

Research on the Style of Duan Inkstone Inscription in Tang Dynasty

-- A Case Study of Two Duan Inkstones Unearthed in Archaeology of Tang Dynasty

Xiaojing Wang

Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, 526061, China

Abstract: Under the background of the Tang Dynasty, regular script has developed into the most coordinated and stable calligraphy style through three periods of transition. This most stable regular script style is suitable for the inscriptions of stone tablets and Duan inkstone in the Tang Dynasty. During this transition, the inheritance and breakthrough in the early Tang Dynasty gave rise to the standardized embryonic form of regular script in the Tang Dynasty. Entering the middle of the Tang Dynasty, regular script was further innovated and developed, strengthening stability. It was not until the late Tang Dynasty was innovated and perfected, and the essence of the early stage was absorbed. During the transition period of regular script in the entire Tang Dynasty, on the basis of inheritance, there was a breakthrough and development. A stable development law was formed with changes in stability and changes in stability.

Keywords: Regular script, Tang Dynasty, Duan inkstone, Transition, Inscription.

1. Introduction

After the transitional development of the initial, middle, and late stages, the Tang Dynasty regular script gradually formed the best coordination combination, and this stable Tang Dynasty regular script has been used in various periods of the Tang Dynasty after being upgraded and completed, including the Tang Dynasty inscriptions and the Tang Dynasty Duan inkstone inscriptions. Based on inheritance, there have been breakthroughs and innovations. In the development of innovation, there is regularity and follow a stable development context. This transitional change in Regular script also represents the consistent aesthetic style of all classes in the Tang Dynasty.

2. Background of Tang Dynasty Calligraphy and Inscriptions

2.1. The Most Coordinated Calligraphy Structure

During the Sui Dynasty in ancient China, the time from founding to the fall was short, and it was a feudal dynasty that existed for only 37 years. However, this period is important in the history of Chinese calligraphy, and it is a transitional stage in the regular script from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty, and the regular script of the Sui Dynasty inherit the calligraphic charm of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, and the chapters are arranged neatly and orderly. The structural formula has the rudiments of square standardization and has a rigorous sense of strength. The brushwork lines are evacuated and symmetrical, and they also have a flexible charm of Colorful. This Sui Dynasty regular script style feature is more obvious in inscriptions. Just like the famous inscription of the Sui Dynasty "Longzang Temple Stele", in terms of chapter method, from top to bottom longitudinal overall order, the font between dense and equal, the overall presentation of elegant and rigorous posture. In terms of structure, there is a tendency for long horizontal strokes to tilt

upwards, and the font structure shows a compact central gathering form. There is also a unique point with a flat dot structure and a loose center state, but not loose, and the whole reaches a balance. In terms of brushwork, the square pen and the round pen are taken into account, there are beautiful and fine stroke lines, and there are also thick and round stroke lines. The whole inscription is rich in changes, with a calligraphy style of free and broad coexistence with rigorous elegance, showing a unique charm different from the Wei and Jin Dynasties, and also playing a role in connecting and transitioning, promoting the further planning process of the late Tang Dynasty.

The Tang Dynasty period was a period of maturity and perfection of the regular script writing, as scholars have studied, believing that there are three stages of transition, each of which has a typical calligraphy master, representing the characteristics of the calligraphy of the current period.

The first stage is the early Tang Dynasty, representative calligraphy masters are Yu Shinan, Ou YangXun, and Chu Suiliang, they inherited the Sui Dynasty regular script artistic style, the structure is thick and square, with a round and fine pen, forming a thin and beautiful style of the early Tang Dynasty.

The second stage is the prosperous Tang Dynasty, representative calligraphy masters are represented by Yan Zhenqing, the style of the regular script is tightly structured, the square and the circle are taken into account, and the slender and hard lines are changed to a plump and strong knot, and the font is broad and atmospheric, vigorous and powerful. It brought a new style of calligraphy to the Tang Dynasty and had a strong Tang Dynasty aesthetic taste.

The third stage is the late Tang Dynasty, the main representative of the calligraphy master is Liu Gongquan, his calligraphy is characterized by the collection of many Tang Dynasty calligraphy masters, including the early Tang Dynasty Ou Yangxun, the flourishing Tang Dynasty Yan Zhenqing, the predecessors of the regular script characteristics of the integration through, take its essence, the formation of a rigorous and tight chapter, the knot body is broad and

vigorous, the pen posture is strong.

In summary, after three stages of transitional development, the combination of book structure and stroke gradually formed the optimal combination, forming the most coordinated style of Tang Dynasty calligraphy. Structural rigor and impeccable, the most coordinated combination of this transition has enabled the Tang Dynasty to be upgraded and perfected and has been used in various periods of the Tang Dynasty, including the inscriptions of Tang Dynasty Stone tablet.

2.2. The Development of Inscription Styles Transition

At the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, after the change of the Sui Dynasty, in the period of the founding of the country, the calligraphy style of the famous calligraphers in the regular script was more based on the Wei and Jin Southern and Northern Dynasties and the Sui Dynasty, which had a breakthrough. Just like Yu Shinan's "Confucius Temple Stele", the stele is engraved in the regular script as a whole, with square and tight chapters and a dense layout. The knot is long, the brushwork is round, the stretch is measured, and it has a unique charm of external softness and inner rigidity. The knot of Ouyang Xun's "Jiucheng Palace Liquan Inscription" is also relatively slender, and the center of the glyph is compact, and the center of this is stretched to the four sides, and there is a density in the sparse. The left side of the body converges, the right side is deep, the upper narrow and the lower are wide, the gap is open and stable, and the glyph shows the characteristics of the conformal formation. The knot of Chu Suiliang's "Sacred Order of the Wild Goose Pagoda" has changed, changing to a relatively slender font, but it does not lack the rigidity and rigor of the regular script in the early Tang Dynasty and adds some elegant and beautiful charm. At this time, a new style of the regular script calligraphy in the early Tang Dynasty was formed.

During the prosperous Tang Dynasty, it fully inherited the regular script characteristics of the early Tang Dynasty, and on this basis, there was innovation and development. Just like Yan Zhenqing's "Duobao Pagoda Stele", the chapters are neatly arranged vertically and horizontally, the vertical axis revolves around a central axis, and the size and shape of the characters are relatively consistent. The knot is broad and upright, and the pen is balanced in all directions, but it is not flexible and lively. His "Yan Qin Giftstone" also has the characteristics of the mature period of the regular scripts, reaching the most coordinated and balanced state of the regular script body, and is an regular script art form that shows a strong aesthetic taste of the Tang Dynasty based on the innovation of the previous regular scripts.

In the late Tang Dynasty, there was innovation in the regular script, gathering the characteristics of the previous two periods and having a new creative style, just like Liu Gongquan's "Mysterious Tower Stele", the chapter layout is rigorous, the lines are tight, and the left and right symmetry between the fonts is uniform. The knot body has a new intention, and the structure is elongated by vertical painting, showing the meaning of strong posture and beauty, thin and weak. The brushwork has also changed to slender and stiff lines, with lighter horizontal lines and heavier vertical lines, sharp and powerful square pen turns, and clean and sharp brushwork.

In summary, the development of inscription of the regular scripts in the three stages of the Tang Dynasty has undergone

transitional changes, and the early Tang Dynasty made breakthroughs based on inheritance, forming the prototype of the square standardization of the Tang Dynasty the regular scripts. During the prosperous Tang Dynasty, the regular scripts developed innovatively, and the style of calligraphy tended to be more stable, reaching a mature period of coordinated and balanced Tang Dynasty regular script styles. In the late Tang Dynasty, further pioneering and innovating, absorbing the strengths of all, absorbing the essence of the early regular script, diversifying development, and adding to the richness of the regular script characters.

3. Analysis Duan Inkstone Calligraphy Inscription

Duan inkstone, first appeared in the Tang Dynasty of China, and flourished in the Song Dynasty, the literati and inkers of all dynasties have loved Duan inkstone very much and has been handed down to this day, Duan inkstone has accumulated a deep history, containing pure artistic essence. There are relatively few Tang Dynasty Duan inkstone excavated by archaeology, and even fewer are inscribed with inscriptions. Among them, there are two representative Tang Dynasty Duan inkstone inscriptions, namely the "Zhong" and "Ding" inscription Duan inkstone excavated from the Tang Tomb of the Phase II Sanatorium of the Hengfu Road Bank in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in 2001, and the "Wu Yong Pan Guan" inscription Duan inkstone excavated from the Tang Tomb of the Second Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University in Guangdong Province in 2009. The writing body of these two Tang Dynasty inscriptions has many similarities with the Tang Dynasty inscriptions, and there are also the flow and application of the regular scripts in folk development, and on this basis, continuous innovation.

3.1. "Zhong" and "Ding" Duan Inkstone Inscription



In 2001, the inscription Duan inkstone (Figure 1) of the Tang Tomb excavated from the Tang Tomb of the Phase II Sanatorium of Hengfu Road Bank in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, was in the form of a round head dustpan-shaped stone, and there was an inscription on the back of the Duan inkstone, which could be identified as "Zhong" and "Ding", the middle two words were unrecognizable, and the inscription was the regular script, which had the characteristics of Tang Dynasty calligraphy. Comparing the two characters with inscriptions from different periods of the Tang Dynasty, it is found that the structure has many similarities.



Figure 1. Ji - shaped Inkstones Unearthed from Hengfu Road, Guangzhou

First of all, compared with the inscription of Chu Suiliang in the early Tang Dynasty, the “Zhong” character of this side of the Duan inkstone is shown in Table 1 below. It can be seen that the structure is almost the same, the form of the regular script is square and simple, the density is alternated, and microscopic strokes are used. Compared with the inscriptions on Liu Gongquan 's inscriptions in the late Tang Dynasty, there are more similarities in the use of strokes. For example, the horizontal strokes are lighter, the vertical strokes are heavier, the vertical strokes are more obvious, the brush strokes are strong, and the strokes are extended. The painting pen is clean and sharp, forming a strong contrast with the brush painting.

Table 1. Comparison of the inscriptions of the word "Zhong"

“Zhong”and“Ding” Duan Inkstone inscription	Chu Suiliang's “Meng Fa Shi Monument”	Liu Gongquan's “Mysterious Tower Stele”
		

Secondly, on this side of the inkstone “Ding”word, because perennial wear, identification is not very clear, the font split structure to analyze, “Ding”offside and Ou Yangxun in the early Tang Dynasty inscriptions also have many similar characteristics, the structure presents a longitudinal trend, the shape is more slender. The thickness of the pen is consistent, and the circular rotation pen method is mostly used. It has the characteristics of both close and stretch coexistence, such as the “Ding” word side structure, simple two pens, but not loose, still close to the center, showing a relaxed and stretchy style. Compared with the inscriptions of Yan Zhenqing in the Tang Dynasty, the regular script of the Tang Dynasty was combined with the advantages of many famous calligraphers, further strengthened in structure and brushwork, and the structure was strict and balanced. As the word ' words ' is offside, the pen structure pursues a stable, enhancing the strength of the horizontal structure.

Table 2. Comparison of the inscriptions of the word "Ding"

“Zhong”and“Ding” Duan Inkstone inscription	Ou Yangxun's “Jiucheng Palace Liquan Inscription”	Yan Zhenqing's “Yuanci Mountain Monument”
		

3.2. “Wu Yong Pan Guan” Duan Inkstone Inscription

According to the 2009 archaeological excavation of Tang tombs at the Second Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University in Guangdong Province, the tombs were formed in the late Tang Dynasty. The Duan Inkstone in the funerary objects presents the popular Feng-shaped shape of the Tang Dynasty. The surface of the inkstone is flat and open, the back of the inkstone is polished and smooth, and there are obvious rust marks. The four-character inscription of “ Wu



Yong Pan Guan” is engraved, the handwriting is clear and legible, and the style of the calligraphy is the regular script.



Figure 2. “Wu Yong Pan Guan” Duan Inkstone.

The inscription of the word “Wu” in the micro-end inkstone “Wu” shows a narrow upper and wide lower form, and the stroke structure is regular and straight. It is highly similar to the “Wu” word skimming angle of Yan Zhenqing 's “Duobao Pagoda Stele” in the Tang Dynasty. It is straight and sides out, with a light and healthy pen, clean and easy to complete the stroke, but also has some unique rhythm.

Table 3. Comparison of the inscriptions of the word "Wu"

“Wu Yong Pan Guan” Duan Inkstone	Yan Zhenqing's “Duobao Pagoda Stele”
	

“Yong” font is a more relaxed, slender font. The square turning is obvious, and the external expansion pen has a free and easy momentum. The straight line of the pen is similar to several inscriptions of Yan Zhenqing. As shown in the first three books of Table 4, the pen has a vigorous and vigorous momentum. The structure of fonts is in the form of slender, and the middle vertical pen is tightened, which plays a role in stabilizing the structure. In addition, the coordination between the two sides makes the “Yong”font more prominent and stable.



Table 4. Comparison of the inscriptions of the word "Yong"

“Wu Yong Pan Guan” Duan Inkstone	Yan Zhenqing's “Wang Lin Epitaph”	Yan Zhenqing's “The Monument of Oriental Shuo Paintings”	Yan Zhenqing's “Li Xuanjing Monument”
			

In the “Pan” word of the Duan inkstone, the structure is loose and intensified, the whole stretches to the four sides, showing an open structure. However, in the loose structure, there is also a square structure paradigm of the regular script of the Tang Dynasty. As shown in Table 5, the structure of the character “Pan” in Duan Inkstone is similar to that of the character “Pan” in Liu Gongquan's inscriptions. Short transverse is stout, long transverse is particularly slender.



Spotting diversity, enhance the diversity of font structure and aesthetic interest.

Table 5. Comparison of the inscriptions of the word "Pan"

"Wu Yong Pan Guan" Duan Inkstone	Liu Gongquan's "Mysterious Tower Stele"
	

Duan inkstone 's "Guan" word, compact structure, with pen lines symmetrical, showing a rigorous attitude. The brushwork of squares and circles shows the diversity of the change of brushwork. As shown in Table 6, it is found that there are similarities in the form the structure of the characters in the inscriptions of Liu Gongquan in the late Tang Dynasty. First, the structure is wide in the upper part and narrow in the lower part, but it does not affect the balance and coordination of the font. The stroke structure follows the characteristics of the regular script in the late Tang Dynasty. The horizontal drawing is thinner, the vertical drawing is thicker, and it contains a sense of weight. It is a kind of dignified Tang Dynasty regular script aesthetic charm.

Table 6. Comparison of the inscriptions of the word "Guan"

"Wu Yong Pan Guan" Duan Inkstone	Liu Gongquan's "Mysterious Tower Stele"
	

To sum up, the inscriptions of the Tang Dynasty unearthed by these two parties have the characteristics of the regular script of the Tang Dynasty. It is an innovative transition in inheritance. The structure is based on the square standard of the regular script of the Tang Dynasty. On the basis of this, it adds some free development, does not stick to the legal requirements of inscription and composition, and is closer to life. It is a free transition of calligraphy style and inheritance and development in daily life.

4. Conclusion

In summary, the Tang Dynasty regular script after three stages of transition development, the combination of structure and strokes, gradually formed the most stable combination and has been used in the Tang Dynasty inscriptions. On the basis of inheritance, the early Tang Dynasty broke through and developed the embryonic form of the standardization of the regular script in the Tang Dynasty. During the prosperous Tang Dynasty, the innovation and development of the regular script style, more prominent stability in the structure, to

achieve a balanced and coordinated maturity of the Tang Dynasty regular script style. The late Tang Dynasty, further completed the innovation, absorbing the essence of the early regular script, diversified development, and further strengthening the richness of the Tang Dynasty regular script.

On the basis of this era, the Tang Dynasty inkstone inscriptions also follow this law of development. First of all, in terms of composition structure, it follows the law of vertical writing and standardizes the neat arrangement to achieve a balanced beauty. Secondly, the structure of the Duan Inkstone inscriptions is consistent with the three stages of the Tang Dynasty's regular script, showing a compact font center and a relaxed style around it. The freedom of collection and release is interesting, and it also contains the strong cohesion of the Tang Dynasty's regular script. Finally, in terms of the structure of the brushwork, there are also diverse changes in the three stages of the regular script inscriptions in the Tang Dynasty. The flexibility of the brushwork, the combination of square and round pens, the rich changes in the use of pens, and the diversity of thickness and depth in horizontal and vertical strokes. Font full of flexible sense of rhythm, these rich features of change and the Tang Dynasty regular script aesthetic rhyme have the same effect, the development of regularity, and follow a stable development context. This transitional change of regular script also represents the consistent aesthetic fashion of all classes in the Tang Dynasty.

Acknowledgment

This work is sponsored by 2022 School-level Scientific Research Fund Project, Zhaoqing University: "Research on the style of Duan inkstone inscriptions unearthed in the Tang Dynasty" (QN202206).

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