gui’s interest in the cultural history of his native place must have sparked his appreciation for the literary works of Wang. In the above poem, Wang depicted a series of quiet and desolate scenes he experienced during an evening visit to the temple of King Aśoka in Ningbo. Such a sense of tranquility was further magnified by Gui’s plain, unmodulated, and unfluctuating brushstrokes in the calligraphic couplet. Through the solemn style of clerical script, the audience was guided to relive Wang’s late-night stay at the empty monastery.

The inscription on the couplet states that the calligraphy was intended as a gift for Huang Yi, a renowned aficionado of stone inscriptions in the eighteenth century:

For the ninth elder brother Xiaosong (Huang Yi). Master connoisseur, please correct my clerical-script calligraphy. At the time we were both in Jining [of Shandong Province]. On the sixteenth
day of the eighth lunar month in the guichou year (September 20, 1793). A casual copy. Yunmen Gui Fu.21

小松九兄，法家正隸，時同在濟寧，癸丑八月既望，偶臨，雲門桂馥。

The passage suggests that Gui transcribed these poetic lines for Huang during their meeting in 1793. At the time, Huang was as an associate administrator of the canal (yunhedao tong-zhi 運河道同知) in Jining.22 Among the circle of Weng Fanggang, Huang was best known for his restoration of ancient steles in Shandong and his pilgrimage to the ruined monuments in Henan.23 His impressive collection of epigraphic materials made him a valued member of this antiquarian community. Several extant letters between Gu and Huang document their frequent exchanges during their time in Shandong. In the eleventh month of 1788, Huang carved a seal for Gui, who returned a calligraphic couplet.24 In 1792, Gui and Huang hired an artisan who specialized in making ink rubbings to search for early inscriptions at Tianzhushan 天柱山 in Shandong.25 In the seventh month of 1793, Gui asked Huang to acquire ink rubbings of ancient steles in Jining and Qufu for him. These letters also contain details of their reciprocal relationship. Huang not only shared his on-site knowledge with Gui but also provided him access to ink rubbings of important inscriptions. In return, Gui offered his calligraphic skill as well as access to a local network.

For this group of scholars, ancient artifacts played a huge role in their commemoration of friendship. In the tenth month of 1793, for example, Huang invited several friends on his fiftieth birthday to look at an ink rubbing of a broken stele. Dated to the second year (173) of the Xiping Era (172–178), this fragmented monument was a recent discovery of Huang in Qufu, Shandong. He also produced a painting for the event.26 The picture depicts a garden setting in which three figures stand indoors to examine an ink rubbing, while two additional figures engage in conversation in a neighboring room. In his colophon next to the image, Huang recorded that his fiftieth birthday happily coincided with the finding of the “Xiping stele.” His guests came to drink wine with him while celebrating his birthday through the ancient inscription.

Similarly, Gui’s couplet is perhaps meant to speak about their shared interests in epigraphy, evoking the sensory experience of an ancient inscription that had fascinated Huang Yi for some years. This inscription consists of two large seal-script characters reading “Hearken to the Pines (tingsong 聽松),” carved on a polished rock boulder at Huishan Temple in modern-day Wuxi, Jiangsu Province (figs. 3 a,b).27 The work was traditionally attributed to the Tang calligrapher Li Yangbing 李陽冰 (ca. 721–787). A colophon of 1791, written on an ink rubbing of this inscription, suggests that Huang was deeply captivated by the content and style of the stone inscription.28 In this colophon, Huang first transcribed an early comment by the Qing scholar Wang Shu 王澍 (1668–1743):

The Gazetteer of Xishan (present-day Wuxi) says that Huishan Temple has a stone couch, located beneath the moon railing in front of the main hall. Its length is about five chi (approximately 5½ feet), and its width is half of [the length]. It has a flat surface that allows one to recline and look up. Therefore, it is called the “stone couch.” On one side of the stone, there are two seal-script characters, tingsong (Hearken to the Pines), which is said to be brushed by Li Yangbing of the Tang. [The inscription] appears aged and fluid and has an archaic tone. It cannot be by someone other
than Yangbing. The poem by Pi Rixiu (834–883) of the Tang says, “At dusk, wind rises high in front of the hall; note after note, pinecones hit the stone couch.” Such was [how one “hearkens to the pines”]. . . .29

The passage by Wang Shu describes a somatic experience of the inscription prompted by its materiality.30 Visitors who only saw the inscription may wonder how one could listen to pine trees. Indeed, pines cannot make sound, but the contact between pinecones and the stone couch brought about a sonic element. Once visitors had reclined on the stone couch, they might recall Pi Rixiu’s poem and relate the inscription to its surrounding environment. A proper experience of the inscription thus involved not just reading the engraving but also lying on the stone to feel the wind and hear the fall of pinecones.

The detailed firsthand account by Wang Shu, who traveled to Huishan Temple to enjoy the inscription in person in 1728, must have inspired Huang to imagine a similar journey. In the second half of the colophon, Huang regrets that he has visited Jiangsu several times but never
had a chance to closely examine the work in situ.31 In 1793, Huang decided to copy these two seal-script characters for the poet Yin Hongwei 印鴻緯 (active ca. 1800) because Yin had agreed to make an ink rubbing of this inscription for him (fig. 4).32 It is unclear if Huang and Gui talked about the inscription during their meeting in 1793. Nevertheless, Gui’s couplet resonates with the engraving at Huishan Temple in the shared imagery of pines and temple. While Huang Yi may have regretted never “hearing” the pine trees at Huishan Temple, Gui Fu could have consoled him, almost with a sense of humor, that pines may not always “speak.” The couplet thus not only elicited Huang’s desire for the seal-script inscription but also underscored the multisensorial experience of the engraved calligraphy in Wuxi.

Ancient Style Reconstituted

Couplet in Clerical Script was also meant to perform an ancient calligraphic style that, in Gui Fu’s mind, followed the historical origin of clerical script. In the inscription, Gui used lin 臨 (lit., “to copy”) to designate his calligraphy as “a casual copy.” The term originates from the freehand copies designed to capture the stylistic features of established calligraphic models. However, in the seventeenth century the concept expanded to denote the performative interpretation of early calligraphic works.33 Katharine Burnett has rendered this concept as “innovative transcription,” highlighting the agency of calligraphers who “maintain the original text but transform the style.”34 Amy McNair has compared the practice to “music compositions that can be
played many ways. Their insights suggest that these so-called “copies” in late imperial China were a type of creative performance. Calligraphers engaged in “copying” to perform their stylistic preferences and cultural knowledge. For evidential scholars, this kind of innovative transcription was an opportunity to showcase their textual expertise, especially the ways in which such text-derived knowledge could help verify and reinforce historical narratives. This updated notion of “copy” thus suggests a line of inquiry related to the style of the Freer couplet: what is the style used by Gui to transcribe the poem of Wang Siren, and how does the style represent his conception of the history of Chinese writing?

Gui’s writings shed light on these questions. In his essay “Explaining Clerical Script” (Shuoli), Gui stated the following:

When writing in clerical script, if one does not clearly understand seal script, the idea that [these two scripts] are interchangeable cannot be known. If one does not examine enough stele inscriptions, the idea that [these two scripts] involve the increase or reduction [of strokes], and that they borrow [components] from one another, cannot be known. In its inception, clerical script was a transformation from seal script, and it thus maintains a close relationship with seal script. Its multiple mutations [in later times] are like the great-great-grandchildren of the earliest ancestor, the shared headwaters flowing into different branches, and the wine derived from the rice.

The text reveals Gui’s desire to return to the origin of clerical script. The investigation of how various cultural conventions—for example, writing script, object type, place name, and regional custom—emerged in the first place is at the core of evidential scholarship. By tracing the sources of those cultural conventions, scholars could gain an understanding of their later development, thereby illuminating “the meanings and principles” (yili) of the world. Gui here pointed out a consensus that clerical script developed from seal script. The relationship between the two scripts underscores that they are not distinct categories but have significant stylistic similarities. The study of ancient epigraphic inscriptions offered abundant examples for Gui to substantiate this relationship. He therefore argued that good clerical-script calligraphy should be based on the method of seal script.

This proposal, in essence, is a retelling of the origin myth of clerical script. The story had been recorded in several classical texts and functioned as a part of the traditional narrative on the invention of Chinese writing. For example, Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 (ca. 8th century), the famed Tang historian of calligraphy, described the emergence of clerical script as follows:

As for clerical script, Cheng Miao, a man of Xiaguixi from the Qin, created it. Miao’s style name was Yuancen. At the beginning he served as a prison officer in the county’s office. When he was convicted, the First Emperor imprisoned [Cheng Miao] in Yunyang. Ruminating [in the jail] for ten years, [Miao] transformed the square and round shapes of big and small seal scripts into three thousand characters of clerical script. Presenting them to the First Emperor, who thought [this invention] could be of good use, [Cheng Miao] was appointed as the Imperial Censor. Because memorial presentations [at the court] were frequent and numerous, yet characters of seal script were difficult to write, clerical script was thus used. Because clerks [used it] to aid the [speed] of writing, it was therefore called clerical script.
The passage above establishes that clerical script was adapted from seal script, an idea that had been reiterated by Gui in his writing. Building upon this, Gui interpreted that the earliest form of clerical script should have maintained some stylistic characteristics of seal script. While clerical script is simplified and distinctive, he believed that it embodied the principles of seal script because of their shared origin.

While many of the original monuments of seal script, such as the state-sponsored stele inscriptions of the Qin dynasty, had long been lost, eighteenth-century scholars were able to gain some idea about their styles through early copies of those inscriptions. For example, the Stele of Mount Yi (Yishan bei), attributed to the Qin statesman Li Si 李斯 (d. 208 BCE), survives in a reengraved copy made by Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (916–991) and Zheng Wenbao 鄭文寶 (953–1013). An ink rubbing of this tenth-century re-engraving at the Freer Gallery shows the perceived hallmarks of the Qin seal script: the structure of each character is utterly symmetrical, and individual strokes are uniform and even (fig. 5).

**FIGURE 5.** Zheng Wenbao (953–1013) and Xu Xuan (916–991). *The Re-engraving of the "Stele of Mount Yi,"* Northern Song dynasty, 993. Ink on paper, 150.6 x 70.9 cm. National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Freer Collection, Gift of Peking University, F1976.35.1
The formal qualities of Qin seal script could also be found in the clerical-script couplet by Gui, especially in his emphasis on structural balance and even brushstrokes. These stylistic similarities suggest that the artist applied the brush method of seal script to his writing of clerical script. By this intentional choice of style, Gui asserted his belief in seal script as the origin of clerical script.

Although the criteria of “abbreviation” were never specified in this historical narrative, Gui Fu and his friends turned to renowned Song scholars for evidence. The study of engraved texts first emerged as a specialized inquiry known as Jinshixue (study of bronze and stone inscriptions; commonly translated as “epigraphy”) in the eleventh century. As classical examples of this tradition, the inscriptive catalogues by three of the most notable epigraphists—Ouyang Xiu, Zhao Mingcheng, and Hong Gua—were frequently referred to by later antiquarian scholars. The legacy of Song scholars was thus instrumental in the study of clerical script during the eighteenth century. A notable example is from the work of Hong Gua. In a comment on an anonymous inscription in Sichuan, Hong described what he considered to be the predominant feature of clerical script:

The method of clerical script originated in the Qin dynasty. Perhaps because it was simple and easy, scribes and clerks used it to facilitate the writing of office documents. The dots and strokes [in clerical script] do not possess the dynamic configuration of upward and downward [brush] movements. . . . Looking at these few characters, one can observe the model writing at the time.

Hong here identified the lack of movement in brushstrokes as a sign of the earliest style of clerical script. While the inscription Hong saw is no longer extant, “dynamic configuration” in the text could have referred to a type of highly animated clerical script later developed during the Han period. For instance, the Stele for Xia Cheng (Xia Cheng bei 夏承碑) of the Eastern Han is known for its intensely gestured brushstrokes (fig. 6). The longest horizontal stroke in the character 有 (lit., “to have”) possesses both “upward and downward movements,” because it is not only fluctuating but also heavily modulated toward the end (fig. 7). In contrast, the same character in Gui’s work presents an even and stable horizontal stroke (fig. 8). It appears that Gui intentionally avoided those wavering brushstrokes, probably with reference to the statements by distinguished Song epigraphists such as Hong Gua. In doing so, he proclaimed the ancient source of his clerical-script calligraphy and reimagined the origin of clerical script.

Evidential scholars also used surviving stele inscriptions, such as the Zhang Qian Stele (Zhang Qian bei 張遷碑), to support the historicity of this style of clerical script. Dated to 186, the Zhang Qian Stele was originally erected in Dongping County of Shandong Province as a memorial to an unrecorded minor official, one Zhang Qian of the Eastern Han period. This monument is most celebrated for the plain, unmodulated, and sharp-edged strokes. Some characters on the stele feature strokes of even thickness (fig. 10). The starting point of each stroke is often marked by a distinct square edge. The uniform, blunt, and forceful brushstrokes are also reminiscent of the formal characteristics of seal script. In the Freer couplet by Gui, the character 有 displays a striking resemblance to the same character in the Zhang Qian Stele in terms of the overall shape and stroke modulation (see fig. 9).
In the eighteenth century, the *Zhang Qian Stele* was taken up by Weng Fanggang and his close associates as one of the preferred models of clerical script. After examining the stele in person in 1779, Weng wrote a long poem about his experience. Two lines from the poem touch upon the style of the inscription and how it represents the authentic style of the "clerk":

The method of clerical script originates from [the writings] of clerks.

[The *Zhang Qian Stele*] shows the genuine, unadorned idea of that time (Qin dynasty):
Slanted brushstrokes, not in the shape of bird tails; the leftward strokes, not in the form of waves. With the dynamic configuration of [each character], the brushstrokes come into their natural vertical and horizontal positions.47

隸法從來出徒隸，猶見當年真朴意。
側非隼尾撇非波，隨勢縱橫成位置。

In Weng’s view, the *Zhang Qian Stele* signifies an ancient style of clerical script because it appears plain and unadorned. The “bird tails” and “waves” here refer to the kind of gestural brushstrokes that could be observed in the *Stele for Xia Cheng*. Weng seemed to agree with Hong Gua that the earliest form of clerical script should not have such flamboyant brush movement. The even and ample brushstrokes in the *Zhang Qian Stele* thus testify to the historical development of clerical script. Identifying the inscription as “the style of the clerk,” Weng fashioned the *Zhang Qian Stele* into a fountainhead of clerical script.

Other prominent calligraphers in the circle of Weng Fanggang also embraced this type of plain and dense brushstroke. For example, Yi Bingshou 伊秉綬 (1754–1815), a close friend of Weng and Gui, gained distinction for his study of the *Zhang Qian Stele*.48 The straight and powerful brushstrokes in his *Couplet on Venerable Officials* evoke characters from this Han monument (fig. 11). Qian Yong 錢泳 (1759–1844), another noted calligrapher of the period, also promoted this style of clerical script.49 His *Couplet in Clerical Script* in the Freer Gallery features similar even and dense brushstrokes (fig. 12). These extant works indicate that belief in the original style of clerical script evolved into a shared visual language in the late eighteenth century.

![Figure 10: Artist unknown. *Zhang Qian Stele*, Eastern Han (25–220), 186. Ink rubbing dated to the Qing dynasty. Ink on paper, 26.5 x 18 cm. University of California, Berkeley, East Asian Library, Chinese Rubbings Collection, Hsin 65](image-url)
The Idea of “Substantial and Thick”

In addition to its value as an authentic historical style, this mode of clerical-script calligraphy was also theorized by scholars around Gui as an expression of sincerity. One of the basic tenets in the practice of Chinese calligraphy is that “writing is the delineation of the mind.” This age-old belief allowed later calligraphers to justify their own stylistic choices and distinguish themselves from others. Gui and his close associates were known to have criticized their predecessor Zheng Fu, whose clerical-script calligraphy was popular in the first half of the eighteenth century. The signature style of Zheng, as shown by one of his extant works, stresses tenuous, sometimes erratic, brushstrokes (fig. 13). The character wu (lit., “not have”), for example, appears animated due to the wavering and tilted horizontal strokes. In contrast, the same character by Gui conveys stability through the strong and uniform brushwork. Many evidential scholars maintained that the “broken” quality of Zheng’s brushwork...
deliberately simulated the worn surface of aged stone monuments, thereby deviating from ideals of authenticity and spontaneity. To their eyes, Zheng's style of handwriting revealed an ostentatious person, disingenuous by the standard of the Confucian ideal. To remedy this "defect," they promoted even and unaffected brushwork because an early aesthetic concept had equated such stylistic expression with the image of an authentic and truthful man.

Weng Fanggang was one of the central figures who put this stylistic choice in established aesthetic terms. He adopted the term 質厚, "substantial and thick," as a prescription for the ideal calligraphy and poetry. In one colophon, Weng essentialized such qualities as the most important principle of Chinese calligraphy:

FIGURE 13. Zheng Fu (1622–1693). Poetic Maxim, Qing dynasty, 1691. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, image: 115.6 × 45.1 cm, overall with mounting: 248.3 × 64.8 cm, overall with knobs: 248.3 × 74.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Julia and John Curtis, in memory of Marie-Hélène and Guy Weill, 2015, 2015.784.9

Though calligraphy is a minor field of study. After the seal and clerical scripts, the standard script was developed. After [the styles of] the Han and Wei (220–266) periods, [the styles] of Jin
(266–420) and Tang (618–907) periods were established. If [this development] were summarized in one phrase: it is to be substantial and thick.54

書雖小道，而篆隸之後變為正楷，漢魏之後結為晉唐，蓋一言以蔽之，曰質厚而已矣。

In Confucian classics, the meanings of zhi, or “substance,” and hou, or “thickness,” usually stand in opposition to wen, or “embellishment.”55 Identifying someone as “substantial and thick” means that the person does not care to be “embellished” and is thus upright and honest. This dichotomy often prioritizes the unadorned and sincere expression of oneself as the most desirable manner of artistic and literary production. Weng employed this archaic rhetoric to fashion himself and his group into unpretentious models.

The term zhihou also evoked a preferred method of brushwork that had been well enunciated in the art criticism of medieval China. Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105), a renowned calligrapher and poet of the Song dynasty, had promoted the idea of zhihou in his calligraphic practice. In a letter, he argued that one should model the “substantial and thick” brushstroke in ancient calligraphy:

[You] are very engaged with learning calligraphy. During the spare time after the cultivation of moral character and the study of classics, [calligraphy] is indeed a hobby superior to others. However, one must take the ancients as the teacher. Although the method of brush aims to be clear and energetic, the substantial and thick [brushstroke] must be the foundation. When ancients talked about calligraphy, they considered the firm and forthright [brushstroke] that sinks [into the paper] as good. Tang-dynasty calligraphers compared the calligraphy of Xu Jihai (Xu Hao 徐浩, 703–782) to “an angry tiger wresting a rock” and “a thirsty stallion racing toward a spring.” [From these metaphors one may] understand the general idea of what [the ancients considered as good]. Among the mistakes of calligraphy, seductive beauty is a trivial flaw, while frivolity is a significant illness. One must directly lay each brushstroke in an upright and regular position. Then, when those brushstrokes are released, the running-script calligraphy can be made naturally. Although cursive-script calligraphy is cursory, the intention of each brushstroke should be upright and regular. Most important, one should avoid deliberately decorating and stitching [each brushstroke]—this is not what makes calligraphy.56

The above passage clarifies the value of zhihou. Huang defined the term as a style of brushstroke that is not only sturdy but also vigorous, likening it to the outburst of energy often associated with powerful animals such as the tiger and horse. Characters constructed by such brushstrokes would be “substantial and thick” because they appear to “sink (chen 沉)” into the surface of the paper, almost as if they were engraved.

In addition, Huang contrasted zhihou with zimei 姿媚, or “seductive beauty,” another critical concept in calligraphic theories. Amy McNair has pointed out that the latter term was used as a metonym for the style of Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303–361), the Sage of Chinese calligraphy.57 Because none of his original works are extant, the style of Wang is most clearly exemplified
through trusted early copies. The fluent flow of intensely modulated inked lines in *Upon Receiving Your Letter (Shideshutie 適得書帖)*, an engraved copy of a short letter by Wang, are representative of his cursive-script calligraphy (fig. 14). The work is collected in the *Chunhua getie 淳化閣帖* (Model letters in the Imperial Archives in the Chunhua Era), a famed calligraphic compendium first compiled in the late tenth century. Such floating, gestural, and conscious movement of the brush is exactly what Huang tried to argue against: the frivolous and pretentious use of the brush. Huang believed that the “substantial and thick” brushstroke was an authentic ancient method because it avoided deliberate embellishment and did not appear overly decorative. It is quite likely that Weng shared this conviction and appropriated the concept as a pathway toward spontaneity.

Both Huang Tingjian and Weng Fanggang put the theories they advocated into practice. Their extant calligraphic works illustrate how they incorporated such moral concepts in their artistic creations. In *Scroll for Zhang Datong*, Huang employed a thick and vigorous brushstroke to “engrave” each large character on the paper (fig. 15). The beginning section of each stroke is solid and firm, generating an impression of the great strength that the artist had conveyed to his brush. In *Comments on Calligraphy*, Weng seemed to have maintained a slow speed of writing to allow each solid brushstroke to fully saturate the absorbent paper (fig. 16). The z-shaped component in the character *zhi* 之, for example, is almost reduced to a round vertical line (fig. 17), while the use of dense ink adds to the overall feeling of “thickness.” Weng transformed all the sharp-edged strokes into a plump inked silhouette. Although these two works differ from Gui’s *Couplet in Clerical Script* in terms of personal style and script type, they share a visual language that favors the use of the heavy and centered brushstroke. Such a stylistic choice suggests that Gui followed Weng and Huang to develop his own “substantial and thick” brushwork expressing a genuine and unadorned self-image.
Conclusion

This article has attempted to unpack the meanings of Gui Fu’s Couplet in Clerical Script to his contemporary audience. With the amplification of evidential research in the second half of the eighteenth century, scholars made use of transmitted texts and stone inscriptions to reconstruct episodes of the past that they believed to be historically authentic, culturally significant, and personally meaningful. The couplet reflects an inventive application of this scholarly methodology in the artistic arena. In 1793, Gui prepared the couplet as a gift to Huang Yi, who at the time was fascinated by the early inscription “Hearken to the Pines,” a seal-script engraving on the stone couch at Huishan Temple in Wuxi. According to a Tang poem, one should not
only view this intriguing monument and read its inscription, but also rest upon it to feel the wind and hear the drop of pinecones. Gui chose these poetic lines, which contain tropes of temple and pines, to simulate the multisensory experience associated with the inscription in Wuxi. The selection of this textual content was significant because it enabled Huang to envision a historical experience that he had long desired.

The couplet also presents Gui’s interpretation of clerical script in its uniform and vigorous brushstrokes. In particular, the artist adopted the brush method of seal script to reimagine the correct form of clerical script but avoided its animated and gestural style because those formal features were not considered historically accurate. Gui and his friends drew on extant stele inscriptions to substantiate their claims about the principle of clerical script. The style of the *Zhang Qian Stele*, for example, accords with what they conceived of as the original style of clerical script. The square and unmodulated brushstrokes in the stele soon evolved into a popular stylistic source during the period. Weng Fanggang then infused this type of brushstroke with the idea of “substantial and thick.” First articulated by Huang Tingjian in the eleventh century, this aesthetic concept promotes the upright and compact brushstroke—as opposed to the “seductive” style of Wang Xizhi—as an honest expression of the writer. To the antiquarian community of the eighteenth century, this style of clerical script signified not just an authentic style from the past but also a genuine representation of the self. Thus, the Freer couplet by Gui Fu details how evidential scholars appropriated textual artifacts to commemorate social relationships, pursue stylistic innovation, and justify aesthetic preference.

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Notes

1 For the translation, see Burton Watson, trans., The Analects of Confucius (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 48. For the original Chinese text, see Cheng Shude 程樹德, Lunyu jishi 論語集釋 (Collected annotations of the Analects) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 2:431.

2 For the origin and function of the calligraphic couplet, see, for example, Cary Y. Liu, “Calligraphic Couplets as Manifestations of Deities and Markers of Buildings,” in The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection, ed. Robert E. Harrist and Wen Fong (Princeton, NJ: Art Museum, Princeton University, 1999), 361–79; Ronald Egan, “Literary Aspects of the Calligraphy Couplets,” in Double Beauty: Qing Dynasty Couplets from the Lechangzai Xuan Collection, ed. Jason C. Kuo and Peter C. Sturman (Hong Kong: Art Museum, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2003), 16–24; and Bai Qianshen 白謙慎, “Duilian yuanli” 對聯源流 (Assorted discussion on couplets), in Double Beauty II: Qing Dynasty Couplets from the Lechangzai Xuan Collection, ed. Harold Mok (Hong Kong: Art Museum, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2007), 26–50.

3 In the standard narrative about the invention of different script types, Cheng Miao 程邈 (ca. 200 BCE), a low-ranking clerk of the Qin dynasty, was named as the “founder” of clerical script; see Zhang Huai- guan 張懷瓘, Shu duan 書斷 (Judgments on calligraphy), in Fashu yaolu 法書要錄 (Important records on model calligraphy), by Zhang Yan yuan 張彥遠 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013), 166–67. I discuss this traditional belief below, in the section “Ancient Style Reconstituted.” Scholars in recent decades have used archaeological findings, such as covenant texts in Houma and Wenxian during the Spring and Autumn Period (ca. 771–476 BCE) and bronze inscriptions from the Warring States Period (ca. 475–221 BCE), to investigate the phenomenon of lian xintan (collecting materials and corresponding text, see Cheng Shude 程樹德, Libian xintan 隸變新探 (New discoveries on the transformation of clerical script) (PhD diss., Capital Normal University, 2006); and Tian Fang 田芳, Libian xintan 隸變新探 (New discoveries on the transformation of clerical script) (MA thesis, Tianjin Normal University, 2014). For a recent discussion of these covenant texts, see Crispin Williams, “Dating the Houma Covenant Texts: The Significance of Recent Findings from the Wenxian Covenant Texts,” Early China 35–36 (2012–13): 247–75. A more conservative viewpoint is that the transformation of clerical script should have taken place at least by the late Warring States Period, roughly around 561–381 BCE; see Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, Wengxue gaiyao 文學概要 (Chinese writing), trans. Gilbert L. Mattos and Jerry Norman (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2000), 113–18.

4 For a discussion on the emergence of epigraphic calligraphy in the seventeenth century, see Qianshen Bai, Fu Shan’s World: The Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003). I follow Bai to term the type of calligraphy inspired by ancient epigraphic materials as “epigraphic calligraphy.” I also avoid using the term “stele school” because the term became popular in a slightly later period and is thus often used to speak about cultural and political concerns that were different from the period under discussion in the present article. For a recent discussion on the theories of the “stele school,” see Aida Yuen Wong, The Other Kang Youwei: Calligrapher, Art Activist, and Aesthetic Reformer in Modern China (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

5 Bai, Fu Shan’s World, 153–208; Amy McNair, “Engraved Calligraphy in China: Recension and Reception,” Art Bulletin 77.1 (March 1995): 106–14. The study of epigraphic materials first emerged in the eleventh century. Epigraphists viewed these inscriptions as authentic historical documents vis-à-vis “transmitted texts” that were compiled and edited by historians of later periods. They began using these quasi-archaeological materials to verify recorded his-


7 The following biography of Gui Fu is based upon: Sun Yafen 孫雅芬, "Gui Fu yanjiu" 桂馥研究 (The research of Gui Fu) (PhD diss., Shandong University, 2009); Zhang Yiwei 張毅巍, "Gui Fu yanjiu" 桂馥研究 (A study of Gui Fu) (MA thesis, Harbin Normal University, 2011); and Cao Hui 曹輝, "Gui Fu shufa yanjiu"桂馥書法研究 (Research on the calligraphy of Gui Fu) (MA thesis, Harbin Normal University, 2011).

8 For important studies on the life, art, and writings of Weng Fanggang, see Matteini, "Aesthetics of Scholarship," 103–20, and "Story of a Stone," 81–96; Peggy Pik-ki Ho 何碧琪, "Weng Fanggang yu Qian jia shi qi beitezhi shufeng ji jianliang wenhua"翁方綱與乾嘉時期碑帖書風及碑藏文化 (A study of Weng Fanggang: The calligraphic style and collection culture of stele and model-letters rubbings in the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods) (PhD diss., National Taiwan University, 2011); Shen Jin 沈津, *Weng Fanggang nianpu* 翁方綱年譜 (Chronicle of Weng Fanggang) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenze yanjiusuo, 2002); and Shen Jin 沈津, ed., *Weng Fanggang tiba shouzha jilu* 翁方綱題跋手札集録 (Collected records of Weng Fanggang's colophons and letters) (Guilin: Guangxi shufan daxue chubanshe, 2002).


10 Gui Fu 桂馥, "Tanxi jingshe ji" 潭西精舍記 (Record of the Tanxi Academy), in *Wanxueji wanxue ji* (Anthology of late learning) (ca. 1794–1841), juan 7: 6–7, accessed March 1, 2022, https://archive.org/details/02105492.cn/page/n54/mode/2up. In classical Chinese, the term jingshe 精舍 often refers to a "Buddhist monastery." However, in the eighteenth century, evidential scholars used jingshe for its Confucian origin, suggesting it was the residence of students and disciples during the Han dynasty. I thus translate the term as academy instead of monastery. For an explanation of the term, see Ruan Yuan 阮元, "Xihu gujing jingshe ji" 西湖詁經精舍記 (Record of the Classics Exegesis Academy at the West Lake), in *Yanjingshi ji* 西湖詁經精舍記 (Anthology of the Studying Classics Studio) (1823), juan 7: 15–16, accessed December 28, 2022, https://ctext.org /library.pl?if=gb&file=79222&page=50.


12 In total, twelve scholars inscribed the scroll: Weng Fanggang, Jiang Deliang, Zeng Yu, Song Baouchun 宋葆淳 (1748–1818), Pan Tingyun 潘廷筠 (jinshi degree obtained in 1778), Zhang Jinfang 張錫芳 (1747–1792), Shen Kepei 沈可培 (1737–1799), Wu Sheng 吳昇 (act. 1780s), Wu Zhao 吳照 (1755–1811), Zhou Huang 周桓 (?) (unidentified), Wu Xuan 吳炫 (dates unknown), and Huang Wan 黃煥 (dates unknown).

13 Sela, *China’s Philological Turn*, 89.


16 For modern evaluations of Gui’s contribution to the Shuowen studies, see He Jiuying 何久盈, "Qian jia
The translation is adapted from the work by Stephen D. Allee; see https://asia.si.edu/object/F1997.46.1-2/. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for sharing their thoughts on the meaning of the inscription. Gui wrote a short essay on the term zhengli 正隸 (orthodox clerical script) and discussed its relation to the term sanli 散隸 (dispersed clerical script). However, there is no sufficient evidence to suggest that the essay is related to the inscription here. See Gui Fu 桂馥, “Zhengli Sanli” 正隸散隸 (Orthodox clerical script and dispersed clerical script), in Zhapu 札朴 (Plain notes) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 220–21.


Chen Mingsheng 陈名生, “Nanjing bowuyuan cang Gui Fu Wu Lü Guo Lin zhi Huang Yi chidu yanjiu: kaoshi 故宮藏黃易尺牍研究: 手跡 (Discussion on issues related to the Qing-dynasty ink-rubbing album of the seal-script inscription Hearken to the Pines)”, attributed to Li Yangbing, at the Palace Museum, includes a depiction of Huishan Temple. In the colophon, Huang suggests that he had visited the temple with a group of friends and was able to make an ink rubbing of the “Li Yangbing” inscription in person. However, Huang dates the image to 1771, which would be too early both for the style of the painting and for the visit. Qin Ming believes that the date might be a mistake and proposes that Huang Yi might have brushed the year in 1791. The problem regarding the date of this painting album deserves independent study. If Qin Ming is correct, this visit should have occurred after Huang Yi’s colophon on the ink rubbing in 1791. For a reproduction of the painting, see https://digicol.dpm.org.cn/cultural/detail?id=a153c6507d7c407f9b58b2f7c0fe2f35&source=1&page=3.

The present name of the temple (Huishan si 惠山寺) was rendered in different Chinese characters during the Qing (Huishan si 惠山寺). For recent discussion of the inscription, see Wang Jiakui 王家葵, “Yuxuan shouji de bianyi (Xiaopenglaige shouji de bianyi)” 玉軒手跡的版式 (Xiaopenglaige 手跡的版式) and for the visit. Qin Ming is correct, this visit should have occurred after Huang Yi’s colophon on the ink rubbing in 1791. For a reproduction of the painting, see https://digicol.dpm.org.cn/cultural/detail?id=a153c6507d7c407f9b58b2f7c0fe2f35&source=1&page=3.

The title of the painting reads: “Xiaopenglaige 聽松” (Calligraphy), no. 11 (2015): 72–74; and Ma Yuejia 馬國佳, “Gugong bowuyuan cang Qing ta Tang Li Yangbing tingsong ce xiangguan wenti kaoshi 故宮博物院藏清拓唐李陽冰銘詩冊影像相關問題考釋 (Discussion on issues related to the Qing-dynasty ink-rubbing album of the seal-script inscription Hearken to the Pines)”, attributed to Li Yangbing, at the Palace Museum), Gugong bowuyuan yuanhan 故宮博物院院刊 (Palace Museum Journal), no. 3 (2022): 89–102.

24 Xue Longchun, Gahuau, 151.
25 Unless otherwise noted, the translations in the article are my own. For the original comment by Wang Shu, see Wang Shu, Zhuyun yimao (Siku quanshu, ca. 1777), juan 3: 23, https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=54158&index=47.
26 The title of the painting reads: “Xiaopenglaige hebei tu 小蓬萊閣賀碑圖 (Felicitations on the stele at the Lesser Penglai Pavilion)” For reproductions of the painting, see Gugong bowuyuan cang, ed., Penglai suyue: Gugong cang Huang Yi Han Wei beike teji zhibao 黃易故宮藏漢魏碑刻特集 (Discussion on the seal-script inscription ‘Hearken to the Pines’ at Huishan), Shuhua yishu 書畫藝術 (Painting and Calligraphy Art), no. 4 (2015): 72–74; and Ma Yuejia 馬國佳, “Gugong bowuyuan cang Qing ta Tang Li Yangbing tingsong ce xiangguan wenti kaoshi 故宮博物院藏清拓唐李陽冰銘詩冊影像相關問題考釋 (Discussion on issues related to the Qing-dynasty ink-rubbing album of the seal-script inscription ‘Hearken to the Pines’)”, attributed to Li Yangbing, at the Palace Museum), Gugong bowuyuan yuanhan 故宮博物院院刊 (Palace Museum Journal), no. 3 (2022): 89–102.
27 For a reproduction of the painting, see https://digicol.dpm.org.cn/cultural/detail?id=a153c6507d7c407f9b58b2f7c0fe2f35&source=1&page=3.
28 Xue Longchun, Gahuau, 150.
29 Bai, Fu Shan’s World, 20–34.
154 Ars Orientalis 53


37 The realization of these "meanings and principles" was an important part of Confucian scholarship in Qing China, and philological investigation provided a means to achieve this aspiration. See Sela, China’s Philological Turn, 2–4.


39 For recent discussions of the politics of memory in Eighteenth-Century China, see Weng Fanggang, "討論東漢夏承碑的觀念問題 Han ke kao jianlun beiike bianwei zhong de guan-nian wentu" 夏承碑原石為漢刻考兼論碑刻辨偽中的觀念問題 (Discussion on whether the Stele for Xia Cheng was an original Han engraving, and on issues related to the authentication of stele inscriptions), Xin meishu 新美術, no. 5 (2017): 83–93; He Biqi 何碧琪 (Peggy Pik-ki Ho), "Donghan Xia Cheng bei" 東漢夏承碑 (Eastern Han dynasty Stele for Xia Cheng), Shufa congkan 書法叢刊 (Journal of Chinese Calligraphy), no. 6 (2015): 26–37, and "Cong Zhenshangzhai ben Xia Cheng bei guankan Qing zhongqi jinshixue yu beixue xingqi de guanxi" 從真賞齋本夏承碑管窺清中期金石學與碑學興起的關係 (Through the lens of the Stele for Xia Cheng in the Zhenshang Studio, an investigation of the relationship between the epigraphic study and the stele-school calligraphy in the mid-Qing period), in Xilingyinshe guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji 西泠印社國際學術研討會論文集 (Proceedings from the international symposium at the Xiling Seal-Carving Society), ed. Xilingyinshe (Hangzhou: Xilingyinshe chubanshe, 2013), 751–61.


41 For a translation of the stele, see Kern, Stele Inscriptions, 10–15. For a discussion of the reengraving of the stele, see Moser, “Learning with Metal and Stone,” 135–74. I chose the Stele of Mount Yi as an example of "Qin seal script" because this Song copy remained an important stylistic source for scholars in the eighteenth century. Deng Shiru 鄧石如 (1743–1805), a renowned seal-script calligrapher of the period, closely studied this reengraved stele; see Liu Heng 劉恆, Zhonghua shuifashi Qingdai juan 中國書法史清代卷 (History of Chinese calligraphy, Qing-dynasty volume) (Nanjing: jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 172.

42 Ouyang Xi 欧陽修, Jigu lu bawei 集古錄跋尾 (Colophons after inscriptions in the Records of Collected Antiquities) (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1982); Zhao Mingcheng 郝明誠, Song ben jinshi lu 宋本金石錄 (Record of epigraphic inscriptions, Song-dynasty edition) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991); Hong Gua 洪池, Lishi liu 錄釋 (Explanation of clerical script, and the sequel to the explanation of clerical script) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985).

43 Gugong bowuyuan, ed., Gugong cong Huang Yi chidu yanjiu, 228. Shana Brown has also noted the importance of these Song scholars in her discussion of the history of Chinese antiquarianism, in Pastimes: From Art and Antiquarianism to Modern Chinese Historiography (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011), 15–32.

44 Hong Gua, Lishi liu, 305.

45 For recent discussions of the Stele for Xia Cheng, see Chen Shuo 陳碩, "Xia Cheng bei yuanshi wei Han" 夏承碑為漢刻考 (Xia Cheng bei yuanshi wei Han ke kao jianlun beiike bianwei zhong de guan-nian wentu) (Both the Stele for Xia Cheng was an original Han engraving, and on issues related to the authentication of stele inscriptions), Xin meishu 新美術, no. 5 (2017): 83–93; He Biqi 何碧琪 (Peggy Pik-ki Ho), "Donghan Xia Cheng bei" 東漢夏承碑 (Eastern Han dynasty Stele for Xia Cheng), Shufa congkan 書法叢刊 (Journal of Chinese Calligraphy), no. 6 (2015): 26–37, and "Cong Zhenshangzhai ben Xia Cheng bei guankan Qing zhongqi jinshixue yu beixue xingqi de guanxi" 從真賞齋本夏承碑管窺清中期金石學與碑學興起的關係 (Through the lens of the Stele for Xia Cheng in the Zhenshang Studio, an investigation of the relationship between the epigraphic study and the stele-school calligraphy in the mid-Qing period), in Xilingyinshe guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji 西泠印社國際學術研討會論文集 (Proceedings from the international symposium at the Xiling Seal-Carving Society), ed. Xilingyinshe (Hangzhou: Xilingyinshe chubanshe, 2013), 751–61.


47 Weng Fanggang 翁方鋼, "Zhang Qian bei ge " 張遷碑歌 (Song for the Zhang Qian Stele), in Fuchu zhai qi shiji 复初齋詩集 (Collected poems of the Fuchu Studio), in Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 清代詩文集彙編 (Edited compilation of poems and essays of the Qing dynasty) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 381:172. For a detailed explanation on the different types of strokes in a Chinese character, see Xue, Eulogy for Burying a Crane, 11–13.

48 For a biography of Yi Bingshou, see Tan Pingguo 譚平國, Yi Bingshou nianpu 伊秉綬年譜 (Chronicle of Yi Bingshou) (Shanghai: Dongfang chubanzhongxian, 2017).

49 Lu Hui- wen 盧慧紋, "Bei yu tie de jiaohui: Qian Yong Panyunge tie zai Qingdai shuishi zhongde yiyi" 趙永潘用許在清代書史中的意義 (Model calligraphy of Panyunge in the history of qing calligraphy), Taida Journal of Art History 31 (2011): 205–76; Yao Ling 姚靈, "Qian Yong yu Qian Jia Dao shiqi de beitie juanke" 錢永和乾嘉時期的碑帖顧刻 (Qian Yong and the making of stele engraving and model calligraphy in the mid-Qing period) (PhD diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2019).

50 Amy McNair touches upon this point in her discussion of the politics of calligraphy, in The Upright Brush: Yan Zhenqing’s Calligraphy and Song Literati Politics (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1998), 1–15.
For a thorough study of the life and art of Zheng Fu, see Xue Longchun, *Zheng Fu yanjiu* (Beijing: Rongbaozhai chubanshe, 2007).

Weng Fanggang and Qian Yong suggested that Zheng Fu tried too hard to imitate the effects of erosion on ancient monuments. See Xue Longchun, *Zheng Fu yanjiu*, 175–86. For Gui Fu’s criticism, see Xing Jianling, “Gui Fu shufa yishu tanxi,” *Zhongguo shufa* (Chinese Calligraphy), no. 2 (2016): 141–43.


Two early examples of this semantic opposition are *wen zhi bingbing* 文質彬彬, or “a perfect balance between embellishment and substance,” and *zhong hou shao wen* 重厚少文, or “valuing thickness and lacking embellishment.” The first phrase is from *Lunyu* (the Analects), which describes the desirable quality of a gentleman; see Cheng Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 2:400–401. The second phrase appears in *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), and was used to describe Zhou Bo 周勃 (d. 169) as an honest and frank official; see Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 2:491–92. For English discussions on this relationship and the definition of *wen*, see Chow Tse-Tsung, "Ancient Chinese Views on Literature, the Tao, and Their Relationship," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 1 (January 1979): 3–29; and Stephen Owen, "Periodization and Major Inflection Points," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature*, ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-ye Li, and Xiaofei Tian (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 17.