CHAPTER 3

The Wei yu deng zhuang Manuscripts

The so-called Wei yu deng zhuang si zhong “Four Types of Documents for Trying Criminal Cases and Other (Procedures)” (hereafter abbreviated as Wei yu deng zhuang) represents a collection of criminal cases from the pre-imperial period of Qin (between 246 BC and 222 BC). The following sections will introduce both the codicological features as well as the basic content of the four manuscripts compiled by the Yuelu Academy editors under this name.

3.1 Codicological Features

The Wei yu deng zhuang contains 257 slips with 15 different criminal case records (12 of them comparably well preserved) that, for various reasons, were submitted by local officials to the higher authorities for decision. Although all of these cases show similarities in structure and content to those contained in the Zou yan shu from Zhangjiashan tomb no. 247, it is clear that they were not part of one and the same codicological unit, i.e. one roll, as is the case with the Zou yan shu. Instead, the Wei yu deng zhuang appears to originally have consisted of four independent manuscript rolls that differed in terms of the writing support (bamboo vs. wood), the dimensions of the slips as well as the number and position of the bindings. These four manuscripts are referred to as first, second, third and fourth “category” (lei 類) in the edition. Figure 1 demonstrates the codicological differences.

An examination of the Wei yu deng zhuang slips further suggests that the writing on all of them actually belongs to the same type of script, although at

84 For general introductions see Zhu and Chen 2013, preface; Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian zhengli xiaozu 2013 as well as Zhang Boyuan 2014d.
85 See chapter 4 below.
86 For the following discussion of the codicological and palaeographical features of the Wei yu deng zhuang in comparison to the Zou yan shu see in detail Staack (forthcoming). Cf. Zhu and Chen 2013, preface. The fact that the Zou yan shu consisted of only one codicological unit becomes evident from the drawing of the position of the slips at the time of excavation, see Zhangjiashan er si hao Hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 2001, appendix B.
the same time considerable differences in the style of script are evident. Table 1 shows some examples of frequently used characters in four different styles.

To sum up, codicological differences in material, the dimensions of the slips and the number and/or position of bindings, which are in fact always paralleled by palaeographical differences in style of script (see Table 2), were the

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87 For some tentative criteria to distinguish the categories “type” and “style” of script as well as “hand” see Richter 2006.

88 Please note that these photos show the verso of all eight slips, because on the wood slips (225 and 226) traces of bindings (indicated by arrows) are barely visible on the recto. Also, the slips do not appear in their original size although the proportions are true to scale. Cf. Yuelu shuyuan cang Qinjian zhengli xiaozu 2013, 78, fig. 1.