

MODERN CHINESE WRITERS' MANUSCRIPTS OR: WHEN DID AUTHORS START TO KEEP THEIR DRAFTS?

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This essay raises the question about the meaning of "keeping a draft manuscripts" in literary production, taking a famous calligraphy from Tang dynasty (8th cent.) as an early Chinese handwriting that bears clear marks of intervention in a creative process. Taking four modern manuscripts as samples, it explores the blurred limits between calligraphy and manuscripts, and proposes to merge the millennium-old scholarly tradition of 'collation' (*jiaokan*) in with methodological tools.

Key words: Modern Chinese literature, (draft) manuscripts, calligraphy, textual criticism, critique génétique, Mao Dun, Ding Ling, Feng Zhi

The violins were still weeping, performing, it seemed, a hymn of passion and love, but already Irina and the deeply moved Dolinin were rapidly walking toward the exit. They were lured by the spring night, by the mystery that had tensely stood up between them. Their two hearts were beating as one.

"Give me your cloakroom ticket," uttered Dolinin (crossed out).

"Please, let me get your hat and manteau" (crossed out).

"Please," uttered Dolinin, "let me get your things" ("and my" inserted between "your" and "things").

Dolinin went up to the cloakroom, and after producing his little ticket (corrected to "both little tickets")

Vladimir Nabokov, "Lips to Lips" (1932/56)¹

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This is not a critical edition, but the fictional description of a writing process that is evidently not considered very creative by the narrator. In Nabokov's story, the protagonist Ilya Borisovich Tal, an unhappy and widowed émigré and spare-time writer in Berlin's slightly stuffy inter-war Russian community, is mercilessly ridiculed: He finally realizes that a Paris literary exile magazine is thriving at his expense without his knowing. However, it is one of the rare descriptions of the process of composition, from a writer who was himself jealously obsessed about not allowing any insight into his own creative procedures. This is my motivation for being interested in manuscripts – and I am encountering a comparable degree of various jealousies on different levels.

1. *The Setting: Research Interest and State of the Field*

Manuscripts are testimonies to a text or a “work” in the making, as are various published editions of the same “work”, mostly insofar as their texts differ from one another.

Interest in differing texts that may be attributed to one single “work” or a corpus of texts have produced a rich tradition of *jiaokan* 校勘 in China (‘comparing and correcting’, or ‘collating’). Similar to the Western tradition, though with fewer interruptions in history, the chief aim of *jiaokan* was to produce a reliable text – not surprisingly, given in some cases centuries of obscure tradition between the claimed or assumed origin of a text and its supposedly oldest surviving witness, or even between individual witnesses. In Chinese, this has resulted in a double usage of the technical term to denote (a) the result of establishing a text, i.e. of the collation (*jiaokanben* 校勘本), and (b) its full documentation according to consulted, i.e. ‘collated’ sources, in other words: a “critical and historical edition” with an *apparatus* (*huijiaoben* 匯校本).

Given that in modern times the problem tends not to be the lack of witnesses, but rather the abundance thereof, sooner or later the question arose whether it makes any sense to establish a “reliable” text with claims of higher authority over other versions of the same text. Translation criticism and textual theory began to question the notion of an “originaloriginal” with its authoritarian claims early in the 20th century, not so textual criticism: Only the confrontation with re-assessing a literary tradition which escaped linear conceptualization of texts in the wake of post-structuralist ideas, thus opposing hierarchical concepts (as typically represented in the *stemma* of textual criticism), gave rise to new

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¹ NABOKOV, V. Lips to Lips [“Usta k ustam”, 1932/56; English version first collected in *A Russian Beauty and Other Stories*, 1967]. In *The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov*, p. 312.

perspectives as well as new techniques of representation. Hélène Cixous has emphatically expressed her core interest: “I want to see the thunderstorms of the factory [...], the crazily roaring blacksmith’s shop [...], the world of passions.”² The French school of *critique génétique* is a case in point that was shaped by challenges such as the fact that during Montaigne’s lifetime no less than eight vastly differing editions of his *Essais* were printed, or that Paul Valéry over decades wrote his *Cahiers* (Note-Books) that in places carry the handwriting of others and elsewhere were edited and published by himself,³ and in still other parts are simply inaccessible to conventional editorial tools.⁴

The result were distinct techniques of a “diplomatic edition” that would preserve the textual organization in space:

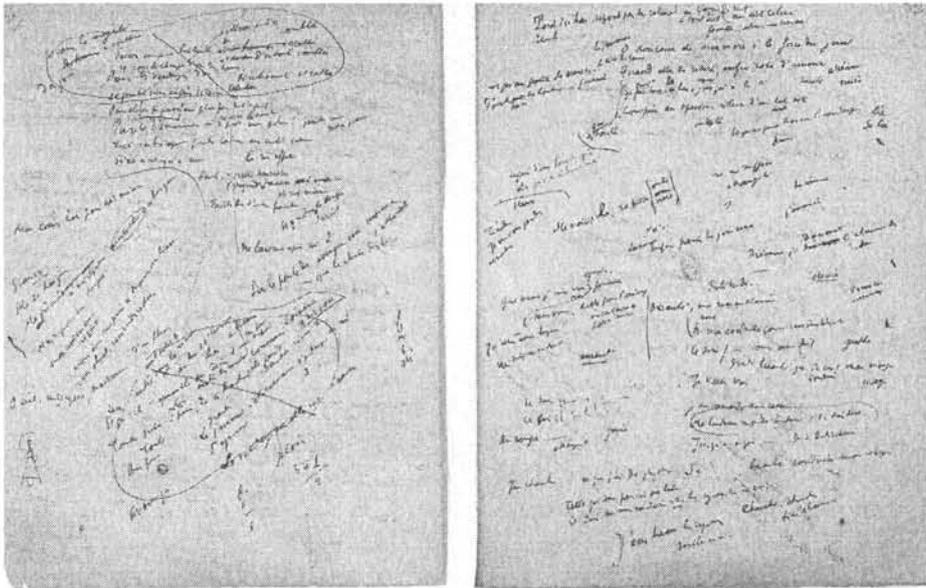


Plate 1 Paul Valéry, double page from notebook with drafts to *Charmes* (Bibliothèque nationale, Paris: nafr. 19011, notebook 3, f° 17v° and f° 18r°).

² CIXOUS, H. In *Repentirs*, p. 49.

³ For an excellent introduction to the methods and tasks, see GRESILLON, A. *Eléments de critique génétique. Lire les manuscrits modernes*. Cf also the seminal article by HAY, L. *Éléments pour l'étude des manuscrits modernes*. In *Codicologica* 1, pp. 91–107.

⁴ See BUNG, S. *Figuren der Liebe. Diskurs und Dichtung bei Paul Valéry und Catherine Pozzi*.

At the same time, a “genetic editions” would attempt to represent which stages a text underwent. It can be done in a technical way that develops a complex system of diacritics that allows all stages to be forced, for the purpose of a the representation of a critical edition in print, into one single textual body:

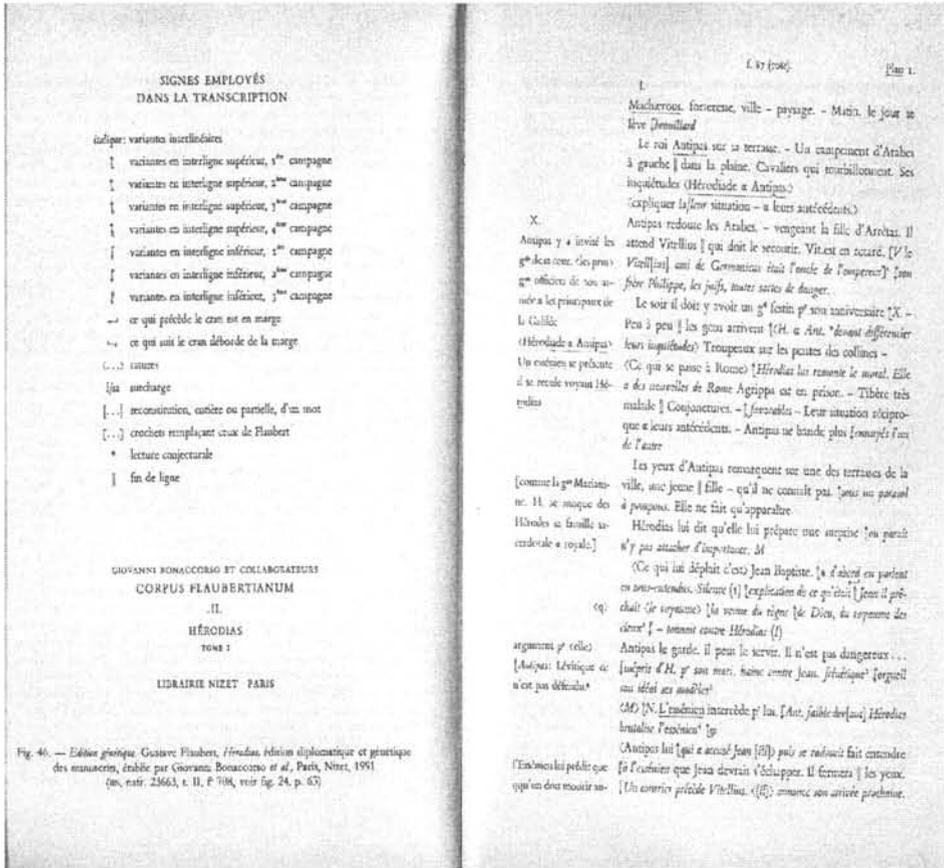


Fig. 46. — *Édition génétique*: Gustave Flaubert, *Hérodias*, édition diplomatique et génétique des manuscrits, établie par Giovanni Bonaccorso et al., Paris, Nizet, 1994 (première édition, 1966), t. II, p. 108, voir fig. 24, p. 63

Plate 2 Gustave Flaubert, genetic edition of *Hérodias*, ed. by Giovanni Bonaccorso & al. (1994).

It can also be handled by marking the stages (all of them characterized by intermediary handwriting, i.e. amendments applied on a proof or the “hand-copy” of a book) typographically, as has been done systematically for one single chapter from the *Essais* by Montaigne:

continuellement en la bouche: Car il est certain qu'elle dit tout ce [qui nous sert] *qu'il faut (53), & qu'elle est trespropre à toutes occasions (4): **C'est l'unique priere de qui je me sers par tout: et la seule [p] au lieu d'en changer. Dou²⁸ il advient que je n'en ai aussi bien en memoire que cella²⁹ (61). J'ay presentement en la pensée, d'où nous venoit cet'erreur, de recourir à Dieu en tous nos desseins & entreprins, & l'appeller à toute sorte de besoin, & en quelque lieu que nostre foiblesse [requiert] vent de l'aide. Sans considerer si l'occasion est juste ou injuste. Et de] l'excrier son nom, & sa puissance, en quelque estat, & action que nous soyons, pour vaineuse qu'elle soit (27). Il est bien nostre seil & unique protecteur *et peut toutes choses à nous aider: mais encore qu'il daigne nous honorer de cert[ain]e douce alliance paternelle (3), il est pourtant autant juste, comme il est bon (6) **et come il est puissant: Mais il use bien plus souvent de sa justice que de son pouvoir (35)³⁰ & nous favorise selon la raison [de sa justice] *d'icelle, non selon nos [injustices & vices] *demandes (58). **Platon en ses lois fait tro[is] sortes d'ignominieuses creance des³¹ Dieux Qu'il n'y en ait point Q'a'Ilz ne se mettent pas de nos affaires Qu'Ilz ne refusent rien à nos vœux effrandes & sacrifices. [La premiere error selon son avis ne dura jamais [ou home n'a] 21] immuable en home depuis son enfance jusques à sa vieillesse³² Les³³ deus d'antant [sont] peuvent souffrir de la constance (57) Sa justice & sa puissance sont inseparables: Pour neux implorons nous sa force en une mauvaise cause: Il faut avoir l'ame nette, au moins en ce [temps] *moment (58), auquel nous le prions, & deschargees de passion vaineuse (6): autrement nous luy presentons, nous mesmes les verges, dequoy nous chastier. Au lieu de rabiller nostre faute, nous la redoublons.

²⁸ l'vœu.

²⁹ celle-là.

³⁰ Le point supérieur coincide avec l'exhaustif de la barre du 1. précédent.

³¹ Item que de peccis Ammonis, l'inculte peult confondre avec les autres prophètes de Montaigne pour le mal de se l. Ammonis.

dant toutes les a
res, vertueuses &
à Dieu, comme j
racle, de voir cor
le teneur, qu'il ne
aux confins mes
sans grâde raiso
fend l'usage pro
diuines chanfon
faut messer Dieu
rention pleine d'
diuine, pour n'au
& plaire à nos or
produite, & noi
permette qu'un
voles penfemens
res raison de voi
nes, par vne sale,
mystères de nost
tuaiement, qu'il

Presentant à celay, à qui nous avons à demander pardon (8), une affection pleine d'irreverence & de haine. Voylà pourquoy je ne loüe pas volontiers ceux, que je voy pour Dieu plus souvent & plus ordinairement, si les actioux voisines de la priere, ne me tesmoignent quelque amendement & reformation (10),

si nocturnus adulter
Tempus Sanctimonie velas adoperata cavalla. (28)

** Et lassiez³⁴ d'un home [incertain] incertain³⁵ à une vie exorable la devotion semble estre aucunement plus condamnable que celle d'un home conforme à soi et dissolu partout³⁶. [P] Pourtant refus nostre esglise tous les jours la faveur de son entrée et societe aus meurs obstines à quelques insignes malice (59). Nous prions sur usage & par coutume (11) Or pour mieux dire, nous lions ou prouvoüons nos prieres: Ce n'est en fin, que [conscience] *meine (40). Et me desplaist de voir faire tous signes de croix (29) au benedicite (30), autant à graces (31) (& [l'usage] plus n'en desplaist [il] que ce soit façon que) honneur & amour souvenant *de ce que c'est un signe que j'ay en remembrance et continual usage, mesmement au bailloir (61) & ce pendant toutes les autres heures du jour, les voir occupees à [vaines, vaines] & [pauvres] *la haine l'avarice l'ingratitude: Aux vices leur heure, sou heure à Dieu, comme par composition & composition. C'est miracle, de voir continuer des actions si diverses d'une si pareille teneur, qu'il ne s'y seute point d'interruption & d'alteration aux confus meuzes, & passage de l'une à l'autre (32). ** Que *lle prodigieuse conscience* (62) se peut donner repos, nourrissant en mesme giste, d'une societe il > accablante & si paisible le crime et le juge. Un home de qui

³⁴ l'amie.

³⁵ Bigli, le mal touchant se trouve à la dernière ligne de l'addition marginale (image inférieure), dans à la suite de l'expression, mais se poursuit, plus au haut de la première ligne, à une distance à l'indistinct après comma. (C'est le chronologique des opinions: d'origine moine à être penitent les deux mots.

³⁶ En un seul mot, stable-11.

Plates 3 and 4 Michel de Montaigne, Michel de Montaigne, manuscript insertions on the so-called "Bordeaux copy" of the *Essais* of 1582, f° 132 v°, and genetic edition of stage 7 by Alain Legros, in *Essais I, 56 "Des prières"*, reproduced from pp. 121 and 174-175.

Similar large-scale undertakings have been made in Germany, with the extremely tricky situation of Hölderlin manuscripts, to give an example, that – conveniently attributed to the period of his mental disease – were for some time considered illegible, but in the 1970s caught the attention of a young *aficionado* once vehemently attacked by established academic textual criticism.⁵ In Anglo-Saxon textual criticism, producing not only a reliable, but also a legible text still seems a main pragmatic concern⁶ – understandably, as samples should have sufficiently demonstrated.

It is a well-known fact that many a modern Chinese author has repeatedly modified the text of one of his works. The common prejudice assumes Guomindang censorship, and if it happened after 1949, it is evidently due to Communist Party pressure. However, this cannot be confirmed by a detached assessment of textual facts, except for some spectacular and all-too-obvious issues, such as the disappearance of the “middle character” of Ruan Ming 阮明 who actually was a GMD *agent provocateur* from Lao She’s famed novel *Luotuo xiangzi* 駱駝祥子 (1936/39, rev. 1955; English tr. *Rickshaw Boy*, 1940).⁷ Yet it is not widely known that Ba Jin 巴金 published no less than eight different printed versions of his novel *The Family* (*Jia* 家, 1931/33) during his lifetime – even without counting the conflated version in his Complete Works (26 vols., 1986–2006).

Little wonder that Chinese scholars became interested in this field of *banben yanjiu* 版本研究 – a discipline that began to flourish in Song times when wealthy collectors wanted to know whether they had bought genuinely old books, as the art of faking was already thriving at the time as well. The status of the text, however, was of minor importance in the beginning. Instead, paper quality, script comparison and the like were the prominent tools of the discipline. A pioneer in the field of modern literature was Gong Mingde 龔明德 when he initiated a series of critical editions of 20th century literary texts, aptly labelled *jiaokanben* in the widest sense. However, he failed to consider copyright issues when directing his efforts towards Qian Zhongshu’s 錢鍾書 *Weicheng* 圍城 (1947),⁸ such that the author who was not happy to have

⁵ See HÖLDERLIN, F. *Sämtliche Werke. Frankfurter Hölderlin Ausgabe*, 23 vols., ed. by D. E. SATTLER & al. For further documentation of the history of this edition cf. the “Dossiers”. In *Text. Kritische Beiträge* vols. 1 ff (1994 ff).

⁶ See e.g. the respective chapters in GREETHAM, D. C., *Textual Scholarship. An Introduction*.

⁷ Cf. ZHAO Qiguang QIGUANG. Who is Ruan Ming? A Political Mystery in Lao She’s ‘Camel Xiangzi’. In *China Information*, 1997–98, pp. 104–122.

⁸ QIAN Zhongshu, “*Weicheng*” *huijiao ben*, ed. by Xu Zhifen 胥智芬 [i.e. Gong Mingde], 1991. The 3rd edition reached the copies 60,001–110,000.

somebody gazing into his workshop, pressed charges against the editor and furnished evidence in court of editorial errors. As a result, the edition had to be withdrawn and destroyed and the whole series was discontinued. Another scholar who is active in the field is no more felicitous, though in other respect: Jin Hongyu's book-length study about varying editions of modern novels contains errors which support the abovementioned prejudices, and thus are evidence that bashing Communist Party literary politics of the 1950s has become accepted practice in literary studies even in present-day PRC – but unfortunately cannot be backed by documentary evidence.⁹

But where are the manuscripts of literary authors? Indeed, few serious scholars are interested in them. A number of detailed assessments of manuscripts are at hand, from Gong Mingde again, and from Chen Zishan who first made an important appearance as co-editor of the pioneering edition of Yu Dafu's works in the early 1980s¹⁰ and published a number of sophisticated and also calligraphic evaluations of hitherto unpublished manuscripts by Zhou Zuoren, partly collected in Hong Kong. Yet this important work that occasionally resulted in new editions more than to a full-fledged study of manuscripts pertained for the most part to the auxiliary, essentially historiographical work of *ziliao yanjiu* 資料研究 or even *shiliao yanjiu* 史料, i.e. to a field definitely considered minor in present-day modern literary studies in China. There seems to be a fundamental reluctance to study what is happening in the “workshop” referred to by Hélène Cixous.

To be sure, the study of manuscripts is considered a continuation of *banben yanjiu*. However, the only critical edition done from a manuscript (hereafter MS) I know of is by Wang Xirong 王錫榮. It is a very particular case in many respects, as it is the manuscript of a translation actually prepared by Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967) in 1904, and revised on the very item by his brother Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936). It is prepared from an English translation of a novelette by the Hungarian writer Kálmán Mikszáth (1847–1910) and had never been published before.¹¹ This is not surprising, as the two brothers had problematic relationship not only in real life, but for decades afterwards also ideologically: It was inconceivable to publish a translation of the politically compromised Zhou Zuoren, yet it was likewise undeniable that the heroicized Lu Xun had an important share in this work. To see them both in such intimate literary cooperation united on one and the same manuscript presented a genuine

⁹ JIN Hongyu, *Zhongguo xiandai changpian xiaoshuo mingzhu banben jiaoping*, 2004.

¹⁰ YU Dafu, *Yu Dafu wenji*, 12 vols., ed. by Wang Zili and Chen Zishan, 1984.

¹¹ MIKSZÁTH, K. *Shen'gai ji gao*, ed. by Wang Xirong, tr. by Zhou Zuoren 周作人 [from *St. Peter's Umbrella*, tr. by B. W. WORSWICK, 1900], rev. by Lu Xun [1904]. In *Shanghai Lu Xun yanjiu*, 1991, pp. 29–57.

scandal. The way Wang Xirong introduced and edited the manuscript is comprehensive and professional indeed. He gives a detailed description of the physical conditions of the manuscript and its history and chooses a diplomatic transcription with deletions coherently marked and insertions placed in their corresponding position in space, thus transcribing diplomatically, as the manuscript as such does not pose many editorial problems.

It is striking, however, that scholars acting as critical editors have mostly preferred to remain anonymous and hide behind a pen-name: both Wang Xirong¹² and Gong Mingde when collating the differing *Weicheng* editions chose anonymity.¹³

It remains for me to point out that all critical authors who have taken a particular interest in manuscripts or in critical edition so far, or in both, have a clear origin in the field of *shiliao yanjiu*. Wang Xirong and Chen Zishan were both involved in the compilation and annotation of Lu Xun's diaries and letters for the 1981 edition of the Complete Works, and in this capacity were confronted with hitherto unpublished material, whereas Gong Mingde as a member of the editorial board of Ba Jin's Selected Works¹⁴ as early as 1982 managed to argue in favour of following the version of the first printed book edition of *Jia*, rather than the latest edition, and soon after that became known as an avid book collector.

2. Problems and Questions

One reason why research on manuscripts tends to remain marginal and even seems to take place outside academe lies in obvious confusion about terminology. The most prominent issue is the blurred transition from "manuscript" to "calligraphy". Not very surprisingly, the hand that guides the paint-brush or the pen determines whether a manuscript clearly intended for practical use at some time begins to be considered an example of art.¹⁵ To put it crudely: some sociology is required.

¹² Huarong [i.e. WANG Xirong]. Guanyu "Shengai ji" yigao. In *Shanghai Lu Xun yanjiu*, 1991, vol. 4, pp. 58–63.

¹³ QIAN Zhongshu. "*Weicheng*" *huijiao ben*, ed. by XU Zhifen [i.e. GONG Mingde], 1991.

¹⁴ BA Jin. *Ba Jin xuanji*, 10 vols., 1982.

¹⁵ Despite their naivety, the comments on MAO Dun's *Ziye* manuscript, pronounced by his son on the occasion of its facsimile publication, are revealing and thus representative: "To read the manuscripts written by Venerable Mao is a spiritual reward. To read the excellent and amenable script [*ziti* 字體] as well as the orderly arrangement carrying just a few impenetrable amendments presents, sheet by sheet, a series of first-rate calligraphies. These are not just manuscripts, but genuine works of art." WEI Tao 韋韜. Bianyan 弁言 [A Note from the Editor]. In MAO Dun. *Ziye* (*shoujiben*), p. 7.

The usage and, in its wake, the appreciation determines the terminology applied to denote a manuscript item. Highly illustrative in this respect is the cataloguing system used in the Old Books' (Gu wenxian ziliao ku 古文獻資料庫) Division of Peking University Library that basically stores all items dated before 1911.



古籍和拓片等各類型又屬

古籍瀏覽：

古籍的瀏覽入口是：“版”

◆“版本類別”最多可分為

◆“出版年代”起自六朝，

◆“出版地點”分為兩級，

拓片瀏覽：

拓片的瀏覽入口是：“朝”

◆“朝代”按中國朝代的先

◆“金石所在地”以現行省

◆“金石類型”為瀏覽和統

◆“版本類型”為分別瀏覽

中國

Plate 7 Organization of material under heading Ancient Books (*guji* 古籍) in the Collection of Old Texts and Sources (*Gu wenxian ziliao ku* 古文獻資料庫), Peking University Library <rbd1.calis.edu.cn> (retrieved Feb 20, 2006).

Unlike what may be assumed about a given item thanks to electronic databases that allow for a hypertext linkage of sets of information, i.e. comparable to a cumulative key-wording which would result in multiple perspectives in these systematics, a manuscript (*gaoben* 稿本) is obviously not considered a unique singular item (*yuanjian* 原件), unlike photographic (prints?) and (official?) documents (*zhaopian* 照片 and *dang'an* 檔案). On the other hand, the division of *gaoben* vaguely suggests the possibility of attributing the term to

various working stages, i.e. *shougaoben* 手稿本 to 'drafts', *tengqing gaoben* 騰清 to 'fair copies' and finally *shangban gaoben* 上版 to the final stage before printing. Yet 'drafts' and 'clear copies' could be considered *moji* 墨蹟 as well, as happens frequently in facsimile editions of authors' manuscripts. Moreover, at times loose sheets that clearly make up a set of items belonging together are classified as *moji*, simply because they have not been bound together, whereas heterogeneous items casually bound together become a *shougaoben*. In activities among writers and the publication business, a completely different set of terms is in use, ranging from the 'initial draft' *chugao* 初稿 or 'draft, brouillon' *caogao* 草稿 to *er, san, si gao* 一、二、三、四稿 for the various stages, alternately with *gaigao* 改 or *xiugao* 修 up to the final *qinggao* 清. Yet in the context of patterns close to genre denotations, as well as of modesty stereotypes, *chugao* or even *caogao* may also appear as titles of books or works.¹⁶ And last but not least, it should be mentioned that *shougaoben* is also an established term for books that have never been printed or otherwise reproduced, but might have nonetheless circulated.

It is fairly evident that the whole range of aesthetic appreciation of calligraphy has weighty implications. Thus, a 'copy' of a poem or other short work signed and hence attributable to a person, would usually be labelled *moji*. Yet it evidently plays a role who that person is, and it sometimes looks as if the calligraphic appreciation of a piece of hand-writing is a function of his or her social status. To see or even to possess such a calligraphy symbolically means participation in that status. Much more than in the Memorial Hall in the middle of Tian'anmen Square, Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976) is ever-present all over the country through the facsimiles of his handwriting, to start with the masthead of the party paper *Renmin ribao* 人民日報, as are the hundreds of millions of facsimile reproductions of some of his poems produced during the Cultural Revolution. Aircraft are flying around the world carrying Deng Xiaoping's 鄧小平 (1904–1997) calligraphy on their fuselage (with Zhou Enlai's 周恩來 [1898–1976] *Minhang* 民航 as predecessor – the parallel with the official appreciation of the calligrapher as politician is striking), and meanwhile dictionaries are compiled carefully listing all existing calligraphic realizations of any single character for Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and others,¹⁷ but not yet for the writer and late Chinese Academy of

¹⁶ A famous example in the field of modern literature studies is WANG Yao. *Zhongguo xin wenxue shigao* [A Draft History of New Literature in China; 1955] Repr. with an appendix, 1971.

¹⁷ See MAO Zedong. *Mao Zedong shufa da zidian* (1993) and *Mao Zedong shufa zihui* (2006) as examples.

Sciences president Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978), although he was very prolific in this practice of *ti zi* 題字 ‘providing the characters’. When on the prestigious scholarly journal *Wenwu* 文物 specialized in archeology (and by virtue of this in ancient texts as well) which was basically removed from political struggles, Guo Moruo’s characters were substituted in 1971 by those of Kang Sheng 康生 (1898–1975), head of the secret police, this was a signal that it might not remain so.

Facsimiles of an individual’s handwriting are, however, not only used on newspaper mastheads and above university gates. To have a book-cover calligraphed by a prominent colleague from the field is a well-known and common practice, but if prominence was assumed for the author by himself, he willingly provided his own handwriting.¹⁸ Reproductions of whole manuscript portions are used for the cover design of literary journals.¹⁹ And when advances in printing technology made it easily possible in the late 1920s, authors’ names began to appear in the headings of articles in their own hands’ facsimiles – which has remained a feature of graphic design, meanwhile not limited to China, but has become quite frequent whenever the editor-in-chief wants to underline his personal relationship with readers.

The function of calligraphy as a medium of political power, consummately studied by Kraus in his *Brushes with Power* (1991),²⁰ does not fail to have its impact on the study of manuscripts to which, at times, similar “power” is attributed, to the extent that their study might even be impeded.

This is best evidenced by numerous anecdotes centring around manuscripts, mainly their theft or their destruction. The son of the famed writer Lu Xun and his companion Xu Guangping 許廣平 (1898–1968), literary executor after his death in 1936, suggests that his mother died from sorrow and concern, rather

¹⁸ Hu Shi (1891–1962) is a distinctive case: He provided the cover calligraphy for Wang Jingzhi’s (1910–1996) *Zuojia de tiaojian* (1936), thus confirming the attachment to his protégé and compatriot (*tongxiang* 同鄉) from the Huizhou area in Anhui province but also to his own *Hu Shi wencun* 胡適文存 (4 vols., 1921).

¹⁹ An example is the portion from Lu Xun’s manuscript for *Wo de di yi ge shifu* 我的第一個師父 [My First Teacher] he published in *Zuojia* 作家, Apr 15, 1936, vol. 1, no. 1, and which appeared on the cover – which was to become the sole source to the facsimile edition of his Complete Manuscripts, as the original manuscript is probably lost and could only be reproduced for the purpose of publishing the journal issue. The very same journal, when after her abduction Ding Ling was considered dead for some time, showed particular concern in publishing facsimiles of her manuscripts. Cf. ALBER, Charles A., *Enduring the Revolution. Ding Ling and the Politics of Literature in Guomindang China*, p. 97.

²⁰ KRAUS, R. C. *Brushes with Power. Modern Politics and the Art of Calligraphy*.

than from a heart attack, after Jiang Qing 江青 (1914–1991) – Mao Zedong’s third wife and a driving force behind the stages of Cultural Revolution literary policies – had proposed to transfer the 15 manuscript pages of Lu Xun’s Reply to Xu Maoyong and on the Question of the United Front Against the Japanese Aggression (1936)²¹ from the Lu Xun Museum to the Ministry of Culture, thus making her a victim of the Cultural Revolution.²² And of course countless are the stories about lost or destroyed manuscripts. If their loss occurred during the war period 1937–49 or the Cultural Revolution 1966–76, in several cases it might have been a godsend to the author allowing him to avoid questions with potentially dangerous consequences, or simply to emphasize his victim status. If in such anecdotes the writer Bing Xin allegedly threw a bundle of love letters allegedly written to her by Gao Changhong 高長虹 (1898–1961) into the sea when sailing to the US with her husband Wu Wenzao 吳文藻 (1901–1985), or if Mao Dun did likewise with the correspondence he had exchanged with his mistress Qin Dejun 秦德君 (1905–1999) when he returned from “exile” in Japan, it certainly suggests a magic attitude towards the written word, shared with calligraphy, but which is by no means limited to China.

Items such as love letters are unlikely to have seen many draft stages. But what about the literary drafts in which I am interested as documents from the “thunderstorms of the factory” of writing? The earliest sample of a manuscript that bears traces of drafting and reworking is the so-called Manuscript Mourning for My Nephew (“Ji zhi gao” 祭侄稿, in its full title “Ji zhi Jiming wen gao” 祭侄季明文稿), written by the famous calligrapher and originator of the ‘Yan style’ (*Yanti*), Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–785), for Yan Jiming who, after having been captured together with his father Yan Gaoqing 杲, was killed by the rebellious troops under the command of An Lushan 安祿山 (703–757).

²¹ LU Xun. Da Xu Maoyong bing guanyu kang Ri tongyi zhanxian wenti 答徐懋庸並關於抗日統一戰線問題. In *Lu Xun quanji*, 2005, vol. 6, pp. 546–564. Tr. in *Selected Works*, vol. 4, pp. 283–300.

²² ZHOU Haiying. Xie zai qianmian. In CHEN Shuyu. *Xu Guangping de yisheng*, p. 8; see also his Lu Xun shougao shijian yu Xu Guangping zhi si. In *Wenhui dushu zhoubao*, pp. 8 and 6.



Plate 8 Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–785), “Ji zhi gao” 祭侄稿 [Manuscript of Mourning for My Nephew], 758 (National Palace Museum, Taipei) – reproduced from *Zhongguo shufajia* 中國書法家, 2004 <zgsfj.com> (retrieved Nov 21st, 2008).

This work was labelled the “current script calligraphy second under heaven”, after Wang Xizhi’s 王羲之 (307–365) “Lanting ji xu” 蘭亭集序 (Preface to the Collection from the Orchid Pavilion, 353 CE), by the Yuan dynasty collector Xian Yushu 鮮于樞 and is now in the collection of the Taipei Palace Museum. Even the most meticulous studies of this “Manuscript...”, however, are nowhere near a critical assessment of the text’s body, i.e. a critical edition that would identify or comment on the characters erased. Moreover, a study that according to all evidence must be considered the most authoritative over the past two decades does not even mention the fact of erasure, though it focuses on “calligraphic innovation”.²³ The only critical comment that includes the fact of modifications says that “Of course the whole scroll is not fair and clear, the brush-stroke is impatient, hasty, scrawling and full of deletions and amendments. [...] that the brush is scribbling shows the bleak and tragic mood that runs all over the paper.”²⁴ Thus, attention is vaguely directed to the psychology of the author, and not to how he worked as a writer.

I do not know whether Sima Qian 司馬遷 wrote drafts when he compiled the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian) at the beginning of our era, yet it is evident from many accounts that the ideal of writing *belles-lettres* was very close to that of calligraphy, if not the same, i.e. a mental preparation and concentration that allows the writer to put down a text or portion of it in one single turn (or stroke literally speaking) – and that therefore all witnesses that would testify to the contrary were considered failures which, as a consequence, should be destroyed. The occasionally harsh reaction of writers to attempts by

²³ XIE Guanghui. Lun Yan Zhenqing “Ji zhi gao” de shufa chuanguangxin. In *Guilin shi jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao*, 2000, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 50–55.

²⁴ LIN Gang. Yan Zhenqing “Ji zhi gao”. In *Renwen qinghua*, 2007.

other to catch a glimpse of their workshop (of which I have mentioned the example of Qian Zhongshu, though his response actually pertained to a published text) might represent a remnant of such aesthetic ideals.

3. *The Present Situation with Modern Authors' Manuscripts*

I am of course not a collector, but I am interested in gaining access to modern writers' manuscripts, and if possible in producing facsimiles of them in a quality that allow me to reconstruct the stages of their composition. In some cases it is difficult but still possible, even if the conventionalized circumscription of characters as used by Yan Zhenqing is filled with black ink, but it requires a high-resolution photograph of the reverse side of the sheet, which is traditionally not used as writing space.

The most important institutions that store and collect manuscripts have been and still are libraries. The holdings of the National Library (abbreviated *Guotu* 國圖, formerly *Beitu* 北圖) which emerged from imperial collections are unparalleled in quantity; they cover the pre-modern period and are administered by the Rare Books' (*shanben* 善本) department. As modern manuscripts are not the key interest of the National Library, and they have usually entered the collection by way of occasional donations, they are not recorded in publicly accessible catalogues. This institution's handling of modern holdings, however, has acquired a dubious reputation, since dedicated book copies from the Republican period, donated by Ba Jin, suddenly appeared on the antiquarian book market. It is not unlikely that even manuscripts may suffer a similar fate. More important for modern manuscripts is the much younger Shanghai Municipal Library (abbreviated *Shangtu* 上圖) with its overall collection built up since the 19th century, with important additions from the literary estates of local intellectuals before 1949, and after that with the integration of a great number of other institutions' and one-time private companies' libraries. Over the past 25 years, modern writers' manuscripts have increased to some 13,000 items (where e.g. a complete novel's MS is counted as one item) for which the Modern Materials' section has established a special fund, the Institute for Manuscripts of Eminent Figures from Modern Chinese Culture (*Zhongguo jindai wenhua mingren shougaoguan* 中國近代文化名人手稿館). This institute's generous showroom with a comprehensive presentation of the finest items from some 50 literary estates, is only opened by special invitation, and its collection is virtually inaccessible, whereas high-quality reproductions of selected MSS are commercially distributed at prices ranging between 1,400 and 2,000 Yuan per CD (status as of July, 2007).

By far the most prominent institution hosting modern authors' manuscripts, both in terms of its specialized purpose and the size of its collection, are the Modern Literature Archives (*Xiandai wenxue guan* 現代文學館). Its holdings

include more than 220,000 hand-written documents (i.e. also files that may be composed of 200 or more sheets) and some 300,000 first and rare editions, at first glance a paradise for *banben yanjiu*. However, despite the ever-present reference to Ba Jin who has contributed an important donation and has even left his hands' imprint on the bronze door-handles of the *Xiandai wenxue guan*, it seems chiefly designed to perpetuate the glory of a not always glorious recent literary past. A larger-than-life reconstruction of the studies of more than 30 writers who contributed to its holdings highlights that policy which also entails extreme restrictions on access to manuscripts, underlined by prohibitively high photocopying or photographing fees of 800 Yuan and more per page (status March 2006) – charged to other Chinese memorial institutions as well, to be sure. Interviews conducted with family members of some two dozen writers who had made substantial donations showed that access to the material was even denied to benefactors. Little wonder that meanwhile these people prefer to keep material privately.

Outside the *Xiandai wenxue guan*, institutional manuscript holdings can be found in the increasing number of Memorials and Museums established all over the country for individual writers, typically in their birthplaces. However, their respective infrastructure varies greatly, from a small exhibition room with a retired kin as custodian to a full-fledged museum with a staff of 20–30. The Lu Xun Museums in Beijing (Lu Xun bowuguan 博物館) and Shanghai (Lu Xun jinianguan 紀念館), the former based on the donation by Xu Guangping of his whole estate to the Chinese state, the latter flourishing thanks to a solid budget, intelligent acquisition policy and rich scholarly activities, as well as the Guo Moruo Museum established in his former residence, also in Beijing, are the biggest of their kind.

Private collectors play an increasingly important role as holders of modern writers' manuscripts. This is due to the rapidly expanding market for post-imperial autographs that naturally emerged from the market for historical calligraphies that had always existed. When a computer print-output of Gu Cheng's novel *Ying'er* was sold for 50,000 HK\$ after he had killed his wife and then committed suicide in 1993, it marked a turning-point on this market.²⁵ Ever since, a full system of professional auction firms and collectors' fairs has developed where 20th century authors' MSS play a prominent role. A specialized journal *Cangshujia* 藏書家 (Ji'nan: Qi Lu shushe 齊魯書社, 1999ff) – in its very title playing on the fact that *shu* has the double meaning of 'calligraphies' or 'writings' and 'books' – caters to the needs of these still

²⁵ See my *Two Works – Hong (1930) and Ying'er (1993) – as Indeterminate Joint Ventures*. In *The Poetics of Death. Essays, Interviews, Recollections and Unpublished Material of Gu Cheng, 20th Century Chinese Poet*, pp. 135–178.

mostly learned collectors. On the other hand, given the situation described above, family members of writers, especially after their death, unwittingly tend to become collectors or rather holders of manuscript collections. They are joined by semi-private collectors, i.e. people in Writers' Associations, publishing houses and similar bodies who are involved with manuscripts in a professional capacity and who develop collectors' tastes. Together they form a growing fund of invisible collections which may be seen sociologically as an act of civic "self-help".

In sum, it is evident that public institutions in China – and ironically even more so when they have been established specifically to collect or even publicize manuscripts – are anything but public. Yet to be fair, it should be added that institutions in Western European countries occasionally act restrictively not just within the strict limits set by copyright laws that protect authors' rights until 50 or 70 years after death, but seem motivated rather by forces aptly circumscribed by "scholarly jealousy".²⁶

An increasingly important source are facsimile reproductions of manuscripts. When the Cultural Revolution was in full swing, in the 1970's, the above-mentioned son of Lu Xun addressed a letter to Mao Zedong, in which he proposed a facsimile manuscript edition of his father's works. It was granted, and the best available cameras and printing technology were made available, so that the 24 volumes published in 1971–72 and sold for the then small fortune of 6.15 Yuan each are unrivalled in their quality to the present day. Since the late 1980's, a number of manuscripts have become available in photomechanical reproduction, although the selections tend to favour fine calligraphies, i.e. fair copies of poems and letters or diaries by noted writers, rather than works that bear the imprint of repeated editorial efforts. They are ostensibly intended for an emerging wealthy urban bourgeoisie and tend to put forth patterns of a supposedly traditional book culture, such as external thread-binding, even if such items were foreign to the respective author.

In my own efforts to assemble material for the study of manuscripts, I have been most successful with private collectors who were not afraid that I would compete with publishing houses in bringing out facsimile editions – possibly unlike public institutions.

²⁶ How the Bodleian Library in Oxford denied access to Kafka MSS for photographs intended to serve as material for a critical edition is just a most spectacular example. See Kilcher, A. Nouvelle ancienne querelle. Streit um Kafkas Nachlass. In *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, p. 34. Cf. comprehensive material on the extended legal controversy made accessible as "Chronik der aktuellen Debatte um die Kafka-Manuskripte" <computerphilologie.uni-muenchen.de/jg98/schuetterle/kafkachronik.html> (retrieved Oct 23rd, 2009); and also WHITNEY, C. R. *New Work in Word: Kafkaesque*, p. A3.

4. Some Examples

But now, I should like to finally present some draft manuscripts and say something about their context.

The first one is written by Mao Dun and is a page from ch. 11 of his novel *Ziye* 子夜 (*Midnight*, 1933), written in late summer 1932 (see *Plate 9*).

Clearly this is not a reproduction of the original manuscript, but is taken from a facsimile edition prepared for the centenary of his birth in 1996. The style of reproduction is typical of the falsely historicizing elements common in the business. The dark stripe to the left vaguely alludes to the framed vertical box usually containing the book-title or the printing-house's name and running across the middle of the sheet where it is folded in traditional binding, whereas above the page numbering – in *daxie* 大寫 numerals, which not only Mao Dun would never have used except for writing out cheques – we see the symbol called 'fish-tail' (*yuwei* 魚尾) in traditional book production, but which would never appear in that position. It should be added what is not visible in this picture: The editors of the facsimile have decided to add a paper-lining the position, number and colour of which do not correspond to the original manuscript, with the colour adapted according to the needs of the facsimile volume's overall design. We find two types of marking erasure: fully blackened, mostly in single characters, and hatching for longer passages. Insertions stem from a second passage for revision, as they fill spaces left over thanks to the design of paragraphs in the first passage. If additional pages are consulted, different writing speeds can be identified, slower (here in the first layer) and quicker (in the second), from character forms that are closer to present-day simplified characters. Relative writing speed may change in the two layers, and an assessment of the whole manuscript reveals not less than six layers, i.e. five revisions. The manuscript is written with a fountain-pen.

fair copy. Careful readers interested in automobile history may recall that in the opening scene of the novel, the protagonist Wu Sunfu 吳孫甫 is driven in a French-made „Citroën“ limousine (at the time, unlike now, written *Xuetielong* 雪鐵龍). Yet in the manuscript, the make of the car is “Ford” (*Fute* 福特). Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白 (1899–1935), once secretary of the CCP, after reading the draft, had suggested that a „Ford“ would be too ordinary a car for an industrialist with a driver, and instead proposed the French brand (whence my article’s title in the bibliography). It is unclear whether Kong Dezhi applied the modification or whether Mao Dun did it on the proofs.²⁷

The second manuscript is written by Ding Ling and presents the opening page from the piece “Yuanfang laixin” 遠方來信 (A Letter from Afar), written in 1981 after she had returned from the US, in a notebook with spiral binding bought there. It was included as chapter 19 in her posthumously published autobiography *Erratic Humans* (*Fengxue renjian* 風雪人間, 1987).

²⁷ For details see my Von Ford zu Citroën – Überlegungen zur Genese des Romans “Mitternacht” (1933) von Mao Dun. In *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung*, 2004, vol. 28, pp. 157–180.

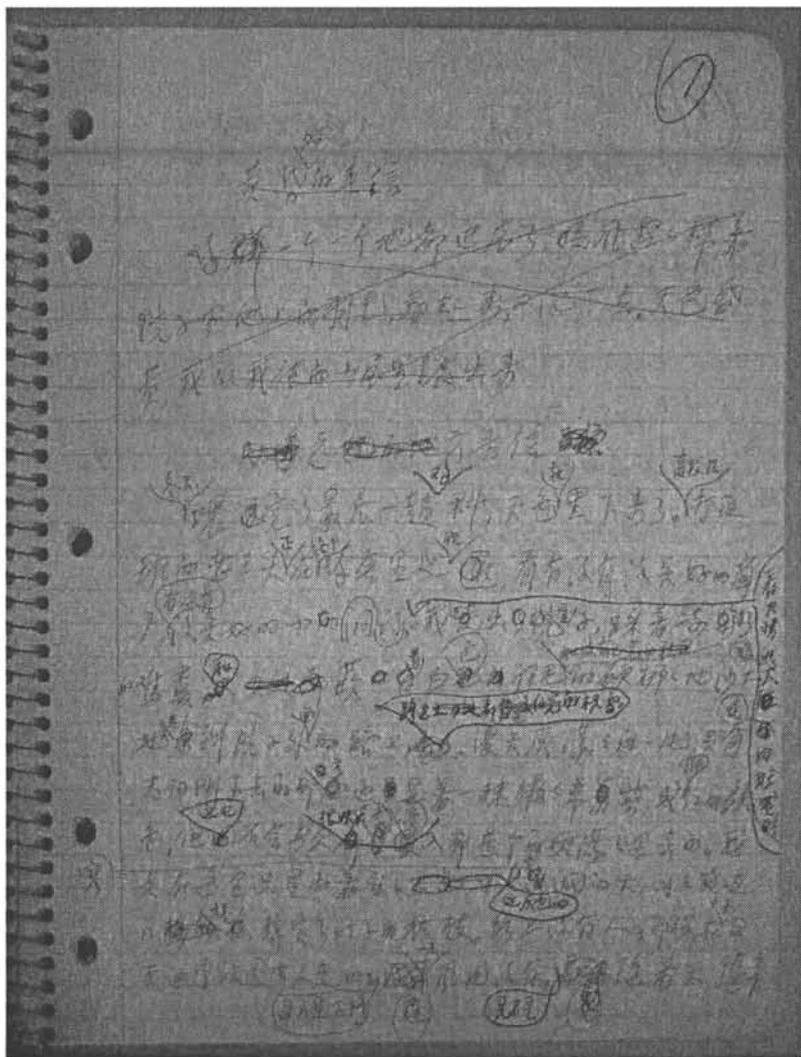


Plate 10 Ding Ling 丁玲 (1904–1986), “Yuanfang laixin” 遠方來信 [A Letter from Afar], two drafts in notebook „Penway / single subject notebook“ with spiral binding, after Aug 29, 1981, p. 3 of 90 sheets, numbered “1” in circle, later included in *Fengxue renjian* 風雪人間, posthumously published 1987 (*Xiandai wenxue guan*).

It is remarkable at first glance that writing tools in four different colours are used and that the piece has been started twice. In the first attempt, filling the upper half of the page, it was titled “Huanghun [shi] de laixin” 黃昏時的來信 (A Letter Arrived at Dawn), with “shi” inserted afterwards, possibly to exclude the possible ambiguity of a ‘Dawn-Like Letter’. It may well be that in the first

attempt there was originally just the title, whereas the three opening lines in blue were added afterwards. In the second attempt, the first layer in light black (or grey) is superseded by a few corrections in blue. A more systematic revision took place in black, whereas the last and fourth layer (in red) is ostensibly written by another. These corrections were in fact written by Chen Ming 陳明 (b1917), Ding Ling's husband. Whether this happened during the writing process, i.e. when she was still alive, or with the perspective of the posthumous publication, remains unclear, as Chen Ming viewed most of her writings before publication, especially after 1979, with the intention of moderating them, after she had encountered serious difficulties twice in her life for her too explicit writings. In this case, however, his interventions are, in terms of stylistics, the reverse: her highly elliptical mode of writing is made more explicit. Strangely enough, only few of Chen Ming's interventions have been retained for the first printed version edited by him, unlike in earlier writings of hers.²⁸

An interesting detail should be noted: writing lines in the second attempt are intermittently placed on a printed line or in the space between two lines. Needless to say, this manuscript was copied again before going to the publishing house, having been typed by her private secretary.

If this particular piece of reminiscent writing by Ding Ling bears more numerous traces of corrections and interventions than any other passage in her memoirs, it is certainly also due to the fact that she evokes here one of the possibly most painful episodes of her life, while at the same time disclosing her strikingly paradoxical attitude towards the Communist Party: It is from 1958, when the writer was exiled for labour in the Northeast, and the letter written by her daughter studying in Moscow and announcing that she would break with her mother, seemingly ceding to pressure from the very same Party that had inflicted this sanction to Ding Ling and which she praises again while putting down her memoirs.

The third and last example of a manuscript is the last ever poem Feng Zhi wrote. It is titled Rereading [the poetry collection] "Goddesses" and was written at the request of the *Shikan* 詩刊 poetry magazine, in preparation for an issue in commemoration of the centenary of Guo Moruo's birth (the collection's author) which was published in November 1992.

²⁸ See *Ding Ling quanji*, vol. 10, pp. 230–237.

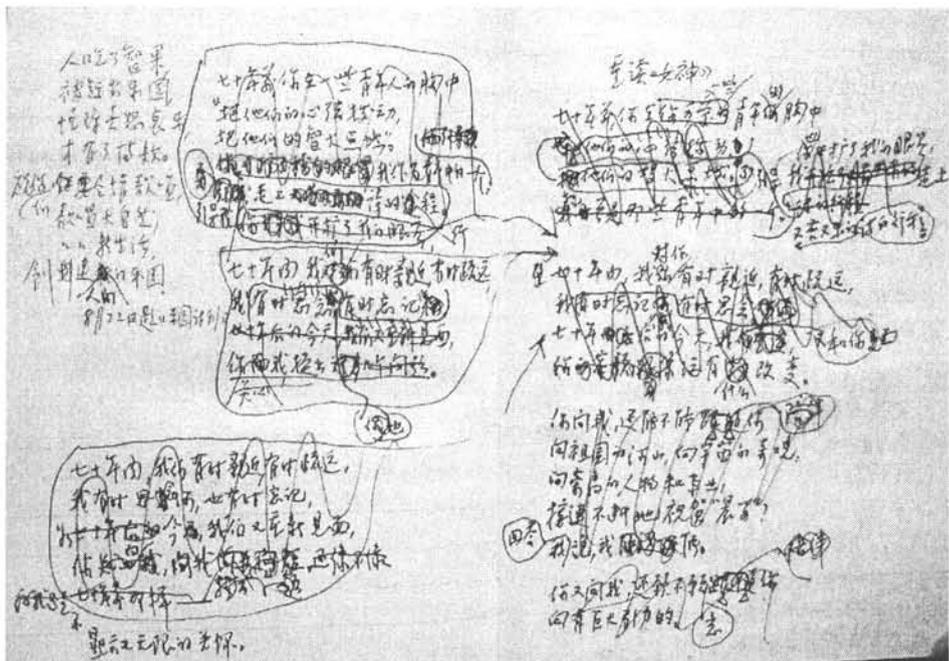


Plate 11 Feng Zhi 馮至 (1905–1993), “Chongdu ‘Nüshen’” 重讀《女神》 [Rereading *The Goddesses*], first draft (of 3) Sep 1992, double page in last notebook, pp. 20–21 (private collection).

The poem recalls the publication of *The Goddesses* 70 years previously (to be more precise: in 1921) and is written *ad hominem*, i.e. addressed to the (deceased) centenarian. Evidently, the three stanzas and the first two verses of the fourth stanza on the double-page of the notebook, out of a total of six, are heavily reworked. This is particularly true of the two first stanzas which set the motif: “Seventy years ago, you...” begins the first, “Within seventy years, I...” the second. After having added two additional layers of modifications and insertions in the first stanza, the author rewrites it anew, again with two layers of amendments. The second version of the stanza is written on the left-hand side, i.e. the preceding page. This indicates that rewriting took place when the first draft version and its amendments were already put down. The same happens twice for stanza 2 in which the author speaks about himself. Finally, the ten layers or so are rejected and the whole text is rewritten – on subsequent pages of the notebook. This whole procedure results in up to 20 layers of text which present the various stages up to the final version. Most interventions are concerned with rhythm, repeated inversions of the syntax in stanza 2 by having the complement at the head of the clause, preceded by *ba* 把, or modifications in

vocabulary. As a result, stanza 1 is fully drafted and corrected twice and stanza 2 three times, on this first draft manuscript out of a total of three.

It is certainly not too far-fetched to see a kind of Œdipal conclusion in this critical reverence to Guo Moruo. Verses 3 and 4 evoke casual encounters of the two with conversations about poetry, in verse 5 the poem reaches its climax: Guo Moruo is said to have repeatedly asked whether Feng Zhi would not like “to join in wishing a ,long life’ to those who have been labelled as bandits”. The reference to the Ode to Bandits (“Feitu song” 匪徒頌; late 1919) in which Guo Moruo had extolled social and political revolutionaries, letting them “live 10,000 years” after every stanza, is as evident as the allusion to the Communists once labelled as *gongfei* 共匪 by the Guomindang, as well as to the many poems from Guo Moruo’s hand that praise Mao Zedong, concluding by the propagandistic stereotype of *wansui* 萬歲 (‘10,000 years’).²⁹

It remains to be pointed out that the same double-page, on the top left, also contains the draft of a dedicative poem, written for the poetry journal *Leyuan shikan* 樂園詩刊 and dated August 22nd.³⁰ For Rereading “The Goddesses”, Feng Zhi prepared a fair copy himself, now using the MS paper of his *danwei*, the institution in which he used to work, the Institute of Foreign Literatures in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. This manuscript, however, again carries a number of minor corrections – and adds a note to readers giving explanations about the poetry collection *The Goddesses*, guidance that was possibly necessary at the time.

²⁹ The formula appears throughout Guo Moruo’s poetry. One of the most remarkable examples is “San hu wan sui” 三呼晚歲 [Three Times Crying Out 10,000 Year] of Sep 19, 1959, a cycle of heptasyllabic regulated verse in which the “general line”, the “Great Leap Forward” and the People’s Communes are hailed, and the ailing theme of repeated hyperbolic decimal powers is fully elaborated with ‘hundred flowers’, ‘one East Wind’, ‘ten million people’s communes’ and not least the last verse of poem no 1: “Ten years of reconstruction are victorious over millennia” (in *Guo Moruo quanji*, vol. 4, p. 4-5). See also “Zai jinianhui shang” 在紀念會上 [On the Memorial Meeting; May 23rd, 1962], with the first stanza concluded “Let hundred flowers blossom in ten-thousand-fold purple and thousand-fold red” (in *Guo Moruo quanji*, vol. 4, p. 122). – It may not be ruled out that Feng Zhi was well aware that no 3 from the cycle, “Renmin gongshe wansui!” 人民公社晚歲 [Long Live the People’s Communes!], was first published in *Shikan* 9/1959, the very same poetry journal for which Feng Zhi was asked to write in honour of Guo Moruo.

³⁰ The journal seems to have never seen the light, as the poem is first published “on the basis of the manuscript” in *Feng Zhi quanji*, vol. 2, p. 333. The version of “Chongdu ‘Nüshen’” printed in *Shikan* is collected first collected in *Wentan bianyuan suibi* 文壇邊緣隨筆 [Notes from the Margins of the Literary Scene; 1995] and reprinted in *Feng Zhi quanji*, vol. 2, p. 294–296.

5. Preliminary Conclusions and Perspectives

(1) The period of manuscript writing in China, maybe with the exception of poetry, is approaching its end. From conversations with writers, scholars, editors and publishers, I may draw the conclusion that – unlike other writing cultures – some 85 percent of creative writing is no longer handwritten and that the trend is persisting. Therefore, it seems an appropriate moment to assess draft manuscript writing in modern China from a systematic perspective, despite the relatively small basis of material currently available.

(2) Contrary to appearances, the transmission of texts is becoming ever more instable, in reverse function of the stability that technology of fixation would allow for. This is not only true of pre-publication stages, but also afterwards.

(3) Interventions (i.e. sources of instability) are auctorial. Thus, the study of variance discloses mechanisms of the creative process which is individual in substance, but socially organized.

(4) Variance can be made visible, most typically by the tools of representation used in genetic edition. However, not all texts (or genres) become most transparent with the same editorial tools.

(5) The greatly varying Chinese terminology in manuscripts reflects shifting and heterogeneous concepts of the public sphere.

It is certainly clear from what I have said above that a comprehensive assessment of manuscripts and of textual variances beyond the manuscript stage is not possible for the time being, simply because of difficulties in providing a sufficiently broad basis. Nonetheless, the aim of my study is to analyze the broadest possible range of techniques and phenomena identifiable in producing textual variants, including idiosyncratic patterns of writing. Study of proof corrections also has to be included, as well as the involvement or non-involvement of authors in cover design, along with the reasons for it.

The study of manuscripts in systematic perspective has to take each and every element into consideration from writing tools and the storage and collection of manuscripts to the organisation of editorial procedures in the publishing business, media transfers and alternative distribution channels. Each of these systematic elements also needs a diachronic presentation.

In specific cases, for the time being and according to the source situation, instances also have to be taken into consideration where not the full range of witnesses from the earliest manuscript stage to the latest printed edition may be taken into consideration, just for the sake of studying as many potentially representative witnesses as possible. The chief aim, however, should be to give an assessment of the “manuscript” that is as comprehensive as possible at the present stage, including sociologically inspired reflection about why access to some material is not yet possible. This will require more detailed research into

the policies of authors' commemoration, as evident in institutions, events and concurrent publications, and as it is legally effective and also manifest in the actual handling of this essentially material part of the literary heritage.

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