Article

Introduction to the History, Use and Function of Chinese Book Collectors' Seals*

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Many old Chinese books (both printed ones and manuscripts) bear red stamps on them (see figs. 1 and 2, for example). These are imprints of what is conventionally called 'seals' (*yinzhang* 印章). Book collectors' seals (*cangshuyin* 藏書印)[1] – one special kind of seal in China – are often compared to European bookplates or *ex libris*. In fact, some Western scholars even use the term '*ex libris* seals' for them.[2] The two have a number of common features: they are not merely marks of ownership, but have developed into a form of art in their own right, which could be used by collectors to express their personality.[3] Despite these similarities, however, there are also a number of important differences: bookplates are a product of the age of printing in Europe, while Chinese book collectors' seals are not exclusively confined to printed books.[4] Bookplates only came into use around 1470 and were essentially printed for the most part.[5] China, on the other hand, has a very long tradition of using seals to mark books and other collectibles, especially paintings and pieces of calligraphy. This dates back to at least the sixth century.[6] What further distinguishes Chinese book collectors' seals from European *ex libris* is the common practice among collectors of adding their seal imprint to those of previous owners.[7] This sometimes resulted in large numbers of imprints being made in a single book. Not only can such imprints be used to identify the various owners of a book, but they are also an important source of information in the difficult task of authentication and open up the possibility of revealing which books once belonged to a specific collector if the person did not happen to draw up or bequeath a catalogue of the works in his collection.

This article is intended to provide a general introduction to Chinese book collectors' seals since these have not been the subject of much attention in Western scholarship so far. To this end, I have drawn on the rich Chinese secondary literature on this topic and have tried to include as many direct references to primary sources as possible.[8] Needless to say, this paper is still a mere outline and is by no means exhaustive. The article

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[1] *Cangshuyin* is the designation used most commonly today; other terms are *cangshuzhang* 藏書章 or *cangshu yinzhang* 藏書印章. Historically used terms include *tushuji* 圖書記 ('bookmark') as well as terms that may also be used for seals in general such as *tuyin* 圖印, *tuji* 圖記, *tuzhang* 圖章, *tushu* 圖書 and *yinji* 印記. See also Lai Fushun 1991, 137.

[2] Van Gulik 1958, 425; Edgren 1997, 59; Edgren 2006, 197.

[3] There are a number of studies comparing the two: Huang Zhiguang 2011; Liu Zhong et al. 2001; Wang Dongming 1987; Qian Jun 1998, 78–101. *Ex libris* (*cangshupiao* 藏書票) only came into use in China in the early twentieth century (Li Yunjing 2000).

[4] Regarding the origin of Western bookplates, it has been argued that since 'printed books had lost their unique character, it was now necessary to provide a designation of individual possession to protect them from theft or even only confusion' (Wolf 1993, 14). Chinese seals have also been identified as technical precursors of printing technology (Tsien 1985, 136–139).

[5] Pearson 1994, 12–96. The common habit of inscribing one's name in a book is much older, of course. In Western Europe, such inscriptions are attested since the twelfth century (at least). On ownership statements in the Islamic world, including the use of seals, see Gacek 1987 and Liebrenz 2011.

[6] In the field of art history, seals are a well-known phenomenon and an important way of authenticating paintings; see van Gulik 1958, 417–457; Contag and Wang 1966; Zhuang Yan et al. 1964.

[7] This use is not only restricted to China. In fact, it can be said that book collectors' seals are characteristic of East Asian books in general (Kornicki 1998, 398). Apart from China, a great deal of research on book collectors' seals has also been conducted in Japan, e.g. Ono 1943/1954, Watanabe and Gotō 2001 and Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan 2002. See also Lin Shenqing 2000b and Lai Fushun 1991, 151–152 for an overview of the relevant Japanese publications.

[8] Since the completion of this article two book-length studies on the topic of Chinese book collectors' seals have been published: Wang Yuelin 2014; Wu Qinfang, Xie Quan 2015.

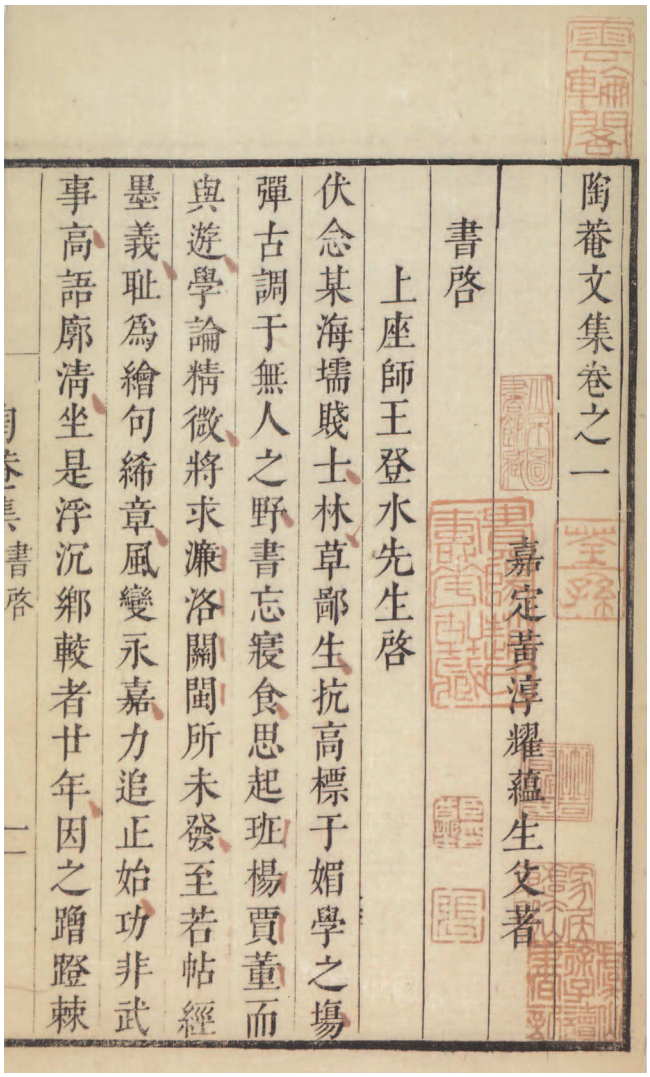
陶菴文集卷之一
嘉定黃淳耀蘊生父著
書啓
上座師王登水先生啓
伏念某海壖賤士林草鄙生抗高標于媚學之場
殫古調于無人之野書忘寢食思起班楊賈董而
與遊學論精微將求濂洛關閩所未發至若帖經
墨義恥爲繪句絺章風變永嘉力追正始功非武
事高語廓清坐是浮沉鄉薿者廿年因之蹭蹬棘

Fig. 1: Print (Kangxi, 1662–1722) of the 'Selected Writings by Tao An'.

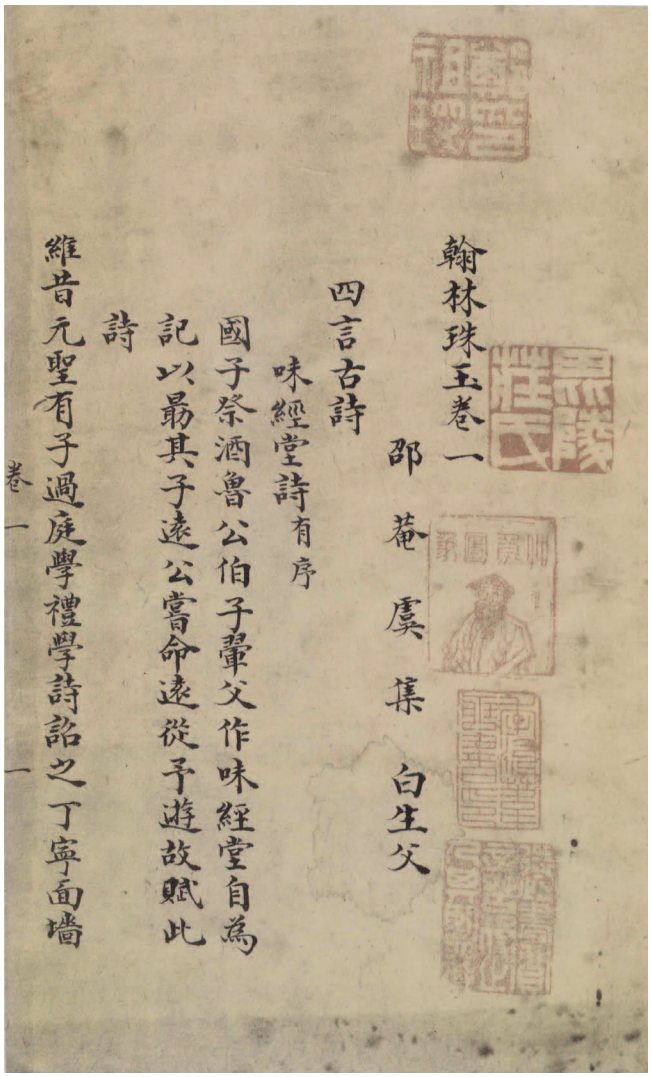
翰林珠玉卷一
邵菴虞集白生父
四言古詩
味經堂詩有序
國子祭酒魯公伯子羣父作味經堂自爲
記以勗其子遠公嘗命遠從予遊故賦此
詩
維昔元聖有子過庭學禮學詩詔之丁寧面墻

Fig. 2: Manuscript (Qing, 1644–1911) of the 'Literary Treasures of the Hanlin Academy'.

consists of five parts. As book collectors' seals are just one specific way in which seals were used in China in bygone days, the first part provides a brief overview of Chinese seals in general. Part two, which is divided into two sections, provides a chronological presentation of the history of Chinese book collectors' seals. Section one covers the beginnings up to the eleventh century, a period in which there seems to be no clearly defined boundary between seals used exclusively for books and those used on other objects. It is only in the eleventh century that we find more concrete evidence of seals being used exclusively in books. This is the subject of section two, which traces developments up to the present day. Part three is concerned with the places where seals were applied in books and includes a description of certain rules for affixing such imprints. Part four discusses the rich variety of seal legends one encounters. Finally, part five discusses the purpose of books collectors' seals beyond being mere marks of ownership.

1. Chinese seals

The use of seals in China has a long history and book collectors' seals are just one specific area of application. In terms of their size and shape, book collectors' seals are no different than any other seals, therefore it will be helpful to give a brief overview of Chinese seals in general to begin with.[9] Although the origins are still disputed among scholars, judging by the many archaeological finds dating back to the fifth to third century BCE, it is safe to assume that seals were already in wide use at this time.[10] They were employed in official and private settings from early on. Institutional seals served to authenticate official

[9] The most extensive work on Chinese seals in a Western language is still Wagner 1994. A recent Chinese publication by Sun Weizu 2010 has been translated into English: Sun 2010. Van Gulik 1958, 417–457, is still very useful. On the early history, see also Veit 1985. Short general introductions are provided by Lauer 1996 and Wagner 1997.

[10] Wagner 1994, 83–107; 1997, 205. See also Veit 1985.

documents such as deeds and were also a symbol of authority. No official was deemed to be in possession of executive power before he had adopted the seals of office used by his predecessor.[11] Private or personal seals could be used in business contracts as a way of providing a degree of security for both parties. In the eleventh century, private seals started to be used as signatures.[12] Besides the more utilitarian purpose of seals as tokens of proof and trust, painters now started to sign their artwork this way.[13] Later, in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, private seals even developed into specimens of fine art. Seal cutting (*zhuanke* 刻篆), or the art of the 'iron brush' (*tiebi* 筆鐵), was referred to as 'the sister of calligraphy'.[14] It has remained a vibrant form of art to this day and has many admirers in East Asia.[15]

Nowadays, the common word for 'seal' in Chinese, *yinzhang* (印章), is often used to designate a seal as an object, i.e. as a tool, as well as meaning the imprint it makes.[16] A variety of materials were used to make such a tool. For a long period in Chinese history, bronze was the standard material employed in official and private seals. Precious metals like gold and silver were reserved for high-ranking officials and generals, while jade was only allowed to be used by the Emperor.[17] As of the fifteenth century, the use of relatively soft stones also became popular. This material made it possible for the literati, i.e. members of the educated elite, not only to design seals, but to produce them themselves. Before this became possible, the production of seals was limited to specialised craftsmen who cast or engraved bronze seals and carved hard materials like jade with the aid of special implements. Soft stones, on the other hand, could be cut easily with a seal knife (a kind of sharpened chisel, actually).[18]

The area for carving the seal – the seal face – is essential for the seal imprint. This is what is used to imprint the seal legend (*yinwen* 印文) on different bases. Early seals were impressed on clay. These 'sealing clays' (*fengni* 封泥), as they are known, were used to seal letters and documents. Since it is impossible to attach clay directly to bamboo or wood, which were writing supports that were commonly used at the time, they were usually affixed with the help of a cord.[19] With the gradual shift to paper as writing support in the third or fourth century CE,[20] however, seals were able to be impressed directly on the material after having been inked with a red pigment. In the beginning, water-based ink was used for this purpose. Honey was added later to attain a thick, plastic substance that allowed an exact impression to be made and prevented any smearing from occurring. From the early twelfth century onwards, further improved oil-based ink pastes were used.[21] Red was probably the preferred colour because the seal could be impressed over writing in black ink without obliterating it. Other colours like black were only used during periods of mourning, while blue was only to be used in the event of an emperor's death.[22]

Seal legends generally have either Chinese characters or a pictorial design on them – or a combination of both. Legends only containing characters make up the vast majority of imprints as most seals are actually name seals (names of individual people, offices or institutions). The number of characters ranges from one to over a hundred in rare cases, though four characters are particularly common. This has to do with the nature of Chinese personal names, the vast majority of which consist of two or three characters.[23] Frequently the character for the word 'seal' (*yin* 印) has been added. In a two-character name, a further character (the genitive particle *zhi* 之) is added in between, thus making up to four characters in all (see fig. 3). The order of the characters commonly follows the customary writing direction in China, i.e. vertically from right to left. However, so-called reversed seals (*huiwen yin* 回文印) are also not uncommon, especially for seals bearing a personal name,

[11] Van Gulik 1958, 419, 425.

[12] Wagner 1997, 209, 211.

[13] Wagner 1994, 140.

[14] Van Gulik 1958, 417, 429; Wagner 1997, 207.

[15] In 2009, the art of Chinese seal engraving was included in the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&RL=00217 (accessed on 21 Jan. 2014).

[16] On the historical development of terms used to denote seals, see Wagner 1994, 114–128, 139. See also Veit 1985, 99–103.

[17] Wagner 1994, 264–268; 1997, 210.

[18] Van Gulik 1958, 429f.; Wagner 1994, 277–281; 1997, 210–211. For details of the production techniques, see Wagner 1994, 316–346.

[19] Veit 1985, 10–11; Wagner 1994, 282–290; 1997, 209. For more information on sealing clays, see Sun Weizu 2002 and Tsien 2004, 57–61.

[20] Tsien 1985, 42–47.

[21] Van Gulik 1958, 420–421; Wagner 1994, 291–298.

[22] Wagner 1997, 207.

[23] On Chinese names, see Bauer 1959 and Jones 1997.

Fig. 3: 'Seal of An Guo' (*An Guo zhi yin*). Personal seal of An Guo (1481–1534).

Fig. 4: 'Cha Shenxing's Seal' (*Cha Shenxing yin*). Personal seal of Cha Shenxing (1650–1727).

Fig. 5: Imprints of the 'Seal of Yongxing prefecture' (*Yongxing jun yin*) on the back of *Za'apitanxin lun*.

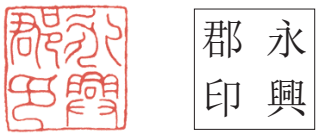

Fig. 6: 'Seal of Yongxing prefecture' (*Yongxing jun yin*).

because this allows the family name and the given name to be depicted in separate columns (see fig. 4).[24]

There is no rule about what script to apply for seal legends, but the *zhuanshu* 篆書 is by far the most common, which is also the reason why it is generally translated as 'seal script'. This script goes back to what was allegedly the commonly used script up to the third century BCE when it was gradually replaced by the more convenient clerical script (*lishu* 書隸). Subsequently it was mainly reserved for inscriptions on stelae (mostly just the headings) and on mirrors, bronze objects, roof tiles and seals.[25] Other scripts employed include the 'nine-folded style' (*jiudie wen* 九疊文) for official seals and the standard script (*kaishu* 楷書). Seals using other writing systems such as the Mongolian or the Manchu script are also prevalent.[26]

The legend could either be cut in intaglio, the characters appearing in white on a red background (*baiwen* 白文), or in relief with the characters in red on a white background (*zhuwen* 朱文). A combination of both styles in one legend was also possible. There is a wide range of forms – round, oval, heart-shaped, angular, etc. – but rectangular and square forms are by far the most prominent, both for private and official seals.[27] The size of seals can vary from less than 2.5 cm across to around 10 cm. There were strict regulations for official seals, which changed substantially over time. The normal size for official seals of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) was one *cun* 寸 (approx. 2.3–2.5 cm), but they were generally larger from the seventh century onwards. Again, there were no rules regarding private seals, but even so, very large private seals are rather uncommon.[28]

2.1. The history of book collectors' seals – from the beginning to the eleventh century

When exactly book collectors' seals first came into use is difficult to say. The oldest extant seal imprint on paper is found on a manuscript from Dunhuang 敦煌, an incomplete scroll with a copy of the *Samyuktābhidharma-hṛdaya-śāstra* (*Za'apitanxin lun* 雜阿毗曇心論), a Buddhist text translated into Chinese by Samghavarman 僧伽跋摩 sometime after 478. The imprint stems from a seal cut in a relief with a size of 5.4 x 5.4 cm. It is found on the back and at the end of the scroll and reads 'Seal of Yongxing Prefecture (永興郡印)' (see figs. 5 and 6).[29] Luo Fuyi 羅福頤 (1905-1981), who first mentioned it, dated it to the Southern Qi dynasty (479–502) since the dynastic history notes that a Yongxing prefecture was established in Ningzhou 州寧 (modern Yunnan) in the year 494.[30] However, this dating has been challenged by several scholars, who all place it in the sixth century. They remark that the style and size of the seal correspond to the larger official seals that came into use during the Sui dynasty (581–618). Most importantly, they have pointed to the fact that the majority of manuscripts from Dunhuang originated

[24] Wagner 1994, 235–240; 1997, 208.

[25] Ledderose 1970, 3–4, 17. The development and use of the script is much more complicated, of course. For a detailed study on the development of the seal script, see Veit 1985, which is now a little outdated, though, due to the growing archeological evidence uncovered in recent decades. For details of more recent studies on the development of the Chinese script, see Qiu 2000, 59–149 and Galambos 2006.

[26] Wagner 1994, 63–64, 477–481, 483–486.

[27] Wagner 1994, 234–245. For an overview of the variety of forms, see van Gulik 1958, 440–442.

[28] Wagner 1994, 461–463, 472–474.

[29] *Guojia tushuguan*: BD 14711 (*Guojia tushuguan cang Dunhuang yishu* 2010, vol. 132: 167).

[30] Luo Fuyi 1981, 71–72. *Nan Qi shu* 15:305–306. *Zhongguo lishi diming dacidian* 1995, 325.

from the surrounding area and that it is rather unlikely that a manuscript from a place as far away as Yunnan in the south-west found its way to Dunhuang in the north-west. Furthermore, they found textual evidence that Dunhuang belonged to a Yongxing prefecture in the period from 561 to 583.[31] However, this evidently is an official seal whose use was probably not confined to books alone.

It is quite obvious that the emergence of collectors' seals is closely related to the shift to paper as a writing support. Although specimens of paper have been discovered from as early as the Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE), it was not until the fourth or fifth century CE that paper became the dominant writing material.[32] Nonetheless, some scholars have dated the emergence of collectors' seals to the Western Han.[33] The evidence presented by them is not very convincing, though. One scholar's argumentation is solely based on an anecdote that cannot be attested in any historical sources. According to this, Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–8 BCE) once lent a rare book to his friend Ji Xiangru 稽相如 who took great pleasure in the book and therefore had a seal cut for it bearing the legend 'The addiction to books and the love of money are one and the same kind of greed; scholars store books like merchants store money (嗜書好貨，同為一貪，賈藏貨貝，儒為此耳)'.[34] Another scholar mentions two examples of excavated seals dated to the Western Han, which are said to have shown traces of red ink on the seal's face. This, together with the few early paper specimens we know of, is taken as proof of the practice of impressing seals with red ink onto paper.[35] However, these traces could just as well have come from coloured clay as it is known that different colours of clay were used for different purposes.[36] Finally, it has been rightly argued that, apart from the lack of textual and physical evidence, it is technically impossible to permanently apply seals with red ink on them to wood or bamboo, which were commonly used for writing during the Han period.[37]

Philological evidence suggests that collectors were putting seals on paintings by the late third century. Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (c. 815–after 875) mentions this in his *Record of the Painters of All the Dynasties* (*Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記):

> 諸好事家印，有東晉僕射周顗印，古小雌字。
>
> Seals of various amateurs of the arts. [Among them] is the seal of the Vice President of the Department of State Affairs Zhou Yi (269–322) of the Eastern Jin dynasty, with antique small female (i.e. intaglio) characters.[38]

These seals probably developed from signatures which were added when admiring the paintings.[39] The earliest archaeological evidence of a collector's seal, not just the imprint, was found in a tomb dated to 845: a seal with the legend '*Bohai tushu* 渤海圖書' was found in the tomb of a certain Li Cun 李存. The epitaph describes the tomb owner as a bibliophile, hence the seal has been interpreted as a book collector's seal.[40]

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[31] Nonetheless, there are minor discrepancies in the exact dating: Yuan Shi 1994 and Zhang Xiying 2000 both date the seal to the years 581 to 583 since it clearly resembles other known seals of the Sui dynasty (581–618). Li Zhitan 2010, on the other hand, dates it to the years 561 to 574 by drawing attention to the persecution of Buddhism under Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou (557–581) as of 574. Shen Leping 2012, 96 suggests the years 578 to 581, i.e. after the death of Emperor Wu and before the establishment of the Sui.

[32] Tsien 1985, 42–47; Pan Jixing 1979, 25–30, 52–61.

[33] Wang Aixi 2002, 48; Xiong Yan 2003, 60; Wang Dongming 1987, 44. Other scholars, however, duly admit that there is no evidence of this: Liu Ning et al. 2007, 77; Yang Yanyan 2011, 57.

[34] Wang Dongming 1987, 44. The anecdote states that although Liu Xiang repeatedly tried to reclaim his book, Ji refused to return it. In the end, Liu Xiang appealed to Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r. 33–7 BCE), with the result that the book was ultimately incorporated into the imperial collection. Liu Xiang and Emperor Cheng are well-known and well-attested historical figures, but I was unable to identify any person named Ji Xiangru. What's more, the allegedly lent-out ancient book entitled *Dengqian suilu* 燈前隨錄 is not attested anywhere. With a minor exception, the alleged legend of the seal is a combination of expressions found in Xu Fei's 許棐 (?–1249) *Meiwu shumu xu* 梅屋書目序 (in: *Xianchou ji* 獻醜集2A/3B) and Fei Gun's 费袞 *Liangxi manzhi* 梁谿漫志 3:29. At best, the anecdote is a much later fictive story, if not entirely the product of Wang Dongming's imagination, as he fails to provide any references. It has nonetheless found its way into a recent popular work on the history of books: Cai Jiayuan 2012, 46.

[35] Zhang Xiying 2000, 158–159. Cao Jinyan 2002, 21–23 gives a more cautious interpretation. Drawing on additional textual and archeological evidence, he argues that seals were already being applied on silk during the Han period. Among the manuscripts from Dunhuang there is indeed an example of a silk fragment with a seal imprint (British Library Or.8211/539a; Chavannes 1913, No. 539, p. 118), but this should not be taken as an example of a book collector's seal.

[36] Wagner 1994, 287.

[37] Hua Jifen 2004, 105. Clay seals were predominantly used to seal books off and were not directly stamped onto writing material (Wagner 1994, 282–283).

[38] *Lidai minghua ji* 3:42 (translation: Acker 1954, 232).

[39] Sha Menghai 1987, 73; Hua Jifen 2004, 105. *Lidai minghua ji* 3:37 (translation: Acker 1954, 216) mentions the 'ornamental signatures of the connoisseurs and art experts of the time (當時鑒識藝人押署)'.

[40] Jia Zhigang 2011, 86. There is yet another excavated seal, which probably

Chinese scholars generally agree that collectors' seals had become widely used by the beginning of the seventh century.[41] Again, this is based on Zhang Yanyuan's findings – he clearly states that official collectors' seals were not in use until the early seventh century:

> 前代御府，自晉宋至周隋，收聚圖畫，皆未行印記[...]。
>
> In the Imperial Storehouse of former dynasties – from Jin and Song times down to the (later) Zhou and Sui (c. middle third century to early seventh) – it was not yet the practice to affix seals to the paintings assembled in them [...].[42]

However, according to Zhang, the early Tang emperors used seals not only for paintings (*tuhua* 圖畫), but also for books (*shu* 書) in their collection. As the word *shu,* stemming from the meaning 'to write', can be used to denote anything written,[43] a clear distinction between manuscript books and calligraphies as pieces of art is not possible. Zhang further mentions the Emperor's private seals as well as official seals of different imperial institutions:

> 太宗皇帝自書貞觀二小字作二小印，貞觀。玄宗皇帝自書開元二小字成一印，開元。又有集賢印、祕閣印、翰林印。{各以判司所收掌圖書定印。}[...]又有弘文之印，恐是東觀舊印。印書者，其印至小。
>
> Emperor Taizong (598–649) had the two small characters *zhen* (true) and *guan* (contemplation) written in his own hand made into two small seals, *zhenguan*. Emperor Xuanzong (685–762) had the two small characters *kai* (to open) and *yuan* (origin) made into a seal written in his own hand: *kaiyuan*. Also there are the seals of the [Hall of the] Assembled Worthies, of the Secret Pavilion, and of the Academy of the Forest of Writing Brushes. {[Gloss:] In each case the pictures and books received and cared for by the authorities [of these institutions] were stamped with these seals.} […]. There are also seals [with the characters] *Hongwen* (standing for Hongwen guan, i.e. College for the Development of Literature). I suppose that these were old seals from the Eastern Tower. Those used for stamping books are very small.[44]

The general practice of applying seals to pictures and books at the Tang court is also attested in a poem by Wang Jian 王建 (767–830):

> 集賢殿内圖書滿 / 點勘頭邊御印同 / 真跡進來依數字 / 別收鎖在玉函中[45]
>
> The Hall of the Assembled Worthies is full of pictures and books / Carefully examining their front, the imperial seal is identical / Authentic works enter according to the amount of characters / They are separately gathered and locked in jade caskets.

However, evidence from administrative sources suggests that the practice of affixing seals to books in the imperial collection of the Tang was discontinued at some point, probably due to the disruptive An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755–763). At least, this is suggested by two memorials from the early ninth century, in which the casting of new seals for this purpose is requested:

> 長慶三年四月，祕書少監李隨奏。當省請置祕書閣圖書印一面，伏以當省御書正本。開元天寶以前，並有小印印縫。自兵難以來，書印失墜。今所寫經史，都無記驗。伏請鑄造，勅旨依奏。[46]
>
> In the fourth month of the third year of the Changqing era (823), Li Sui, Vice-Director of the Palace Library, memorialised the Emperor: 'This department (i.e. *bishu sheng* 祕書省, Palace Library) requests to set up a Palace Library book seal to imprint the originals of the imperial books in this department. Before the eras of Kaiyuan (713–

also dates back to the Tang dynasty, with the legend '*Wuwei xiyu tushu* 武威習御圖書'. This has also been interpreted as a book collector's seal. See also Shen Leping 2013, 103.

[41] Wang Jing 1979, 59; Cao Zhi 1992, 490; Xu Xi 1995, 58; Lin Shenqing 1997, 1; Hua Jifen 2004, 105; Bai Shuchun 2011, 62; Cheng Qianfan, Xu Youfu 1998, 364; Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 1: 3–4.

[42] *Lidai minghua ji* 3:37 (translation, modified: Acker 1954, 216).

[43] Cha Qisen 1994, 27.

[44] *Lidai minghua ji* 3:42 (translation, modified: Acker 1954, 231–232). On the institutions mentioned here, which all had libraries of their own, see Drège 1991, 70–82. The two emperors' private seals are very famous (Wagner 1994, 133). For reproduced imprints of these, see Zhong Yinlan 2008, 403, 416.

[45] *Yuding Quan Tang shi* 302:2B, in: *Siku quanshu* 1426, 57.

[46] *Tang huiyao* 65:1125.

741) and Tianbao (742–756), a small seal had to be imprinted on the seam. This book seal has been lost ever since the chaos of war (i.e. the An Lushan rebellion, 755–763). None of the canonical and historical works copied today have any marks on them. I therefore humbly request to cast one.' An imperial decree approved the request.

開成元年四月，集賢殿御書院請鑄小印一面，以御書為印文，從之。[47]

In the fourth month of the first year of the era Kaicheng (836), the Imperial Academy of the Hall of the Assembled Worthies requested to cast one small seal with 'imperial book' as its legend. The request was approved.

According to Zhang Yanyuan, private collectors also embraced this practice. He lists a number of private seals, eight of which have the character *shu* 書 in their legend.[48] This probably indicates their use as book collectors' seals. The term *tushu* 圖書 is often employed in the legends, as in the case of the excavated seal belonging to Li Cun, which has been mentioned above.[49] Also a generic term for books in general, this has frequently been interpreted as an alternative colloquial term for private seals.[50] Others believe the term is used to highlight the function of the seal, being used exclusively for pictures (*tu*) and books (*shu*).[51] This reinforces the assumption that no collectors' seals were used exclusively for books initially. However, an absolute distinction between picture (*tu*) and writing (*shu*) seems doubtful anyway. Maggie Bickford, for instance, although working on slightly later material, has shown that what modern scholars classify as pictures are actually illustrated manuscripts.[52] Furthermore, the term *tu* 'might designate almost any form of graphic representation including charts, diagrams, maps and illustrations in general'.[53] The *locus classicus* for the concept of *tu* in the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) also mentions *shu* at the same time: 'The [Yellow] River brought forth a chart (*tu*) and the Luo [River] brought forth a writing (*shu*); the sages took these as models (河出圖，洛出書，聖人則之)'.[54] This shows the close connection between the two.[55]

'Sutra collecting seals' (*cangjingyin* 藏經印) from Buddhist monasteries are yet another case. Imprints of these are found on some of the Dunhuang manuscripts. Seals of eight different monasteries have been identified and are said to have been in use from the seventh to the early eleventh century.[56] They were probably reserved for marking scriptures once kept in the monastic libraries.[57] Among the Dunhuang manuscripts there are also numerous imprints of the 'Seal of the great sutras of Gua and Sha Prefectures (瓜沙州大垂印)'. This is only found on copies of sutras and is believed to have been the ownership mark of a private collector.[58]

[47] *Tang huiyao* 64:1121.

[48] *Lidai minghua ji* 3:42–46 (translation Acker 1954, 232–240). The eight seals are: *Pengcheng hou shuhua ji* 彭城侯書畫記, *Liushi shuyin* 劉氏書印, *Shuyin* 書印, *Ye hou tushu kezhang* 鄴侯圖書刻章, *Mashi tushu* 馬氏圖書, *Xiao gong shuyin* 蕭公書印, *Chushi shuyin* 褚氏書印 and *Yuanshu* 遠書. Zhang Yanyuan was unable to identify the collectors of the last three, while only Li Bi 李泌 (722–789), the owner of the second seal, is known to have collected works (see Fan Fengshu 2009, 39, 42). Further evidence of the use of book collectors' seals by private collectors is found in a poem by Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (c. 834–883): 'Lu Wang xiti shuyin nang fenghe ciyun 魯望戲題書印囊奉和次韻' (*Yuding Quan Tang shi* 615:5A, in: *Siku quanshu* 1429, 219).

[49] Apart from the two excavated seals (Jia Zhigang 2011, 86), one also finds a seal imprint with the legend '*Xuanyushi tushu yin* 宣諭使圖書印' on some Dunhuang manuscripts. See Shen Leping 2013, 102–103.

[50] Bai Shuchun 2011, 62. According to Wagner 1994, 133, 139, it originally only denoted book collectors' seals. Later on, it also became a general term for seals. Sha Menghai thinks this usage of the term is inadequate (Sha Menghai 1987, 16, 73–74). A similar verdict is found in *Yindian* 印典 (5:24A, in: *Siku quanshu* 839, 926), where the origins of the term are traced back to Song times.

[51] Cao Jinyan 2002, 139–140; Jia Zhigang 2011, 86.

[52] Bickford 2006.

[53] Clunas 1997, 107 (quoting John B. Henderson [1994], 'Chinese Cosmographical Thought. The High Intellectual Tradition', in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward [eds.], *The History of Cartography*, vol. 2, bk. 2, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 214); see also 104–105.

[54] *Yijing zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 7:341. Clunas 1997, 107.

[55] The statesman and philosopher Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381) states in his essay *The Origins of Painting* (*Huayuan* 源畫) that 'writing and painting are not different Ways, but are as one in their origin' (Clunas 1997, 109).

[56] Shen Leping 2013, 101–102, 104–105 further specifies that the seals of the Baoen 報恩 and Longxing 龍興 monasteries were in use between the seventh and eleventh century, while those of the Kaiyuan 開元, Jingtu 淨土, Sanjie 三界 and Liantai 蓮台 monasteries only came into use in the eighth century and those of the Xiande 顯德 and Qianming 乾明 monasteries only in the tenth century. He also observed that the imprints of legends in seal script are in red, while those in regular script (*kaiti* 楷體) are in black. According to Shen, this rule began to be observed from the 830s/840s onwards.

[57] Rong 2013, 487–488 (transl. of Rong Xinjiang 2002, 344); Shen Leping 2013, 101–102, 104–105. Drège 1991, 216–217 remarks that inscriptions stating the name of a monastery are actually more common. For a list of these marks and seal imprints in the major collections, see Drège 1991, 238–245. On the St Petersburg collection, see Chuguevskii 1999, 145, 148. See also Ch'en 1960, 8, 11, 12.

[58] Rong 2013, 487–488 (transl. of Rong Xinjiang 2002, 344). Ch'en

Evidence on collectors' seals from the period of disunity following the Tang still suggests that there is no clear distinction between collectors' seals for books and those for pieces of art. Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053–1102) mentioned an old catalogue with a seal imprint, which belonged to the collection kept by Li Bian 李昇 (888–943), the first emperor of the Southern Tang (937–976):

> 澄心堂，南唐烈祖節度金陵之宴居也，世以為元宗書殿，誤矣。趙內翰彥若家有《澄心堂書目》，才二千餘卷，有建業文房之印，後有主者，皆牙校也。
>
> The Hall of Clarifying the Heart was the pleasure palace in the capital, Jinling (i.e. Nanjing), used by Emperor Liezu of the Southern Tang (i.e. Li Bian) when acting as Military Commissioner [before becoming Emperor]. Later generations believed it to be the library of Emperor Yuanzong (i.e. Li Jing 李璟, 916–961). This is wrong. The family of the Palace Writer Zhao Yanruo[59] possessed the *Book Catalogue of the Hall of Clarifying the Heart*, [which records] a total of more than two thousand *juan*[60], with [an imprint of] the 'Seal of the Jianye Study'. Later owners were all inferior military officers.[61]

The same seal is also mentioned by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031–1095) in his *Dream Pool Essays* (*Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談). Shen mostly talks about this and two other seals being found on pieces of art (calligraphy and paintings) which once belonged to Li Yu 李煜 (937–978), the last emperor of the Southern Tang and known as a poet and lover of art.[62] However, one of the other seals mentioned – the 'Seal of the Library of the Assembled Worthies Academy (集賢殿書院印)' – points to an educational institution already mentioned by Zhang Yanyuan. This institution was first established in 725 and served as an advisory college. Under the Tang, it is said to have had the largest collection of books (invariably manuscripts at that time) after the imperial library.[63] It is safe to assume that this seal was predominantly used for books, although maybe not exclusively.

2.2. The history of book collectors' seals – from the twelfth century to the present day

Book collectors' seals became increasingly common in the eleventh century – their use specifically in books is slightly more evident than in earlier times.[64] This period witnessed an upsurge in the availability of books that is probably related to the emergence of printed books.[65] Nonetheless, the manuscript remained dominant. The proliferation of printed books does not seem to have reached every tier of society, but was restricted to the elite, who could afford to buy them.[66] It also seems that the term *tushu* 圖書, sometimes at least, may now be understood to stand for books in general. A Chinese scholar has estimated that in the period roughly from the eleventh to the early twentieth century, there were more than 1,100 scholars who put their collectors' seals on books.[67] Mi Fu's 米芾 (1051–1107) *History of Calligraphy* (*Shushi* 書史)

1960, 9, Drège 1984, 55–56 and Chuguevskii 1999, 144 read the legend as 'Seal of the great king of Gua and Sha prefectures (瓜沙州大王印)'. Drège and Chuguevskii identify the 'great king' with the Cao family, which is known to have used the title 'king'. According to Drège, this is probably Cao Yijin 曹議金, who is believed to have governed the two prefectures from 914 to 935. Shen Leping 2013, 101 convincingly argues against this reading from a palaeographic viewpoint as well as a historical one.

[59] That is, Zhao Yuankao 趙元考, a contemporary of Chen Shidao (Chang Bide 1974, 3532). On the translation of the title, see Hucker 1988, 4178.

[60] This term originally designated a scroll made of bamboo slips, silk or paper (Tsien 1985, 228–231). The term was preserved even after scrolls were superseded by the codex format. Since it no longer corresponds to the physical unit, it should be understood as a chapter (Wilkinson 2012, 914). Nonetheless, although it might correspond to one physical volume, it very often does not.

[61] *Houshan tancong* 後山談叢 2:36. Later in the same work, there is an almost identical passage; what is most striking here is that the names are different: instead of the *Book Catalogue of the Hall of Clarifying the Heart*, it is *Jianye Study's Book Catalogue*, but with only slightly more than a thousand *juan*; instead of 'Seal of the Jianye Study', it is 'Seal of the Jinling library (金陵圖書院印)'. This was already noticed by the editors: *Houshan tancong* 3:45. The imprint of 'Seal of the Jianye Study' is found in Zhong Yinlan 2008, 394.

[62] Mengxi bitan 夢溪筆談, *bu bitan* 補筆談 2:957, no. 566. These and other seals are also mentioned in *Shaoshi wenjian houlu* 邵氏聞見後錄 27:215–216 by Shao Bo 邵博 (?–1158) and in Guo Ruoxu's 郭若虛 (c. 1060–1110) *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞誌 6:11A/B.

[63] Drège 1991, 72–76; McMullen 1988, 15–16, 222–223. There is yet another, slightly different seal, namely the 'Imperial Book Seal of the Hall of the Assembled Worthies (集賢院御書印)'. See *Zhongguo lidai jiancangjia yinjian shujuku* 中國曆代鑒藏家印鑒數據庫 2011.

[64] Qu Mianliang 1988, 90 argues that the use of specific book collectors' seals only began in the Song period.

[65] The impact of printed books in this period is undisputed. However, scholars like Inoue Susume argue that contrary to older views, the Song did not witness a printing revolution, but the manuscript still remained dominant. A radical transformation to the printed book only occurred in the sixteenth century when large collections of works were made up of more prints than manuscripts. Brokaw 2005a provides a summary of Inoue's work. See also McDermott 2005; 2006, 43–81 and Brokaw 2005b, 23–24; 2007, 259–262.

[66] Brokaw 2005a, 150; 2007, 260–261; Lee 1995, 194.

[67] Bai Shuchun 2011, 63.

informs us in detail about the seals used by the early Song emperors. Nonetheless, as far as imperial use is concerned, there still seems to be no clear distinction between seals for books and seals for paintings and calligraphies:

> 印文須細，圈須與文等，我太祖祕閣圖書之印，不滿二寸，圈文皆細。上閣圖書字印亦然。仁宗後，印經院賜經，用上閣圖書字大印，粗文。若施於書畫，占紙素，字畫多有損於書帖。近三館祕閣之印，文雖細，圈乃粗如半指，亦印損書畫也。[68]
>
> The seal legend should be delicate and the edge should be equal to the legend. The 'Book Seal of the Secret Pavilion' used by our Emperor Taizu (reigned 960–976) is less than two inches long and both the edge and legend are delicate. The characters of the seal 'Books of the Upper Pavilion' are in the same [style]. After Emperor Renzong (r. 1022–1063), one would use a large seal with the characters 'Books of the Upper Pavilion' for the classics issued by the Classics Printing Bureau,[69] the legend [being carved rather] roughly. When applied on books and paintings on the paper's blank area, the characters' strokes are very harmful to the calligraphy. Recently, although legends of the seals of the Three Institutes and the Secret Pavilion are delicate, their edges were very rough – as thick as half a finger. These seals are also harmful to books and paintings.

When the Jurchen conquered the capital of the Northern Song in 1127, they captured 38 'book seals of the Palace Treasury (內府圖書印)'.[70] Apart from the Emperor's seals and those used in the capital, there are also extant seal imprints of regional government institutions. The legend of one of these reads as follows:

> 嘉興府府學官書，依條不許借出，系知府何寺正任內發下，嘉定甲戌七月　日記。[71]
>
> In accordance with the regulations, books belonging to the prefectual school of Jiaxing Prefecture are not allowed to be lend out. This was issued during the term of office of prefect He Sizheng, marked on day [ ], the seventh month in the year *jiaxu* of the Jiading era [1214].

Similar repeated bans on lending out books, which was a continuous threat to the integrity and survival of government collections, are known to have been issued in the capital (the first in 999). '[I]n 1228, book theft had become so common that some scholarly officials were said to be flogging off for a profit the books they had removed from court libraries and then impressed with their private seal.'[72] This reveals the increasing evidence of private book collectors' seals. During the Song period (906–1279), bibliophilism grew among the elite. Thomas H. C. Lee identifies 'the beginnings of serious book collecting' in this period. This love of books not only derived from the increased emphasis on education as this was demanded by the imperial civil-service examinations, but also from a passion for books 'simply for knowledge and self-cultivation'.[73] It became a main characteristic of all literati, and 'throughout the rest of the imperial period – that is, until 1911 – possession of, or at least access to, books was essential to respectability in Chinese society'.[74]

The following anecdote on Fu Bi 富弼 (1004–1082) is clearly about a privately collected book, which was imprinted with a seal bearing the owner's official title:

> 《元和姓纂》，富鄭公家書。甲子歲，洛陽大水，公第書無慮萬卷，率漂沒放失，市人得而鬻之，鎮海節度印章猶存。是書尚軼數卷，以鄭公物藏之。[…]卷首有鎮海軍節度使 印，富韓公家舊本也。[75]
>
> The *Register of the Great Families from the Yuanhe Era* (806–820) was a book from the home of Fu, Duke of Zheng (i.e. Fu Bi). In the year *jiazi* (1024 or 1084) there was a big flood in Luoyang and around ten thousand *juan* from

[68] *Shushi* 31B–32A. On the different imperial libraries of the Song, see Winkelman 1974.

[69] Hucker 1988, 7979.

[70] *Jinshi* 金史 31:764. For extant imprints of official seals of the Song, see Lin Shenqing 1997, 261–263 and Sun Beixin and Li Zhizhong 1998.

[71] Fan Jingzhong 2001, 143–144. See also Zhang Lijuan and Cheng Youqing 2002, 93. There is a similar seal imprint belonging to the same institution dated to 1266.

[72] McDermott 2006, 130.

[73] Lee 1995, 193, 214. The oldest seal imprints recorded in the *Tianlu linlang shumu* – the catalogue of Emperor Qianlong's private book collection, which is the first catalogue to include detailed records on book collectors' seals – are also from Song collectors (Lai Fushun 1991, 144–145, 232).

[74] Brokaw 2007, 254.

[75] *Dongguan yulun* 東觀餘論 by Huang Bosi 黃伯思 (1079–1118), cited from *Cangshu jishi shi* 藏書紀事詩, 1:17.

> his official residence were quickly washed away and lost. A merchant found and sold [parts of] it. The 'Seal of the Military Commissioner of Zhenhai' was still to be found [on it]. There are still some scattered *juan* of this book kept as objects belonging to the Duke of Zheng. […] At the front there is the 'Seal of the Military Commissioner of Zhenhai' – an old copy from the home of Fu, Duke of Han [i.e. Fu Bi].[76]

A seal that undoubtedly belonged to a private collector is mentioned in this Ming-period description of a precious edition of the *Grand Scribe's Records* (*Shiji* 史記):

> 宋人小楷《史記》，松雪翁物。計十帙，紙高四寸，字類半黍。不惟筆精墨妙，中間絕無偽謬。每帙有舊學史氏及碧沚二印，宋通直郎史守之所用。[77]
>
> The *Grand Scribe's Records* in small, regular script by a Song man belonged to the old man Pine Snow (i.e. Zhao Mengfu). It amounts to ten volumes, the paper [of each one] is four inches in size and the characters are the size of half a grain of millet. Not only is the calligraphy excellent, but there are absolutely no mistakes in it. Each volume has the two seals 'Old Learning of the Shi Family' and 'Green Islet', which were used by Shi Shouzhi (1166–1224), Court Gentleman for Comprehensive Duty of the Song.[78]

The mentions and anecdotes involving book collectors' seals are too numerous to all be cited here.[79] The number of seals owned by a single collector also increased. One of the most famous book collectors of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), who was also a renowned painter and calligrapher of the time, was Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322). He had at least 26 different seals. A significant number of them have identical legends, only cut in different styles: there are five different seals with 'Mr Zhao Zi'ang (趙氏子昂)', four with merely the character 'Zhao (趙)' and three with 'Zhao Mengfu's seal (趙孟頫印)'.[80] He probably did not use all of the seals on books. However, whether there were seals reserved to be used on books and others just on paintings or calligraphies remains an open question and can only be answered by studying all his paintings and books in detail.

It has been rightly pointed out that many of the seals found on books could also be applied to other objects as their legends do not necessarily mark them as being exclusively intended for books.[81] Furthermore, many book collectors were also collectors of art or even artists themselves, as in the case of Zhao Mengfu.[82] An explicit comment on the clear distinction between seals used for books and those used for objects of art is only to be found in the *Decalogue of Book Collecting* (*Cangshu shiyue* 藏書十約), a manual for book collectors that was written by Ye Dehui 葉德輝 (1864–1927) and published in 1911: '[Y]ou should have separate seals for your collection of bronzes and stone inscriptions, calligraphic masterpieces and paintings, Han dynasty tiles and bricks, ancient coins, etc. (金石、書畫、漢瓦、漢磚、古泉之類，當別為一印).'[83]

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[76] Fu Bi was bestowed both the honorary title Duke of Zheng and Duke of Han (Chang Bide 1974, 2785–2786). Regarding the translation of the title, see Hucker 1988, 772.

[77] *Qinghe shuhuafang* 清河書畫舫 by Zhang Chou 張丑 (Ming), cited from *Cangshu jishi shi*, 1:47.

[78] Both seal legends go back to imperial presents. Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 (1162–1189) gave Shi Shouzhi's grandfather, Shi Hao 史浩 (1106–1194), a calligraphy with the two characters 'Classical Learning', and Shi Shouzhi received the two characters 'Green Islet' written by Emperor Ningzong 寧宗 (1194–1224) (Pan Meiyue 1995). For more on Shi Shouzhi and his seals, see *Cangshu jishi shi*, 1:47–48. On Zhao Mengfu, see Lin Shenqing 1997, 2; Wang He 1991, 304–305. On the translation of the title, see Hucker 1988, 7473.

[78] Other collectors of the Song and Yuan periods known to have had book collectors' seals include Liu Xizhong 劉羲仲 (c. 1059–1120): *Cangshu jishi shi*, 1:19–20; Wang He 1991, 115–116. Lou Yao 楼鑰 (1137–1213): *Cangshu jishi shi*, 1:44; Wang He 1991, 424. Jia Sidao 賈似道 (1213–1275): *Cangshu jishi shi*, 1:54; Lin Shenqing 1997, 1; Wang He 1991, 333. Zhou Mi 周密 (1232–1298): Lin Shenqing 1997, 2; Wang He 1991, 275. Yu Yan 俞琰 (1258–1314/1327) and his grandson Yu Zhenmu 俞貞木: *Cangshu jishi shi*, 1:54–55; Lin Shenqing 1997, 3; Wang He 1991, 312. Yuan Yi 袁易 (1262–1306): Lin Shenqing 1997, 4; Wang He 1991, 336. Yang Weizhen 楊維楨 (1296–1370): Lin Shenqing 1997, 4–5; Wang He 1991, 153. Zhang Wen 張雯 (1293–1356): *Cangshu jishi shi*, 2:61; Wang He 1991, 237. Lu You 陸友 (Yuan): *Cangshu jishi shi*, 2:62–63; Wang He 1991, 225. Further collectors not mentioned by Ye Changchi in his *Cangshu jishi shi* have been identified by Lai Fushun 1991, 175–176, 203–204, 232–233.

[80] Zi'ang is Zhao Mengfu's style name (*zi*): Wang He 1991, 304–305. Zhao is famous for his paintings of landscapes and horses: Sullivan 2008, 216. For a recent study on the artist, see McCausland 2011. Zhao did not cut the seals himself (Sha Menghai 1987, 94–96). *Zhongguo lidai jiancangjia yinjian shujuku* 2011 lists a total of 26 seals, Contag, Wang 1966, 524–526 has 14 seals and Zhong Yinlan 2008, 702–703 mentions 15 of them. *Cangshu jishi shi*, 2:59–60 mentions four seals, Jiang Fucong 1937, 2 has 13 seals, Lai Fushun 1991, 233 counts 14 seals and Lin Shenqing 1997, 2–3 mentions five seals. It is safe to say that the seals mentioned by the latter four authors were used on books since their publications focus on book collectors. Whether they were exclusively affixed to books is yet another question, though.

[81] Lai Fushun 1991, 139–140.

[82] Lai Fushun 1991, 149, 162–163, 183–184.

[83] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 157). For more on Ye Dehui, see Zheng Weizhang 1999, 1307–1314.

The culture of private book collectors' seals flourished in the late Ming period (in the sixteenth to early seventeenth century). The vast majority of the aforementioned 1,100 private collectors lived during this time and the ensuing Qing dynasty (1644–1911).[84] The reasons for this increase are as follows. Firstly, the introduction of relatively soft stones used as material for seals made it possible for the literati to cut their own seals, which made private seals increasingly popular.[85] Secondly, although there had been relatively large private collections in previous periods, these were few in number. It was only by the late Ming that various private collections came into existence that were much larger. Numerous factors such as a drop in the price of block-cutting and paper, a wider audience for books and an increase in the number of potential authors led to the proliferation of commercial publishing. The wider availability of books made it possible for more people to build up their own collections. It is believed that the number of imprints in large book collections surpassed those of manuscripts for the very first time in this period.[86] This transition in China's book culture needs to be seen against the backdrop of the general social and economic changes of the late Ming era. Increasing wealth due to the commercialisation of the economy and rapid urbanisation allowed more people to take an interest in books. Book collecting, once a hobby pursued by scholars and the imperial family, also became possible for wealthy merchants and landowners now. These collectors and bibliophiles produced annotated catalogues of their own collections and appended colophons or postscripts (*tiba* 題跋) to their books during the Qing period, in particular.[87] The imprints of collectors' seals are frequently mentioned in both catalogues and colophons. The eighth point in Ye Dehui's *Decalogue of Book Collecting* is on colophons; here he mentions the catalogue of the Qianlong emperor's private collection (r. 1735–1796) as the preferred model for recording seal inscriptions:

> [...]以及收藏前人之姓名、印記，並仿《欽定天祿琳琅》之例。
>
> [...] and in recording the names and seals of its former possessors, you should follow the model of the *Gems of Heavenly Favour* [library catalogue] compiled by order of the Emperor.[88]

This catalogue – actually there are two, the first compiled in 1775 and the second in 1779 after the original collections had been lost in a fire[89] – contains very detailed entries on every book in the collection, including their colophons, the names of former owners and elaborate descriptions of their seal imprints. It is, in fact, the first book catalogue with detailed and systematic information on seal imprints.[90] In the introduction it is explained that the 'recording of their [i.e. the former owners'] seal imprints then follows the example of *The Clear Water Pleasure Boat of Painting and Calligraphy*, inserting transcriptions of all [imprints by] using regular script to serve as a means of scholarly evidence (錄其印記則仿《清河書畫舫》之例，皆用真書摹入以資考據)'.[91] The detailed transcription of the imprints consists of

[84] Wang Jing 1979, 59. This is also evident in the special albums of book collectors' seal imprints: Lin Shenqing 1989, 2000a. Unlike his other two publications, Lin Shenqing 1997 is not restricted to Ming and Qing seals, but nonetheless, the majority are imprints from that period. See also *Shanben cangshu yinzhang xuancui* 1988; Zhang Jianlun 2004; Chen Xianxing and Shi Fei 2009, 102–292. The largest collection of book collectors' seals to date, which has been catalogued by the National Library of China in Beijing, contains close to 6,000 seal imprints that are all from Ming and Qing times. Not only the imprints are reproduced here, but the whole page on which the imprint was made. The seal imprints are transcribed, but their owners are not identified: Sun Xuelei et al. 2004. Other useful works, although not exclusively assembling book collectors' seals, are Zhong Yinlan 2008 and *Zhongguo lidai jiancangjia yinjian shujuku* 2011, which is a database hosted at Zhejiang Library assembling data on many of the albums listed here as well as other works.

[85] Cao Zhi 1992, 491–492 further states a rising interest in epigraphy (*jinshixue* 金石學), especially in the Qing, as another factor shaping a generally growing interest in seals.

[86] Brokaw 2005a, 152–154; 2005b, 24–27; McDermott 2005, 76–90; 2006, 43–81.

[87] Brokaw 2007, 254, 256. Obviously there had been catalogues of private collections before, but they are far fewer in number and many of them are only known by title today. For a list of catalogues of private collections from the Tang (618–907) to the Qing period (1644–1911), see Yuan Qingshu 2003, 225–248.

[88] *Cangshu shiyue*, 12 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 153).

[89] Yang Guolin 2006, 123–124. *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu* 欽定天祿琳琅書目 and *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu xubian* 欽定天祿琳琅書目續編.

[90] Lai Fushun 1991, 178. Lai Fushun 1991 is a very detailed study of the seal imprints recorded in the catalogue, including numerous indices on all the seal legends (4–136), their owners (128–253), the owners' place of origin (155–160) and whose seals are to be found in which entry of the two catalogues (162–170, 185–194). This study is the conflation of Lai's earlier publications: Lai Fushun 1987; 1989; 1990.

[91] *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu*, Fanli: 2A/B. *The Clear Water Pleasure Boat of Painting and Calligraphy* (*Qinghe shuhuafang*) is a catalogue of paintings compiled by Zhang Chou 張丑 (1577–1643) (Brown and Hutton 2011, 309).

Fig. 7: *Qinding Tianlu linlan shumu* 欽定天祿琳瑯書目, 6:31B/32A.

the reproduction of the seal's shape by drawing the outline into which the characters – following the original order of the legend – are copied in regular script (see fig. 7). This is supplemented with further information on their style (intaglio or relief), where they have been affixed in the book and what colour they are (which is only mentioned if it is not red).[92] And the compilers furthermore endeavoured to identify the respective owners of the seal imprints.[93] Many catalogues of private collections equally include descriptions of seal imprints[94] generally consisting of the following features: their location, shape, style of legend and a transcription of the seal legend in regular script, but no exact copy of the seal.[95]

Sun Congtian 孫從添 (1692–1767), the compiler of another, earlier manual for book collecting, recommended only recording seal imprints in the catalogue reserved for rare Song and Yuan editions, which were considered the most precious ones of all.[96] He is explicit about adding seal imprints, but does not go into any detail: 'The seal which you may stamp in one corner of your books should be small (小用角圖章)'.[97] Ye Dehui, who names Sun Congtian's work as his model,[98] devotes the entire final paragraph of his manual to the matter of seals and leaves no doubt about the necessity to affix seals: 'Books in your collection must have seals on them (藏書必有印記)'.[99]

Collectors' and bibliophiles' obsession with obtaining rare books, especially, albeit not exclusively, Song and Yuan editions, for which they were willing to pay high prices, made forgeries of these a very profitable business. Besides dying the paper, rebinding the book and 'adding boastful notes in imitation calligraphy of famous scholars and collectors about the value and rarity' of a particular book, adding forged seal imprints was an important way of fabricating a rare and precious book.[100] According to a study by Wu Qinfang 吳芹芳, fabricated rare books and therefore also forged seals started to be produced in large quantity from the Jiajing 嘉靖 era (1521–1567) onwards. Apart from forged seals, which were mostly cut in wood, regardless of whether they were official seals or those of famous collectors and scholars, he also draws attention to the possibility for book dealers to add

[92] Both catalogues follow the same style in their entries. According to Lai Fushun, the transcriptions of the seal imprints were executed by hand in other versions than the printed edition from 1884. In the case of an extant manuscript edition of the earlier catalogue, seals with the transcribed legends written in standard script were cut to be impressed (Lai Fushun 1991, 209).

[93] *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu* records 902 different seal imprints (with a total of 1,278 records), only a third of the owners of which were identified by the compilers. The second catalogue records 1,019 different seal imprints (with a total of 1,200 records), not even 20% of which were identified. See Lai Fushun 1991, 179, 205, 211. Lai Fushun has now identified most of the owners of the 1,922 different seals.

[94] There are simply too many private catalogues to form a definitive judgement as to whether all of them include information on seal imprints. Yuan Qingshu 2003, 228–248 lists 105 for the Ming and 315 for the Qing period, but this list is probably not even complete. Quite a number of catalogues are actually said to have used the *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu* as a model (Lai Fushun 1991, 2).

[95] Van Gulik 1958, 439–440 writes about catalogues of paintings, but this also holds true for catalogues of books. In fact, as has been mentioned above, the former were the model for the *Tianlu linlang shumu*.

[96] *Cangshu jiyao*, 44 (translation: Fang 1951, 244). On the rather incomplete biography of Sun Congtian, see Fang 1951, 215–218.

[97] *Cangshu jiyao*, 45 (translation: Fang 1951, 242).

[98] See the author's preface in *Cangshu shiyue*, 3 (translation: Fang 1950, 133).

[99] *Cangshu shiyue*, 13 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 156). He himself, though, admits to not having 'stamped seals on most of the books in my collection (余之藏書多未鈐印)', *Cangshu shiyue*, 13 (translation: Fang 1950, 156).

[100] Edgren 2006, 199.

imprints with the original seal of a famous collector, because these were sometimes sold by his descendants.[101] The case of the seals belonging to Li Shengduo 李盛鐸 (1859–1937) is a good example illustrating this. Li was a well-known private collector of genuine Dunhuang manuscripts. Most of these were sold to Japan in 1935. After Li's death the remains of his rare book collection were sold to Beijing University Library. The Library did not buy his seals, however. Those subsequently came into the hands of booksellers who affixed Li's original seals to old books with the aim of increasing their value as it was long known that Li's collection included a large number of rare and unique works. Other dealers who were not in the possession of the original seals 'copied several of them (maybe three or four) and used them to stamp both original and forged manuscripts'.[102] 'The disappearance of the original seals [thus] created an ideal condition for forgers who could affix the genuine seal onto a forged scroll, or make a fake seal and affix it onto an authentic but less valuable manuscript, using the reputation of the Li collection to increase its value.'[103]

Wu Qinfang furthermore describes cases where seal imprints were cut out from one book and pasted onto another, or cases of copying imprints using a brush.[104] Finally he elaborates on the delicate task of identifying forged imprints. The methods he describes range from (a) careful examination of the whole book in order to see whether the age of the imprint conforms to other features of the book, (b) comparison of the imprint with other attested imprints of the same seal, (c) close inspection of the legend's style and colour of the ink as well as the position of the imprint on the book, to (d) the final option of consulting catalogues, if available, to check whether the book with the imprint in question was once in the possession of that particular collector.[105]

The compilers of the above-mentioned catalogue of Qianlong's collection already identified and described forged seal imprints. In one case, they clearly state that the alleged imprint of the Song emperor Huizong 徽宗 (reigned 1100–1126) is a 'bookseller's forgery (書賈偽作)'.[106] While Sun Congtian only mentions the problem of forged seals briefly,[107] Ye Dehui finds much more drastic words: he decries booksellers for adding forged seal imprints and puts this practice in the same light as the infamous biblioclasm of the first Chinese emperor in the second century BCE:

> 曾見宋元舊刻，有為書估偽造各家印記以希善價者，有學究、市賈強作解事，以惡刻閒印鈐滿通卷者。此豈白璧之微瑕，實為秦火之餘厄。
>
> I have seen some with forged seals of collectors that booksellers have affixed to ancient Song and Yuan prints with an eye to making them fetch high prices, some of them stamped all over with badly cut seals containing idle, pseudo-elegant phrases picked up by pedantic schoolmasters and vulgar tradesmen with a pretense to knowledge and taste. This assuredly is more than a trifling flaw on an immaculate jade ring; nay, it is nothing less than a continuation of the Qin burning of books.[108]

How widespread forged seals were among booksellers well into the twentieth century can be seen from an anecdote cited by Wu Qinfang, according to which the National Museum of Chinese History (*Zhongguo lishi bowuguan* 中國歷史博物館) purchased over 1,000 forged seals from Liulichang

[101] Wu Qinfang 2013, 114–118.

[102] Rong 2002, 66–67 (Engl. version of Rong Xinjiang 1997). On Li's seals, see also Chen Tao 2010. Li Shengduo is said to have used more than twenty different seals. For more on 12 of these, see Lin Shenqing 1997, 230–231; Zhong Yinlan 2008, 415; see also *Zhongguo lidai jiancangjia yinjian shujuku* 2011. Chen Hongyan and Lin Shitian 2007a and 2007b provide an overview of seal imprints of private collectors found on Dunhuang manuscripts in Chinese and Japanese collections.

[103] Rong 2013, 516 (transl. of Rong Xinjiang 2001, 364).

[104] Wu Qinfang 2013, 114–118. See also Chen Xianxing and Shi Fei 2009, 67–71, whose focus is on forged seals found on manuscripts, for which they describe a number of examples. Chen Xianxing 2003, 268 presents original and forged imprints belonging to Chen Zhan 陳鱣 (1753–1817) side by side. Lai Fushun 1991, 140 mentions the practice among collectors of using ancient seals of the Qin and Han period.

[105] Wu Qinfang 2013, 118–120. Lai Fushun 1991, 145–146 also discusses how to identify forged seals. Liu Xiangchun 2013, 44–45 emphasises the importance of identifying the seal owners in order to tell whether a seal imprint is genuine or not. At the same time, he points to the problem of identical legends used by many different collectors. How difficult it is to identify the owners can be seen in fig. 1: six of the nine imprints have still not been assigned to their owners yet.

[106] *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu*, 6:17B. For further cases, see 8:12A, 8:33A. See also Wu Qinfang 2013, 115–116; Lai Fushun 1991, 178–179. For cases in the *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu xubian*, see Lai Fushun 1991, 204–205.

[107] *Cangshu jiyao*, 38 (translation: Fang 1951, 229).

[108] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 157). The use of forged seals in fabricating early editions is also mentioned in *Shulin qinghua*, 10:264.

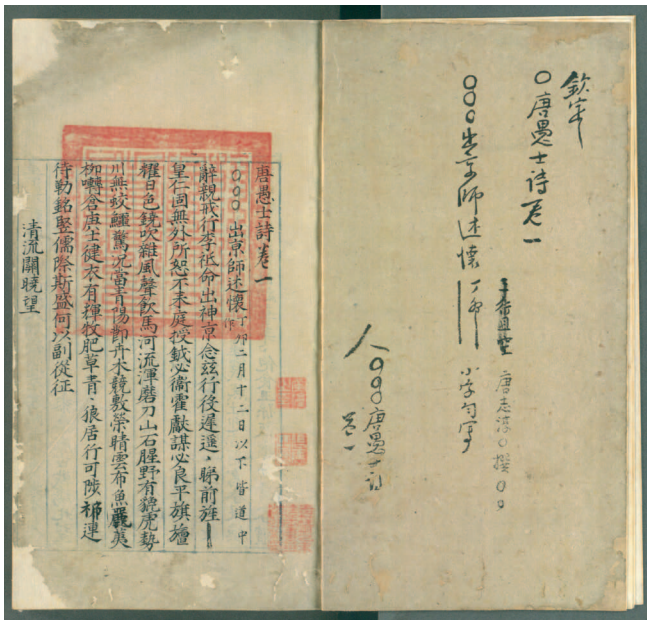

Fig. 8: Manuscript with imprint of 'Hanlin Academy's Seal' (*Hanlin yuan yin* 翰林院印).

琉璃廠 in 1952; this is the quarter in Beijing where bookstalls and antique dealers are traditionally found.[109] Not only forged seals, but seal imprints in general are an important means of authenticating rare Chinese books, of course.[110] However, seal imprints are only secondary evidence since, unlike paper, ink and calligraphy, they always constitute a later addition to a manuscript or printed book.[111] As such, one should not forget that a forged seal imprint does not necessarily imply that the manuscript itself has been faked; a forged seal might be found on a genuine manuscript, and a genuine seal might be affixed to a forged manuscript.[112]

Official book collectors' seals continued to be used by different administrative institutions throughout the Yuan (1271–1368), Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) periods. These seals are often considerably larger than those of private collectors and had to be affixed in a specific position (more on this below).[113] To name but one example, all books sent to the court for the monumental *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書) – the largest of all collections in the history of imperial China, for which books from all over the country were sent to the capital as of 1773[114] – were imprinted with the words 'Hanlin Academy's Seal (翰林院印)' on their first page upon their arrival. This is a rectangular seal in relief with a bilingual legend in Manchu and Chinese (see fig. 8).[115] Of course, the Qianlong emperor, who is known to have 'plastered' paintings and calligraphies in his collection with scores of seal imprints and notes,[116] likewise had the books in his personal collection imprinted with seals. The catalogue states that each volume (*ce* 冊) of a book should be imprinted with two different imperial seals at the front and back.[117] In the same manner, modern libraries, which came into existence in China at the beginning of the twentieth century, continued the practice of affixing seal imprints to the works in their possession. Take the regulations for the Second Public Library of Zhili Province (直隸省), for example, which include the following clause: 'All books provided by the Library have to be affixed with its seal to prevent any loss (凡館中所列圖書，均蓋本館圖記，以防遺失)'.[118] In the largest work on book collectors' seal imprints published so far, which was issued by the National Library of China *(Zhongguo guojia tushuguan* 中國國家圖書館), the seal imprint of the National Library is frequently found.[119]

[109] Wu Qinfang 2013, 118.

[110] Li Zhizhong 1990, 207–211; Lai Fushun 1991, 148.

[111] Wang Jing 1979, 59.

[112] Rong 2013, 516–517 (transl. of Rong Xinjiang 2001, 364).

[113] Reproductions of some seal imprints from these three dynasties are found in Sun Beixin and Li Zhizhong 1998 and Lin Shenqing 1997, 264–270. Taking the example of just the first volume of Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, one frequently finds the bilingual (Manchu and Chinese) imprint of the 'Seal of the Books from the Ministry of Education (學部圖書之印)' (vol. 1: 9, 90, 100, 101, 111, 130, 193, 199), but also an example of the 'Directorate of Education's Seal (國子監印)' (vol. 1: 38), the Directorate of Education being the predecessor of the Ministry of Education founded in 1905 (*Qingshi gao*, 24:953). The library of the Ministry of Education was established in 1910 (*Qingshi gao*, 25:975).

[114] See Guy 1987.

[115] Liu Qiang 2006. See also Wu Qinfang 2013, 114–115.

[116] Bronson and Ho 2004, 221.

[117] *Qinding Tianlu linlang shumu*, Fanli: 2B. The two seals are 'Treasure Personally Viewed by Emperor Qianlong (乾隆御覽之寶)' and 'Gems of Heavenly Favour (天祿琳琅)'. See Lin Shenqing 1997, 268. However, there is evidence of more than these two seals; see National Palace Museum 2007 and Lai Fushun 1991, 212–213.

[118] Li Xibi and Zhang Jiaohua 1996, 283 cited from *Zhejiang gongli tushuguan nianbao* 浙江公立圖書館年報 7:22 (1922), 179. The regulations for the Zhejiang Public Library from 1917 and a decree by the Ministry of Eduction for the library in Beijing from 1915 both include the use of seals. Li Xibi and Zhang Jiaohua 1996, 323, 211. On the establishment of modern libraries in China, see Pélissier 1971 and Li Xuemei 1999.

[119] Besides the seal of the National Library of China (e.g. Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 1: 86 and many more), there also are those of other libraries such as the Beijing Library or the Capital Library, the predecessor of the National Library (Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, passim). One also finds modern

Private collectors continued the tradition of affixing collectors' seals to their books well into the middle of the twentieth century. The tradition of imprinting book collectors' seals waned with the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, as the acquisition of private property was discouraged and private book collections were gradually transferred to state institutions.[120] However, like many other traditional practices, book collecting and book collectors' seals have recently witnessed a revival. There is a popular auction market for old books, in fact. In 2012, a set of 179 rare books from an old family collection was sold for a spectacular 216 million RMB.[121] A modern manual on collecting books was also published recently, in which the author not only outlines the history of book collectors' seals, but also gives detailed instructions on how to impress one's own seal on a page.[122] Wei Li 韋力 (born in 1964), who has recently been named the largest private collector of rare books (*shanben* 善本) in China and who is also the editor of the journal *The Book Collector* (*Cangshujia* 藏書家), imprints his books among others with the following seal: 'Once in Wei Li's home (曾在韋力家)'.[123]

3. Where a seal is placed

The decision about where to put a seal on a painting or piece of calligraphy is largely based on aesthetic considerations. It has 'to harmonize with the spacing of the picture'. By the Ming period, certain rules had been made as to where to affix seals.[124] Similar considerations were also valid for books. Ye Dehui emphasises the need to 'look for some empty space (尋隙處)' for one's seal imprint.[125] Collectors' seals should not be put on paintings above the artist's name, and they should be impressed in books below the name of the author if possible.[126] The places in books where imprints are regularly found are as follows: (1) they are commonly situated in a blank space in the lower right-hand corner of the first page or (2) on the upper margin (*tiantou* 天頭) of the same page; (3) with the preface (*xu* 序); (4) on the last page of each volume (*ce* 冊) or chapter (*juan* 卷) in the lower part of the last line; (5) in other blank spaces such as after colophons or postscripts (*tiba* 題跋) or on the frontispiece (*fengmian* 封面), flyleaf (*huye* 護頁), etc.[127] Seal imprints need not be restricted to just one of these places, of course. It is not unusual to find imprints at various spots throughout a book.[128] The monastic seals encountered on Dunhuang manuscripts are normally found at the beginning and end of a scroll.[129] Later collectors added their seals above those of previous owners. If there was no more space for a seal above the imprints made by previous collectors, then it would be impressed to the left of the first imprint. Ideally, the imprints are thus found in chronological order from bottom to top and from right to left. This can also be helpful in identifying forged imprints or ones added later as these often do not appear in chronological order.[130]

Most collectors not only had one seal, but a number of them, and some did not just use one seal, but two of them – or even more. For instance, the use of two seal imprints – an intaglio seal given the style name (*zi* 字) on top and a relief seal with the family and personal name (*xingming* 姓名) below – is a common convention found in collectors' seals used on paintings and calligraphies and may also be observed in book collectors' seals.[131] There were no clearly

library stamps sporadically (e.g. Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 2: 2, 214, 242). It should be noted that the imprints of all modern libraries, regardless of whether they are traditionally styled seal imprints or modern library stamps, are never transcribed by the compilers of the publication. For more on seals and stamps of modern libraries, see Dai Longji 2003 as well.

[120] Edgren 1997, 64.

[121] Mei Jia and Wang Kaihao 2012. Qian Jun 1998, 157–163 provides an overview of prices obtained at auctions of old books, which range from 5,500 to 418,000 RMB.

[122] Qian Jun 1998, 78–87.

[123] Wei Li 2009; Zhou Xiaodong 2007. *Cangshujia* was first published in 1999 and ceased to be published in 2004 after only ten issues. Another six issues were published from 2006 until 2009, and publication was resumed again just recently in 2013. http://www.guoxue.com/?p=15017 (accessed on 7 May 2014). Wei Li has also published a manual for collecting ancient books, which includes a chapter on collectors' seals and a presentation of his own seals (Wei Li 2004, 109-122).

[124] Van Gulik 1958, citation 425; on the rules, see 437–438.

[125] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation: Fang 1950, 157–158).

[126] Van Gulik 1958, 425.

[127] Bai Shuchun 2011, 64. Ye Dehui mentions the upper margin, final page and flyleaf. *Cangshu shiyue*, 11, 14 (translation: Fang 1950, 152, 158).

[128] E.g. Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 1: 24–26, 30–32, 60–62, 84–88, 239–242, 246–250 and many more.

[129] Shen Leping 2013, 101; Drège 1984, 55.

[130] Wu Qinfang 2013, 120.

[131] Van Gulik 1958, 437. Chen Zhan 陳鱣 (1753–1817) frequently used a relief seal with his portrait and his style name (Zhongyu 仲魚) together with an intaglio seal bearing the legend 'I endured a great deal of hardship to obtain this book; may later generations appreciate my effort (得此書費辛苦後之人其鑑我)'. Liu Xiangchun 2013, 48. On the seal imprints, see Lin Shenqing 1997, 134 and Chen Xianxing 2003, 268. For an example, see

defined rules, of course, but rather cultural conventions that left room for individual preferences. Zhou Shutao 周叔弢 (1891–1984), an entrepreneur and book collector, described his principles in the following way in 1926:

> 余所得善本書每鈐《曾在周叔弢處》六子朱文印，蓋收書只以遮眼，本無世藏之心，非好為曠達之語以欺人。今此印刓敝，不堪復用，遂改鈐《周暹》二字白文小印，[...]。[132]

> On each of the rare books I obtained, I affixed the six-character relief seal 'once in Zhou Shutao's place', since I [started] gathering books just as an alibi and originally had no intention of collecting them my whole life and I don't like to bother people with broad-minded sayings. Now this seal is worn out and I can't bear to use it any longer, so I have switched to affixing the small two-character intaglio seal 'Zhou Xian' instead (i.e. Zhou Shutao's personal name), [...].

This also means that it is possible to reconstruct the chronological sequence of Zhou's acquisition of books by the use of his seals.[133] In fact, collectors might use certain seals just to mark their most precious pieces. Some even had seals cut just to be affixed to one specific book.[134]

In his collectors' guide, Ye Dehui unambiguously writes: 'wherever there is text, relief and intaglio seals are out of place (凡書有字處，朱文白文俱不相宜)'.[135] However, that does not hold true for official seal imprints; these had to be impressed in the upper centre of the first page above the text (see fig. 8).[136] Naturally, emperors had the privilege of being able to affix their seals in very prominent places.[137] In general, books in the imperial collections of the Ming and Qing period would be impressed with a seal on the first and last page of each volume, after the imperial preface (*yuzhi xuwen* 御製序文), if present, and the flyleaves at the front and back of the book.[138] Many book catalogues not only give transcriptions of the seals' legends, but also add information on their position within the book. The most detailed work in this respect is the catalogue of Qianlong's private book collection. The transcription of each imprint is followed by information on where it is found in the book: along with the preface (*xu*) or table of contents (*mulu* 目錄), in exactly which chapter (*juan*) or volume (*ce*) it appears, at the end or beginning of a chapter (*juan zhong* 卷終 or *juan shou* 卷首),[139] in each chapter (*ge juan* 各卷) or volume (*ge ce* 各冊), on a flyleaf (*fuye* 副葉), after a colophon or postscript (*ba mo* 跋末) and so on. If the seal imprint is found in multiple places, they are all listed in detail.[140]

Ye Dehui, however, is not only concerned about locating the correct place to imprint one's seal, but equally with the composition of the different imprints:

> 凡書流傳愈久者，其藏書印愈多。朱紫縱橫，幾無隙紙。是宜移於書眉卷尾，以免齟齬。亦或視各印之大小朱白，間別用之。小印朱文重迭，尚無不可。若白文與大印聚於一行，則令閱者生厭矣。

> The longer a book has been transmitted, the more will be the seals of its possessors. Red and purple will run crisscross to such an extent that you may have hardly any blank space. Therefore the best thing to do would be to have seals stamped on the upper margin and at the very end of each volume, so that disharmony may be avoided. Also you must make allowance for the different sizes of the seals as well as the

fig. 2, first and third seal imprint. Li Shengduo (1859–1937) imprinted most of his Dunhuang manuscripts with three different seals, some of them with four or five and one with as many as nine (three times three different seals). Chen Tao 2010, 76–78.

[132] Cited from Liu Xiangchun 2013, 48. On Zhou Shutao, see Zheng Weizhang 1999, 1618–1622.

[133] Liu Xiangchun 2013, 48. Zhou Shutao actually had more than just these two seals; see Lin Shenqing 1997, 258. There are at least two different seals with Zhou Xian as a legend; see Zhong Yinlan 2008, 559. Chen Tao 2010, 78–81 has done a chronological reconstruction for the seals used in Li Shengduo's collection of Dunhuang manuscripts.

[134] Liu Xiangchun 2013, 49–50.

[135] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation: Fang 1950, 158).

[136] This was the case for the Hanlin Academy Seal (翰林院印) (Wu Qinfang 2013, 114; Liu Qiang 2006, 60). It is also very obvious for the 'Book Seal of the Ministry of Education (學部圖書之印)' (i.e. Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 1: 9, 90, 100, 101, 111, 130, 193, 199).

[137] As in the case of paintings and calligraphies (van Gulik 1958, 425, 438).

[138] Ren Jiyu 2001, 272.

[139] This 'also has the very specific meaning of caption title (the title as it appears in the first column of the first page of text) or the caption area (including the first few columns of the first page of text, often containing authorship and/or publishing information)' (Edgren 1993, 136).

[140] *Qinding tianlu linlang shumu*, passim. However, Qianlong's own seal imprints are never recorded.

> difference between relief and intaglio engravings; you must discriminate when using them. It is permissible to have small seals or relief-script seals stamped one after another, but the reader of your book will be disgusted to see intaglio-script seals or larger seals crowding the same column.[141]

The aesthetic devaluation caused by too many seals being used was lamented very clearly by Jiang Shaoshu 姜紹書 (died c. 1680) in his criticism of the collector Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴 (1525–1590)[142]:

> 墨林生嘉隆承平之世，資力雄贍。出其緒餘。購求法書名畫，三吳珍秘，歸之如流。每得名跡，以印鈐之，累累滿幅。譬如石衛尉以明珠精錙聘得麗人，而虞其他適，則黥面記之。抑且遍黥其體無完膚，較蒙不潔之西子，更為酷烈矣。[143]

> Molin (i.e. Xiang Yuanbian) lived in the peaceful time of the Jia[jing] (1522–1666) and Long[qing] (1567–1572) emperors. He disposed of strong financial means and took his surplus to buy model calligraphies and famous paintings. Precious and rare works from the Three Wu[144] came to him like an [endless] stream. Every time he obtained a work of a famous hand, he would affix his seal to it, again and again all over it. This is like the Chamberlain for the Palace Garrison named Shi, who got possession of pretty girls using brilliant pearls and pure gold. Afraid they might desert him, he marked their faces with a tattoo. He even had their whole bodies tattooed, leaving not a fleck of skin untouched. Compared to the defilement of Xizi this was even more cruel.[145]

There are some books with countless imprints, especially very rare and old editions that were considered extremely precious and had been in the possession of many different collectors. Take, for example, the Song print of the *Collected Poems of the Tang Maiden Yu Xuanji* (*Tang nülang Yu Xuanji shji* 唐女郎魚玄機詩集), which has over 100 seal imprints on it and once belonged to such well-known collectors as Zhu Chengjue 朱承爵 (1480–1527), the above-mentioned Xiang Yuanbian, Huang Pilie 黃丕烈 (1763–1825), Yuan Kewen 袁克文 (1890–1931) and numerous others.[146] Another impressive example is the fragmentary print from 1213 of the *Annotated Poems of Mr Dongpo* (*Zhu Dongpo xiansheng shi* 註東坡先生詩), which contains at least 30 imprints.[147] Nonetheless, judging from the largest publications on collectors' seals imprints to date, which have been produced by the National Library of China and cover seal imprints found in over 1,800 books from Ming and Qing times (both printed works and manuscripts), the vast majority of books only have two or three imprints on them.[148]

4. Legends

A bewildering variety of legends are to be found on book collectors' seals. Most research undertaken by Chinese scholars actually concentrates on categorising the different types of legends based on their content. Although all scholars

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[141] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 158).

[142] On Xiang Yuanbian, see Wang He 1991, 308. Lin Shenqing 1997, 36–38 reproduces as many as 41 seal imprints made by this collector. His seals are also very prominent in the *Tianlu linlang shumu* with 26 different imprints (Lai Fushun 1991, 240–241). See also van Gulik 1958, 438. There are over ten of his seal imprints on a Song print of the *Tang nülang Yu Xuanji shiji* 唐女郎魚玄機詩集 (Zhang Xiuyu 2012, 26). For more on this book, see below.

[143] *Yunshizhai bitan* 韻石齋筆談 cited from *Cangshu jishi shi*, 3:247.

[144] This is a loose term without a clear definition and points to different cities in the lower Yangzi region (*Zhongguo lishi diming dacidian* 1995, 19–20).

[145] I was unable to identify the source of the story of the tattooed women. However, Ye Dehui uses a similar allusion: *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation: Fang 1950, 156–157). It might be related to the story of Shi Chong 石崇 (249–300) and his concubine, Green Pearl 珠綠, who committed suicide when Shi had to give her up for a more powerful man (*Jinshu* 晉書, 33:1008). In a different anecdote, Green Pearl refers to Shi Chong as Chamberlain for the Palace Garrison (*Taiping guangji*, 489:4020). Xizi, better known as Xishi 施西, was a legendary beauty of Chinese antiquity (*Hanyu dacidian*, vol. 8: 744–745). I have used parts of Achilles Fang's translation here (Fang 1950, 171).

[146] Zhang Lijuan and Cheng Youqing 2002, 95–97. Zhang Xiuyu 2012 provides a detailed description of all the owners. *Tang nülang Yu Xuanji shi* 2003 is a reproduction of the original kept at the National Library of China in Beijing. The work merely consists of 25 folios, only 12 of which bear the actual text; the rest of them are the title page, forewords and colophons by various collectors. The main text alone bears 66 seal imprints on the first and last folios.

[147] Guojia tushuguan tecangzu 2011, 136. Today, this print is kept by the National Central Library in Taipei. Another fragment of the same work, currently kept at the National Library of China in Beijing, probably belongs to the same book since some of the fragmentary seal imprints are complementary to each other (Zhang Lijuan and Cheng Youqing 2002, 96–98. See also Edgren 1997, 58–60). Fan Jingzhong 2001, 142 mentions another book with over 70 imprints. Li Xuemei 1999, 220–221 mentions further examples of Song editions with many seal imprints.

[148] In my analysis of the two first volumes, which span a total of 536 pages, each reproducing one original page with seal imprints on it, I found that 66% of the pages contain two or three imprints, 15% have only one, 11% have four and the rest contain anything between five and ten imprints. However, the 110 or so cases where more than one page of a book has been reproduced (mostly two pages, in fact) were not taken into consideration here. Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 1 and 2.

seem to have devised their own typology,[149] they all agree that the majority of the legends bear names, as is the case with Chinese seals in general.[150] These might be names of individual people in all their variations – ranging from the family name (*xing* 姓) and personal name (*ming* 名) to the style name (*zi* 字) or literary name (*hao* 號) – or the name of a collector's studio (*zhai* 齋), study (*shi* 室), two-storey building (*lou* 樓), pavilion (*ge* 閣) or hall (*tang* 堂) where his collection was stored. These are by far the most common options. Furthermore, the name on a legend might also be a place name (often that of the collector's home), an official rank (*guanzhi* 官職), an academic qualification obtained by passing civil-service examinations, or in case of official seals, the name of a government agency or imperial library. In many cases, instead of the character for 'seal' (*yin* 印), the name is followed by a character standing for 'collecting' (*cang* 藏). Like the meaning of *ex libris*, it must be understood as 'collected by …' or 'from the collection of …'. Other than names, one finds dates (including a collector's date of birth or the date a particular book was acquired, for example), poems, maxims, idioms and the like. Seal legends which many scholars subsume under the category of connoisseurship (*jianshang* 鑒賞) are not uncommon. These might bear information on who has evaluated (*jianbie* 鑒別), collated (*jiaodu* 校讀) or simply enjoyed looking at the book (*guanshang* 觀賞 or *guoyan* 過眼).[151] Needless to say, all kinds of combinations are common, especially those involving different types of names.

Another quite common type of legend is one that contains exhortations to later generations to safeguard the owner's book. This practice goes back to a famous dictum of Du Xian's 杜暹 (died in 740), who declared: 'loaning or selling off [a book] is an unfilial act (鬻及借人為不孝)'.[152] Here are a few typical legends of this kind: 'May [my] children and grandchildren protect it [this book] (子孫保之)', 'May [my] children and grandchildren protect [this book] forever (子孫永保)'[153] and the rather more elaborate 'Buying this book was not easy. I bequeath it to my children and grandchildren – don't discard it lightly (購此書甚不易，遺子孫弗輕棄)'.[154] One also finds more sophisticated examples: 'Grandfather's and father's books are for the education of children and grandchildren. Selling and loaning them to others is a highly unfilial act. Received family rule of the Chu family from Yunjian (祖父書籍，子孫是教。鬻及借人，大為不孝。雲間褚氏，世家垂訓)'.[155] Other collectors even threaten their descendants with 'execution by the gods', 'expulsion from the ancestral hall' or a whipping.[156]

It is generally assumed that legends became more complex over time. This has already been remarked by Li Kang 李康, a Qing-time author:

> 古印只有姓名與字，唐宋稍著齋室名，元時尚未闌入成語，至明代則某科進士某官職，無不羼入。[157]
>
> In antiquity, seals only bore the family, personal or style name. In Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) times, there were some using the name of their studios or study-rooms.

[149] It seems that only Liu Shangheng and Lai Fushun have taken any notice of previous typologies. Liu discusses those of Wang Jing 1979, Lai Fushun 1991 and Lin Shenqing 1997 by contrasting their different categories in a table before introducing his own (Liu Shangheng 2000, 48–49). Lai Fushun 1991, 138 summarises typologies of two Japanese scholars.

[150] Wang Jing 1979, 60–68; Qu Mianliang 1988; Wang Heting 1990; Lai Fushun 1991, 138–144; Cao Zhi 1992, 494–496; Xu Dongsheng 1994; Lin Shenqing 1997, 2–5; Zhou Shaochuan 1999, 252–259; Liu Shangheng 2000, 49–52; Ren Jiyu 2001, 261–271; Wang Aixi 2002; Sang Liangzhi 2002, 329–346; Xiong Yan 2003, 61–63; Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. I: 9–11; Huo Manli 2004, 22–23; Bai Shuchun 2011, 63–64; Shi Wei 2012, 100–104; Liu Xiangchun 2013. Some typologies are based on seal legends from a certain region or collection: Fei Yuqing 2007, 124–125; Liu Ning et al. 2007, 77–78; Yang Yanyan 2011, 57–59. Jiang Fucong 1937 offers no typology – it is just a collection of seal legends of collectors from a specific area. Others categorise the legends of particular collectors: Peng Wenjing 2002, 77–79, 2003, 13–15. Van Gulik 1958, 451–457 offers a very detailed typology of seal legends in English, albeit not specifically for book collectors' seals.

[151] This is not restricted to the collector and owner of the book; the person in question might be someone other than the actual owner (Peng Wenjing 2002, 79). Lai Fushun objects to calling these book collectors' seals in a narrow sense for this reason (Lai Fushun 1991, 137).

[152] Fan Jingzhong 2001, 143. The translation is taken from McDermott 2006, 139. The brackets are my addition.

[153] Lin Shenqing 1997, 38, 65, 90, 152, 193. This formula clearly resembles the final dedications commonly found in ancient bronze inscriptions (Shaughnessy 1997, 70, 73–74, 76, 83).

[154] This seal belonged to Shen Tingfang 沈廷芳 (1692-1762) (Ren Jiyu 2001, 267). The legend actually imitates an earlier model; see Fan Jingzhong 2001, 153.

[155] Fan Jingzhong 2001, 144.

[156] McDermott 2006, 139. Fan Jingzhong 2001 has collected many more examples. Fan Jingzhong 2002 seems to be a slightly extended version of his earlier publication. See also Cao Zhi and Cao Xinzhe 2012.

[157] *Qianchen mengying lu* 前塵夢影錄 cited from Cheng Qianfan and Xu Youfu 1998, 367. Traditionally, Wen Peng (1498–1573) is credited as the first to have engraved longer legends, sayings or poems on seals (Wagner 1994, 271).

In Yuan times (1279–1368), sayings were not included yet, while in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), all kinds of academic degrees and official ranks were invariably added as well.

A similar observation is shared by Ye Dehui, who at the same time condemns the trend of using ever-longer legends:

今人收藏印，多有以姓字齋堂、一切藏器累累至數十字者，此亦何異於自作小傳哉！余見宋元人收藏書籍、碑帖、字畫，多止鈐用姓名或二字別號、三字齋名，此正法也。明季山人墨客始用閒章，浸淫至於士大夫，相習而不知其俗，此最刺目之事。

Today's men, however, are prone to affix to their books seals consisting of the names of their studios and halls as well as of all the archaeological objects in their collections, altogether amounting to tens of characters. Is this practice any different from writing a short autobiography? Most of the books, rubbings of steles, calligraphic masterpieces and paintings which were once in the collections of the Song and Yuan, I have noticed, bear no more than a seal consisting of the given name and family names, two-character literary names or a three-character name of a studio. This is the proper usage. It was at the end of the Ming dynasty that scholars without official employment and men of letters began to use seals inscribed with idle words. This practice then gradually spread among the literati, who became so accustomed to it as to be unaware of its being bad taste. It is a most disgusting practice.[158]

Apart from the need to 'look for some empty space', Ye Dehui's second guiding principle in the use of seals is actually to 'remove idle words (去閒文)'. He advocates the use of short legends bearing only names:

姓名表字、樓閣堂齋，於是二三印，一印四五字足矣。

You may cut two or three seals containing your given and family names, your style name, the name of your two-storey building, pavilion, hall, or studio, each of the seals containing no more than four or five characters.[159]


原序
勇稽詩降為詞六朝濫啓其意而體創于李唐五代繼
隆其軌而風暢于趙宋柳屯田之曉風殘月蘇學士之
亂石崩雲世所共稱固無論已建炎而後作者斐然數
南渡之才人無非妍手詠西湖之麗景盡是尚家薄醉
尊前按紅牙之小拍清歌扇底度白雪之新聲況乎人
閒玉椀閣下銅駝不無荊棘之悲用誌黍離之感文弦
鼓其淒調玉笛發其哀思亦有登山臨水勝情與豪素
爭飛惜別懷人秀句共郵筒俱遠凡斯體製有待纂編

Fig. 9: Seal of Yang Jizhen 楊繼振 (1832–1893).

On the other hand, there are seal legends that contain whole pieces of prose. The most extreme example of this is probably that of Yang Jizhen 楊繼振 (1832–1893) and his rectangular relief seal with a legend consisting of 252 characters written in standard script – the imprint fills almost a whole page (see fig. 9) in which he admonishes his descendants to protect his (or rather, their) collection, including a quotation of Zhao Mengfu's well-known directive on how to handle books:[160]

聚書藏書，良非易事。善觀書者，澄神端慮，淨几焚香。勿卷腦，勿折角，勿以爪侵字，勿以唾揭幅，勿以作枕，勿以夾刺。[161]

Assembling and collecting books is really not an easy task. To enjoy books properly, clear your mind and let go of your worries, clean your desk and burn incense. Do not roll them up, do not make them dog-eared, do not approach the writing with [sharp] fingernails, do not use saliva to turn the pages, do not use them as a pillow and do not put bookmarks in them.

[158] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 157). Ye Dehui also devotes one chapter to the legends of book collectors' seals in his *Shulin qinghua* 10: 288–290.

[159] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 157).

[160] *Cangshu jishi shi*, 6:374; Fan Jingzhong 2001, 149–150; Ren Jiyu 2001, 270–271; McDermott 2006, 88. Lai Fushun (1991, 141, footnote 9, 10) lists two further examples of legends with over 100 characters. See also Qu Mianliang 1988, 95–97.

[161] Fan Jingzhong 2001, 150. The original includes two further points: 'do not handle [them] with dirty hands and do not exhibit them on the dining table (勿把穢手，勿展食案)'. There are numerous adaptations of these rules in seal legends (Fan Jingzhong 2001, 146–147).

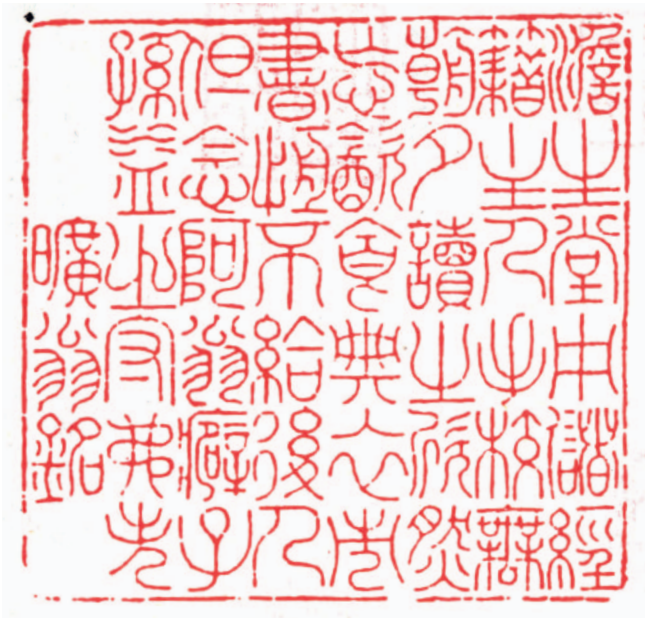

Fig. 10: Seal of Qi Chenghan 祁承㸁 (1563–1628), relief seal.

Yang himself further adds: 'do not sell them for money, do not lend them to others and do not bequeath them to unfilial sons and grandsons (勿以鬻錢，勿以借人，勿以貽不肖子孫)'. Another, less excessive, example is that of Qi Chenghan 祁承㸁 (1563–1628)[162] (see fig. 10):

> 澹生堂中儲經籍。主人手校無朝夕。讀之欣然忘飲食。典衣市書恒不給。後人但念阿翁癖。子孫益之守弗失。曠翁銘。[163]
>
> [Many] books are stored in the Dansheng hall. I, their owner, collated them by hand day and night. When reading them, I forgot to eat and drink out of sheer pleasure. Even pawning my clothes to buy [more] books didn't help, as I could never get enough of them; [I am afraid] my descendants will only remember their old man's craving. May [my] children and grandchildren get even more of them and guard them well so none of them get lost. Engraved by Old Man Kuang [i.e. Qi Chenghan].

The same high regard for books could also be expressed in fewer words: 'A single canonical work is worth more than a chestful of gold (黃金籯滿不如一經).'[164] Many more examples, both long and short, could be cited here to attest collectors' love of reading and studying as well as their concern about the future of their books, often combined with the wish for their descendants to preserve them.

5. Function

From the examples presented above, it will now have become quite clear that book collectors' seals not only served as marks of ownership, but were also used by their owners to express their views and attitudes and even to address their descendants. At the same time, the continuous addition of new imprints created a link between the different owners. Lothar Ledderose has put forward a hypothesis on the social function of calligraphy as a means of fostering social coherence among the literati in China, which also touches on the use of seals. According to him, the consecutive addition of collectors' seals on a piece of calligraphy established a 'quasi-physical relationship' among the different collectors and thus helped to stimulate a sense of belonging among members of the elite.[165] Like calligraphy, which was produced, collected and appreciated by the literati, books and book collecting were also part of their particular culture – not to speak of the difficult distinction between calligraphy and books. And just like in the realm of painting and calligraphy, seal imprints on books were considered to have an aesthetic value, adding beauty to the object. They became an integral part of a piece of art or a book. This is most obvious in Ye Dehui's treatment of the topic. As has been shown above, he clearly focuses on the aesthetic dimension of book collectors' seals. Aside from the right place for the imprint and its proper legend, he also draws attention to the style of the seal carving, which should comply to certain standards:

> 故不得工於仿漢及善松雪、文、何體，不如不印，免至名跡受污。
>
> Therefore, unless your seals skillfully imitate the Han style or closely follow the style of Songxue (i.e. Zhao Mengfu), Wen [Peng], or He [Zhen], it is better to have no seals at all; your books, priceless as they are, will at least be spared defilement.[166]

[162] On Qi Chenghan, see Lin Shenqing 2000a, 41–44; Wang He 1991, 95–96.

[163] Lin Shenqing 2000a, 44.

[164] This is the seal legend used by Xu Qianxue 徐乾學 (1631–1694); Lin Shenqing 2000a, 80–84. This is a saying found in *Hanshu* 73:3107.

[165] Ledderose 1986.

[166] *Cangshu shiyue*, 14 (translation, modified: Fang 1950, 158). Wen Peng 文彭 (1498–1573) was the eldest son of the famous painter and calligrapher Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559). He Zhen 何震 (c. 1530–1604) was

The many examples of seal legends exhorting the owner's descendants to safeguard books might seem contradictory to the idea of a 'quasi-physical relationship' among the different collectors, but this is actually just a reflection of how unlikely it was to preserve a large book collection over many generations. In fact, there are very few prominent examples of families who were able to keep large collections across generations.[167] However, there are also examples of seal legends in which the owners acknowledge that their book is most likely to end up in the hands of a different collector one day. This was articulated most clearly by Xu Zeng 許增 (1824–1903):

> 得之不易失之易，物無盡藏亦此理。但愿得者如我輩，即非我有亦可喜。[168]
>
> It was not easy to obtain it, [but] it will be easy to lose it; the inexhaustible treasury [of the Creator] of Things also [follows] this principle.[169] I only wish that whoever obtains it is like me; even if I do not possess it, that is also gratifying.

This wish may also be expressed more plainly than this, as in the words of Sun Congtian: 'Treasure it, whoever obtained it (得之寶之)',[170] or 'Hope it will be circulated and passed on; do not defile or destroy it (願流傳勿污損)', as the seal legend of Wu Chao 吳焯 (1676–1733) and his son, Wu Yuchi 吳玉墀, declares.[171] The use of the phrase 'once in … (曾在)' or 'once collected by ... (曾藏)' reflects a collector's recognition of the fact that his book will sooner or later become part of another person's collection.[172] Affixing one's seal to a work was also a way of immortalising oneself, of course. This point is aptly expressed by Huang Pilie (1763–1825) in one of his many colophons on the books in his collection:

> 可知書不可無目，本書不可無圖記、題識，俾后之讀者一覽而知為誰之書。雖書不必仍為我有，而我與書俱存也。[173]
>
> Evidently, books should not be without a table of contents, and a book should [also] not be without a seal and colophon if it is to allow later readers to know whose book this is at a glance. Even if the book does not belong to me any more, I will be preserved together with the book [this way].

a student of Wen Peng. The emergence of seal cutting as an art of its own is closely related to these men (Wagner 1994, 275–277).

[167] McDermott 2006, 85–88. Cao Zhi and Cao Xinzhe 2012, 95–98 have found numerous cases of collections that were sold by a collector's descendants, but only mention a few contrasting examples of collections preserved over many generations.

[168] Fan Jingzhong 2001, 154–155.

[169] This alludes to a passage in the *Red Cliff Rhapsody* (*Chibi fu* 赤壁賦) by Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), see *Su Shi Wenji* 1:15 (transl. Mair 1994, 441): "Moreover, each thing within heaven and earth has its master. If I did not possess it, then I would not take even a hair of it. However, the pure wind over the river becomes sound when our ears capture it, and the bright moon between the mountains takes on form when our eyes encounter it. There is no prohibition against our acquiring them, and we can use them without ever consuming them. They are from the inexhaustible treasury of the Creator of Things, which you and I can enjoy together. (且夫天地之間，物各有主。苟非吾之所有，雖一毫而莫取。惟江上之清風，與山間之明月，耳得之而爲聲，目遇之而成色。取之無禁，用之不竭。是造物者之無盡藏也，而吾與子之所共適。)".

[170] Fang 1951, 217, 246. Achilles Fang remarks that this stands in opposition to the usual 'may children and grandchildren protect it' (Fang 1951, 260).

[171] Cao Zhi and Cao Xinzhe 2012, 99. On Wu Chao and his son, see Wang He 1991, 164, 168..

[172] Cao Zhi and Cao Xinzhe 2012, 99.

[173] From a colophon to a manuscript copy of the *Zaiye ji* 在野集, a selection of poems by Yuan Kai 袁凱 (?1316 – ?). Cited from Peng Wenjing 2003, 15.

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Fig. 1: Print (Kangxi, 1662–1722) of the 'Selected Writings by Tao An' (Tao An wenji 陶庵文集) by Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀 (1605–1645), 1:2B. (Held by National Library of China in Beijing: / 96108. Image taken from Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 6: 162). Nine seal imprints: 1: Zhang 張, not identified. 2: 'Subject Kui's seal' (*Chen Kui yin* 臣夔印), not identified. 3: 'Collected in the Shouhua Studio of the Zhao family from Guiyang' (*Guiyang Zhao shi Shouhua xuan cang* 貴陽趙氏壽華軒藏), not identified. 4: 'Bookmark of Master Xu from Yushan' (*Yushan Xuzi dushuji* 虞山徐子讀書記), not identified. 5: 'Stay idly at home in the eastern suburbs of Yushan' (*Jia ju Yushan dongguo* 家居虞山東郭), not identified. 6: Jin Kui 晉夔, not identified. 7: Quansun 荃孫, by Miao Quansun 繆荃孫 (1844–1919). 8: 'Cloud-wheel pavilion' (*Yunlunge* 雲輪閣), by Miao Quansun. 9: 'From the collection of the Beijing Library' (*Beijing tushuguan cang* 北京圖書館藏).

Fig. 2: Manuscript (Qing, 1644–1911) of the 'Literary Treasures of the Hanlin Academy' (*Hanlin zhuyu* 翰林珠玉) by Yu Ji 虞集 (1272–1348), 1:1B. (Held by National Library of China in Beijing: / 102857. Image taken from Sun Xuelei et al. 2004, vol. 6: 71). Five seal imprints (from bottom to top): 1: 'To obtain this book I endured much hardship. May later generations appreciate me' (得此書費辛苦後之人其鑒我), by Chen Zhan 陳鱣 (1753–1817). 2: 'Book collector's seal belonging to Ji Cangwei' (*Ji Cangwei cangshuyin* 季滄葦藏書印), by Ji Zhenyi 季振宜 (1630–1674). 3: 'Portrait of Zhongyu' (*Zhongyu tuxiang* 仲魚圖像), by Chen Zhan. 4: 'The Zhuang family of Kunling' (*Kunling Zhuang shi* 昆陵莊氏), not identified (possibly Zhuang Zuji 莊祖基 (1843–1890). 5: 'Zheng Zuchen's seal' (*Zheng Zuchen yin* 鄭祖琛印), by Zheng Zuchen (1784–1851).

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Fig. 6: 'Seal of Yongxing prefecture' (*Yongxing jun yin* 永興郡印), relief seal (image taken from http://www.mebag.com/paper/paper31.htm, accessed on 30 May 2014).

Fig. 7: *Qinding Tianlu linlan shumu* 欽定天祿琳瑯書目, 6:31B/32A.

Fig. 8: Manuscript with imprint of 'Hanlin Academy's Seal' (*Hanlin yuan yin* 翰林院印). 'Poems by Tang Yushi' (*Tang Yushi shi* 唐愚士詩) (Held by National Palace Museum in Taipei: 平圖013602).

Fig. 9: Seal of Yang Jizhen 楊繼振 (1832–1893), relief seal in standard script with 252 characters. (Found in print [Daoguang, 1820–1850, *Airixuan kanben* 愛日軒刊本] of the 'Extremely Marvellous Words' (*Juemiao haoci* 絕妙好詞) edited by Zhou Mi 周密 (1232–1298) auctioned in 2009 (http://pmgs.kongfz.com/detail/16_84189/, accessed on 30 October 2014).

Fig. 10: Seal of Qi Chenghan 祁承㸁 (1563–1628), relief seal. (Image taken from Lin Shenqing 2000a, 44.)

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