The Tang Empress and Her Characters

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When Wu Zetian (624-705), established her own dynasty in 689, she demonstratively introduced her very own graphic variants for a certain number of graphs. I shall present the historical context and the logic underlying the creation of these graphs. I shall try to explore the meaning of such modifications for a proper understanding of the specificities of the Chinese script.

Françoise Bottéro is a Research fellow at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in the Center for Linguistic Research on East Asian languages (CRLAO) in Paris who specialises in the History and analysis of the Chinese writing. Among her main interest are: the first theories on the script in China, the legend of the invention of writing in China, the problems concerning the terminology of writing, tabooed characters, the problem of classification of Chinese characters in dictionaries, graphic variants, etc.