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REVISITING LIU XIE'S CONCEPT OF THE GENRE AND ITS PLACE IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL CHINESE LITERARY THEORY

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Abstract: *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons (Wen Xin Diao Long) by Liu Xie (465/466–520/522) overcomes other similar treaties of that time by its size (about 40 thousand characters), by the complexity of the structure, and as well by the depth of working out the issues of literary theory and practice. That's why the Liu Xie's literary concept is usually considered as a kind of quintessence of Chinese literary mind of the early Middle Ages. This article is an attempt to challenge this thesis and demonstrate that Liu Xie was far ahead of his time. Analyzing the Liu Xie's genre concept, the author focuses on two major points. The first is the connection of the genre with categories of a higher or general order, with the notions of traditional Chinese literary types or modes of wen and bi and with the form of artistic speech. The second is the hierarchy of genres specified by the order of their description in the treatise. The author rebuts the idea that Liu Xie divided the literature into wen and bi on the basis of rhyme only. She argues that he considered the content of a literary work to be more important than its form for defining its genre.*

Keywords: Liu Xie,The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*,* Wen Xin Diao Long, Chinese poetics, Chinese literature, medieval Chinese literature.

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К ВОПРОСУ О ЖАНРОВОЙ КОНЦЕПЦИИ ЛЮ СЕ И ЕЕ МЕСТЕ В РАННЕСРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ КИТАЙСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРНОЙ МЫСЛИ

Л. В. СТЕЖЕНСКАЯ

Резюме: *Трактат Лю Се (465/466–520/522) «Резной дракон литературной мысли» («Вэнь синь дяо лун») часто рассматривают как квинтэссенцию раннесредневековой китайской литературоведческой мысли, поскольку он превосходит другие сочинения своего времени как по размеру (примерно 40 тысяч иероглифов), так и по сложности структуры, и по глубине проработки вопросов теории и практики литературы. В данной статье же делается попытка оспорить эту идею и показать, что по многим своим взглядам Лю Се намного опередил свое время. Анализируя жанровую концепцию «Резного дракона...», автор останавливается на двух важных вопросах. Первый – это вопрос о связи жанра с понятиями традиционных китайских «литературных родов» «вэнь» и «би» и с формой художественной речи. Второй – вопрос иерархии жанров, заданной порядком их описания в трактате. Автор оспаривает распространенные представления о Лю Се как о стороннике деления литературы на вэнь и би только по признаку рифмы. По ее мнению, Лю Се считал, что для характеристики литературных жанров содержание произведений важнее чисто формальных черт.*

Ключевые слова: Лю Се, Резной дракон литературной мысли, «Вэнь синь дяо лун»,китайская поэтика, китайская литература, *средневековая* китайская литература.

The concept of *genre* accompanied Chinese literary thought since the very appearance of the written tradition in China. The oldest written monuments *The Most Venerable Book* (*Shang Shu*) and *The Book of Songs* (*Shi jing*) specify the genre of the texts that composed them [Riftin, 1994, p. 267–270]. Up to the early twentieth century the traditional Chinese poetics was based on the concept of the canonized genre. The idea of a proper set or system of traditional genres was formed in the early Middle Ages. Outlining the composition of literary genres, medieval Chinese literary critics and theorists thus gave the definition of the notion of literature of their time [Smirnov, 2000, p. 265–289]. This literature may be called classical or elitist. Traditional literary criticism ignored a significant layer of national Chinese literature represented by the so-called "low genres".

In a series of historical and literary sources of the early Middle Ages, the treatise of Liu Xie (465/466 – 520/522) *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wen Xin Diao Long,* hereafter – *The Dragon…*) occupies an exceptional place. None of the other works of this period can compare with *The Dragon...* neither by size (about 40 thousand characters), nor by the complexity of the structure, nor by the depth of working out the issues of literature theory and practice. Moreover, the organization and vastness of the text of *The Dragon...* makes it the most important source of our knowledge of the early medieval Chinese literature.

Hence the researcher may have a temptation to present the literary concept of Liu Xie as a kind of quintessence of early medieval Chinese thought (see, for example, the monographs of Vladimir Iosifovich Braginsky who represented the "averaged" poetology of the Arabic, Indian and Chinese zone-shaping literatures [Braginsky, 1991; Braginsky, 2004]). Chinese medieval poetology was examined on the basis of the treatise by Liu Xie *Wen Xin Diao Long*, in which "most of the concepts of Chinese poetology are integrated into an orderly whole" [Braginsky, 1991, p. 54].

In this article, I will try to challenge this thesis about the representativeness of *The on ...* for the literary thought of the early Middle Ages. Liu Xie was significantly different from his contemporaries. I will focus on the two points in my study of the genre concept of *The Dragon...* The first is the connection of the genre with categories of a higher or general order, with the notions of traditional Chinese literary types or modes of *wen* and *bi* and with the form of artistic speech. The second is the hierarchy of genres specified by the order of their description in the treatise.

The study of *The Dragon ...* in Russia will soon overstep a hundred-year boundary and, of course, it is not limited to the specified issues. The main attention of soviet and Russian literary theorists-sinologists was directed to the general aesthetic evaluation of the treatise. One of the steps on the way to understanding the content of Liu Xie's aesthetic concept was the explanation of his principle of hierarchy of genres and that category itself. From this groundwork I will proceed in my article, in some cases expanding the context of the problem, and in others, on the contrary, referring to details that have not yet been considered in Russian literary studies of China.

The description of specific genres occupying almost half of the treatise leaves no doubt that Liu Xie in his work relied on a certain concept of the literary genre. The interpretation of the content of this concept or its equivalents by Liu Xie remains a debated issue of modern Chinese literary studies and the history of Chinese literature. It is considered that the enumeration of genres in the treatise sets the hierarchy of medieval Chinese genres, that is, represents their classification.

Important advantages of this classification are its diversity and unity of principles. As a rule, they are specified in the following provisions. All the genres of Liu Xie are grouped according to the large categories of contemporary literature – elegant literature (*wen*) and simply literature (*bi*). The order of enumeration of genres is determined by their literary qualities. More literary or elegant genres are explained earlier than less literary ones. When enumerating genres,

their thematic proximity is taken into account, so many genres are described in pairs. When genres are less close in content, the chapter gives their generalized representation. In the description of the literary genre, the lexical explanation of the genre name and its definition is given first. Then the stylistic features of the genre are explained. Further, the historical origins of the genre and its evolution are indicated. Finally, information on the best works in the specified genre is provided.

In the title of the treatise *Wen Xin Diao Long* (lit. *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*), two themes are distinguished: literariness (i.e., the feature of being literature) and literary work. Liu Xie clarifies the literary concept mainly in the first five chapters of the treatise, as well as in the final chapter 50, *Statement of intent* (*Xu zhi*). Liu Xie's *literariness* reflects an understanding of this attribute in China during the second half of the fifth century – the early sixth century. In modern studies, this *literariness* is treated as *elegance* and literature itself – as *elegant literature* represented by a limited set of the literary genres contemporary with Liu Xie. The Liu Xie's genre theory is to be studied within a more general problematics: the relationship between the historical concept of *elegance* and his concept of *artistry*. The core of the latter forms the concept of *aesthetic* [Khalizev, 2000, p. 31–33, 82, 104–105].

For the reader not being lost in conjectures which genres are being discussed, below in Table 1 I provide a list of chapters of the treatise named after the genres. Basically, this table was prepared according to the corresponding scheme in the commentary of Fan Wenlan (1893–1969), one of the founders of *The Dragon ...* studies. His classification of genres by two large categories of *wen* and *bi* gained wide popularity. The origin of genres from one or another classical book being a part of the Confucian *Five Classics* is often stipulated in the treatise by Liu Xie himself. For the sinologists, the table contains hieroglyphs. For the reader who is not familiar with the Chinese language, I provide the names of the genres in transcription and in English translations. Most of the translations are borrowed from the article by Boris Lvovich Riftin (1932–2012) on the genres of medieval Chinese literature (see footnote to the Table 1) and my own translations are marked with asterisks (*).

Igor Samoilovich Lisevich (1932–2000) formulated and substantiated the methodological principle of investigating the ideas of Liu Xie, based on the analysis of his terminology, in such a way: "To go from the categories that have developed and for many centuries been used in China itself; because any other approach from the very starting point would mean the use of modern forms of thinking instead of those of authors of the studied monuments." [Lisevich, 1979, p. 6] In this case, a concrete method of studying becomes clear. Only some of "the most important terms" chosen by "the ancients themselves", are "the subject of the analysis". For the treatise of Liu Xie, the key and most important concept is *wen*.

T a b l e 1

Sequence and classification of the "genre" chapters of the treatise Wen Xin Diao Long[1]

Number in the list	*Name of the chapter (genre)*	*Chapter number*	*Belonging to the wen (elegant literature) or bi (business writing) section*	*Origin from the classics (by Fan Wenlan)*
1	2	3	4	5
0	辨騷 (*bian sao*) *sao* [*sorrowful song*, elegy]	5	文 *wen*	詩 *Songs*

[1] The table is prepared as per: [Liu Xie, 1962, p. 4–5; Riftin, 1994, p. 278–282]. I have added sequential numbers of the genres, as well as transcription and translation of the names of the genres marked with an asterisk (*). Other translations belong to B. L. Riftin.

1	2	3	4	5
1	明詩 (*ming shi*) *poems*	6	文 *wen*	詩 *Songs*
2	樂府 (*yue fu*) *music chamber*	7	文 *wen*	詩 *Songs*
3	詮賦 (*quan fu*) *poem-fu*	8	文 *wen*	詩 *Songs*
4	頌 (song) Hymn	9	文 *wen*	詩 *Songs*
5	贊 (zan) Eulogy	9	文 *wen*	詩 *Songs*
6	祝 (chu / chou) appeal to the gods	10	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
7	盟 (meng) appeal to the gods	10	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
8	銘 (ming) inscription on bronze	11	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
9	箴 (zhen) instruction	11	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
10	誄(lei) lament	12	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
11	碑 (bei) inscription on the commemorative stele	12	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
12	哀 (ai) lament for the one died young	13	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
13	弔 (diao) inquiries about the death	13	文 *wen*	禮 *Rites*
14	雜文 (za wen) mixed (or different) genres	14	文筆 *wen-bi*	–
15	諧 (xie) riddle	15	文筆 *wen-bi*	–
16	隱 (yin) riddle	15	文筆 *wen-bi*	–
17	史傳 (shi zhuan) history, commentary of a historical nature	16	筆 *bi*	春秋 *Spring and Autumn*
18	諸子 (zhu zi) philosophers*	17	–	–
19	論 (lun) reasoning	18	筆 *bi*	易 *Changes*
20	說 (sho) “word”	18	筆 *bi*	易 *Changes*
21	詔 (zhao) order of appointment	19	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
22	策 (ce) order of appointment	19	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
23	檄 (xi) accusation*	20	筆 *bi*	春秋 *Spring and Autumn*
24	移 (yi) reprimand*	20	筆 *bi*	春秋 *Spring and Autumn*
25	封禪 (feng shan) Sacrifices to Heaven and Earth*	21	筆 *bi*	禮 *Rites*
26	章 (zhang) report to superiors	22	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
27	表 (biao) report to superiors	22	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
28	奏 (zou) report to the sovereign	23	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*

1	2	3	4	5
29	啟 (qi) report to the sovereign	23	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
30	議 (yi) suggestion*	24	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
31	對 (dui) response to the inquiry of the sovereign *	24	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
32	書 (shu) record*	25	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
33	記 (ji) note*	25	筆 *bi*	書 *The Most Venerable Book*

Liu Xie used the term *wen* in a variety of meanings, among which those should be specified those ones that are the most closely associated with his concept of contemporary literature. First of all, it is the elegance as the quality of literariness. Russian scholars Kirina Ivanovna Golygina (1935–2009) and Vladimir Alekseevich Krivtsov (1921–1985) credited Liu Xie with the formulation of a new literary concept, determinedat its birth by the specific historical form of elegant literature of the fifth and sixth centuries. The elegance (*wen*) was stressed by Liu Xie as a feature typical of the elegant literature, which was denoted by the same term *wen* [Krivtsov, 1978, p. 162; Golygina, 2008(2), p. 138].

Golygina connects the very appearance of the idea of elegant literature (*wen*) in literary studies with Liu Xie. As she supposes he "saw the main, inalienable element of elegant literature in rhyme" [Golygina, 2008(1), p. 77; Golygina, 2008(2), p. 138–139, 140]. Marina Evguenievna Kravtsova also agrees with her, reporting that "Liu Xie tries to specify *wen* more accurately considering its main feature to be the presence of *yun*, i.e. rhymes, in the text [Kravtsova, 2008, p. 251]. The former literature was consequently divided into the elegant literature and the the unrhymed one, for which Liu Xie introduced into the literary theory a new term "business literature" (*bi*, *lit*. stylus) [Golygina, 2008(2), p. 140].

Krivtsov and Lisevich were less judgemental in this matter. They believed that the Chinese theorist only followed the generally accepted practice of his time of dividing the literature into "purely artistic" (*wen*) and "business, applied" (*bi*) ones [Krivtsov, 1978, p. 158; Lisevich, 1979, p. 30]. In addition, Lisevich saw the main difference between *wen* and *bi* not in rhyme but in "contrasting the unrhythmic business prose with the prose and poetry, subject to the strict principle of rhythm" [Lisevich, 1979, p. 30]. Golygina also seems not to imply *yun* as a rhyme in the strict sense of the term since she pointed out that the treatise of Liu Xie had been "written in the style of parallel rhymed phrases – *pianli*" [Golygina, 2008(2), p. 139]. *The Dragon...* is really written in a parallel style but only the "commendable words" (zan) located at the end of chapters are rhymed having a rhyme in even lines from the second one to the eighth.

Kravtsova also suggested to pay attention to the rhythm and to understand the "rhyme" of Liu Xie "in a broader sense of this term – rhythmic structure, reinforced by rhyme" [Kravtsova, 2008, p. 251–252]. She, in fact, suggested a four-part classification of genres in the Liu Xie treatise. Referring to thedistinguishing of two semantic parts and several thematic blocks in *The Dragon* ..., which is common in Chinese literary studies, Kravtsova points out the beginning of the classification from "strictly poetic genres". Further, in her opinion, Liu Xie singled out two groups of genres. To the first one he referred "*wen* proper (rhymed or rhythmic, prose) and *bi* 'brush [for writing]'." To the second – "biographies included in historiographical works (*shi zhuan*), philosophical writings (*zhu zi*), treatises (*lun*), epistles (*shu*), as well as purely business genres including various reports to the sovereign (*zou*, *biao*)" [Kravtsova, 2008, p. 252]. How exactly the *bi* genres of the first group and genres listed in the second group dif-

fer Kravtsova did not explain in her brief reference article [Kravtsova, 2008, p. 252]. However, taking into account her statement that "in general *bi* genres are still included by Liu Xie in the elegant literature", and thus "such understanding of artistic literature and its genre composition" is established in the literary studies of China, consideration of the genres of the second group becomes irrelevant since they are outside the scope of literature. Inclusion of *bi* in the scope of elegant literature was also recognized by Golygina [Kravtsova, 2008, p. 252; Golygina, 2008(2), p. 139].

So, to summarize the statements of Russian theorists of literature, it turns out that Liu Xie in his contemporary written tradition singled out *wenbi*, that is, "literature" (Krivtsov) or "philology" (Lisevich) or "elegant literature" (Golygina, Kravtsov). Within *wenbi*, he singled out *wen*, i.e., "artistic literature" (Krivtsov) or "elegant literature" (Lisevich) or "elegant word" (Golygina) or poetry and rhythmic prose (Kravtsova). Other genres, by which in this case the usual prose should be considered, were allocated by him into the *bi* category, i.e., "business, applied" literature (Krivtsov), non-rhythmic prose (Lisevich), "business literature" (Golygina), non-rhythmed prose (Kravtsova).

According to this point of view, the notion of elegance (*wen*) applied only to the part of the Liu Xie contemporary literature, which was defined as elegant literature in the strictsense (*wen*). This concept was not applied to purely prosaic genres (*bi*). Golygina pointed out that Liu Xie "saw" the difference between *wen* and *bi* "only in style". Other researchers also agreed with this point of view speaking about "artistic form", "form of expression" or "literary style" [Golygina, 2008(2), p. 139; Krivtsov, 1978, p. 162; Lisevich, 1979, p. 30].

B. L. Riftin devoted a special work to the genres of the Chinese medieval literature, in which he analyzed in great detail the sequence of genres in the classification of Liu Xie. He showed that Liu Xie did not always keep the criterion of "literariness (*wen*) or decoration of style" and concluded that "rhyme as the main criterion of decoration and not just the elegance of style, the beauty of presentation, imagery, etc., determined the division of all literature into artistic (*wen*) and business (*bi* – lit. "writing brush") ones for Liu Xie and in general in Chinese theoretical thought of the fourth – sixth centuries." Noting the presence of "highly artistic" works in the composition of genres of "business literature" (*bi*), he pointed to the insignificance of the "division into poetry and prose" for Liu Xie who "lived in the heyday of "*pianli*" prose or parallel style prose when many works of small forms were written with rhythmic and rhymed prose with numerous parallel grammatical constructions and differed little from the pieces of poetry" [Riftin, 1994, p. 281–282].

The difference between two specified approaches is obvious and it consists in recognizing or denying the existence of ordinary non-rhythmical and non-rhymed prose being a part of the genre system of elegant literature. And their common feature is also clear when our scholars connect the quality of elegance (literariness or artistry) of Liu Xie's literature to the style of works. In this latter sense, both proposed approaches are based on the views of Vasiliy Mikhailovich Alekseev (1881–1951), who at the time noted that in the *Selections of Refined Literature* (*Wen xuan*) by Xiao Tong (501–531) the term *wen* meant "mainly literary works regardless content" (Alekseev's spacing). According to his opinion, Xiao Tong gave a strong preference to the form "towards all other features distinguishing a literary work." Therefore, Alekseev spoke of *wen* as a complex of "those Chinese works that are designed exclusively for emotive ends, i.e., those who by their rhythm, choice of words and other stylistic devices strive to excite aesthetic pleasure in the reader" [Alekseev, 2002, p. 71].

Now I'll try to understand the concept of *wenbi*, which was discussed by the Russian scholars. I am at a loss to say when did this term appear but it is obvious that it had happened long before Liu Xie. Wang Chong (about 27–104) in his treatise *Balanced Inquiries* (*Lun heng*) completed in 80 A.D. used the word (binomial) *wenbi* as a concretion of two words. Arguing about the importance of the "educated man" (*wen ren*) occupying the second place after the

"outstanding sage" (*hong ru*) in his classification of the Confucian abilities, Wang Chong gave an example of a certain Chang-sheng, a minor official in the regional government, according to reports of whom his superiors made right and fair decisions. When he died, they could not find a substitute for him. The successors "were not like [him] [*bu zu lei*] in *wenbi*." Their reports could not correspond to its *text standards* (*wen gui*, lit. *text track*) and its *writing technique* (*bi shu*, *the stylus' trace*) [Wang Chong, 1990, juan 13: 39. Chao qi, p. 613]. In general, Wang Chong uses these two words in such meanings. *Wen* is a text or a work and *bi* is writing, a process of writing or just a verb "to write". The writer, according to him, "puts the stylus, creates the text" (*xia bi zao wen*), "writes the text with the stylus" (*yi bi zhu wen*) [Wang Chong, 1990, juan 9: 28. Wen Kong, p. 395; juan 30: 45. Zi ji, p. 1405].

Almost five centuries later Xiao Yi (508–555, the Liang Emperor Yuan-di, 552–555) understood the word combination of *wen-bi* in a different way (See: [Xiao Yi, 1967, juan 4, p. 189–192]). His judgment concerning this matter seems to crown the centuries-old history of the term spread in traditional Chinese literary thought of the early Middle Ages, so we will dwell on it in more detail. Arguing about the historical destiny of "scholarship" (*xue*) in the chapter "Glory in the Word" ("Li Yan") of his extensive historical essay *Jin lou zi*, he said that in ancient times there had been two kinds of scholarship and the contemporary scholarship was already divided into four branches. The followers of Confucius (about 551–479 B.C.) had studied the canonical books of their teacher and transfered his teachings; and this was called "Confucianism" (*ru*). The other part of the ancient scholarship had been limited only to "literature" (*wen*). It had been represented by "stanzas and odes" (*ci fu*) composed by adherents of Qu Yuan (340–278 B.C.), Song Yu (about 298 – about 222 B.C.), Mei Cheng (died 140 B.C.) and Sima Xiangru (179–117 B.C.).

As Xiao Yi pointed out, the Confucians of his time engaged in "philosophers" (*zi*) and "history" (*shi)* and this was called "scholarship" (*xue*). Another branch of knowledge, as he mentioned, was usually called "stylus" (*bi*). Xiao Yi explains this concept by the example of Yan Zuan (the third – fourth centuries) who was either "clumsy" in "writing poems" (*wei shi*) or simply "did not resort to them" (*bu bian*). Another example relates to a certain Bosong who was good in writing reports (zhang zou)[2]. The last, fourth, branch of knowledge, according to Xiao Yi, was "elegant literature" (*wen*). It included "singing songs and endless sadness".

Further, Xiao Yi characterizes the literary styles of the branches of knowledge identified by him. Contemporary "scholars" (i.e., philosophers and historians), according to him, in their majority do not resort to "writing stanzas" (*zhu ci*), they "adhere to the division of the text into [semantic] segments" (*zhang ju*). Although Xiao Yi is dismissive of the works of scholars steeped in scholasticism, he nevertheless notes the opportunity to see in them the "source" (*yuan)* of this contemporary branch of knowledge. The works in the style (or genres) of *bi*, in his opinion, at the worst cannot be called "writings" (*cheng wen*) but at best there is no mentioning of "choosing the right" in them (*qu yi*). The authors write only to show the technique of writing and demonstrate their mind. But creation of the *wen* requires much more attention to the stylistic side – "stretched silk lace [composition (?)], beautiful tonality, pronounceableness, movement of the soul."

Xiao Yi believed that *wen-bi* (i.e., *wen* and *bi* together) of antiquity and modernity had different sources (*yuan*). For antiquity these sources and currents are clear. These are the commentaries of *Tuan zhuan* and *Xi ci zhuan* to *The Book of Changes*, sections *Morals of the kingdoms*, *Lesser odes* and *Great odes* of *The Book of Songs*, writings of various schools of ancient

[2] I suppose that this is about Zhang Sun (the second name is Bosun), in connection with the reports of which at the end of Western Han (206 B.C. – 25 A.D.) it was said: "If you want to get an inheritance for feeding – act through Zhang Bosun. Martial prowess cannot be compared with [his] ability to write reports." See: [Ban Gu, 1986, juan 99, p. 4086].

teachings. They are represented in the provision of the Taoist philosopher Ge Hong (284–263) on the adornment of great and noble men, in the words of Cao Pi (187–226) who developed the idea of Confucius on the equal relationship between "elegance" (*wen*) and "[naked] essence" (*zhi*), in the judgement of the Confucius student Zi Xia about the "four origins" (*si shi*) in the "Book of Songs", and in the organization of the seven sections of the bibliography *The Seven Descriptions* (*qi lue*) of the Han scholar Liu Xin (53/46 B.C.–23 A.D.).

Contemporary "literature" (*wenbi*), according to Xiao Yi, also had (*zhi*) sources but they were "not analyzed" in detail (*bu bian*). As such a "source", he names "elegance" (*qing qi*) of Pan Yue (247–300), the famous author of "laments" (*ai*). However, the literary criticism of that time as Xiao Yi says was limited only to the praise of the "fidelity of feeling" (*qing qie*) of this writer and then either makes or cites the conclusion about the difficulty of "creating" (*wei*) "elegant works" (*wen*).

Xiao Yi notes that Cao Pi and Lu Zhi (261–303) were theorists of literature (*wen shi*) but not Confucian canonologists. They achieved fame by defining the general rules of literature. Due to the works of these and other "literary men" one can almost fully understand the meaning of literature. Xiao Yi gives an example of the famous calligrapher and poet Xie Tiao (464–499), "who had become famous for his talent", who, apparently, in the field of literary studies, "had gone over the necessary in order to supplement up to the more". What exactly his contribution was, unfortunately, remains unknown since his relevant works, if they existed, have not survived until present. Another noted theorist of literature is Ren Fang (460–508) whose works "are not included in the first section of bibliographies" comprising the Confucian classics and their interpretations, but whose "writing brush" (*bi han*) was very talented and skilled in combination of "[various] currents and sections of knowledge" (*liu lue*). Moreover, Ren Fang was famous for his writings in nonpoetic genres (*bi*) and his report writing skill [*Xin jiao ben* Nan shi fu suoyin, 1981, juan 33, p. 865; juan 50, p. 1248]. There is also his small historical and literary essay *The Origins of Literature* (*Wenzhang yuanqi*) which lists more than 80 contemporary literary genres with the time of their origin (usually the Han dynasty and later), as well as five ancient genres – *ge* (Ch. 7, No. 2), *shi* (Ch. 6, No. 1), *lei* (Ch. 12, No. 10), *zhen* (Ch. 11, No. 9), *ming* (Ch. 11, No. 8), from which, in his opinion, the medieval literature originates [Ren Fang, 2009][3].

At the end of his short essay, Xiao Yi complains about the damaged "modern morals" (*jin zhi su*) and condemns their "followers" for turning literature into entertainment (*ji shu*) and fun (*xi xiao*). "And when you lose the source (*yuan*)," he says, "the current (*liu*) will immediately move away."

The specified analysis of the issues of the composition of medieval Chinese literature of the middle of the sixth century by Xiao Yi is used in almost all literary and historical works. At the same time, the volume of its quoting and interpretation of the text itself varies somewhat (see: [Golygina, 1974. p. 195; Golygina, 2008(2), p. 139–140; Riftin, 1994, p. 284]). The explanation of Xiao Yi's views that I have presented above lets me draw some conclusions. He attributed works created not earlier than the second half of the third century to contemporary literature, i.e., he considered contemporary literature as a product of the recent historical era and opposed it to the ancient tradition. He did not associate the literature (*wenbi*) of his time with either Confucian canonology, which according to his opinion actually belonged to the previous historical era, or contemporary philosophical and historical works that were opposed to literature also by their style – they seem to be written in prose.

[3] The authenticity of the present text is questionable. In the enumeration of ancient genres, after the genre name the numbers of the corresponding "genre" chapters of the "Dragon…" and the genre numbers according to our *Table 1* are specified in parentheses.

Xiao Yi mentioned nothing about the style of *bi*-literature but when comparing the styles of other kinds of written works he specified, the reader must come to the conclusion that this literature was "stanzaic" (*ci*), i.e., it was most likely represented by a rhythmic prose. Xiao Yi's elegant literature (*wen*) is melodious, i.e., poetic, but the meaning of rhyme for its distinguishing was not specified directly. These "omissions" served as the basis for a variety of interpretations of the composition of medieval Chinese literature in contemporary scholarly literary studies.

Thus, for example, it is concluded that by the middle of the sixthcentury the meaning of the rhyme itself was insignificant for distinguishing the genres of elegant literature (*wen*) and just literature (*bi*). The concept of "elegance" of literature began to be associated with "prosody in general". In addition, Xiao Yi has to be called a formalist, who allegedly does not say a word about the content of the work [*Zhongguo wen xue piping shi*, 1993, vol. 1, p. 126]. But at the same time there is no commentary on the very principle by which Xiao Yi divided contemporary literature into *wen* and *bi*. Proposal of the famous Chinese textual critic Ruan Yuan (1764–1849) to consider *wen* as rhythmic genres, and *bi* – as pure prose, based largely on his understanding of Xiao Yi's essay, in the XX century received just criticism by rather authoritative historian of Chinese literature, Guo Shaoyu (1893–1984) [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 73–74]. However, his own conclusion that Xiao Yi did not distinguish parallel prose and ordinary prose and included both of them in *bi* composition, seems me not quite true [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 74]. As I have said above, "non-strophity" was common for the "philosophers" and "history", which were regarded by Xiao Yi as the "scholarship" of contemporary time and were not included in the "literature" (*wenbi*).

According to the generally accepted date, Liu Xie wrote his treatise in about 500 A.D., i.e., about 55 years before Xiao Y's essay. As it is known, in his treatise Liu Xie reported on the contemporary common division of the literature into *wen* and *bi* according to the principle of the presence of rhyme (yun). Concerning Xiao Yi, this principle was not directly stipulated. This gives ground to historians of Chinese literature to assume the chronological variability of the content of the *wenbi* concept. I have already mentioned the Han scholar Wang Chong's *wenbi* binomial above. In the meaning of "literature", this term is believed to start to be used only during the Jin Dynasty (266–420), and during the Southern Dynasty Song (420–479) entered the everyday lexicon [*Zhongguo wen xue piping shi*, 1993, vol. 1, p. 126; *Zhongguo wen xue piping tong shi*…, 1996, p. 196].

Wenbi's words in earlier sources seem to have this meaning even during the reign of Wei (220–266) of the Three Kingdoms era. The decree of Cao Cao (155–220), ruler of the Wei apanage principality since 213, prescribed to select officials capable to "write" (*wen bi*) with a standard (zhen) handwriting (i.e. *lishu*) and *cao* handwriting (i.e., simplified cursive) [*Quan shang gu San dai…,* 1958, juan 2, p. 1061–1]. But already Wei Kai (died between 226 and 239) in his inscription on stone stele mentions some writings (*wenbi*) as well as semantic and hieroglyphic comments [*Quan shang gu San dai…,* juan 28, p. 1212–2].

According to Guo Shaoyu, the word "wenbi" with meaning "literature" must have existed as early as in the Han era everyday language (206 B.C.–220 A.D.). During the early Middle Ages, its meaning was rethought [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 66–67].

The formulation of the distinction between the *wen* and *bi* works according to the presence of rhyme is customarily associated with the author of *The History of the Later Han* (*Hou Han shu*) Fan Ye (398–445). In the letter to his nephews, he set out the reasons why he began to study history and not literature, as well as explained the meaning of his poetic "evaluations" (*zan*) added by him at the end of the biography chapters besides the usual "judgments" (*lun*) [*... Song shu fu suoyin*, 1980, juan 69, p. 1829–1831; *…Nan shi fu suoyin,* 1981, juan 33, p. 854–855]. In this letter, there is a phrase, which in modern literary studies is interpreted approximately in this way: "*bi* [works] are simpler then *wen* [works] because [they] do not adhere

to rhyme"[4]. This interpretation seems to me very doubtful. I think that Fan Ye here speaks only about the author's style (*shou bi*) of the still very young poet Xie Zhuang (421–466) whose works (*wen*) "did not adhere to rhyme"[5]. The whole deal was, apparently, about the traditional rhyme on the last fourth word[6] in the line since Xie Zhuang was known for his verses with five-word lines and small odes. At the same time, Fan Ye in his letter mentions rhyme (*yun*) twice in connection with *wen*, which, in principle, can indicate rhyme as a distinctive feature of elegant literature.

Another example indisputably testifies to an understanding of the difference between *bi* and *wen* but it does not directly affect the meaning of rhyme. The famous poet and literary theorist Yan Yanzhi (384–456) talking about his sons in response to the question of Wen-di (424–453), the emperor of the southern Song dynasty, noted that his eldest son Yan Jun "received [the ability to] *bi* from him", and his second son Yan Ce – ability to *wen* [… *Song shu fu suoyin*. 1980, juan 75, p. 1959; … *Nan shi fu suoyin*, 1981, juan 34, p. 839].

On this not very strong factual foundation, the of the Hong Kong scholar Liao Zhiqiang bases his statement, which has not been questioned yet, on the change in the criterion for the *wen* distinguishing between the middle of the fifth century and the middle of the sixth century [Liao Zhiqiang, 1999, p. 29–31]. Basing on the works of the founder of the contemporary scientific study of *The Dragon* ... Huang Jigang (Huang Kan, 1886–1935) and well-known theorists of literature medievalists Zhang Renqing (died in 2007) and Hong Kong based expert in traditional Chinese literature Kuang Jianxing, Liao Zhiqiang argues that in the years of Yongming (483–493) of the southern Qi dynasty reign (479–502), the well-known historian and writer Shen Yue (441–513) proposed his teaching on the prosody of the Chinese utterance, the main point of which was the tonal and sound harmony of the syntagma. By that time, the idea of a final rhyme (*yun jiao*) as the main feature of elegant literature (*wen*) already existed and did not conflict with the new requirements of harmony. According to Liao Zhiqiang, over the next 60 years, the harmony proposed by Shen Yue began to be perceived as a more important feature of *wen*, whereas the previous requirement to have a rhyme, in fact, gradually lost its significance. In fact, since Liao Zhiqiang literally speaks about the loss of the rhyme concept and its dissolution in "phonetics" (*sheng yun*). To support this assumption, the scholar quotes Huang Kan's opinion that Xiao Yi in his essay purportedly attributed the previous "rhymed" *wen* to "literature (*wenbi*) of antiquity", and the "rhythmicized *wen*", having received a new meaning after years of Yongming, – to "*wenbi* of modernity". There was nothing like that in Xiao Yi's essay, as I have shown above.

Thus, if I talk about prose only, then I must assume that its one part belonged to *bi* since it was not based on the principles of tonal and sound harmony and the other – to *wen* as it was harmonious in accordance with the rules of Shen Yue. The main moment in this transformation of the *wen* concept was the development of the parallel prose style and this, according to Liao Zhiqiang and other authorities he refers on, was reflected in the above mentioned essay by Xiao Yi.

Liao Zhiqiang understands the concept of *wen* more broadly than Guo Shaoyu: according to him it should include rhythmic poetry with rhyme and rhythmic prose without rhyme. This postulate was stipulated by the Hong Kong theorist of literature. Accordingly, only ordinary non-rhythmic prose should remain for *bi*. Guo Shaoyu, I remind, ascribed to *bi* both kinds of prose. Liao Zhiqiang did not explain the question of rhymed works, not differing in tonal and

[4] See: [Riftin, 1994, p. 282–283 (referring to Wang Yunxi and Gu Xicheng)]; *Zhongguo wen xue piping shi,* 1993, vol. 1, p. 124; *Zhongguo wen xue piping tongshi*…, 1996, p. 192; Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 68; Liao Zhiqiang, 1999, p. 29].

[5] Concerning that *wen* in this phrase should be considered as a work, not as a form of speech, see also: [*Zhongguo wen xue piping tongshi*.., 1996, p. 192].

[6] Poems were written in classical Chinese (*wenyan*) where the words are monosyllabic.

sound harmony, belonging to *wen* or *bi*. Similarly, the division of written works into literature and non-literature is neither explained by him.

It is easy to see that, having offered his explanation of the reasons for the *wen* concept evolution in the fifth and sixth centuries, Liao Zhiqiang came to the same conclusions which had been made by Ruan Yuan in the nineteenth century. Following Huang Kan, Liao Zhiqiang had to point out the insignificance of the genre (*tizhi*) of the work for its attribution to *wen* or *bi*. On the other hand, also referring to Huang Kan, he was forced to refuse the purely formal characteristics of *wen* and indicate, in addition to rhytmicity, its second criterion, which is lyricism (*qing ci*) [Liao Zhiqiang, 1999, p. 30].

A certain deviation from the generally accepted practice of considering the correlation of parts of the early medieval literature-*wenbi* in the context of the formal characteristics of the work was outlined in a separate volume (devoted to the period under consideration) of the multivolume history of Chinese literary criticism written by Wang Yunxi (1926–2014) and his disciple, professor of the Fudan University Yang Ming (born in 1942). They suggested that Xiao Yi meant the quality criteria when dividing the works into categories of *wen* and *bi*. Bad poetry, despite the presence of rhyme in it, he allegedly attributed not to the elegant literature (*wen*) but to ordinary or business literature (*bi*) [*Zhongguo wen xue piping tongshi*.., 1996, p. 194, 197, 198]. The only reason for such a statement was Xiao Yi's phrase about "incompetence" (*bu bian*) of the Jin dynasty Yang Zuan in poetry (*wei shi*). As I have noted above, the phrase *bu bian* does indeed have the indicated meaning, usually implying the awkwardness of the physical movements of a person, but much more often it means "inconvenience". In this phrase, this second meaning can also be realized, and in this case the phrase really should mean the unfitness of the verses for the purposes pursued by Yang Zuan.

The "collected papers" (*ji*) in two juans and the "records" (*lu*) in one juan of the administrator (*tai shou*) of Longxi area (in the present-day Gansu province) by Yan Zuan are indicated in the bibliographic section of the authors' collections (*bie ji*) of *The History of Sui* (*Sui shu*), but one can only guess what exact works were included in them since these collections have not survived until present [... *Sui shu fu suoyin,* 1980, juan 35, zhi 30, p. 1063][7]. Judging by the name and later meaning of the term "lu", the collection of "records" should include service reports or reasoning on some topics.

It is more difficult to assume the composition of the works of from the "collected papers". Although the *Sui shu* calls the authors of "separate (authors') collections" (*bie ji*) the "people of *ci*" (*ci ren*), hardly all of them wrote exactly in the genre or style of "stanzas" (*ci*). Long before the Sui dynasty (581–618), this term was used to specify the contemporary literati compared to the literati of the past who were called "poets" (people of *shi*, *shi ren*)[8]. Du You (735–812) in his *Comprehensive Institutions* (*Tong dian*) referred to the "collection" (*ji*) of Yan Zuan when describing the positions of the imperial library, which may indicate a certain business document or historical sketch of the early medieval author [Tong dian, 1988, juan 26, p. 737].

There are few recollections of Yan Zuan's poems in historical sources. At the early fourth century, the commander (*xiaowei*) of the Xirong Army, Yan Zuan, presented his poems about the services of the deceased General Zhou Chu (236–297) to the throne. According to the quotation given, it can be seen that this was a classic verse with four hieroglyphs per line [...*Jin shu fu suoyin*, 1980, juan 58, p. 1571]. Another case of presenting some of Yan Zuan's own verse to the emperor is indicated in Li Shan's commentary (630–689) on the official report (*qi*) of the above mentioned Ren Fang in *Selections of Refined Literature* (*Wen xuan*); with only the

[7] The collection of works by Yan Zuan was also mentioned in *The Old History of Tang* by Liu Xu (888–947) and in *The New History of Tang* by Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072), etc. *Records* were no longer noted there. See: [… *Jiu Tang shu fu suoyin*, 1981, juan 47, zhi 27, p. 2061; ... *Xin Tang Shu fu suoyin*, 1981, juan 60, zhi 50, p. 1584].

[8] [... *Han shu fu suoyin*, 1986, juan 30, zhi 10, p. 1756]. See the commentary by Yan Shigu (581–645). Ban Gu (32–92) in his bibliographic description cited Yang Xiong (53 B.C.–18 A.D.).

phrase from the accompanying report (*biao*) by Yan Zuan [*Wen xuan*…, 1986, juan 39, p. 1795]. These facts, of course, don't indicate any participation of Yan Zuan in the innovative poetry of his time. Yan Zuan undoubtedly gained fame among his contemporaries and historical memory among the descendants in another way.

In the afterword to the section of biographies in *The History of Sui* compiled around 636 by Wei Zheng (580–643) and the others, the historiographer tells about the harm caused to the ruling house by the slander of unscrupulous dignitaries. And on the contrary, devoted and honest officials are exalted. As a positive example, Yan Zuan is given, information about his "attitude" (*feng*) of which is preserved in the "records of the past" (*qian zai*) […*Sui shu fu suoyin*, 1981, juan 62. p. 1488]. The earlier history of the southern Song dynasty (*Song shu*), the work on which began in 487, also mentions Yan Zuan as an honest official. Yan Zuan protested against the accusation of the imperial son Sima Yu (278–300) who was deprived of the title of heir to the throne and later killed. Yan's exhortations "supported the glory" (*he rong*) of the Jin dynasty, the historiographer compared them with the "report" (*zou shu*) of Guanlao, which entered the Han annals […*Song shu fu suoyin*, 1980, juan 61, p. 1639]. This is a report that was submitted by the ruler of the Huguansanlaoappanage Linghu Mao to the Han emperor Wu-di (141–87 B.C.), in which he uncovered false accusations against the deceased Liu Ju (128–91 B.C.), son of the emperor. Accused by insidious dignitaries, Liu Ju was forced to rebel, his troops were defeated and he committed suicide.

Song shu does not specify in which form Yan Zuan "submitted the exhortation" (*xian gui*) but it is obvious that his authority was closely related to this action. *The History of Jin* (*Jin shu*) compiled in 646–648 based on the materials of earlier historical works clarifies this issue. "Exhortations" (*gui*) here are called "reports to the emperor" (*shang shu*) and voluminous quotations from them leave no doubt that the reports were written in prose [… *Jin shu bing fu bian liu zhong*, 1980, juan 48, p. 1349–1355]. The author of the biography of Yan Zuan in *Jin shu* especially stressed that Yan was "the man of duty" (*yi shi*) – "being prostrated [he] gave a report (*fu zou*) and was expecting a severe execution" [ibid., p. 1357].

As we see, both before and after Xiao Yi (508–555), the reputation of Yan Zuan was determined by his fearlessness and reports addressed to the emperor. These reports were not poetic, so it is hardly legitimate to try to establish a connection between the literary manner or the favorite genre of Yan Zuan with poetry. In this case it is obvious that Xiao Yi opposed the poetry (*shi*) to ordinary literature (*bi*), i.e., his views were not fundamentally different from the views of Fan Ye (398–445) – elegant literature (*wen*) and just literature (*bi*) were distinguished by the presence or absence of rhyme.

To support our point of view, we refer to another well-known historical source also associated with Xiao Yi. In the 530s or 540s the official heir to the throne, Xiao Gang (503–551) and future Liang Emperor Jianwen-di (549–551) wrote a letter to his younger brother Xiao Yi who then had the princely title of Xiandong-wang. In the letter, he touched upon many questions of literature very similar to those reflected later in the essay by Xiao Yi [... *Liang shu fu suoyin*, 1980, juan 49, p. 690–691]. In particular, Xiao Gang complained about his sense of duality in relation to the literary standards of his time. Reforming the versification by Shen Yue and other poets in the late fifth century made new verses completely unlike the classical ones. Following the new standard would mean oblivion of the ancient classics and following its patterns would force to reject the new poetry but it had many values. Xiao Gang also complained about the deplorable present state of literature noting that this applies equally to both "verses (*shi*) and literature (*bi*)". Among the exemplary authors he called all the same poet Xie Tiao and prose writer Ren Fang. Other authorities were Shen Yue in poetry (*shi*) and Lu Chui (470–526) in literature (*bi*). Thus, the synonym for *wenb*i literature from Xiao Yi's essay in Xiao Gang's letter is *shibi* literature, which should be followed by the fact that Xiao Yi meant rhymed poetic genres by *wen*. Xiao Gang also called Zhang Shijian (Zhang Shuai, 475–527) and Zhou Shengyi

(Zhou She, 469–524) as the "great masters" (cheng jia shou) but he only points out certain genres for them – ode (*fu*) for the first one and reasoning (*bian*) for the second one.

The diversity of the opinions expressed, based on the ambiguous information of historical sources and their interpretations, one way or another brings Chinese researchers to the idea of the ambiguity of the *wenbi* word combination. Often, without any justification, it is simply stated that the term did not have a strict definition (see, for example: [*Zhongguo wen xue piping tongshi*..., 1996, p. 198]). The most popular approach for the academic literary studies became that formulated 80 years ago by Guo Shaoyu[9]. He was one of the first to turn to the reasons for changing the Chinese literary terminology of the early Middle Ages [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, chapter 19, p. 63–74]. According to his opinion, the basis of this process was the development of the literature concept. Having given his rather free interpretation of Xiao Yi's statement about the difference between the "scholarship" of antiquity and modernity, Guo Shaoyu pointed out that in the Han period (206 B.C.–220 A.D.), there was the term *wenzhang* for specifying a certain range of works. Along with it, the term *wenxue* was used. The latter was evolving from the designation of scholarship in general to the designation of the field of knowledge (*xuewen*) of a "decorated" word, different in its nature (*xingzhi*) from other branches of knowledge. In the early medieval period, these concepts became interdependent. Guo Shaoyu says that, in the same way as now, both terms referred to the same concept denoted in modern Chinese as the word "literature" but emphasized two sides of this concept: literature as a collection of literary works and literature as an academic discipline.

At the same time, there appeared the practice of compiling large collections of literary texts, which, basically, were works of new and very diverse genres of Han and later literature. This required a more precise classification of literary genres that could be based on either the similarity of the "character" (*xingzhi*) of literary works or the closeness of their form (*xingshi*).

Apparently, as early as in the daily speech of the Han era there was a "stable word combination" (*cheng ci*), in fact a disyllabic word, *wenbi* that denoted literature. The need for classification led to the rethinking of the attitude of the *wen* and *bi* morphemes in its composition. They were contrasted as particular concepts of rhymed works (*wen*) and unrhymed works (*bi*). This contrast by the presence of rhyme was purely formal, or, as Guo Shaoyu said, form-cum-genre (*xingshi tizhi*) contrast. According to Guo Shaoyu, it was used when the literature-*wenzhang* was meant.

In the field of traditional *wenxue* teaching, comprehension of literary works also took place but according to their "nature". Guo Shaoyu gives examples of other areas of knowledge, opposed to literature at that time. Here he indicates "[non-fiction] word" (*yan* or *yu*), which was not "decorated and euphonious" like *bi* and still less so as *wen*. Another example is related to the establishment of the four educational institutions for teaching "Confucianism" (*ru*), the Taoist-Confucian "teaching on the mysterious" (*xuan*), "history" (*shi*) and "literature" (*wen*) in the southern Song empire in 438 (see: […*Song shu fu suoyin*, 1980, juan 93, p. 2293–2294]). In the semantic field of the *wenxue* teaching, the word *wenbi* counterposed literary works to all other works and did not indicate the division of literary texts by the presence or absence of rhyme within literature. However, its two-part composition made it possible to relate the works of different nature, such as those that, according to Xiao Yi, conveyed "endless sadness" or combined "currents and sections" of various knowledge, with its parts. In the framework of the *wenxue* concept, Guo Shaoyu identified *wen* with purely literary genres ([*chun*] *wenxue*) and *bi* – with mixed literary genres (*za wenxue*) [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 72][10]. Thus, without formu-

[9] The first edition (only the first volume) of the "History of Chinese Literary Criticism" by Guo Shaoyu took place in 1934.

[10] As an example of "pure" genres (wen), Guo Shaoyu indicates poems and poems-fu, i.e., genres No. 6 and No. 8 in our Table. 1, as well as genres under the numbers 11–13; "Mixed" genres are represented by No. 16, 18, 22–24.

lating this thesis, he spoke of a certain quality of "literariness" of genres, a quality that was not anyway connected with the poetic or prosaic speech of the work. Soviet and Russian theorists of literature, as I recall, spoke about the quality of "elegance" (*wen*) of literature and specified its aesthetic nature.

The mixing or rather non-distinction of the two above-mentioned concepts was called by Guo Shaoyu as the main mistake of his predecessors and colleagues who studied the early medieval literature-*wenbi*. In their works, only the formal difference in genres by rhyme was taken into account [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 69, 73][11]. Guo Shaoyu particularly pointed to the erroneous understanding of the hieroglyph *wen* in the titles of early medieval general collections of literary texts. Understanding *wen* as only the rhymed poetry, the researchers made incorrect conclusions about the genre composition of such collections. In fact, in these titles the word *wen* was an abbreviated version of the word *wenbi*, that is, it represented the literature of all genres [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 73][12].

The Guo Shaoyu's idea of the evolution of the concept of literature, as far as I know, does not raise any special objections among modern researchers. I also agree with its general direction. At the same time, it is necessary to note some particular provisions and conclusions of this Chinese historian of literature, which need to be clarified and revised. The distinguishing of the concepts of "form" and "nature" is justified as a method of literary analysis but in reality, especially when it comes to the literary genre, it is almost impossible to separate them. Therefore, for example, Guo Shaoyu ultimately finishes the conversation about the literary "nature" in isolation from form with listing of purely literary genres, all of which are represented by rhymed genres. The connection between "nature" and "form" was not considered and stipulated by Guo Shaoyu.

Hence, as I think, some erroneous statements and conclusions of this scholar arise. Guo Shaoyu spoke of various synonyms for the word *wenbi*, which, in his opinion, represented either formal or common features of literature. At the same time, the author did not take into account any restrictions existed at that time for the formation of such synonyms. Among the synonyms, he, for example, specified also binomial *shiwen*, consisting of morpheme *shi* (verses) and *wen* (literature) [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 69, 71, 72]. Such a binomial exists in Chinese, but it appeared later than the period under consideration, only when the meaning of classical prose stuck with *wen*. According to the concept of Guo Shaoyu, which assumes the separation of "nature" and "form", nothing should prevent such a word from appearing before. For example, in this word rhymed genres (*shi*) could be contrasted by the form (like according to Guo Shaoyu) to other, unrhymed genres (*wen*). They could also be contrasted by a greater or lesser degree of literary character.

My search in the digitized texts of the official histories of the Southern and Northern dynasties revealed more than 130 cases of consistent use of the hieroglyphs *shi* and *wen* but in none of them the combination of these hieroglyphs was a binomial of two morphemes. This suggests either a different levels (as a part and as a whole) of the concepts *shi* and *wen* or their synonymy. The lack of *wenshi* binomial with the reverse order of morphemes rather argues in favor of the second assumption. At present, I have much more opportunities to determine a real set of terms for expressing concepts related to Chinese literature of the early Middle Ages. An analysis of their composition and frequency of use will undoubtedly introduce certain corrections into the known provisions of Guo Shaoyu.

It is necessary to dwell especially on another particular conclusion of this Chinese scholar referring to the identification of literature as a separate field of knowledge. Guo Shaoyu de-

[11] This, as I would like to add, led to a very broad interpretation of the very concept of rhyme.

[12] Let's note, for example, that in the *Selections of Refined Literature* (*Wen xuan*) of Xiao Tong (501–531) works of the genres belonging to *bi* category predominate by number.

clared that the word *wenshi*, the second morpheme in which means *history* in modern Chinese, was a synonym for *wenbi* in the early Middle Ages [Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 67, 69, 71, 72]. This conclusion formally contradicts the thesis previously stated by the author about the separation of literature (*wen*) and history (*shi*) in the education of the southern Song empire and also contradicts the message of Xiao Yi, according to whom the philosophers (*zi*) and history (*shi*) were separated from contemporary literature. Guo Shaoyu identifies the work of Ren Fang mentioned by Xiao Yi with the "history" (*shi*) but the involvement of more historical data makes Ren Fang a literary man, though connected with history, but only because he was the author of historical and literary work on the origin of new literary genres. Not so long ago, a fairly detailed article about Ren Fang was published confirming his authority as a literary man, not a historian [Yang Sai, 2012]. Finally, a less biased reading of other historical examples of Guo Shaoyu does not support his identification of "literature" (*bi*) with "history" (*shi*).

Now it is worthwhile to see how these same questions are covered in the treatise of Liu Xie. According to the instruction given in the text of the treatise, the work on *The Dragon...* was completed at the end of the reign of the southern Qi dynasty no earlier than 499 and no later than 500 [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1718–1719][13]. Liu Xie was well aware of the opposition of *wen* and *bi* of that time. However, in his treatise, he used this binomial only twice and each time spoke of the demands applicable to the literature or the work in general [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1064; vol. 3, p. 1262].

Significantly more often, Liu Xie called the literature as *wenzhang*. By it, he could mean both contemporary and ancient literature. At the same time, he drew attention to the non-written nature of ancient literature and contrasted it with a more recent written literature. In the chapter "Zhang Biao", Liu Xie specifies that initially the reports to the ruler were oral. Later, they both were submitted verbally and in writing (*yan bi*). The differences in the form of speech, according to Liu Xie's remark, did not influence the formation of genre features of business and gratitude reports. On the other hand, he explains the absence of the genres of reports in the Han bibliographies by the fact that, unlike the "melodious" (*yao yong*) works, which were necessarily recorded, mostly oral reports were submitted through state departments, and information from them was preserved only in historical or official records [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 830].

The absence of a fundamental distinction between oral and written forms of speech for the genre characteristics of a literary work was expressed by Liu Xie in his criticism of the statements of Yan Yanzhi that "*bi* as a [literary] kind (*ti*) is a [written] text [*wen*] [to oral] speech (*yan*)". To this genre, Yan attributed the commentary literature (*zhuanji*) and the canonical monuments themselves considered as "speech" (*yan*) [ibid., vol. 3, p. 1627]. What exactly he meant by "speech" remains unclear, so there are several research interpretations but they all agree that the "speech" of the ancient classics was "non-literary" in one way or another (see: [Golygina, 2008(2), p. 140; Guo Shaoyu, 1992, p. 69–70]). Based on the fact that in the commentary *Wen yan* (*Explanations to the text*) the canonical *Book of Changes* is called "text" (*wen*), Liu Xie denies Yan's statement that the canon cannot be attributed to written speech (*bi*).

His general approach to this issue is more interesting, since it reflects the far from formal but meaningful criteria for the definition of genres. "Canon and comments are to some extent both speech (*yan*) and writing (*bi*). The writing (*bi*) is the assistant of the speech (*yan*): it can be strong, it can be weak. *Six classics* is irreducible due to its classical depth, and not because it has the advantage or disadvantage of being a speech (*yan*) or writing (*bi*)," says Liu Xie [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1629].

[13] See also: [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1831]. Here, the "people of the past" (gu ren) include the literary men of the southern Song dynasty (420–479).

Concerning the sound structure of works, Liu Xie spoke of harmony and rhyme. He called harmony (*he*) as the "mutual sequence of different sounds" and rhyme (*yun*) as "the consonance of the same sounds" [ibid., vol. 3, p. 1228, 1233]. The selection of sounds in the line for a certain rhyme was considered easy by him and the harmonic combination of sounds by its decrease and increase of the tone – difficult. It is impossible to say exactly how terminologically strict Liu Xie was in this description – using synonyms he could speak of creating a literary work in general – but here we have a possible example of his understanding of the works difference by the form of speech: "[Given that] writing (*zhu*) of *bi*-work is an easy affair, choosing harmony is extremely difficult. Writing (*zhui*) of *wen*-work is the most difficult thing, [when] writing in rhyme is very easy". According to this description, it is obvious that the difference between *bi* and *wen* was in rhyme. Sound harmony is mentioned here only in connection with the *bi* genres. It remains unclear whether it was common for all *bi*-works – harmony is mentioned by Liu Xie only in connection with the works of the "harmonic scale" or "harmonic genres" (*he ti*).

The fact that harmony was equally inherent to poetry, we learn from the following description. Liu Xie divides the prosody of the works into two categories comparing the first with the pipe (*yue*), which has a constant tuning, and the second with the psaltery (*se*), which tuning of the strings can be changed with the help of small stands (*zhu*). The authors of the first category are the famous poets Cao Zhi (192–232) and Pan Yue. The second category is represented by Lu Ji (261–303) and Zuo Si (250–305) who are known for their odes (*fu*). The issue of rhyme, according to Liu Xie, was much simpler since its violation was immediately obvious like a "square wedge [in a round hole]", so "poets, connecting rhymes, in their majority [were] accurate".

In historical literary studies, Liu Xie's statement about the division of contemporary literature into *wen* and *bi* is cited invariably but a part of this statement is usually omitted. In the 44th chapter of the treatise, we read: "Nowadays it is usually said that something is *wen* (work) and something is *bi* (composition). It is believed that the one without rhyme is *bi* and the one with rhyme is *wen*. [Confucius's saying] "elegance (*wen*) serves to supplement the word (*yan*)" (see: [*Duanju Shisan jing jingwen*…, 1991, p. 148 (Xiang-gong, the 25th year)]) equally related to [rhymed] *Shi* [*jing*] and [unrhymed] *Shu* [*jing*]. The division in two names [appeared only] recently!" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1622–1623] Confucius' authority for Liu Xie was indisputable.The second chapter of Liu Xie's treatise "Evidence from the Sage" ("Zheng Sheng") is devoted to the views of Confucius on "elegance" (*wen*). This Confucius's quote is also cited there [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 37]. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that the "current" and "recent" division was more important for Liu Xie than the opinion of Confucius.

Liu Xie characterized the works on the basis of literariness or "elegance" (*wen*) and "essence" (*zhi*). At the time Krivtsov noted: "In Chinese Confucian aesthetics, the concept of *wen* as an artistic form is closely associated with the concept of "zhi" meaning a certain original content of the work, regardless of its ideological and moral aspect and artistic merit" [Krivtsov, 1978, p. 162]. The contrast of these concepts goes back to Confucius's *Lun yu*: "The teacher said: The essence (*zhi. – L.S.*) in the simpleton outperformed the gloss (*wen. – L.S.*) / In the pedant, the gloss outperformed the whole essence, / Only in a noble man / The essence and the gloss are evenly mixed" [Confucius, 1999, p. 200 (Russian translation by I. I. Semenenko)]. Academician N. I. Konrad and L. S. Perelomov translate *zhi* as "feature of the nature" [Conrad, 1977, p. 416; Perelomov, 1998, p. 344].

Krivtsov, in general, was right when he said that "Liu Xie subordinates the artistic merit to the content of zhi" [Krivtsov, 1978, p. 162]. Liu Xie singled out several instances of the relationship between the "essence" (*zhi*) and its external representation in "decoration" (*wen*). As an example, he brought water and a tree. Their "decorations" are, respectively, swell on the water and quivering flower petals. In this case, "decoration (*wen*) is attached (*fu*) to the essence

(*zhi*)". In other words, the even surface of the water without ripples will not change anything in our understanding of the naturally formless water, just as the absence of flowers can't prevent us from recognizing a tree because of its clear outline. In other cases, "the essence relies on (*dai*) the decoration". Deprived of their coloring after the fur shearing, the noble tiger and leopard will not outwardly differ from the ignoble dog and ram; skinny leather of a rhinoceros will become truly valuable only after its covering with a red varnish. The same, if not greater, degree of freedom of the "form" from the "material", Liu Xie must have been implied in the description of "words weaving" (*zhi ci*), when "theshine is being created (*wei*)". "The essence" in this process is the described "inner world" (*xing ling*) and "images of the external world" (*qi xiang*) [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1148, 1150].

No less and perhaps more often, Liu Xie uses the word "zhi" attributively as a definition or predicate denoting a kind of initial (or zero) degree of literary form by this word. Such a form is distinguished by its primeval or straightforwardness, it does not have what it is called "mind-set on an expression" (see: [Tomashevskiy, 2002, p. 28]).

Considering the historical evolution of poetry (*yong ge*) of the "nine epochs", Liu Xie speaks of the tendency of "conformity" (*he*) of intention (*zhi*) to "rules" or, most likely, "measure of elegance" (*wen ze*) of his time [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1084]. In the elegance, there was an accumulation of quality as the literature of each subsequent dynasty was built with an eye to its predecessor. Describing the songs of the times of the mythical Yellow Emperor, Liu Xie calls them "simple to the extreme" (*zhi zhi zhi*), i.e., naïvly artistic but that's why sincere. Next there is the growth of elegance to the degree of "beauty and classicism" of Shang-Yin (XVI–XI centuries B.C.) and Zhou (XI–III centuries B.C.) era. Then in the ancient Chinese kingdom of Chu and under the Han dynasty the poetry became "exaggeratedly catchy" (*chi er yan*) and by the beginning of the southern Song dynasty – "pseudo-new" (*e er xin*). This historical transition from "simplicity" (*zhi*) to "fake" (*e*) was explained by Liu Xie with "attention to modernity and negligence to antiquity", "clouding of trend" (*mei feng*) and "decline in vitality" (*shuaiqi*)" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1084–1090]. Pointing out that "elegance (*wen*) and simplicity (*zhi*) are attached (*fu*) to [internal] nature (*xing*) and its [external] appearance (*qing*)," he repeatedly stressed the historical variability of the ratio of *zhi* and *wen* or the need for a proper combination of *wen* and *zhi* [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 594, 888, 1094; vol. 3, p. 1159, 1567, 1653, 1723, 1770, 1847, 1859].

Thus, the quality of elegance or literariness was recognized by Liu Xie as measurable by its degree. The oldest verses made of the two-word lines were "simple" (*zhi*) and then in subsequent epochs they became more and more "decorated" (see: [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1270; vol. 2, p. 1084, 1089–1090]). However, this commensurability is indicated by him not for all literature in general but only for close genres, in this case poetic ones.

Liu Xie argues that "the structure of the literature by genres (*ti*) has a consistency" manifested in the "succession [of their] names and principles (*ming li*)." The literary (*wenci*) "style", which Liu Xie literally calls "life force" (*qi li*), exists in the context of change [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1079 (see the commentary on the term "qi" on p. 1080)]. Here and above, our translation of "vitality" refers to the Chinese term *qi*, for which in the philosophical literature the values "pneuma", "breath", etc. are usually given [Kobzev, 2006(2), p. 549–551]. Historical changes in the "decoration" (*wen*) of poetry, as I recall, were just caused by the weakening of "vitality" (*qi*). Thus, although the implementation of the genre in specific works by pneumatic agents (pneumas) could change, the genre itself as a "principle" (*li*) or "invisible device" [Kobzev, 2006(1), p. 295–297] was not subject to change.

Another reason for changing "decoration" is called "clouding" or "obnubilation of the trend". The literary category for "trend" (*feng*) was examined in sufficient detail by Lisevich [Lisevich, 1979, p. 64–98]. He also pointed out the variety of its interpretations and the need to consider it together with the "gu" category ("bone") – *feng* and *gu* "together, as a single con-

cept, began to serve to define a certain inner core of the work" [Lisevich, 1979, p. 88]. Realizing the united term *fenggu* as the "different levels of spirituality" of the work, Lisevich defined the "disembodied and ethereal" *feng* as "an element of some inner basis of the work", and *gu* – as "architectonics" or as content in everyday meaning – "secondary content, external relating to the *feng*". He noted Liu Xie's "pronounced figurativeness of the *fenggu* category", who "likens the work of literature to a living organism", and in this vein provided his selective translations from the author's explanations, which, however, only applied to the definition of *gu* [Lisevich, 1979, p. 88–89].

In the context of the topic of this article, we cannot be distracted by the analysis of available translations and the analysis of the Liu Xie's term. Concerning *fenggu*, it will be enough to add that Liu Xie refers this term to "verbal expressions" (*ci*), which "rely on bones", and "feelings" (*qing*) of the work that "contain a trend". The coherence of the text indicates the presence of "bone [skeleton]" (*gu*) in the work, and the clarity of the mood – the presence of "trend" (*feng*) [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1048]. In modern Chinese, the complex word *ciqing* denotes a kind of attractiveness or noticeability of the work in connection with the "temperament and interest" contained in it.

To clarify the connection between the concepts of *gu* and *feng*, Liu Xie gives an example of the relationship, relatively speaking, of the exterior and temperament of birds. Outwardly beautiful and fleshy pheasants fly poorly but the eagle and the falcon devoid of colors fly high because they have strong bones and decisive temper. Therefore, when "trend and bone" lack "colorfulness" (*cai*), then "birds of prey" gather in the literature, and when "colorfulness" lacks "trend and bone" – then "pheasants". Of course, according to Liu Xie a mythical phoenix (*feng*), which is "richly decorated and flies high", is ideal in this respect [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1064].

It is also important to note that both *feng* and *gu* were considered by Liu Xie within the framework of one "body" (*ti*) and acted as secondary concepts in relation to it. According to Liu Xie, the "body" (*ti*) "promotes the skeleton" (*shu hai*) and the "body" again (but this time represented in the original as *xing* (shape, form) synonymous) "clothes in pneumas-qi" (*bao qi*). And further in the chapter "Feng gu" Liu Xie repeatedly refers to the "body" (*ti*) as to the initial moment in the selection of words and the expression of idea, and this does not allow the "new ideas" to be "erratic" (*luan*) and "unexpected expressions" to be "repulsive" (*du*) [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1048, 1059, 1066].

In this chapter, Liu Xie once defines "the body" calling it *wen ti*, i.e., either "the body of the *wen*-work", or, as a term, "genre" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1066]. In this case the exact interpretation of this phrase remains unclear, but then in the chapter "Wholeness [of the work]" (*Fu hui*) he definitely speaks of "the need to correctly distinguish a genre (*tizhi*)" and only after that continues that "feelings and intentions should be made the soul [of the work], facts and intentions – its bone marrow, words and beauties – muscles and skin"[14].

As we can see, the other reason determined by Liu Xie for the historical changes in "decoration" – "trend" (*feng*) or even in the unfolded form, "the trend and the frame" (*fenggu*), according to his own idea, operated within the genre. Only works of the same genre could differ by decoration (*wen*) and simplicity (*zhi*). Describing the historical changes in the genre of *dui ce*, which was a report in a response to the request of the emperor and used to select and promote officials, Liu Xie pointed out that under Han there were appointed "men of extensive knowledge" (*bo shi*) and at the court "pheasants" assembled; under Jin (266–420) there were selected "outstanding talents" (*xiu cai*) and first of all there were "roe deer" (*jun*) [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 912]. It should be explained that roe deer were considered shy and fast animals

[14] [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1593]. In the translation by Lisevich, I have only replaced his "bone and frame" with "bone marrow" ("gu sui" in the original), see: [Lisevich, 1979, p. 89].

and therefore a little wild. However, Liu Xie does not point to any special "decoration" of the Han reports at all. The reports were, we would say, too "theoretical" – the Han people "got stuck in abstract conversations". But from the time of the Wei kingdom (220–266) and the Jin dynasty, they started to care about "elegance" (*wen li*) little, i.e., they did not even pay attention to that small measure of elegance that was sufficient for that genre. Liu Xie considered both reports "erroneous" (*shi*), i.e., not corresponding to the standard of the genre, and the reason for this was, although in different ways (*yi*) but equally erroneous (*shi*) practice of selecting officials [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 912].

Again we meet a certain understanding of literary or elegance, which is common for this genre as a certain measure of the ratio of "simplicity" (*zhi*) and "decoration" (*wen*). Liu Xie's statement that *wen* and *zhi* should "correlate" (*xiang cheng*) or "being different, correspond [to each other]" (*bian qie*) seems to be attributed to the form and content [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1770; vol. 2, p. 594]. However, when he talks about "*zhi* and *wen* changing" in time, about mixing *zhi* and *wen* in a work or about the fact that the work should balance "between *zhi* and *wen* in the interval between elegance (*ya*) and plainness (*su*)" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1653, 1723, 1847; vol. 2, p. 1094], there is no doubt that here he means two poles of elegance, presented precisely in the form of a work.

According to what has been said above, the following conclusions should be made. The theory of Chinese literature of Liu Xie should be called genre theory, not because it contains an enumeration or classification of contemporary genres but because it is based on the primary concept of the genre. Literariness outside the genre for Liu Xie did not exist. Inside the genre, the concept of elegance (*wen*) was conjugated with its opposite – simplicity (*zhi*). For a particular genre, ideally, there was a certain ratio between elegance and simplicity. In terms of terminology, this ratio was denoted by a word with a positive value of elegance – *wen*. Works of different genres could not be compared by this quality in principle, since by virtue of their genre identity embodied various prescribed ratios of *wen* and *zhi*. The report, written in a too elegant style, could not be more or less elegant (*wen*) than a poorly written verse. However, a poorly written verse in the terms of literature was worse than a report performed in the classical style prescribed by its genre [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1124, 1125]. Liu Xie, talking about the reports (*jianji*) of Liu Zhen (died in 217), noted their either beauty or the parallelism of style (*li*) and the "exhortation for the good". The reports of Liu Zhen, as Liu Xie believed, "were in fact more beautiful than [his] poetry" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 939].

Based on these conclusions, we can now proceed to considering the principles of the order of chapters devoted to literary genres in the treatise *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*. Contemporary literary studies, as we pointed out above, assign an analytical meaning to the order of these chapters sequence. The more aesthetically important "elegant" rhymed (rhythmic) genres (*wen*) go before less aesthetically important or less "literary" non-rhymed (non-rhythmic) genres (*bi*).

The most important, first-hand information about the structure of the treatise is contained in the final 50th chapter of the treatise "Declaration of intent" ("Xu zhi"), a kind of afterword to the entire treatise [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1898–1939]. Following the work of Fan Wenlan, our theorists of literature start the list of contemporary genres with Ch. 5 "An analysis of the [Li] sao" ("Bian Sao") [Liu Xie, 1962, p. 4; Riftin, 1994, p. 279–280; Kravtsova, 2008, p. 251]. However, in the afterword, Liu Xie ascribes this chapter to a separate part of the first five chapters "On key issues in the literature" as I have said (see: [Stezhenskaya, 2013, p. 19–26]). The author of a rather authoritative commentary on *The Dragon...* Zhan Ying (1916–1998) also showed that Liu Xie did not include the chapter "Bian sao" in the list of contemporary genres in his afterword (see commentary 3 in: [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2. p. 1080]). In addition, another well-known researcher of the treatise Wang Yuanhua (1920–2008) also pointed to the different composition of the "genre" chapters and the chapter "Bian Sao" as an argument [Wang Yu-

anhua, 1984, p. 227–233]. In Chinese literary studies, the opinion about the beginning of the list of genres from Chapter 6, "An exegis of poetry" (*Ming shi*), is currently predominant [*Zhongguo wen xue piping tongshi*..., 1996, p. 367].

Thus, the line with the number 0 (chapter 5) should be removed from our Table 1 and then 20 chapters will remain on the list (from the sixth to the 25th). In the afterword in regard to these chapters, Liu Xie reported the following: "When [I] began to talk about *wen* and enumerate *bi*, I put the distinctions and differences, started from the source to show the end. [I] explained the names to make sense. [I] selected works to form chapters; laid down principles to emphasize the unity of the common. The first chapters [of the treatise] placed in front, so that the general plan was clear".

Reflected in our translation, the separate use of parts of the *wenbi* binomial usually serves as the basis for the well-founded assumption that Liu Xie in the spirit of his time divided all literary genres into rhymed (*wen*) and unrhymed (*bi*). However, if one takes into account the style of parallel prose of Liu Xie, such a reading will not be the only possible one. After all, if we consider the additions separately, then the verbs that control them will also have to be considered not parts of the disyllabic verb *lunxu* (meaning *to discuss, to interpret*) but independent verbs with different meanings – *to discuss* for *lun* and *to enumerate* for *xu*. However, there is no difference in the style of analysing the genres of any group in the text of the treatise.

The same style of parallel prose allows us to consider direct objects *wen* and *bi* in this sentence as independent words not related to each other as morphemes in a binomial. In this case, the nature of the objects should be absolutely different and the phrase will take the following form: "taking into account *wen*, enumerate *bi*". Such a tied use of the *lun* and *xu* verbs occurs in historical sources (see: [*Quan Tang wen*, 1987, juan 13, p. 1050–91]). This interpretation would have been very close to the views of our theorists of literature since it establishes the principle of enumeration of genres by their "elegance". However, firstly, the genres of Liu Xie are nowhere named *bi*. Secondly, as we tried to show above, this principle of comparing genres by the index or measure of "elegance" would contradict the genre concept of Liu Xie. At one time, Riftin drew attention to the fact that the criterion of "literariness (*wen*) or decoration of style" was not followed in the classification of Liu Xie [Riftin, 1994, p. 282].

In our opinion, in this case the most general interpretation of this phrase will be the most accurate. Liu Xie wanted only to say that he "interpreted" (*lunxu*) the "literature" (*wenbi*). To this, perhaps, we can add that he meant the contemporary literature. Only having had this single compound object of description, Liu Xie could talk about "distinctions and differences" (of the genres) in the next phrase[15], otherwise this phrase would be redundant for the skillful stylist Liu Xie. Official *History of Liang* (*Liang Shu*) neither does specify the division of the genres by Liu Xie into the categories of *wen* and *bi*. Here it is only said that in the treatise Liu Xie "examined (*lun*) ancient and contemporary genres (*wenti*), gave their brief descriptions (*yin*) and arranged them in order (*ci*)" [...*Liang Shu fu suoyin*, 1980, juan 50, p. 710]. The later *History of the Southern Dynasties* (*Nan shi*) only reports that Liu Xie "treated (*lun*) of ancient and contemporary genres" [... *Nan shi fu suoyin*, 1981, juan 72, p. 1782].

The sequence of "genre" chapters is not the only list of literary genres in *The Dragon*.... Considering the Confucian *Five Classics* (*Wu jing*) as a kind of basis for the early medieval literary theory, Liu Xie pointed to the conscious use of genre forms in classical Confucian books. Starting with them, he provided a "source" (*zong*), or rather, the tradition of literary genre practice of his time. In Chapter 3 "The Classics as literary sources" ("Zong jing"), the order of enumeration of genres is given by the sequence of Confucian classical books in *Five Classics*. We present it below in *Table 2*. Here the genre names given earlier in *Table 1* are provided in

[15] An example of the application of the words qu and you regarding genre "zhu zi" see: [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 663].

transcription. The names of previously not mentioned genres are given in hieroglyphic writing, transcription and our translation. For all genres, we specify numbers of the chapters, in which they were examined by Liu Xie. According to Liu Xie, other genres and even other, in addition to Confucianism, philosophical trends in the terms of genre were associated with the *Five Classics*: "[no matter how] one hundred schools [try] to "jump", they eventually remain within the circle of [classics]" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 78–79].

T a b l e 2

Literary genres in the list of Chapter 3 "The Classics as literary sources"

No.	Genre name	Chapter number	Belonging to the tradition of the classic
1	lun	18	易 *Changes*
2	shuo	18	易 *Changes*
3	辭 ci (utterance)	18	易 *Changes*
4	序 xu (exposition)	18	易 *Changes*
5	zhao	19	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
6	ce	19	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
7	zhang	22	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
8	zou	23	書 *The Most Venerable Book*
9	fu	8	詩 *Songs*
10	song	9	詩 *Songs*
11	歌 ge (song)	7	詩 *Songs*
12	zan	9	詩 *Songs*
13	ming	11	禮 *Rites*
14	lei	12	禮 *Rites*
15	zhen	11	禮 *Rites*
16	zhu	10	禮 *Rites*
17	ji	25	春秋 *Spring and Autumn*
18	zhuan	16	春秋 *Spring and Autumn*
19	meng	10	春秋 *Spring and Autumn*
20	xi	20	春秋 *Spring and Autumn*

It should be noted that, in comparison with Fan Wenlan's analytically concluded relation of genre *meng* (an appeal to the gods, see *Table 1*, No. 7, Chapter 10) with *Rites* (*Li*), the author of the treatise pointed out its connection with the chronicle *Spring and Autumn* (*Chun qiu*) (*Table 2*, No. 19).

Another enumeration of genres is given by Liu Xie in Chapter 30, "On choice of style" ("Ding shi") [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 1125]. The chapter is devoted to the selection of the most appropriate form or structure (*zhi*) of a work which is dictated, on the one hand, by "feeling" or "circumstances" (*qing*), and on the other hand, by genre (*ti*). Liu Xie warns the reader that successful mastery of genres means understanding their differences and then indicates the stylistic features of genres. For convenience, I also list this enumeration in the form of a table below.

Table 3

Stylistic features of genres (according to Liu Xie)

No.	Genre name	Chapter number	Feature of style
1	zhang	22	exemplary and classic (*dian ya* 典雅)
2	biao	22	exemplary and classic
3	zou	23	exemplary and classic
4	yi	24	exemplary and classic
5	fu	8	freshness and beauty (*qing li* 清麗)
6	song	9	freshness and beauty
7	ge	7	freshness and beauty
8	shi	6	freshness and beauty
9	符 fu (document)	25	clarity and certainty (*ming duan* 明斷)
10	xi	20	clarity and certainty
11	shu	25	clarity and certainty
12	yi	20	clarity and certainty
13	shi 史	16	main and most important (*he yao* 核要)
14	lun	18	main and most important
15	序 xu (exposition)	18	main and most important
16	注 zhu (note)	18	main and most important
17	zhen	11	great depth (*hong shen* 宏深)
18	ming	11	great depth
19	bei	12	great depth
20	lei	12	great depth
21	連珠 lianzhu (“pearl thread”)	14	mastery and charm (qiao yan 巧艷)
22	七辭 qici (seven-stanzas)	14	mastery and charm

It is easy to see that the sequence of genres in these three lists is significantly different. In the last two cases, it is more or less understandable since Liu Xie stipulated the principle of enumeration. In all three lists (including Table 1), the number of *bi* genres exceeds the number of *wen* genres.

B. L. Riftin referring to the unnamed “Chinese researchers”, in fact, challenged the breakdown of Fan Wenlan with the interim chapters 14 and 15 (see Table 1) and indicated that in the list of chapters of the treatise the watershed based on the principle of “rhyme as the main criterion for decoration” passed between chapter 15 “Joke-*xie* and riddle-*yin*” and chapter 16 “Historical writings” (“Shizhuan”) [Riftin, 1994, p. 281, 282]. In this case, according to the number of chapters, rhymed genres (*wen*) and unrhymed genres (*bi*) turn out to be exactly balanced. Therefore, we can assume that Liu Xie, even if he did not consider the separation of genres into *wen* and *bi* theoretically important, nevertheless formally used this principle to organize the material of 20 chapters of his treatise. It remains only to verify this assumption.

First, one should refer to Chapter 14, “Mixed genres” or “Miscellanea” (“Za wen”). Riftin believed that in this chapter mostly the outdated well-known as early as in ancient times genres were described [Riftin, 1994, p. 281]. However, Liu Xie in this case only talked about the variety of titles of these works but referred all of them to the genre or genres of *za wen* [Liu Xie,

1989, vol. 1, p. 519]. Separately stipulated by Liu Xie, the genres of "seven-stanza" (*qi*) and "pearl threads" (*lian zhu*) now belong to poetry. "Seven-stanza" was a composition of seven parts, usually formed as a dialogue. This new genre for the early Middle Ages (see *Table 3*, lines 22 and 23) was a kind of modification of the ode but besides its special structure it was also characterized by a frequent lack of rhyme. It was a stage in the gradual "prosaization" of the medieval ode. Another new genre, *lian zhu*, got its name because it was a short poetic form in which the end of one line served as the beginning for another one, thus there was a kind of "stringing", i.e., joining (*lian*) the pearls-lines (*zhu*). Judging by the remaining samples, not all lines of such poem were rhymed.

The criterion of rhyme is not directly named by Riftin for singling out "joke" (*xie*) and riddle (*yin*) into a separate chapter but the list of genres of "elegant literature" was supposed to end on the 15th chapter [Riftin, 1994, p. 281]. Riftin considered these genres separately by their original content. Liu Xie, most likely, had another relatively new genre in mind, called a disyllabic word – *xieyin*. Under *yin*, he meant not a riddle, but a kind of mockery or a hint. Only in the kingdom of Wei, "the mockery (*chao yin*) of a noble man became a riddle (*miyu*)," he says [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 547]. It is difficult to say anything definite about the form of speech of the *xieyin* genre. Guo Pu (276–324) noted the low literary status of *xieyin*, perhaps because it "did not have a deep rhyme" […*Jin shu bing fu bian liu zhong*, juan 72, p. 1905]. Riftin was absolutely right when attributed the genres of this chapter to folklore. Liu Xie pointed out that "the place of *xieyin* in literature (*wenci*) is similar to the place of small utterances (*xiaoshuo*) in nine [philosophical] schools of thought. *Xiaoshuo* were collected by minor officials in order to "see and hear [the mood of the subjects] well" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 556][16].

Riftin pointed out the inconsistency of Liu Xie in relation to another folklore genre – the proverb (*yan*) [Riftin, 1994, p. 282][17]. This genre is described by a medieval theorist in the last "genre" chapter 25 "Epistolary writing" ("Shu ji"). If the rhyme according to Liu Xie was a principle of classification of genres, then this last chapter in the list certainly had to list only prose genres. Chinese proverbs, as we know, are mostly rhymed [Pryadokhin, 1977, p. 17].

Liu Xie also ascribed the genre *feng shan* (Sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, see *Table 1*, Chapter 21, No. 25) to the supposed section of unrhymed literature (*bi*). The works in this genre that have survived until present make us doubt that the genre was prosaic. With no less reason, it can be called poetic and in extreme cases – mixed. Liu Xie especially notes the failure of Handan Chun (132–221), whose work, although it was sophisticated enough in technics, still "could not reach a success". When writing his work Handan, as Liu Xie said, "collected rhymes" (*ji yun*) [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 814].

As we see, the form of speech, or more exactly, the rhyme itself, also had no decisive importance in the classification of the genres of Liu Xie. Neither the lack of rhyme in the *xieyin* genre prevented it from being attributed to *wen*, nor did the presence of rhyme prevent the proverb from being attributed to the *bi* genres. The general uncertainty of the "literary" criteria in the chapters following, as well as the variability of the "literary" criteria in other lists of Liu Xie, makes us turn to the examination of other, in addition to the literary ones, possible principles for organizing chapters in this medieval treatise.

The mention of ancient and contemporary genres from *The Dragon...* in the *Liang shu* and *Nan shi* prompted us to check the historical principle in the Liu Xie's list of the chapters. In the historical perspective, as we pointed out, Ren Fang listed the contemporary literary genres. We were not able to determine the principles regulating the distribution of chapters. The origin of

[16] About *xiaosho*, see also: [Riftin, 1994, p. 272].

[17] Let us note that Liu Xie, of course, did not "bring together proverbs and condolences". The different hieroglyph was used for the word *condolence* but the hieroglyph with the main meaning "proverb" could also be used as its phonetic substitute.

most genres was attributed to the ancient times by Liu Xie. He himself pointed out that in literary assessments "he did not take into account antiquity and modernity" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1933].

Liu Xie was not the first to undertake classification of literary genres. The preceding classifications were in sufficient detail described by Riftin [Riftin, 1994, p. 271–278]. Liu Xie has repeatedly stated in his treatise his critical study of the works of his predecessors. Therefore, he could act according to the model, proceed from some known order of enumeration of genres. He pointed out the similarity and difference of his views with the views of his predecessors but most likely did not copy someone else's classification since he believed that in literary criticism "the principles actually cannot be the same" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 3, p. 1933]. At the same time, the genres he named in the "poetic" chapters (chapters 6–15) are, in sum, very similar to the genres in the exposition of *Literary Trends* ("Wenzhang liubie ji") of Zhi Yu (died in 311/312) – *song* (ch. 9, No. 4), *shi* (ch. 6, No. 1), *qici* (ch. 14), *fu* (ch. 8, No. 3), *zhen* (ch. 11, No. 9), *ming* (ch. 11, No. 8), *lei* (ch. 12, No. 10), *aici* (ch. 13, No. 12), *wen* (ch. 13), *beiming* (ch. 12, No. 11) [Zhi Yu, 1935][18]. Now it is impossible to say what exactly was the order of their following in this work, because its existing text was composed later of extant quotes in other written monuments.

In *The Dragon...* there are direct indications that Liu Xie was oriented in his work on enumeration of genres in the "Bibliographical Description" ("Yi wen zhi") of the *History of Han* by Ban Gu (32–92), based on the bibliographies of Liu Xiang (77–6 BC) and Liu Xin (50 BC–23 AD). According to these Han works, Liu Xie put genres of notes and records (*shu ji*) at the very end of his description. He noted that although these genres are "the latest in the bibliography (*yi wen*) [by Ban Gu], they are the first in the management service" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 942][19]. Similarly, the position of Chapter 15 on the genres of *xie* and *yin* was determined by the presence of the book *Yin shu* at the end of the section "Ode" of the Han bibliographies [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 545]. His chapter 8 dedicated to the genre of ode, Liu Xie begins with the definitions of this genre by Liu Xiang and Ban Gu, in whose bibliographies there were relevant sections [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 272]. Liu Xie explains distinguishing of the genre of *yuefu* in a separate chapter with the fact that Liu Xiang considered this genre separately from the "poems" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 263]. In the chapter on the genres of reports, Liu Xie considered it necessary to say why these genres were not reflected in the lists of Liu Xin and Ban Gu [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 830]. On the contrary, in chapter 17, "The Philosophers" ("Zhu zi"), he explained the existence of a large number of works by Liu Xiang in a section with the same name due to the fact that they were not affected by the burning during the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.) [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 633][20].

We have already noted above that Liu Xie contrasted the Han bibliographical section of the "philosophers" to literature, when he compared the literary genre of the *xieyin* and the "philosophical" genre of *xiaoshuo* [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 1, p. 556][21]. Defining the genre of literature as "philosophers" he attributed to it only works representing a certain doctrine, "widely enlightening everything" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 656]. The fictitiousness of characters and situations, noted as a literary feature of the genre of ode, for the literary writing of philosophical works, according to Liu Xie, was unacceptable [Riftin, 1994, p. 286; Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 642].

[18] In this list, the chapter number and the genre number are indicated in parentheses according to Table 1. Without the indication of the genre number in the list *qici* (seven-stanza) and *wen* (a funeral word) are provided, which, like the *aici* (ch. 13, No. 12), seems to be a subgenre of *ai* (lament for the one died young, ch. 13, No. 12).

[19] The interpretation of this phrase by Riftin differs somewhat from mine, see: [Riftin, 1994, p. 283].

[20] Liu Xie talks about Liu Xiang, but calls the bibliography "The Seven Descriptions" ("Qi lue") of his son Liu Xin.

[21] About Xiaosho, see also: [Riftin, 1994, p. 272].

In the Han bibliographies, a special section of history was not specified. Historical works were collected under the heading of the chronicle *Chun qiu* in the section of Confucian classics (*liu yi*). During the early Middle Ages, the imperial bibliographers began to single out history in a special section. Liu Xie devoted chapter 16, "Shizhuan", which occupies the first position in the alleged block of unrhymed *bi* genres, to historical works. Our scholars usually associated literariness with only certain parts of historical works – biographies and concluding "praises" (*zan*) [Golygina, 1974, p. 197; Riftin, 1994, p. 282]. Liu Xie in both the title of the chapter and its text pointed to the original genre of "canonical commentary" (*zhuan*) created by the historian Zuo to the chronicle of *Chun qiu*. Then, in the Han period, thanks to the works of Sima Tan and his son Sima Qian (145/135–86 B.C.), the genre of the historical work became consisting of several parts. It included annals, biographies, treatises and chronological tables [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 576; Vyatkin, 1974, p. 221–228]. For the generic title of the genre of the historical work, Liu Xie used the term *jizhuan* and indicated that the works of this genre "present the events by years; [their] text is not a general discussion but a record of what is authentic (*shi*)" [Liu Xie, 1989, vol. 2, p. 604; Vyatkin, 1974, p. 226][22].

The above information is sufficient to speak of the peculiarity of the literary doctrine of Liu Xie for the early medieval period in general and its polemic relationship with contemporary literary thought of the middle of the fifth – middle of the sixth century.

Formal division of literature into elegant (*wen*) and business (*bi*) typical for this period was not important for Liu Xie. The feature of the text rhymedness in terms of literary mastery was not highly appreciated by him. When distributing certain genres by chapters, Liu Xie often refuses the feature of rhymedness (or, conversely, unrhymedness) of the text in favour of other considerations, most often historical precedents. Sound harmony, from his point of view, was more difficult for the writer but it never served as a measure of the elegance of literary genres in the treatise. Non-rhythmical genres are not separated by this feature from the rhythmical ones. Currently, Liu Xie is sometimes reckoned among the literary conservatives of the beginning of the Liang dynasty (502–557) because he allegedly advocated the division of literature into *wen* and *bi* on the basis of rhyme only, while the elegant literature already lost interest in rhyme and was attracted by "prosody" [*Zhongguo wen xue piping tongshi*, 1996: Wei, Jin, Nan Bei chao juan, p. 197]. The groundlessness of such a statement is obvious as it is also obvious that Liu Xie's understanding of literariness not only did not lag behind his contemporaries but took it a step further refusing to consider only the formal features of the work. He spoke in favor of importance of the content for characterization of genre quite clearly when he said that the canon is such only because of its "depth" and not because of the form of speech.

If it is really possible to see Liu Xie's conservatism, it must be in his total approach to literature. This fact is usually not noticed by the theorists of literature aiming to present *The Dragon...* as a step on the way of literature to self-awareness of its specifics. But historian Rudolf Vsevolodovich Vyatkin (1910–1995) considered the inclusion of the chapter "Historical writings" in the treatise as an evidence of Liu Xie's absence of "a clear differentiation between philosophical, historical and fiction literature" [Vyatkin, 1974, p. 217]. We remind that even before the birth of Liu Xie in the southern empire of Song the special state schools for teaching separate disciplines of history and literature were established. The section of history was introduced in the Chinese bibliography as early as in the third century, first by Zheng Mo (213–280) and then by Xun Xu (died in 289). Since then, in traditional Chinese book systematization, history and literature have always been separated in different sections [Yao Mingda, 1984, p. 70–126]. The choice between the career of a writer and a historian was faced by the author of the

[22] Judging by the early medieval monuments, the terms of *jizhuan* and *shizhuan* were, apparently, synonymous and designated a historical work in general.

History of the Later Han Fan Ye. Xiao Yi in the middle of the sixth century unambiguously attributed philosophy and history to "scholarship", which was opposed to "literature" (*wenbi*).

The inclusion of the chapters "Historical writings" and "Philosophers" in the literary treatise at the very end of the fifth century looked like an obvious anachronism. In this case, Liu Xie did not mean separate "literary insertions", i.e., parables, legends, judgments, etc., the inclusion and non-inclusion of which in the composition of the *Selections of Refined Literature* (compiled in 526/527), for example, were stipulated by Xiao Tong (501–531). Liu Xie talked about the genres of large scale and complex compositions. Such genre forms were not common for the literary works of his time [*Zhongguo wen xue piping tongshi*, 1996: Wei, Jin, Nan Bei chao juan, p. 193; Riftin, 1994, p. 283]. On the other hand, for the same reasons, Liu Xie's treatise itself, which is also a literary work, did not correspond to the genre tradition of his time.

Liu Xie's views on the history of literary genres clearly differed from his contemporaries' ones. Xiao Yi and his brother Xiao Gang saw the beginning of contemporary literature in the historically recent past. The tradition of this literature had nothing to do with Confucianism. Ren Fang seemed to point to the connection of contemporary literature with antiquity but this connection was viewed formally only by preserving the names of the five ancient genres mentioned in the historical literature. Zhong Rong (circa 468–518), the author of the outstanding for his time literary critical review *An Evaluation of Poetry* (*Shi pin*), who stressed that the genre of verse under his consideration with the five-word lines "definitely took shape in the [epoch of] Han and was not the consequence of the weakening of [the most ancient dynasty of] Zhou" [... *Liang shu fu suoyin*, 1980, juan 49, p. 695]. Liu Xie believed that genres existed before literature as "principles" (*li*) which found a diverse embodiment in the historical process of the development of literature. Liu Xie mainly associated actualization of these principles with Confucius.

Liu Xie was far ahead of his time but that is the reason why he lost touch with his time. Certain tension between the ideological background of the literary concept of Liu Xie and the facts of his biography remains a debated issue of historical literary studies [Wang Yuanhua, 2004, p. 28–55]. Similarly, the consideration of his ideas against the background of the contemporary historical environment requires additional attention and caution from the researcher. Russian theorists of literature have already paid attention to this problem when they talked about the "sharp dissonance" of the Liu Xie's treatise with his time or when they called him "the herald" of those tendencies in the literary theory of China that prevailed only in the eighth and ninth centuries [Golygina 2008(2), p. 137; Lisevich, 1979, p. 204]. The outstanding achievement of early medieval Chinese literary thought embodied in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* by Liu Xie is undeniable. The typical nature of this work for that historical period is doubtful.

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