

A Harmonious Match of Painting and Calligraphy: The Qianlong Emperor and the Production of *The Illustrated Book of Poetry from the Imperial Brush*

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Abstract

During the Qianlong reign in the Qing dynasty, the Imperial Printing Office at the Wuying Palace was not the only institution specially assigned to produce and print court books, for some of the more opulent and refined imperial books were specifically assigned by the Qianlong emperor to be made by the Workshops of the Imperial Household for the purpose of collection and display. These beautiful and meticulous book productions of the court not only reflect imperial taste but also the personal appreciation of books and their cultural implications of the emperor and even his political agenda. However, when the emperor ordered the Workshops of the Imperial Household to handle special book projects, how were his personal ideas and artistic taste fully expressed in process of production from conception to the choice of materials and methods of representation? This essay examines the production of *A Harmonious Match of Painting and Calligraphy: The Complete Illustrated Book of Poetry from the Imperial Brush* (or *The Illustrated Book of Poetry from the Imperial Brush* for short) in thirty albums ordered by the Qianlong emperor to gain a glimpse at understanding of the decision-making role that he played in the process. The study also reexamines the actual date of completion for this illustrated book in the collection of the National Palace Museum as a means to further realize the inner world of the Qianlong emperor and his artistic taste.

Keywords: Qianlong emperor, *The Illustrated Book of Poetry from the Imperial Brush*, Workshops of the Imperial Household, court books, art of binding

(Translated by Donald E. Brix)