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*Frederick W. Mote, Hung-Lam Chu, "Part A: General Trends", The Gest Library Journal 2, no. 2 (1988): 99-110, accessed January 14, 2017,  
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## Part A. General Trends

Traditionally, most bibliophiles, judging by the standards of art and scholarly editing, have considered the Northern and Southern Sung (960-1125-1279), and to a lesser degree the following Yüan (1279-1368), to be a golden age of printed book production. Today Sung and Yüan books are very rare and are immensely valuable; most of those still in existence are in public collections in East Asia. Many have been photographically reprinted in recent times.

The Gest collection possesses about 2,400 volumes (*ts'e*) printed in Sung and Yüan times, or printed during the early Ming from blocks cut in the Sung and Yüan. Although that may seem a large number, most of those belong to a few large sets. They are not fully representative of the best in Sung and Yüan printing. Some modern facsimile reprintings therefore are included to show calligraphy's influences on printing.

For those influences we must look to the creative master calligraphers of the T'ang, and particularly to those most noted for their standard or model (*k'ai*) script. The last of the three basic script styles (*ts'ao*, *hsing*, and *k'ai*) to take form in the post-Han centuries, the standard script underwent great development during the T'ang for use in monumental stelae. Rubbings of a few of those have been widely used as models for calligraphy practice from that time to the present. The standard (*k'ai*) script also became the norm for printed books. Three T'ang calligraphers, among dozens of great masters, set the distinctive and most influential styles for writing standard script in calligraphy generally and in printing. They are Ou-yang Hsün (557-641), Yen Chen-ch'ing (709-785), and Liu Kung-ch'üan (778-865). Throughout the Sung and Yüan, until the impact of the last of the great innovative calligraphy stylists, Chao Meng-fu (died 1322), the characters seen in most printed books can be identified with one or the other of those three styles, or with the merging of Ou-yang's and Yen's calligraphy. In printing of this period the influence of the calligrapher was direct and obvious, even though the calligraphy actually used for carving the blocks was

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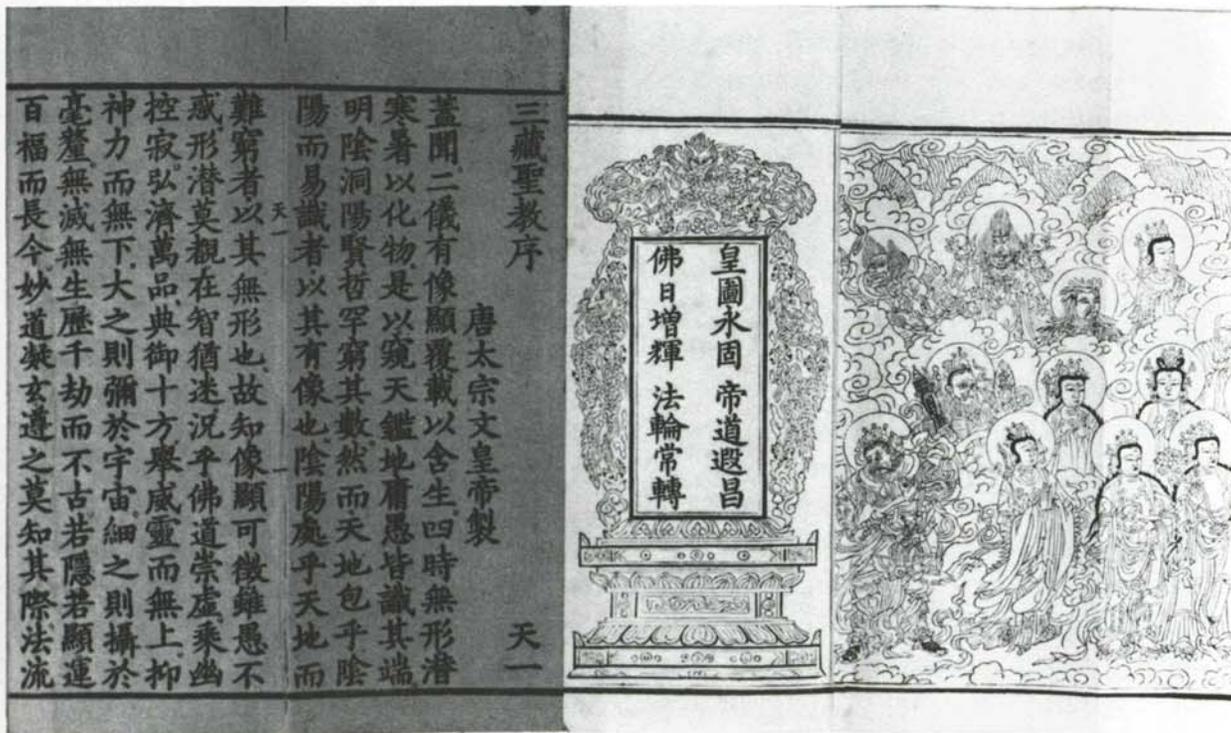
written by distant followers of those models, and the processes of tracing and carving imposed a further screen between the resulting printed page and its distant prototype. Yet, so important were the elements of calligraphy and its transfer to the printing blocks that in Sung and Yüan times the best books carry the names of the calligraphers in the front matter, and the carvers added their names to the edges of the blocks. Those practices were not characteristic of later printing.

This part is written by Chu.

The Buddhist printing of the *Tripitaka* began only a decade after the Sung dynasty was founded in 960 A.D. By the end of the dynasty in 1279 five different editions had been printed and a sixth was underway. This last one, which would be completed in about 1321 during the Yüan dynasty, was the Chi-sha edition, from which our present selection is made. We have discussed the Gest copy of this edition in some detail in a previous entry (no. 40). The following remarks focus upon the calligraphy engraved on the printing blocks.

The page of the text illustrated (no. 49) belongs to the part of the sutra that was printed during the late Sung.<sup>1</sup> (The drawing was an addition made during the Ming.) The style of the calligraphy is that of Yen Chen-ch'ing, judging from a generally muscular, rigid, and broad compo-

sition with thick and heavy strokes. At a glance it appears different from most other Sung printings with a calligraphic style ascribed to Yen because the horizontal strokes are less inclined and their edges rounder. However, the weighty force infusing the strokes and the equally square sizes of the characters point to a fundamental characteristic of Yen. The slight lack of elegance in individual characters is compensated by a unifying structural dignity, smooth yet imposing. Yen's style is said to have been most popularly adopted during the Sung by printers in Szechwan and Fukien. In fact, it can even be said that Yen's was adopted as a "basic" or "master" style, often blended with qualities and touches of such other popular styles in printing as Liu Kung-ch'üan's. Because the Chi-sha edition of the *Tripitaka* was engraved and printed in the Soochow



49. *Chi-sha pan ta-tsang ching*. (See no. 40).

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area, we can see that Yen's style — although here in a modified form — obviously had an even wider base of acceptance.

Mei-shan, a name used generally for the Chengtu area in Szechwan, was the cultural center of west China during the Sung, and in fact Sung printing flourished there first before it developed in Hangchow and Fukien. Scholars have agreed that Chengtu printers showed a preference for Liu Kung-ch'üan's style of calligraphy, which is characterized as a compromise between the well-balanced and slender style of Ou-yang Hsün and the muscular and broad style of Yen Chen-ch'ing. It uses neat and forceful strokes in elongated or perpendicular shapes in addition to a tight and square composition of individual characters. To be sure, books printed in other centers, such as those from the Hangchow and Fukien areas in later Sung times, also present an expression of the Liu style. In general, though, the Ou-yang and Yen styles dominated.

Illustration no. 50 is taken from a page of the annotated Confucian classic, the *Book of Rites*, printed in Chengtu in early Southern Sung times. Judging from the above characterization of Liu Kung-ch'üan's brushwork, the calligraphy of this book obviously is considerably influenced by the Liu style. No complete copy exists of this edition, which is considered to belong to the prestigious series of twelve Confucian classics published by the government school of Chengtu. In any event, the great skill in engraving and the high quality of ink displayed in this copy have led authorities to regard it as the best of Szechwan printing in the Sung.<sup>2</sup>

*Hsin-pien shih-wen lei-chü han-mo ta-ch'üan* (no. 51) is an encyclopedia of mo-

del writings (prose, poetry, letters, and others) printed in the latter half of the Yüan dynasty. The author, Liu Ying-li, was a native of Chien-yang, Fukien, who passed his *chin-shih* examination during the Sung dynasty, in 1250. When the Sung was ended, he declined official service and returned home to establish a private academy, together with the famous Confucian scholar Hsiung Ho (1253-1312), teaching local students. It was Hsiung who wrote the preface to this book in 1307. There are several versions of this work that are extant, but the present edition is so rare that it is not recorded in almost all available bibliographies. As the ownership seals indicated, this copy was once the property of the Manchu Prince of Kuo.<sup>3</sup>

The impressive quality both in block engraving and printing shows that this is an excellent product of Yüan times. The "black mouths," the double-line borders, and the general format betray a style that bespeaks the typical skill in Yüan printing. The calligraphy of the text is especially noteworthy. Though the characters are small, their strokes are so charmingly clear and forceful. It shows a combination of styles of which those of Ou-yang Hsün and Chao Meng-fu appear to be relatively prominent.

*Hsüan-ho po-ku t'u-lu* (Illustrated Record of Ancient Objects in the Hsüan-ho Pal-

> 50. *Li-chi chu*. 15 ch. extant.

Author: Cheng Hsüan (127-200).

Date: 12th century.

Dimensions: 8 cols. of 16 chars. (16 of 21 small chars.); block, 23.4 x 16.1 cm.

Source: Pei-ching t'u-shu-kuan, comp., *Chung-kuo pan-k'o t'u-lu* (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1961), Illus. 222.

禮記卷第十五

經解第二十六

鄭氏注

孔子曰入其國其教可知也

觀其風俗則知其所以教

其

為人也溫柔敦厚詩教也疏通知遠書教

也廣博易良樂教也絜靜精微易教也恭

儉莊敬禮教也屬辭比事春秋教也

屬猶台也

春秋多記諸侯朝聘會同有相接之辭罪辯之事

故詩之失愚書之失

誣樂之失奢易之失賊禮之失煩春秋之

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ace) is an illustrated catalogue of some 600 bronzes of pre-Ch'in times compiled by Wang Fu of Hsiang-fu (Kaifeng). Wang was an influential collaborator of the notorious prime minister Ts'ai Ching (1047-1126).

The term "Hsüan-ho" in the title has often been erroneously equated with the

Hsüan-ho reign (1119-1127) of the Sung emperor Hui-tsung. According to a note by Ts'ai T'ao (fl. 1120s), Ts'ai Ching's son and an acquaintance of the author, the book was written during the early part of the Cheng-ho reign (1107-1110), and the term Hsüan-ho was actually the name of a palace in the imperial city. The *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* reviewers upheld the reliability of this note and pointed out that the mistake was first made by the Southern Sung erudite Hung Mai (1123-1202). The present edition, as noted by the added words of the title, was engraved and printed during the Chih-ta reign period (1308-1312) of the emperor Wu-tsung of Yüan. The

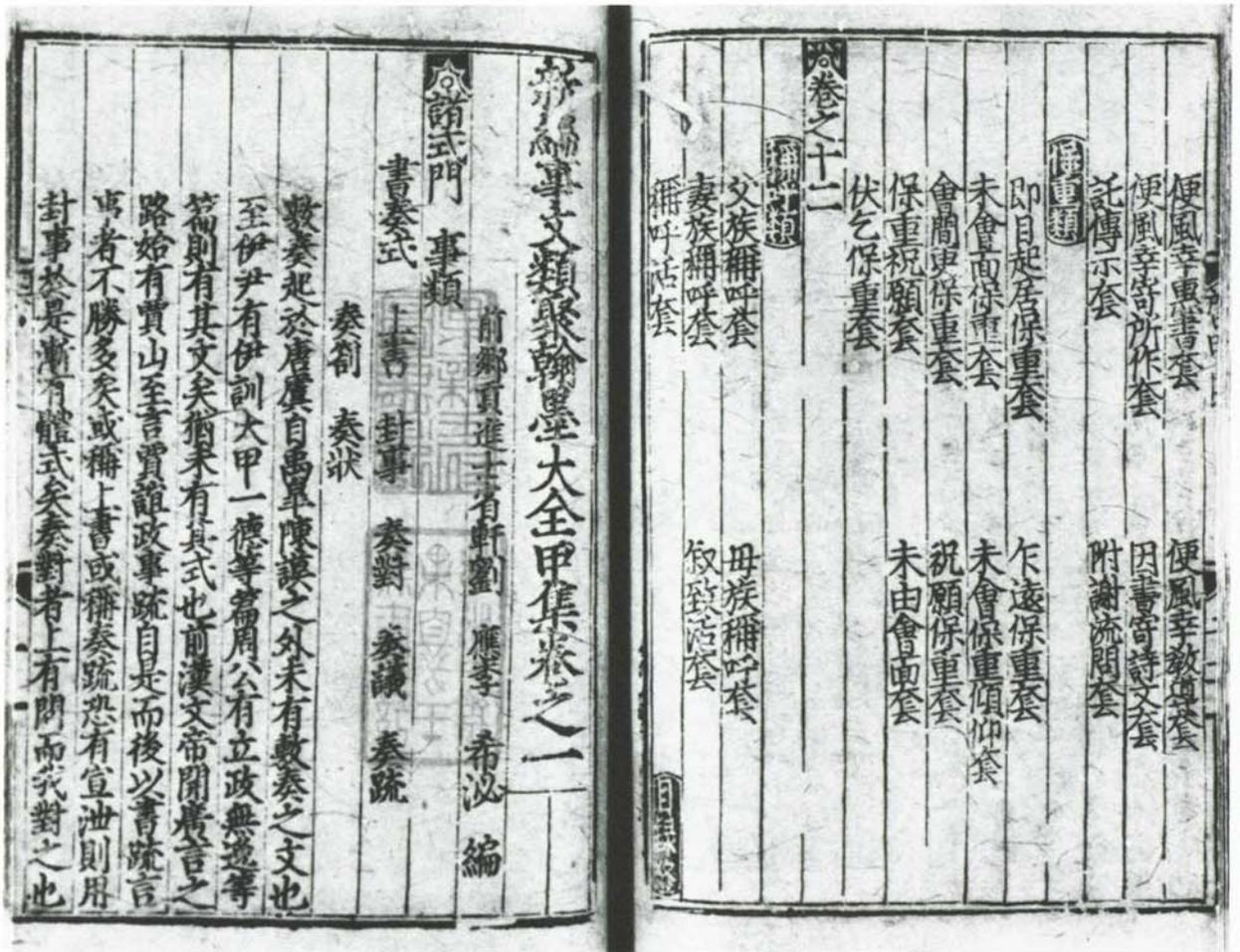
51. *Hsin-pien shih-wen lei-chü han-mo ta-ch'üan*. 145 ch. (60 vols.).

Author: Liu Ying-li (d. 1308).

Date: 1307-1367.

Dimensions: 10 cols. of 24 chars.; block, 15.2 x 10 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.





52. *Chih-ta ch'ung-hsiu hsüan-ho po-ku t'u-lu*. 30 ch. (30 vols.).

Author: Wang Fu (1079-1126).

Date: 1308-1312.

Dimensions: 8 cols. of 17 chars.; block, 29.3 x 22.8 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

present copy (no. 52) is actually a Ming printing; the many blurred spots that mutilate both the text and the illustrations indicate that the blocks were in rather bad condition by the time of this printing.<sup>4</sup>

The characters of the text, as can be seen from the illustrated page, are of a calligraphic style typical of Ou-yang Hsün. Notice the neatness of the entire brushwork, the well-balanced composition of the characters, the elegantly even and slender strokes — unmistakable character-

istics of the Ou-yang style in printed books. The generous spacing between the characters creates a further appearance of calmness and meticulousness, making the entire page a most refined example of the Ou-yang style of calligraphy in Sung and Yüan books.

Ou-yang Hsün was by far the most influential calligrapher in printed books from the Sung to the Ming. But like those of Yen Chen-ch'ing and Liu Kung-ch'üan, his style was intermingled with others in the course of book printing. This is shown in our edition of *T'ung-chih* (no. 53), the famous historical work by Cheng Ch'iao, a great Sung scholar from P'u-t'ien, Fukien. This book was first printed in 1322 by the government school of Foo-chow. The present copy is a Ming print-



53. *T'ung-chih*. 200 ch. (240 vols.).

Author: Cheng Ch'iao (1104-1162).

Date: 1322 (Foochow).

Dimensions: 9 cols. of 21 chars.; block, 29 x 19.5 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

ing from blocks of the original edition that were repaired in 1474. The repair and the printing were both done by the Ministry of Personnel, although the blocks were under the custody of the National Academy at Nanking.<sup>5</sup> The repaired blocks, as can be seen from the left-hand folio of the illustrated page, have the date of the repair engraved on the upper center of the block,

appearing as the unobtrusive intaglio characters in the upper-left margin (no. 53). To make the distinction between old and new more obvious, so as to avoid any hint of deception, the "black mouth" page format was observed in the new blocks. (See the black portions of the left margin.) Compare the illustrated folios with each other, and it becomes clear that the Ming block cutters had tried to be faithful to the calligraphic style of the original edition.

Our edition of *Liao-shih* (no. 54), the standard *History of the Liao Dynasty* (907-1125), originally compiled in 1344, was engraved and printed by the National

Academy at Nanking.<sup>6</sup> As the third line of the illustrated page shows, this edition was made by imperial order, and the officials responsible for the publication were the chancellor of the Academy, Chang Pang-ch'i (1484-1544) of Yinhsien, Chekiang, and his deputy, Chiang Ju-pi (1486-1558) of Kuei-hsi, Kiangsi. The date of publication, 1529, is engraved on the upper center of the block, appearing at the upper-left margin of the folio. Both the National Academy at Nanking and the National Academy at Peking were major government presses in the Ming and were famous for reprinting important texts of the past. Often the same book would be reprinted by both institutions, hence the designation of "Northern" and "Southern" National Academy editions. The present book belongs to the latter. Such reprints were normally collated and revised by the teachers and students of the Academies. The blocks, being government properties, were also under the custody of these institutions. The characters of the present text still display obvious qualities of the Ou-yang Hsün style of calligraphy, with well-balanced structure and well-defined strokes. The slightly rectangular shape of the characters, frequently seen in Sung books, was quite typical of fine printing around this time.

*Chou-shu* is the official history of the Chou dynasty (557-581), compiled in 636 by the early T'ang historian Ling-hu Tefen. The present edition was printed in 1604 by the National Academy at Peking.<sup>7</sup> Like the *Liao-shih* printed by the National Academy at Nanking (no. 54), the date of publication is engraved on the upper center of the block and the names of the responsible officials on the first page of the text. The chancellor and vice-chancellor supervising this reprint were Hsiao

Yün-chü (*chin-shih* 1586) of Hsüan-hua, Kwangsi, and Li T'eng-fang (*chin-shih* 1592) of Hsiang-t'an, Hunan. Judging from the quality of ink and the great clarity of the engraved characters and lines, the present copy (no. 55) is one of the first printings from the new blocks. The characters in the text, although having a slightly elongated shape, are still of an Ou-yang style of calligraphy. By the time of this publication, the Ou-yang style in printed books had in general given way to the so-called Sung style of calligraphy, that is, one in which a rigid uniformity in shape and strokes is assumed in each and every character of a text. The calligraphy of the scripts in the present book, though markedly different in its overall appearance from that in books printed by the National Academy at Nanking, still possesses a refined style to distinguish it from the cheap and mass-produced products of commercial printers.

The individually distinguishable styles of calligraphy that added flavor to books printed in Sung and Yüan times were gradually standardized after the mid-sixteenth century. They became an easily recognizable stereotype, the "Sung style," which was widely practiced by professional scribes and adopted by printers. This style is often appropriately called "craftsman script." As Tsuen-hsüin Tsien remarks, it is "more rigid and square in construction with heavy lines for vertical strokes, lighter lines for horizontal strokes, and a heavy tail at the end of the strokes."<sup>8</sup> These features may be best illustrated by the present selection (no. 56), an abridged version of the literary works of the well-known Ming scholar and statesman, Ch'iu Chün, edited and published by seventh-generation descendants of Ch'iu.

本紀第一

遼史一

元開府儀同三司上柱國前中書右丞相監修國史都總裁臣脫脫修

大明南京國子監祭酒臣張邦奇司業臣江汝璧奉

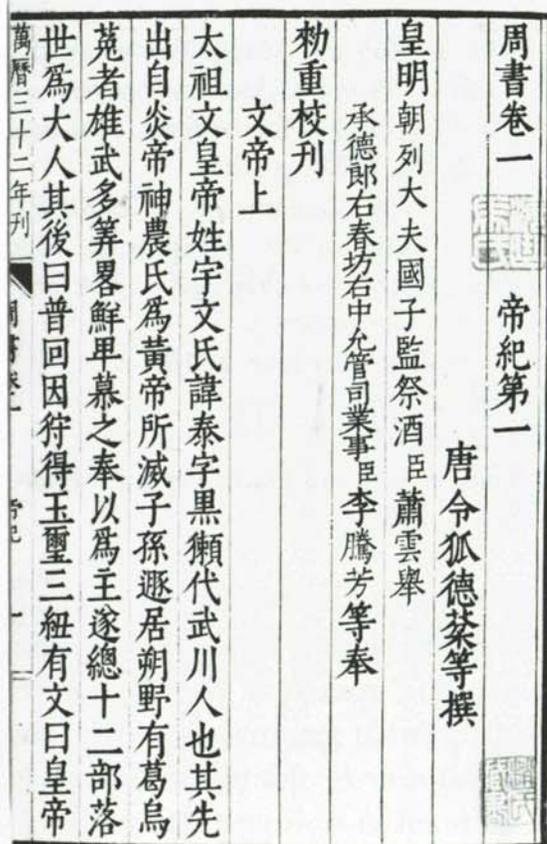
旨校刊

太祖上

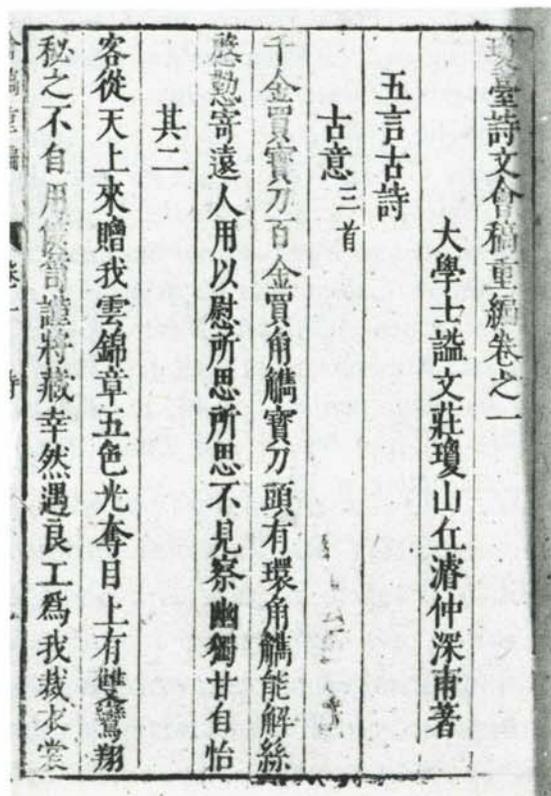
太祖大聖大明神烈天皇帝姓耶律氏諱億字阿保機小字啜里只契丹迭刺部霞瀨益石烈鄉耶律彌里人德祖皇帝長子母曰宣簡皇后蕭氏唐咸通十三年生初母夢日墮懷中有娠及生室有神光異香體如三歲兒即能匍匐祖母簡獻皇后異之鞠為己子常匿於別幕塗其面不

嘉靖八年刊

卷已一



55. *Chou-shu*. 50 ch. (10 vols.).  
 Author: Ling-hu Te-fen (583-666).  
 Date: 1604 (Peking).  
 Dimensions: 10 cols. of 21 chars.; block, 22.8 x 14 cm.  
 Collection: Gest Oriental Library.



56. *Ch'iuung-t'ai shih-wen hui-kao ch'ung-pien*. 24 ch. (16 vols.).  
 Author: Ch'iu Chün (1421-1495).  
 Date: 1621.  
 Dimensions: 9 cols. of 21 chars.; block, 20 x 13.5 cm.  
 Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

- < 54. *Liao-shih*. 116 ch. (16 vols.).  
 Author: Toghto (1314-1355) et al.  
 Date: 1529 (Nanking).  
 Dimensions: 10 cols. of 22 chars.; block, 21.6 x 15 cm.  
 Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

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NOTES TO SECTION 3  
PART A

1. Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, pp. 224-25; Li Ch'ing-chih, *Ku-shu pan-pen chien-ting yen-chiu* (Taipei: Wen-shih-che ch'u-pan-she, 1986), pp. 36-38; and Sotoyama Gunzi, "Yen Chen-ch'ing: His Calligraphy and Personality," paper presented to International Seminar on Chinese Calligraphy in Memory of Yen Chen-ch'ing's 1,200th Posthumous Anniversary, Taipei, [ca. 1985].
2. *Chung-kuo pan-k'o*, p. 43; Li, *Ku-shu pan-pen*, pp. 38-39; and Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, p. 224.
3. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 324; SKTY 135, p. 8b; and Wang Teh-yi et al., comps., *Yüan-jen chuan-chi tzu-liao so-yin* (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng ch'u-pan kung-ssu, 1982), p. 1858.
4. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 272; SKTY 115, p. 2b; Ch'ang, *Sung-jen*, p. 233; Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, p. 224; and Li, *Ku-shu pan-pen*, p. 37.
5. Ch'ü, *Gest Catalogue*, p. 105.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 445; and Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, p. 225.